

Articles

“The Violences of Place and Pen” Identities and Language in the Twentieth-Century Historiography of King Philip’s War

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In 1997, Colin Calloway observed that King Philip’s War (1675-78) “remains the great watershed” in the historical trajectory of seventeenth-century New England. An influential scholar of Colonial and Native America, Calloway added that, much like “the Civil War in United States history,” the English and Native inhabitants of the colonial northeast found it “difficult to escape the shadow” of King Philip’s War. Its enduring violences and historical legacy still haunt the northeast and influenced the state and federal “Indian policy” in the United States through the Second World War.¹ Calloway’s remarks are more than two

¹ Colin G. Calloway, “Introduction: Surviving the Dark Ages,” in *After King Philip’s War: Presence and Persistence in Indian New England* (Hanover, N.H.: University of New England Press, 1997), 4.

Calloway is currently the John Kimball, Jr. 1943 Professor of History and Professor of Native American Studies at Dartmouth College. “Colin Calloway,” Dartmouth College profile, accessed November 27,

decades old, but they remain true and, if anything, have become increasingly relevant in both academia and popular historical consciousness. Since 1997, “the shadow” of the war has attracted attention from historians of Early America, indigenous activists, and even popular writers.² Although their work has surely contributed in important ways to how scholars and the public understand the war, it seems impossible to adequately understand and assess it without the context of the twentieth-century historiographic tradition. As our nation nears the 350th anniversary of King Philip’s War, it seems particularly opportune to reexamine two notable ways in which twentieth-century historians explored, challenged, and reimagined this “watershed” moment in colonial New England.

Before exploring two significant debates in the historiography of King Philip’s War, a brief historical overview of the conflict will help orient non-specialist readers. Though military alliances often blur the complexity of individual allegiances, the conflict was fought between two major factions. On one side were the United Colonies of New England, an intercolonial alliance between Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth Colony, Rhode Island, and New Haven. The United Colonies were joined by Christian Indian allies, who were mainly Mohegans and Pequots. The other main faction was led by Metacom, also known as

2019, <https://history.dartmouth.edu/people/colin-gordon-calloway>.

² Promising work outside of strictly “academic” history includes indigenous language reclamation projects. For example, see Jennifer Weston and Barbara Sorenson, “Awakening a Language on Sleeping Cape Cod,” *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2011): 6-7.

Philip or “King” Philip.³ Philip was a sachem, or chief, of the Wampanoags, a Southern Algonquian people whose homelands encompass the southern parts of the modern U.S. states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. His allies included the Nipmucks, Podunks, Narragansetts (who were initially neutral but were attacked by the English in December 1675), and Nashaways.⁴ After the death of Philip’s father, the Wampanoag sachem Massasoit in 1661, political and economic tensions arose between the English and Wampanoags. These tensions were exacerbated by colonial expansion and their dispossession of Wampanoag lands in the 1670s.

On January 29, 1675, the situation finally ruptured when the Massachusetts Indian John Sassamon was found dead at Assawampsett Pond in Southeastern Massachusetts.⁵

³ Like many Southern Algonquians, the Wampanoag sachem was known by several names, and his people commonly took new ones to signify new identities. While the sachem referred to himself as “Metacom” as a young man, Jill Lepore makes a convincing argument that he called himself “Philip” after 1660. Beginning in the nineteenth century, some scholars and antiquarians started calling him “Metacom” in their romanticized histories of the war that emphasized his “Indianness.” See Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), xxv, 21-26. For clarity’s sake, this article will subsequently refer to him as “Philip.”

⁴ David J. Silverman, *This Land is Their Land: The Wampanoag Indians, Plymouth Colony, and the Troubled History of Thanksgiving* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 54. James D. Drake gives a review of the groups affiliated with the two main factions. See Drake, *King Philip’s War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 75-108.

⁵ Assawampsett Pond is in the modern towns of Lakeville and Middleboro, Massachusetts. Gladys de Maranville Vigers, *History of*

Sassamon was a Christian Indian who had been tutored by Puritan minister John Elliot, spoke fluent English, and had served as a translator for New England soldiers in the Pequot War of 1637. He was widely liked and trusted by English settlers in Plymouth Colony.⁶ Just weeks before his death, Sassamon warned Plymouth Governor Josiah Winslow that an attack was being planned by King Philip. Winslow and other English leaders initially believed that he had drowned, but they began to suspect foul play after a coroner's examination revealed that his neck had been violently broken. On June 6, 1675, the Plymouth court brought three Wampanoag men to trial for the alleged murder of

the Town of Lakeville, Massachusetts (Middleboro: H.L. Thatcher & Company, 1952), 9-14. There is some debate about what terminology to use when referring to the original inhabitants of the America. In the United States, the most popular terms are "Indian" and "Native American," although "Indigenous" has also recently gained popularity. While acknowledging that none of these terms are ideal, this article uses specific tribal names whenever possible. When these identities are unknown or in general observations, "Indian" is used because there is some evidence that it is often preferred by Indians themselves. The term "Native American" is too broad and can easily be confused or appropriated by non-Indian "natives" of the United States. See Michael, Yellow Bird, "What We Want to Be Called: Indigenous Peoples' Perspectives on Racial and Ethnic Identity Label," *American Indian Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 1-21; and Don Marks, "What's in a Name: Indian, Native, Aboriginal, or Indigenous?" *CBC News* (Manitoba), Oct. 2, 2014.

⁶ The following account draws from Lepore, *The Name of War*; xxv, 21-26; Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 122-24; and Daniel R. Mandell, *King Philip's War: Colonial Expansion, Native Resistance, and the end of Indian Sovereignty* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 42-46.

Sassamon. Although the evidence was shaky, a jury of twelve Englishmen and six “of the most indifferentest, gravest, and sage Indians” convicted the three Wampanoag men and executed them on June 8, 1675.⁷

Though Sassamon’s initial warning that King Philip intended to lead an Indian “rebellion” was probably false, the execution of his alleged murders enraged the Wampanoag sachem and his people. After about three weeks of abortive peace negotiations, Wampanoag warriors under King Philip’s direction attacked Swansea, Massachusetts on June 25, 1675. Historical actors on both sides of the conflict were soon forced to consider the extent to which their ethnic and cultural identities determined their military interests. Although Philip secured alliances with numerous Algonquian tribes across New England, many Christian Indians fought for the English. Yet the latter group was consistently distrusted by colonial leaders. By October 1675, the English had become so paranoid about the alleged “duplicity” of their allies and their intent to “rebel” that they confined them on Deer Island in Boston Harbor. Hundreds of Christian Indians died of starvation in their ten months of confinement, a wartime atrocity that only reinforced that complex identities and allegiances are rarely tolerated in war.⁸

⁷ Quoted from the *Plymouth Colony Records*, V:168, in Drake, *King Philip’s War*, 71; 220-35. The identities of the six Indian jurists are unknown.

⁸ A detailed account of the starvation of the Christian or “Praying” Indians on Deer Island is in David J. Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha’s Vineyard, 1600-1871* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 78-119.

A few words must suffice to summarize the course of the fighting. Philip's Indian alliance achieved significant military success into February 1676, razing dozens of English towns, killing many colonists, and taking hundreds of captives. That month, Philip's men raided sites within ten miles of Boston, and the Massachusetts Council seriously considered erecting a palisade around the city. Yet the colonists were eventually able to blunt these attacks, and a combination of increasing casualties and inadequate supplies caused several tribes to abandon their alliance with King Philip.⁹ The Wampanoags continued to fight until August 12, 1676, when Colonel Benjamin Church's rangers tracked down and killed Philip. The English decided that his corpse should be treated as that of a "rebel," and therefore the sachem was beheaded then drawn and quartered. Philip's severed head was displayed for a generation in Plymouth.¹⁰ In a mere eleven months, King Philip's War fundamentally reshaped English and Native lives across New England.

In the conflict's immediate aftermath, Puritan ministers Increase Mather of Boston's First Church and William Hubbard of Ipswich wrote the first histories of King Philip's War. In the fall of 1676, Mather published *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England in Boston*. Months later, Hubbard finished *A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New England*. In his preface, the

⁹ This account is synthesized from Mandell, *King Philip's War*, esp. 90-118; and Lepore, *The Name of War*, xxvii.

¹⁰ Lepore, *The Name of War*, 173-78; Mandell, *King Philip's War*, 124-27; and Douglas E. Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1958), 232-36.

Ipswich minister decried his ecclesiastic rival describing the conflict as a “war,” which he believed lent too much dignity to the conflict.¹¹ The conflict’s name was therefore contested just months after its conclusion, and this debate continues to manifest in the historiography in ways that will be discussed in the body of this article.¹² Though Mather and Hubbard

¹¹ Increase Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England. From June 24. 1675 (when the first Englishman was Murdered by the Indians) to August 12. 1676. when Philip, alias Metacomet, the principal Author and Beginner of the War was slain. Wherein the Grounds, beginning, and Progress of the War; is summarily expressed* (Boston, 1676); online edition, the Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, ed. Paul Royster, accessed November 27, 2019; and William Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New-England, from the first planting thereof in the year 1607. to this present year 1677. But chiefly the late Troubles in the last two years, 1675. and 1676. To which is added a Discourse about the Warre with the Pequods In the year 1637* (Boston, 1677); online ed., *Evans Early American Imprint Collection*, University of Michigan. For background on Mather and Hubbard, see Lepore, *The Name of War*, XVI-II; and Naoki Onshi, “Puritan Historians and Historiography,” *The Oxford Handbook of Early American Literature*, ed. Kevin J. Hayes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12-20.

¹² Although King Philip was slain in August 1676, the fighting continued in northern New England until April 1678. For work on the war’s understudied northern front, see Alvin Morrison, “Tricentennial, Too: King Philip’s War Northern Front (Maine, 1675–1678),” in *Actes Du Huitième Congrès Des Algonquinistes (1976)*, ed. William Cowan (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1977); Emerson Baker, “Trouble to the Eastward: The Failure of Anglo-Indian Relations in Early Maine” (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 1986); Baker and John Reid, “Amerindian Power in the Early Modern Northeast: A Reappraisal,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (January 2004): 77-106; Kenneth M. Morrison, *The Embattled Northeast* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Calloway, *Dawnland Encounters: Indians and*

detested each other, their accounts became the *de facto* histories of the war for nearly two centuries. Although a number of historians and antiquarians wrote accounts of King Philip's War in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, their work was essentially derivative of Mather and Hubbard.¹³

In 1716, Benjamin Church, the leader of the rangers who eventually killed Philip, added a third "canonical" history titled *The Entertaining History of King Philip's War*.¹⁴ As historians Jill Lepore and later Lisa Brooks have shown, Church's *Entertaining History* is especially problematic because it became a "conventional" history despite the fact that it was comprised of his memoirs edited

Europeans in Northern New England (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1991); Alice Nash, "The Abiding Frontier: Family, Gender and Religion in Wabanaki History, 1600–1763" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1997); and Calloway, *The Western Abenakis of Vermont* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990).

¹³ These uncritical histories include Peter Oliver, *The Puritan Commonwealth: An Historical Review of the Puritan Government in Massachusetts in Its Civil and Ecclesiastical Relations From Its Rise to the Abrogation of the First Charter* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1856); George E. Ellis, *The Red Man and White Man in North America: from its Discovery to the Present Time* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1882); William C. MacLeod, *The American Indian frontier* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1928); cited in Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1965), 63 n.1.

¹⁴ Benjamin Church, *The Entertaining History of King Philip's War, which began in the Month of June 1675. As Also of Expeditions More Lately Made Against the Common Enemy, and Indian Rebels, in the Eastern Parts of New-England* (Boston: B. Greene, 1716; Newport, 1772); online ed., *Evans Early American Imprint Collection*, University of Michigan.

and published (and possibly fabricated) by his son forty years after 1676. Lepore convincingly asserted in a *New Yorker* article that Church's "as-told-to, after-the-fact memoir is the single most unreliable account" of King Philip's War. It is also especially boisterous and offers a narrative that minimizes the role of New England's Native American allies. Lepore, Brooks, and other historians have shown the limitations of the uncritical use of *Entertaining History* as a historical document. But the full title of Church's memoir apparently popularized the appellation "King Philip's War." This appellation has since seeped into our national historical consciousness and was left unchallenged by academic historians until the mid-twentieth century.¹⁵

Douglas E. Leach can justifiably be said to have inaugurated modern academic scholarship on King Philip's War in 1958, when he published his seminal book *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War*.¹⁶ Leach did not significantly challenge the historical narratives (or fully abandon the racist perspectives) of Mather, Hubbard, and Church. However, he reinvigorated scholarly interest in the war and, perhaps less directly, initiated two major historiographic debates that are the subject of this article.

¹⁵ Jill Lepore, "Plymouth Rocked: Of Pilgrims, Puritans, and professors," *New Yorker*, April 24, 2006. Accessed November 27, 2019: http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/04/24/060424crat_atlarge; and Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 8, 349 n13. For evidence that the term "King Philip's War" first appeared in *Entertaining Passages*, see Jenny H. Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 128, 302, n.44.

¹⁶ Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, especially vii-iii.

The first debate was on the relationship between identity (ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic), wartime alliances, and intercultural encounters. While historians in the mid-twentieth century often portrayed the war as a racial conflict between “white” and “red” men, ethnohistorians and those on the New Left complicated this interpretation in important ways beginning around 1976. Epitomized by James D. Drake’s 1999 book *King Philip’s War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676*, this historiographic current was complete by the new millennium and remains contested. The second debate was over whether there was a better name for the conflict than “King Philip’s War.” As detailed in the second section of this article, the “names of war” debate started in 1976 and perhaps peaked with Jill Lepore’s 1998 masterpiece *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity*. Lepore explored how literacy empowered English historical actors to inscribe the significance of the conflict and “kill their enemies twice” in the process. Her book was influenced by the “cultural turn” in the humanities and especially by the work of postcolonial historians like Michel Foucault and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.¹⁷ The historiographical debates identified in this article chronologically overlap, often intertwine, and are occasionally inseparable. Yet exploring them separately offers two significant and somewhat discrete historical perspectives on King Philip’s War.

¹⁷ For a detailed consideration of the “cultural turn” in the humanities and social sciences, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The ‘Objectivity Question’ and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: University Press, 1988), especially 533-573.

I. *Blurring The Line Between “Civilized” and “Savage”*

If *Flintlock and Tomahawk* is the origin of the modern historiography of King Philip’s War, Leach also initiated the first historiographical debate on the role of ethnic, cultural, and religious identities in shaping wartime alliances and cultural encounters. Raised in Providence, Rhode Island, Douglas Edward Leach (1920-2003) served in the U.S. Navy in World War II and earned his PhD in history from Harvard University in 1952. Advised by the influential historian Samuel Eliot Morrison, an unshakeable Rankean scholar and committed anti-relativist, Leach became interested in cultural “relations and military interactions among colonials, Native Americans, and Britons.”¹⁸ His PhD dissertation was the basis for *Flintlock and Tomahawk*. After beginning his career with a six-year stint at Bates College, Leach taught for three decades at Vanderbilt University before his death in 2003.¹⁹ Leach generally interpreted the war as one between two factions that fit neatly into the racial and cultural categories of “red” and “white.” While he did sometimes note intertribal and intercolonial factionalism, Leach usually ignored the complexities of these colonial and indigenous identities and

¹⁸ Quoted in Samuel T. McSeveney, “In Memoriam: Douglas Edward Leach (1920-2003),” *Perspectives in History* 42, no. 5 (May 2004), accessed November 29, 2019:

<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2004/in-memoriam-douglas-edward-leach>. For observations about Morrison’s ideology, see Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 290, 292, 316.

¹⁹ McSeveney, “Douglas Edward Leach;” and Douglas E. Leach, “The Causes and Effects of King Philip’s War (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1952), Introduction.

did not consider how they were often mutually constituted. After discussing Leach's most significant contributions to this first historiographic debate, this section will survey how it has been taken up by historians Alden T. Vaughan, Francis Jennings, James Axtell, Philip Ranlet, Richard White, Jill Lepore, and James D. Drake. While this historiographical survey is hardly exhaustive, it does include most of the influential twentieth-century histories of King Philip's War.

In the opening pages of *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, Leach identifies the contemporary and historical exigencies of his work. He claims that “[little] has been written about King Philip's War in more than half a century. The subject was one which fascinated earlier generations, but most of the available accounts tend to be uncritical and otherwise limited in scope. None presents a...whole society in travail—the true picture of New England in 1675-1676.”²⁰ This assessment is likely true, given that most older histories were antiquarian reprints of the three “canonical” narratives written by Mather, Hubbard, and Church.²¹ Writing in the 1950s, Leach probably also believed that postwar liberation movements lent new relevance to King Philip's War, though not in a progressive sense. His book's preface, which Morrison wrote, claims that given “our recent experiences of warfare, and of the many instances today of backward peoples getting enlarged notions of nationalism and turning ferociously on Europeans who have attempted to civilize them, this early conflict of the same nature cannot help but be of interest.”²²

²⁰ Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, vii.

²¹ See Note #9.

²² Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, ix.

For Leach and his old advisor, King Philip's War was essentially a violent, but short, interruption in the progressive march from Indian "savagery" to white "civilization."

Leach made impressive use of the archive to detail intercolonial factionalism and especially the dynamic English-Native military alliances. However, he was fundamentally unable to escape the ethnocentric argument that conflict between "civilized" and "savage" societies was inevitable. Leach claimed that "when the first English settlers landed on New England shores and built permanent homes there, King Philip's War became virtually inevitable...[Two] incompatible ways of life confronted each other, and one of the two would have to prevail." His interpretation echoed Morrison, who claimed that "behind King Philip's War was the clash of a relatively advanced race with savages, an occurrence not uncommon in history."²³ This assumption had implications for his treatments of intercultural encounters, including English-Native alliances and the universal practice of captive-taking. Tellingly, Leach titled his chapter that contained his most comprehensive discussion of alliances "The Problem of the 'Friendly Indians.'"

Failing to separate his perspective from those of the colonial leaders, he sought to answer slanted questions like "How far could these outwardly loyal natives be trusted?" and "Was their Christianity stronger than their savage instincts and kinship with the enemy?"²⁴ His treatment of wartime captives followed similar lines, and he wrote in

²³ Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, ix.

²⁴ Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 145-54.

glowing terms about the missionaries and the allegedly innate “savagery” of allied Christian or “Praying” Indians.²⁵

Alden T. Vaughan (1929—) made the next major contribution to the historiography of intercultural relations during King Philip’s War. After earning his PhD in history at Columbia University in 1964, Vaughan taught for three decades at the same institution before concluding his career at Clark University in 2004.²⁶ His dissertation informed his first influential first book, which was titled *The New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians 1620-1675* and was published in 1965.²⁷ In *The New England Frontier*, Vaughan focused extensively on the factors that caused King Philip’s War, including the deterioration of intercultural relations in New England. His arguments both contested and reinforced Leach’s conclusions. Vaughan’s entire argument rested on his unshakable conviction that the “Puritans followed a remarkably humane, considerate, and just policy in their dealings with the Indians...who were less powerful, less civilized, less sophisticated, and—in the eyes of the New England colonists—less godly.”²⁸ Where Leach held English colonists somewhat culpable for atrocities like Deer Island, the Puritans did virtually no wrong from the perspective of Vaughan. This divergence also had implications for their

²⁵ Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 242-44.

²⁶ Alden T. Vaughan, “New England Puritans and the American Indian, 1620-1675” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1964); and “Alden T. Vaughan, PhD,” History Department Website, Clark University accessed online Nov. 30, 2019:

<http://www2.clarku.edu/faculty/facultybio.cfm?id=512>

²⁷ Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1965).

²⁸ Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, vii.

assessments of who started King Philip's War. Leach argued that the Wampanoag's alleged inability to conceive of private land ownership had sparked conflict, but Vaughan directly blamed the violence on Philip's aggression and the fact that he was not a Praying Indian.²⁹

Yet Vaughan's conclusions also echoed Leach's in important ways. Like his predecessor, he drew a fundamental dichotomy between "civilized" and "savage" actors in King Philip's War. Vaughan contended that "the challenge of the Puritan...was not to exterminate, enslave, or ignore the native, but to convert, civilize, and educate him..."³⁰ From a modern perspective, this claim is dated and seems to have little historical value. It also represents an important contribution to the historiographic debate in that it begins to untether cultural notions of "civilized" and "savage" from the racial categories of "white" and "red." Vaughan claimed that "New England natives based their loyalties on criteria other than racial affinity." He likewise insisted that it "was the historian, not the Puritan or the aborigine, who insisted on making racial division the focal point of Puritan-Indian relations in New England," which contradicts Leach and especially Elliot.³¹ In Vaughan's treatment of the Praying Indians, he makes it clear that they could become "civilized" through Christianization. Diverging markedly from both three "canonical" narratives and Leach's *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, Vaughan contended that cultural and religious identities were somewhat mutable and distinct from race in King Philip's War.

²⁹ Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 310.

³⁰ Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, viii.

³¹ Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 63.

From 1976 to 1991, at least three historians directly challenged the whiggish mid-century histories of King Philip's War. While Francis Jennings (1918-2000), James Axtell (1941—), and Richard White (1947—) never wrote full accounts of the war, their work left an indelible mark on the fields of Colonial America and Native American Studies and undoubtedly influenced the historiography of the war. Raised in rural Pennsylvania, Jennings was a secondary school history teacher before earning his PhD at the University of Pennsylvania.³² In 1976, his book *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* shifted the terms of historiographical debate in its attempt to depict how seventeenth-century colonialism was experienced by Indians in northeastern America. Jennings asserted that, from an indigenous perspective, the “colonial period of United States history...is the period of invasion of Indian society by Europeans.”³³ *The Invasion of America* traced the evolution of English (and especially Puritan) ideologies, which justified their colonialization and conquest of Native Americans. Summarizing the historiographical impact of Jennings's book, one reviewer described it as “a powerful assault on the racist mythology that has so long obscured an honest view of Indian-European relations in early America.”³⁴ In attempting to uncover indigenous perspectives on the war, Jennings distinguished himself from

³² James Jenaga, “Native American History Writer Francis Jennings, 82,” *The Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 22, 2000.

³³ Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, x.

³⁴ James P. Ronda, Review of *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*, by Francis Jennings, *The American Historical Review* 82, no. 1 (1977): 168-69.

Leach and Vaughan, who both claimed (with some remorse) that the absence of written records made this task impossible.³⁵

Axtell and White made pivotal contributions to the historiography that blurred cultural and racial identities in Colonial America. While Jennings was the first major scholar to be categorically critical of the Puritans, *The Invasion of America* did not subvert the historiographic dichotomy that theorized fundamentally distinct “European” and “Indian” cultural identities in the way that Axtell would almost a decade later.³⁶ A native of Upstate New York, Axtell earned his history PhD from Cambridge University in 1967. He spent the majority of his career at William & Mary, where his 1985 book *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* established him as one of the leading Early Americanists.³⁷ Although King Philip’s War was not the focus of Axtell’s book, he influenced the historiographical debate on identity, allegiance, and encounter by further unsettling the rigid ethnic, cultural, and especially religious identity categories codified by Leach, Vaughan, and, somewhat ironically, Jennings. Axtell was fascinated by so-called “White Indians,” English and French colonists who were taken captive and chose to “go native.” His book also offered a far more critical view of colonial

³⁵ See Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, iii-iv; and Vaughan, *The New England Frontier*, v-vi. The latter did somewhat revise his views later in his career.

³⁶ To his credit, Jennings also made this shift in his later work.

³⁷ Bruce Ebert, “Work continues for retiring professors,” William & Mary, accessed Dec. 12, 2019: <https://www.wm.edu/news/stories/2008/work-continues-for-retiring-professors.php>.

missionaries, whom he saw as colonial agents who intended to oversee a total cultural and spiritual transformation of “savage” Native Americans into “civilized” peoples whose identities mirrored those of English and French colonists. Axtell termed this wholesale missionary transformation project “an invasion within,” which became his title.³⁸ He also made full use of ethnohistorical methods and incorporated New France (the modern Canadian province of Québec) as a “third society” in the historical narrative of Colonial America.

In 1991, White’s book *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* created a third seismic shift that would influence future histories of King Philip’s War. After completing his undergraduate education at the University of California, Santa Cruz, White (1947—) earned his history PhD from the University of Washington in 1975.³⁹ White’s book begins with a significant historiographical observation:

The history of Indian-white relations has not usually produced complex stories. Indians are the rock, European peoples are the sea, and history seems a constant storm. There have been but two outcomes: The sea wears down and dissolves the rock; or the sea erodes the rock but cannot finally absorb its battered remnant, which endures. The first outcome produces

³⁸ James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

³⁹ “Richard White, Emeritus,” Stanford University Department of History, accessed December 1, 2019, <https://history.stanford.edu/people/richard-white-emeritus>.

stories of conquest and assimilation; the second produces stories of cultural persistence. The tellers of such stories do not lie. Some Indian groups did disappear; others did persist. But the tellers of such stories miss a larger process and a larger truth. The meeting of sea and continent, like the meeting of whites and Indians, creates as well as destroys. Contact was not a battle of primal forces in which only one could survive. Something new could appear.⁴⁰

To address this historiographic shortfall, White posited the existence of a “middle ground” which was “the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages. It is a place where many of the North American subjects and allies of empires lived. It is the area between the historical foreground of European invasion and occupation and the background of Indian defeat and retreat.”⁴¹ The “middle ground” was sustained when Natives and colonists tried to establish intercultural relationships through appeals “to what they perceive[d] to be the values and practices of...[the] others.” Colonists and Indians frequently misinterpreted each other’s cultural values, and their “creative misunderstandings” birthed “new meanings and through them new practices—the shared meanings and practices of the middle ground.”⁴² Despite White’s explicit claim that the “middle ground” was

⁴⁰ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xxv.

⁴¹ White, *The Middle Ground*, xxvi.

⁴² White, *The Middle Ground*, xxvi.

a phenomenon limited to the eighteenth-century Great Lakes Region, the idea was widely (and sometimes fallaciously) used to characterize Euro-Native intercultural relations in numerous contexts, including King Philip's War. It would foreground the future contributions to the historiographical debate on the complex relationships between identities and alliances.

In 1990, Russell Bourne (1929-2019) wrote his impactful book *The Red King's Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England, 1675-1678*.⁴³ Although Bourne was not an academic historian, he was a writer and editor for *TIME* Magazine, ran several publishing departments, and eventually wrote three history books and a poetry collection.⁴⁴ However, under the informal tutelage of Neal Salisbury, an accomplished scholar of Colonial and Native New England, he was able to write a book that influenced the historiographical debate on the connections between categories of identity and wartime alliances in King Philip's War. Perhaps Bourne's most important claim was that there were numerous commonalities between the two sides before and during the war, "most obvious of all...[was] that across all New England the settler and native societies were blundering through a political experience [where]...the great diplomats of the first two generations of red-white contact

⁴³ Russell Bourne, *The Red King's Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England, 1675-1678* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1990).

⁴⁴ Matt Butler, "A Final Note: Russell Bourne's lifetime of poems; published in a month," *Ithaca Times Daily*, accessed December 13, 2019: https://www.ithaca.com/entertainment/books/a-final-note-russell-bourne-s-lifetime-of-poems-published/article_f92d9a20-5baf-11e9-bea2-a37ed760aab4.html.

were succeeded by a new generation of less accommodating, more bitter personages.”⁴⁵ To Bourne the “bitter” generation included King Philip and Josiah Winslow, the Plymouth Governor who had presided over the court that had convicted and executed three Wampanoags for the alleged murder of John Sassamon in June 1675. As discussed in Section II, Bourne’s argument can be seen as an attempt to chart a “middle course” between progressive and conservative accounts of the conflict, but it seems to contradict the historical record in significant ways.

In the late 1990s, Jill Lepore (1966—) and James D. Drake (Unknown—) added new dimensions to the historiographical debates on cultural identity and cultural encounter in King Philip’s War. A native of Central Massachusetts, Lepore earned her PhD from Yale University in 1995. Now at Harvard University, she has since risen to the highest ranks of American historians and is one of few scholars with a “public persona.”⁴⁶ While Lepore’s 1998 book *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* is featured more significantly in the second historiographical debate about the names of war, she also comments about the relationship between wartime identities, alliances, and intercultural encounters. Writing at the height of the “cultural turn,” Lepore emphasizes how language fundamentally constructed both colonial and indigenous ethnic, cultural, and religious identities. She starts with an observation from the historian Stephen

⁴⁵ Bourne, *The Red King’s Rebellion*, xiv.

⁴⁶ “Jill Lepore: David Woods Kemper ’41 Professor of History,” Scholars at Harvard, accessed Dec. 10, 2019: <https://scholar.harvard.edu/jlepore/home>.

Greenblatt, who claimed that language is “one of the crucial ways of distinguishing between men and beasts.”⁴⁷ Building on this assertion, Lepore contends that through describing Indian as others, “the language of cruelty and savagery was the vocabulary Puritans adapted...[as they] attempted to carve out for themselves a narrow path of virtue, piety, and mercy.”⁴⁸ This observation invites her readers to critically interrogate the “English” and “Indian” identities that had been presupposed by earlier scholars, particularly Morrison, Leach, and Vaughan.

Drake took a less linguistic approach to the war. Raised in Colorado, he received his PhD from UCLA and has since taught at the Metropolitan University of Denver.⁴⁹ Rather than assuming that the cultural dichotomy had caused the war, Drake argued in his book *King Philip’s War: Civil War in New England* that starker differences were created through the conflict. Before June 1675, he contended “that the natives and the colonists of New England had enough in common to form their own unique society. Fought among various groups of these Indians and the English, King Philip’s War was a civil war that destroyed that incarnation

⁴⁷ Stephen Greenblatt, “Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century,” in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. Fredi Chiappelli, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 566-68, quoted in Lepore, *The Name of War*, xiv.

⁴⁸ Lepore, *The Name of War*, xiv.

⁴⁹ “James Drake Faculty Profile,” Metropolitan State University of Denver, accessed Dec. 10, 2019: <http://webapp.msudenver.edu/directory/profile.php/directoryprofile/profile.jsp?uName=drakeja>.

of New England.”⁵⁰ This observation almost completely blurs the identity categories of “English” and “Indian.” Drake adds further that “Both Native American and English groups found enough commonality between their cultures to allow for...political linkages, [which,] combined with a shared economy, legal system, and social space, constituted the metaphorical electrons in the covalent society formed by bonds [between]... groups of Indians and the various English colonies in New England.”⁵¹ Adopting the ethnographic perspectives of Axtell and White, Drake claimed that King Philip’s War “is ultimately interested in the intersections among these groups: the sites where they encounter and challenge each other, responding dialectically to each other’s heritage practices.”⁵²

Over the course of about forty years, the historiographic debate on the relationship between identity (broadly construed) and wartime alliances has become increasingly nuanced. It started in 1958 with the static identity categories and neatly constituted “white” and “red” sides in Douglas Leach’s *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, which echoed the staunchly anti-relativist views of his doctoral advisor, Samuel Eliot Morrison. Alden Vaughan made minor inroads in complicating Leach’s neat dichotomies, but his love for the Puritans as “civilizers” probably made significant reassessments difficult for him. Yet over the next twenty-five years, increasingly ethnographic and anti-colonial sentiments within the profession created opportunities for significant reassessments of identity and

⁵⁰ Drake, *King Philip’s War*, 2.

⁵¹ Drake, *King Philip’s War*, 58-9.

⁵² Drake, *King Philip’s War*, 8-9.

allegiance in the war. Francis Jennings, James Axtell, and Richard White all advanced frameworks that would allow future historians to complicate the relationship between identities and allegiances, and eventually do poststructuralist analyses that interrogated them as categories. James D. Drake's *King Philip's War* epitomized the first approach, while Jill Lepore's *The Name of War* exemplified the latter treatment. Having traced the historiographical debate on wartime identities and alliances, the next section turns to the second debate, which is over the most suitable appellation for King Philip's War.

II. *The Names of King Philip's War*

The second major historiographical debate concerns the most appropriate name for King Philip's War. As mentioned in the introduction, Benjamin Church was probably the first to label the eleven-month conflict "King Philip's War" in his fraught 1716 narrative *The Entertaining History of King Philip's War*. Since most arguments for retaining this appellation are compelling, this article will continue to refer to the conflict as King Philip's War. The first section of this article describes how Douglas E. Leach's 1958 book *Flintlock and Tomahawk* reignited academic interest in the war and initiated a historiographical debate over identity categories and intercultural encounters in seventeenth-century New England.

But while Leach can be justifiably called the "father" of modern historiography of King Philip's War, in *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, he never critically considers whether the conflict was appropriately named. Similarly, Alden T. Vaughan's 1965 book *New England Frontier* does not reflect

on the suitability of the war's name. Given that both books were written in an era when conservatism dominated the field of American history, their silence on this matter is unsurprising. The historiographical debate on the best name for the war began in the turbulent 1970s.

In 1976, Francis Jennings proposed the first new name for the war in his book, *The Invasion of America*. Presenting the conflict as a case study in which the Puritans manifested their colonialist ideologies, he claimed that the conflict "has been misnamed King Philip's War; it was, in fact, the Second Puritan Conquest."⁵³ Significantly, Jennings both rejected the argument that racial tensions played a central role in instigating conflict and, to a lesser extent, recognized the power of language in constituting meaning. He contended:

that the standard way to characterize this event has been to call it a racial showdown. This...is wrong. Far from having any unity of contestants...[the war] became a congeries of conflicts of which the resistance led by Wampanoag sachem Philip was only one. Different Europeans pursued different interests and fought different conflicts, and so did different Indians. The contestants themselves showed scant evidence of racial objectives as such. Such views were imposed on the phenomena later."⁵⁴

James Axtell and Richard White would drive academic cognizance of more nuanced identities and motives for

⁵³ Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 298.

⁵⁴ Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 298.

Native Americans, which further contributed to identity categories in King Philip's War.⁵⁵ After complicating the assumption that racial identities dictated wartime interests and allegiances, Jennings elaborated on the question of language that would intrigue historians in the 1990s.

Jennings directly challenged Leach's conclusion that a "few, intelligent men who lived through King Philip's War, and who later pondered its causes, its development, its outcome, and its effects, sensed a historical significance of that great conflict. They realized that the two races had fought a war of extermination."⁵⁶ On the contrary, he observes that Massachusetts Puritans had frequent squabbles with colonists from Martha's Vineyard, Connecticut, and New York. Jennings defined a new historical legacy for Puritan leaders, claiming that the "the few intelligent racists' problem was to put a good face on a war of intended conquest by the Puritans that was met with desperate resistance by the Indians...Puritans had long known the power of propaganda presented as history. In their scheme of predestination, invention was the mother of necessity."⁵⁷ As suggested here, Jennings contends that Puritan histories were colored in deliberate ways by their colonialist ideologies, since through the written record, colonial leaders sought to solidify racial distinctions and present the conflict

⁵⁵ For example, see Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, xi; and White, *The Middle Ground*, 1-49.

⁵⁶ Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 94, 123, 137-138, 169, 184-187; and Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 298. In a historiographic footnote, Jennings comments "It will become evident that I owe a debt to Leach's scholarship, though I differ sharply from him in interpretation." See *The Invasion of America*, 298 n.1.

⁵⁷ Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 298.

as a defensive and unavoidable war against the “savages.” While his work would draw conservative backlash, he made the first substantial contribution to the historiographic debate on the best name for King Philip’s War.

In 1988, Philip Ranlet (1953—) challenged Jennings’s choice to rename the war “The Second Puritan Conquest.” A historian interested in Loyalists in the American Revolution, Ranlet earned his history PhD from Columbia University in 1983.⁵⁸ His 1988 article “Another Look at the Causes of King Philip’s War” directly criticizes Jennings as one of the “historians of the New Left who arose to champion Indians” in the late 1960s, and “have since been sympathizing so totally with the natives that they have failed to appreciate the settlers’ experience.”⁵⁹ He also describes Leach’s *Flintlock and Tomahawk* as a “a more balanced view” of the war and claims that some of “Vaughan’s conclusions go too far, but his book should nonetheless be the starting point for those pursuing the subject.”⁶⁰ Returning to his critique of Jennings, Ranlet problematized how historians had tried to rename the conflict. Gary B. Nash called the conflict “Metacom’s War” in *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America*, but Ranlet rejects this revisionist name and cites primary evidence that name the Wampanoag sachem as King Philip.⁶¹ Ranlet cites the

⁵⁸ Philip Ranlet, *The New York Loyalists* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986).

⁵⁹ Philip Ranlet, “Another Look at the Causes of King Philip’s War,” *The New England Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (1988): 79 n.2.

⁶⁰ Ranlet, “Another Look,” 79 n.1.

⁶¹ Gary B. Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974), 123-27, in Ranlet, “Another Look,” 80 n.3.

historian Richard Slotkin, who claims that he was given this name before intercultural hostilities began in the 1670s.⁶² These observations led the conservative historian to conclude that “Renaming King Philip’s War, then, seems to be of dubious value...[t]here is no reason not to use the [conventional] name.”⁶³

Bourne also weighed in on the name debate in his 1990 book *The Red King’s Rebellion*. As indicated in his title, Bourne posited that the war was best characterized as a “rebellion” led by King Philip. This name was apparently not intended to avow the pretensions of colonial officials, who liked to claim that Philip, the Wampanoags, and their Southern Algonquian allies were all English subjects.⁶⁴ However, we can determine some of its significance from how he positions himself in the historiography. Bourne criticized conservative historians’ claims that the settlers justly purchased property from their indigenous neighbors. Yet he lashed out at “revisionist” historians like Francis Jennings, whom he described as an agenda-driven, “blame-throwing breed of analysts.”⁶⁵ It seems plausible that Bourne chose “Metacom’s Rebellion” because he saw it as a “middle ground” in the historiographic debate in that it both

⁶² Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 79, in Ranlet, “Another Look,” 80 n.3.

⁶³ Ranlet, “Another Look,” 80 n.3.

⁶⁴ Curiously, Bourne never explicitly comments on his title. My interpretation here is borrows from that of Jill Lepore. See Lepore, *The Name of War*, xv, 251 n.25.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Bourne, *The Red King’s Rebellion*, 8. For other critiques of revisionist history, see 6-7, 46, 99 and 111. For pushback against conservative interpretations, see xii-xiv.

underscored indigenous agency while also assigning a degree of blame to King Philip, whose alleged insolence helped destroy the prewar “biracial society [that is] not generally reported in the history books.”⁶⁶ Yet in staking a historiographic “middle ground” by calling the conflict a “rebellion,” Bourne makes an implicit historical claim that is not supported by the primary record. There is insubstantial evidence to suggest that Metacom intended to rebel against New England in July 1675.⁶⁷

Jill Lepore’s 1998 book *The Name of War* revitalized the historiographical debate about the most suitable name for the war by emphasizing how language can constitute meaning. Writing at the height of the “cultural turn” in the late 1990s, Lepore described her book in these terms:

This is a study of war, and of how people write about it. Writing about war can be almost as difficult as waging it and, often enough, is essential to winning it. The words used to describe war have a great deal of work to do: they must communicate war’s intensity, its traumas, fears, and glories; they must make clear who is right and who is wrong, rally support, and recruit allies; and they must document the pain of war, and in so doing, help to alleviate it.⁶⁸

Perhaps influenced by poststructuralists like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, Lepore argues in *The Name*

⁶⁶ Bourne, *The Red King’s Rebellion*, xii.

⁶⁷ One more, my interpretation draws from Lepore, *The Name of War*, xv-xvi.

⁶⁸ Lepore, *The Name of War*, ix.

of *War* that written language had a central role in assigning cultural significance to the conflict, which became the hegemonic historical narratives that were consolidated and amplified in the more than three centuries since 1676. Lepore considered war to be both a “a violent contest for territory, resources, and political allegiances” and “a contest for meaning.”⁶⁹ Although the physical violence is initially overwhelming, war survivors “do not remain at a loss for words for long. Out of the chaos we soon make new meanings of our world, finding words to make reality real again.” In this fundamental way, war “twice cultivates language: it requires justification, it demands description.”⁷⁰

Lepore tried to distance herself from the notion that language constituted the entire human experience, reminding her audience that to “say that war cultivates language is not to ignore what else war does: war kills.”⁷¹ Yet she follows this essential qualifier with a contention that seemingly “doubles down” on her belief that language is constitutive in several essential ways: “the central claim of this book that wounds and words—the injuries and their interpretation—cannot be separated, that acts of war generate acts of narration...[that] are often joined in a common purpose: defining the geographical, political, cultural, and sometimes racial and national boundaries...”⁷² In a summary of her position on language and conflict, Lepore concludes that “[w]aging, writing, and remembering

⁶⁹ Lepore, *The Name of War*, x.

⁷⁰ Lepore, *The Name of War*, x.

⁷¹ Lepore, *The Name of War*, x.

⁷² Lepore, *The Name of War*, x.

a war all shape its legacy, all draw boundaries.”⁷³ *The Name of War* had significant ramifications for the historiographical debate on the most suitable name for King Philip’s War. If language had constituted the significant cultural, racial, and national boundaries in the seventeenth century, it can also be said to have insulated them from serious scrutiny by concurrently inscribing the dominant historical memory of the conflict. As the title of her book implies, Lepore justifiably believed that the war’s name was an important site where language played a fundamental role in the construction and preservation of the dominant historical memory of King Philip’s War.

Given that the constitutive power of language was essential to her analysis, Lepore surely felt obligated to offer her own perspective on the historiographical debate about the “correct” name for King Philip’s War. Surveying previous answers to the question of can “what happened in New England in 1675 and 1676 rightly be called King Philip’s War?” Lepore considers the alternatives posited by three historians who have answered in the negative. As discussed above, Jennings renamed it “The Second Puritan Conquest,” Bourne termed it “Metacom’s Rebellion,” and Drake went with “Indian Civil War.”⁷⁴ While each of these names has some merits, Lepore ultimately advocates for the name King Philip’s War. She argues that “The Second

⁷³ Lepore, *The Name of War*, xi.

⁷⁴ Lepore, *The Name of War*, xv, 251 n.25. Though Drake did not publish his book on the war until 1999, he evidently made similar arguments that the conflict is best understood as an “Indian civil war” in his thesis. See James Drake, “Severing the Ties That Bind Them: A Reconceptualization of King Philip’s War” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1995), 3-11.

Puritan Conquest” implies that the outcome of the war was foreordained, which was fallacious and teleological. Although it was intended to celebrate the historical agency and tribal sovereignty of Native Americans, “Metacom’s Rebellion” implied that the Indians allied with King Philip were rebellious subjects of the British Empire, a pretense that was often adopted by colonial officials. Finally, although it made a well-intentioned attempt to center how indigenous peoples experienced the war, the name “Indian Civil War” is at odds with the primary record, which suggests that most of Philip’s allies understood themselves to be at war against the colonists of New England.⁷⁵

Lepore continues this discussion by assessing the name “King Philip’s War.” Her analysis discussion is worth quoting at length:

“King Philip’s War” is not unbiased, but its biases are telling. (And some of its biases are less biased than historians have assumed.) Perhaps it will be best to consider each of the contested terms in “King Philip’s War” in turn. To begin with, calling an Indian leader a “king,” though it eventually became mocking, began as a simple (though inaccurate) translation of *sachem*. The English called many prominent Indian leaders “kings,” partly in recognition of the sachems’ very real political authority and partly as a result of the colonists’ overestimation of that authority. Most sachemships were hereditary, and English colonists saw them as roughly analogous to European monarchies, however much smaller in scale; “king”

⁷⁵ Lepore, *The Name of War*, xv, 251 n.25.

might have seemed a fitting, if not entirely satisfactory, translation of “sachem.” “Philip,” too, was an English creation; it was the name given to Metacom when he and his brother Wamsutta appeared before the Plymouth Court in 1660 as a gesture of friendship and fidelity...

“War” is, of course, the slipperiest, most disputed word in “King Philip’s War,” but the recently proposed alternatives are poor substitutes. “Conquest” implies that the outcome of the hostilities was predetermined, while “rebellion” suggests that Philip was a treasonous subject of King Charles. Neither is quite true (much as the colonists would have liked to believe both). “Indian Civil War” rings false too, although the colonists were quick to call upon Indian allies, the majority on both sides perceived the war as an English-on-Indian conflict. In the end, “war” may be the word that takes the conflict most seriously...⁷⁶

This analysis is the most substantial justification for the name “King Philip’s War.” Lepore observes that while linguistic meanings are almost always contested and unable to encompass the totality of the human experience, some names are more suitable than others. Importantly, she also makes the observation that historians sometimes overanalyze and take umbrage with the conventional names of war, finding presentist significances that betray their own ideological perspectives. In numerous respects, Lepore’s *The Name of War* remains *the* book on the conflict that has

⁷⁶ Lepore, *The Name of War*, xvi.

become a touchstone for almost all twenty-first century histories of King Philip's War.

The second historiographical debate over the most suitable name for the violences of 1675-1678 garnered scholarly attention in the twentieth century. As discussed in Section I, Douglas E. Leach reignited academic interest in the war in his 1958 *Flintlock and Tomahawk*. However, he and Alden T. Vaughan tacitly accepted "King Philip's War," an appellation first coined in Benjamin Church's problematic account titled *Entertaining History of King Philip's War*. In 1975, Francis Jennings inaugurated the historiographical debate in earnest when he described the conflict as "The Second Puritan Conquest," which was decried as inappropriately biased by conservative historian Philip Ranlet. Russell Bourne tried to chart a "middle ground" between the traditionalists and alleged "revisionists" on the New Left. However, he came to an anachronistic name expressed in the title of his book *The Red King's Rebellion*. In 1998, Jill Lepore masterfully defended the old name "King Philip's War," which reaffirmed its status as the historical discipline's "conventional" name for the war. Lepore's nuanced justification for "King Philip's War" remained the *status quo* until 2018, when two promising young historians reignited the debate and offered sweeping new interpretations of the war.

Although King Philip's War has been studied by several talented historians in the current century, in 2018 Lisa Brooks (1971—) and Christine DeLucia (1984—) made seminal contributions to its historiography. While it is too

soon to fully assess how their books will influence future work on the conflict, they have recovered indigenous perspectives on the war in powerful ways. A member of the Missisquoi Abenaki Nation, Brooks earned her history PhD from Cornell University in 2004 and is currently at Amherst College.⁷⁷ As alluded to in the title of her book *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War*, Brooks retraces the complex lives and identities of two little-known Native Americans—Weetamo, a female Wampanoag leader and James Printer, a Nipmuc scholar at Harvard University.⁷⁸ Brooks is especially interested in material culture, and she has also visually displayed her research using an interactive website created with Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping Software.⁷⁹ She claims that these methodologies allow her to break free from colonial narrative structures that have constrained “authors and historians...within an orderly “chain-of-events” or thesis argument.” Brooks asserts that a “decolonial process might reverse that trend by resisting containment and opening possibilities for Native presence.”⁸⁰ As historians write new accounts of King Philip's War, it seems likely that many will at least attempt to use Brook's decolonial approach.

⁷⁷ “Lisa Brooks: Professor of American Studies and English,” Amherst College, accessed Dec. 12, 2019: <https://www.amherst.edu/people/facstaff/lbrooks>.

⁷⁸ Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (NW: Yale University Press), 1-16.

⁷⁹ Lisa Brooks, “Our Beloved Kin: Remapping a New History of King Philip's War,” accessed Dec. 12, 2019: <https://ourbelovedkin.com/awikhigan/index>.

⁸⁰ Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 7.

DeLucia earned her PhD in American Studies from Yale University in 2012. She currently teaches at Williams College in Western Massachusetts.⁸¹ In 2018, DeLucia published *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast*.⁸² Where Brooks focused on material culture as a means to decolonize histories of the war, DeLucia uncovers Native American voices through methods associated with memory studies. This methodology lets her integrate later sources written by indigenous actors, oral testimonies, and print media into an analysis of the war's place in our national historical consciousness.⁸³ With the partial exceptions of James Axtell and Richard White, the twentieth-century historians surveyed in this article relied almost entirely on colonial records and ignored non-written indigenous sources. While the intellectual foundation for decolonial histories was partially created by progressive historians like Francis Jennings and Native American activists like Vine Deloria Jr. in the 1970s, most scholars believed that it was impossible to fully write about the conflict from an indigenous perspective. Brooks and DeLucia discredit this old notion and have likely charted new paths in the historiography of King Philip's War.

What historiographic debates and methodological approaches will frame future histories of King Philip's War? While it is impossible to say with certainty, a few debates and approaches look to be increasingly influential. First, it

⁸¹ Christine DeLucia, "About Me," Personal Website, Accessed Dec. 13, 2019: <https://www.christinedelucia.com/>.

⁸² Christine DeLucia, *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

⁸³ DeLucia, *Memory Lands*, 1-26.

seems that the historiographic debate on how ethnic, cultural, and religious identities influenced wartime alliances and intercultural encounters will now be taken up and reconsidered from the perspective of everyday Native Americans, rather than well-known colonial officials or even Native leaders like King Philip. For example, Brook's two main historical "characters" are the female Wampanoag leader Weetamo and the Nipmuc scholar James Printer.⁸⁴ Secondly, it seems that language will continue to factor into future work on the war, but not in the fully constitutive sense expressed by Foucault, Spivak, and other postcolonial scholars of the "cultural turn." Instead, Brooks and DeLucia have urged the study of indigenous languages, the use of oral testimonies as historical evidence, and the use of Native place names in their work to help decolonize their histories. Finally, it seems that both older theoretical frameworks, such as memory studies, and new technologies GIS will be used more widely. Although it ended almost 350 years ago, rarely has there been a more opportune moment for fresh histories of King Philip's War.

⁸⁴ Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 1-16.