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History, Memory, and the Indian Struggle for Autonomy in the Seventeenth-Century Hudson Valley

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ABSTRACT This essay uses treaty records, council minutes, personal correspondence, and travel narratives to argue that Hudson Valley Indians seized on the 1664 English conquest of New Netherland to try to position Natives and newcomers as independent members of an extended community sharing a common past and landscape. Formulating a history emphasizing peace, preserving the memory of that past through ritual actions, and involving English colonists in processes that rested on that history, Native Americans sought to integrate the newcomers into their existing network of social relations and a physical landscape that manifested those relations. Meanwhile, English colonists seeking to secure the colony and confirm individual land titles participated in rituals, agreed to treaties, and recorded land purchases in ways that acknowledged Indians' memories regarding lands and the communities that inhabited them. Though the project ultimately failed, the English conquest of New Netherland briefly introduced the possibility of integrating the newcomers into a larger community of diverse, autonomous peoples connected by a common history embedded in the Hudson Valley's regional landscape.

In 1674/75, a decade after the English conquest of New Netherland, Mahicans meeting with New York officials at Albany recalled that when they had first encountered Europeans “they were strong of people and had power. Then the Dutch were but few, but they let them remain and live in peace.”

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More than half a century later, however, they had become “weak and are but few, and the English with the Dutch are now many . . . the English and the Dutch are now one.” Insisting that the “Indians are now one also,” they asked that “they will not be exiled or destroyed by the English, something they have never done to the Christians,” and asserted their understanding that “we are now all together the English and the Indians [brethren].” Seeking to establish a narrative characterized by friendly relations between themselves and European colonists, the Indians suggested continuity between Dutch and English eras but also the ties between Natives and newcomers. Emphasizing their own links to other Native communities strengthened their position as they cited historical precedent in expressing their hope for an intercultural landscape on which unequal but autonomous communities could continue to cohabitate.¹

The Mahicans at Albany were not the first to assert a history that emphasized peaceful relations. Well-established mechanisms for building intergroup relations allowed Hudson Valley Indians to seize on the 1664 English conquest and subsequent discussions with colonial officials to articulate a history that could serve as the basis for a nascent colonial community in which they maintained autonomous roles. If the Dutch had long resisted Indian efforts to integrate them into Hudson Valley networks as kin and community members, the English at least initially appeared more receptive to what Cynthia Van Zandt has described as Native efforts to map newcomers “into a grid of social space that made sense to them.” As English officials and colonists in the Hudson Valley participated in rituals, mediated conflicts, and acquired land, they acknowledged Indian memories and so participated in historical traditions that aligned them with Native communities. By becoming conversant in those historical traditions, the English could join the existing networks that linked the region’s numerous Indian bands into what Andrew Newman has called a “community of memory,” collective memories and their modes of transmission helping define group identity. But those communities also occupied physical space, and this essay considers how and why

1. Robert Livingston, *The Livingston Indian Records, 1666–1723*, ed. Lawrence Leder (Gettysburg: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956), 37. For a different reading of this moment, see Amy Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 44; for a discussion of these types of speeches, see Tom Arne Midtrød, *The Memory of All Ancient Customs: Native American Diplomacy in the Colonial Hudson Valley* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 64, 90–91.

Hudson Valley Indians worked to embed social relations in the land parcels, burial sites, and settlements of the regional landscape.²

The English conquest came as the expanding colonial population and continued Iroquois interference in the region threatened to politically marginalize and physically displace Hudson Valley Indians. Natives saw in it renewed opportunity to incorporate European outsiders in familiar ways, reprising the strategies that, as Tom Arne Midtrød has argued, successfully linked them to New England Algonquians and to Susquehannocks to the east, but that had failed to integrate the Dutch. Midtrød points out that despite that failure, intergroup connections supported cooperation that preserved an autonomous Native political arena well into the eighteenth century, albeit one that never fully incorporated Euro-American neighbors. Midtrød and Donna Merwick have followed Allen Trelease's lead in arguing that the transition to English rule did not mark a broader revolution in Indian relations across the Hudson Valley, and that many of the problems that characterized Dutch-Indian relations persisted under the English administration. Indeed, Natives' efforts to engage the English as relative equals were ultimately unsuccessful, and within two decades the valley's Indians were effectively marginalized, often appearing only as minor players in Iroquois-English diplomacy.³

But focusing on the long-term effects of the English conquest on Indian-European relations can obscure the degree to which the takeover offered Hudson Valley Indians a renewed opportunity to attempt to define their relations with European colonists. One exception to the prevailing pattern is Robert Grumet's work, which notes that Munsee sachems seeking to preserve a measure of autonomy found chances to pit the English conquerors against entrenched Dutch colonists. By examining Natives' rhetorical

2. Cynthia Van Zandt, *Brothers among Nations: The Pursuit of Intercultural Alliances in Early America, 1580–1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7–9; Andrew Newman, *On Records: Delaware Indians, Colonists, and the Media of History and Memory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 9–10.

3. Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 61–64, 82; Donna Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow: Dutch-Amerindian Encounters in New Netherlands* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 149, 258–59; Allen W. Trelease, *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), 174–203, 228. See also Jaap Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Paul Andrew Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter in America: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Hudson Valley* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 163–74.

strategies in the immediate aftermath of the English conquest, this essay builds on Grumet's insight to argue that Hudson Valley Indians did attempt to take advantage of the new political context to recast intercultural relationships and protect their place in the valley. Centering the landscape as the medium through which social relations were maintained lent continuity to a fluid sociopolitical world and potentially secured Native occupation of the valley. By investing the Hudson Valley landscape with significance for Native and newcomer alike, Hudson Valley Indians attempted to align English and Indian communities and so establish reciprocal obligations between peoples sharing not just space but a history of place. Assigning English colonists a place on the land positioned them within a larger territory, while asking them to help preserve the memory of their historical role embedded them as participants in the cultural community inhabiting that landscape. Educating colonists in those traditions, Hudson Valley Indians worked simultaneously to further entrench themselves and to enmesh English newcomers in a wider regional community of peoples linked through their shared relationships with New York's intercultural landscape.⁴



The Mahicans at Albany in 1674/75 drew selectively on Indians' past experiences with European colonists, choosing to emphasize periods of peace rather than the outbreaks of violence that punctuated New Netherland's history. Although insulated by distance from the three outbreaks of open warfare that marked the lower Hudson Valley, Mahicans and other Indians living upriver maintained ties with Natives to their south. Though Mahicans may have been more unified than the Munsee- and Unami-speaking bands closer to New Amsterdam, actual and fictive kinship connected the various groups despite the localism characterizing political organization. The flexible arrangements allowed for mergers and mobility, as well as the possibility of incorporating outsiders as kin. The arriving Dutch had seemed likely to be absorbed in part because, initially uncertain about their own claims to sovereignty, they cautiously expanded their commercial reach, which required neither a large population nor extensive territory.⁵

4. Robert S. Grumet, *The Munsee Indians: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 110.

5. Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow*, 3, 59, 69, 101–2; Matthew Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 136, 142; Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 2–17, 21–24; Ted J. Brasser, "The Coastal New York Indians in the Early Contact Period," in Laurence M. Hauptman and Jack Campisi, eds., *Neighbors and Intruders: An Ethnohistorical Exploration of the Indians of Hudson's*

Later recast as an ideal model for Indian-European relations, the resulting peace eroded as the fur trade's centers moved north and west, economically marginalizing lower-valley Indians who also faced an expanding Dutch population's desire for agricultural lands after 1640. Sparked by demands for tribute from Indians facing this expansion, Kieft's War concluded in 1645 with a treaty that established a process for resolving conflicts, even as it dispersed some Indian communities and forced others to acknowledge Dutch political authority. Facing the erosion of their land base and political sovereignty by the mid-1640s, Munsee bands in the lower valley nonetheless maintained their cultural independence and separate identities as regular contact beyond occasional trade led to increased conflict in the 1650s. A decade after Kieft's War, the Peach War may have prompted the Dutch to work more willingly within local modes to access Native diplomatic channels, a network they used to secure intelligence and neutrality from some valley Indians during the Esopus Wars of the late Dutch period. A more typical colonial conflict over European expansion and threats to Native territorial sovereignty, this Third Dutch-Munsee War closed with a treaty signed just months before the English conquest.⁶

By 1664, then, long experience had taught New Netherland's Indians the futility of using trade and other local customs to integrate Dutch colonists into networks of Native relations. Repeated epidemics and warfare with Dutch and Iroquois neighbors had diminished Hudson Valley Indian populations, and consequently Natives' power relative to Europeans. As the colony's European population grew rapidly after 1650, colonists no longer occupied only small island settlements surrounded by Native peoples. Two larger towns, at New Amsterdam and Beverwijck (Albany), and numerous

River (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1978), 155; Laurence Hauptman, "The Dispersal of the River Indians: Frontier Expansion and Indian Dispossession in the Hudson Valley," in Hauptman and Campisi, *Neighbors and Intruders*, 249; Jacobs, *Colony of New Netherland*, 13-14; Paul Otto, "Intercultural Relations between Native Americans and Europeans in New Netherland and New York," in Hans Krabbendam, Cornelis A. Van Minnen, and Giles Scott-Smith, eds., *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 179.

6. On these conflicts and the marginalization of Indians in the lower valley, see Hauptman, "Dispersal of the River Indians," 248; Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow*, 135-49, 183, 209-27; Otto, *Dutch-Munsee Encounter*, 165-67; Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 50, 61, 74-75, 109-14; Jacobs, *Colony of New Netherland*, 76-77; Van Zandt, *Brothers among Nations*, 171-86; Otto, "Intercultural Relations," 185; Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace*, 169-70; Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 48.

smaller settlements housed nearly nine thousand colonists by 1664. That growth pushed Indians to the peripheries of Dutch settlements that exhibited no ethnographic familiarity with them and showed little interest in establishing long-standing or widespread alliances that would build them into a larger political landscape. Situated nearby and significant to Dutch commerce and defense, Natives nonetheless remained outside the Dutch community and, according to Dutch perspectives, subordinate to Dutch power despite having extracted some promising concessions and continuing to claim equality and independent status. As the English assumed control of the region, Hudson Valley Indians with close ties to the Dutch were probably disappointed, but others sensed an opportunity to recast past events and shape their relationships with a new group of colonizers.⁷

The possibility of educating English colonists and so integrating them into the Native political landscape may have appeared more viable as the new English government sought to consolidate power and institute control in the region, and to ensure its security against the threatening Iroquois and French combination to the west. But it also no doubt became more urgent as the new governor, Richard Nicolls, quickly reached an accord with the Iroquois, who had already displaced the Mahicans to the east of the Hudson River by the 1620s and continued to dominate the northern fur trade. In addition to promising to sustain trade relations as they had existed under the Dutch, English officials insisted that Indians to the south with whom they had reached separate agreements would be covered by the peace. But they also agreed to Iroquois proposals that though they would “make peace for the Indian Princes, with the Nations down the River,” they would “not assist the three Nations . . . who murdered one of the Princes of the Maques [Mohawks].” For Hudson Valley Indians, the treaty would have portended the Iroquois’s ability to extend their influence downriver, making clear to New York’s Indians how pressing it was to secure their own arrangements with the newcomers. In pursuing such an agreement, Esopus Indians built

7. Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace*, 131, 137, 253; Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow*, 116, 202; Jacobs, *Colony of New Netherland*, 32, 212; Simon Middleton, “The Waning of Dutch New York,” in Krabbendam et al., *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations*, 108–9; Otto, *Dutch-Munsee Encounter*, 163, 175; Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 77–82. For more on the English conquest, see Jacobs, *Colony of New Netherland*, 99–103, 251; Donna Merwick, *Possessing Albany, 1630–1710: The Dutch and English Experiences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 145.

on their own 1664 treaty with the Dutch, but several provisions suggested a new approach unique to the English newcomers.⁸

The May 1664 treaty ending the Second Esopus War had expressed some hope of settling differences between the Dutch and Esopus, but it suggested that such resolution would involve a deliberate act of disremembering. It insisted, “All, that has happened formerly, shall be forgiven and forgotten and not be remembered again: the people killed and gone on either side shall and must be forgotten.” On a rhetorical level it attempted to erase that past history of conflict, suggesting that forgiveness alone would not eliminate the causes of the war; casualties on both sides needed to be forgotten lest they become a new grievance and cause for yet more fighting. But another of the treaty’s provisions seemingly contradicted that plea, as it was “also covenanted, that they or some of their people shall come down here every year, to renew this compact and that, if they bring a present, we shall also give them one.” By commemorating the peace settlement, the annual renewals provided a constant reminder of the recent war and its casualties. The regular visits and promise of gift exchange lent the renewals a markedly ritual cast that positioned them as participatory actions confirming an ongoing relationship between the Esopus and Dutch. Oddly, it was the regular act of remembering the treaty attached to the war that would maintain the peaceful relationship between neighbors.⁹

Forgiveness and forgetfulness might eliminate historical grievances, but they could not stem the continued incursions of European settlers and the increasing competition over trade. It could hardly have surprised the region’s native peoples when the English, already interfering in Dutch and Indian affairs, seized the colony in 1664. Richard Nicolls acted quickly to confirm the year-old Dutch treaty, extending its provisions to the new English government in New York in October 1665. Consecutive provisions

8. Edmund B. O’Callaghan and Berthold Fernow, eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1853–87), 3:68–69. On the early stages of Iroquois-English relations in New York, see Daniel Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 99; Middleton, “Waning of Dutch New York,” 110.

9. O’Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 13:375–77. For an interpretation of this agreement as one between relative equals, see Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 61.

of the new agreement provided that “The said Sachems doth Engage to come once every yeare and bring some of their young People to Acknowledge every Part of this Agreeem’. in the Sopes, to the end that it may be kept in perpetuall memory,” and promised that regular visits would ensure “That all past Injuriyes are buryed & forgotten on both sides.” Replicating some terms of the treaty with the Dutch, Nicolls’s treaty added several new elements. Notably, its insistence that sachems renewing the agreement bring “young People” attempted to ensure that future generations would maintain the agreement. When the sachem Calcop brought “his young son and another young Indyan” to “set their marke to the Agreement made between Coll Nicolls and the Sopez Indyan” in 1670, he was one of a series of Esopus representatives whose participation in this renewal ritual committed to the “perpetuall memory” of an emerging generation not just the treaty itself, but the memory of the war that had generated it.¹⁰

While it thus seems unlikely that the causes of the war would be truly forgotten, neither would the diplomatic process that brought about its end. Regularly acknowledging the treaty helped secure the continuity of diplomatic practice across subsequent generations of Indians and European colonists. The 1665 agreement between the Esopus and English newcomers, then, emphasized continuity and projected peace into the future by commemorating a moment at which that peaceful relationship had taken root. Acknowledging a turning point in Indian-colonist relations embedded the treaty and its practices in a longer trajectory. The text of Nicolls’s treaty reflected this history by suggesting that past injuries would be not just forgotten, but “buried,” the choice of language acknowledging the casualties of the Esopus War and other conflicts while simultaneously purporting to remove the grievances that caused them. It recast burial not simply as the outcome of a war, but as the beginning of a new stage of Indian-colonist relations.¹¹

Language that associated burials with a new Indian-European solidarity was not coincidental. European visitors to New Netherland and New York

10. O’Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 13:399–401. The Nicolls treaty was renewed nine times between 1669 and 1682. For a memorandum of Calcop’s 1670 renewal with his son and another youth, see Peter R. Christoph, ed., *Administrative Papers of Governors Richard Nicolls and Francis Lovelace, 1664–1673* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1980), 147.

11. For a similar point about agreements between Delaware Indians and the Pennsylvania government in which “wampum did not seal an agreement so much as mark its beginning,” see Newman, *On Records*, 165.

frequently related the burial and mourning practices of Native Americans, and their reports collectively suggest that diplomatic practice might have reflected mortuary rituals. Adriaen van der Donck reported in 1655 that “When someone among the Indians departs this life, all around take great care in committing the dead body to earth,” and that “in order to put the mourning and grieving behind them all the better, and not to afflict the memory of the deceased’s kin, together with all those of the same family, jurisdiction, and those living in the same area and carrying the same name, they dislike making mention of it [the death], talking or asking about it, and feel that doing so is meant to hurt and injure.” Van der Donck identified an extended community participating in efforts to ameliorate pain. Suppressing discussion established the community’s ability to function without the deceased and eliminated obstacles to the interactions of surviving community members. Like treaties that buried grievances, what van der Donck described was less an act of complete disremembering than an attempt to reinstate normal social relations within a complete and functioning community.¹²

Meanwhile, near relations of the deceased carefully commemorated their ancestors. Charles Wolley recalled, “They mourn over their dead commonly two or three days before they bury them,” and Daniel Denton observed that they “do visit the grave once or twice a day, where they send forth sad lamentations.” These mourning practices established a division, the wider community’s silence contrasting with the mourning of closer kin. Mourners, however, participated in both practices, revealing a layered community in which they belonged at once to a smaller group marked by loss and circumscribed by its participation in active mourning rituals, and to a more expansive group reconstituting itself as complete. Daily grieving eventually gave way to annual commemorations at well-marked gravesites, which regularly confirmed the contours of a community unified by its members’ participation in constructing and maintaining the site. According to Jasper Danckaerts, “they also continually keep the mound clean and weed every day.” Denton reported, “afterwards every year once they view the grave, make a

12. Adriaen van der Donck, *A Description of New Netherland*, ed. Charles T. Gehring and William A. Starna, trans. Diederik Willem Goedhuys (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 88–89. A group of Indians at Staten Island confirmed this attitude when they said of a list of Indian names read off a deed, “they are dead, so doe not love to heare of them”; Victor Hugo Paltsits, ed., *Minutes of the Executive Council of the Province of New York: Administration of Francis Lovelace, 1668–1683* (Albany: State of New York, 1910), 1:44.

new mourning for him, trimming up of the Grave, not suffering of a Grass to grow by it,” and “they fence their graves with a hedge.” Wolley added, “many times they plant a certain Tree by their Graves which keeps green all the year.” Native communities thus ensured that the deceased were not forgotten, anchoring their memories in a constructed physical landscape whose maintenance required regular, ongoing action.¹³

Centering rituals of community participation on burial sites positioned graves in an ongoing historical narrative, while continual landscaping efforts around graves affirmed historical links to landscapes and couched that history in genealogical descent. Describing similar practices surrounding burial sites in New England, Thomas Morton reported that the regular visits to graves helped Natives “keepe their annals,” suggesting that Native Americans kept a careful record of events and burials that they reinforced with regular visitations. Landscaping actions commemorated the bodily presence of ancestors while also allowing participants to establish themselves as community members with a shared history of inhabitation that they could project into the future.¹⁴

13. Charles Wolley, *A Two Years' Journal in New York and Parts of Its Territories in America*, ed. Edward Gaylord Bourne (Cleveland: Burrow Brothers, 1902), 35–36; Daniel Denton, *A Brief Description of New-York: Formerly Called New-Netherlands, with the Places Thereto Adjoining* (London: John Hancock and William Bradley, 1670), 9; Charles T. Gehring and Robert S. Grumet, “Observations of the Indians from Jasper Danckaerts’s Journal, 1679–1680,” in *William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (1987): 110–11. See also William Penn, “Letter from William Penn to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders, 1683,” in Albert Cook Myers, ed., *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey, and Delaware, 1630–1707* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1912), 234; van der Donck, *Description of New Netherland*, 88–89. On grave tending, see Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 28.

14. Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan* (Amsterdam: Jacob Frederick Stam, 1637), 51. See also Adriaen van der Donck, “Description of New Netherland,” in E. B. O’Callaghan, ed., *The Documentary History of the State of New-York*, 4 vols. (Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1849–51), 4:127; Gabriel Thomas, “An Historical and Geographical Account of Pensilvania and West-New-Jersey,” in Myers, *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania*, 340. On landscape elements as mnemonics, see Howard Morphy, “Colonialism, History and the Construction of Place: The Politics of Landscape in Northern Australia,” in Barbara Bender, ed., *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives* (Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1993), 234; Michele D. Dominy, “White Settler Assertions of Native Status,” *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 2 (May 1995): 365. On commemorative acts collapsing retrospective and prospective memory, see Newman, *On Records*, 16. On Native American funeral practices, see James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), chap. 5.

Attached to geographical features, those narratives associated groups with particular locations. Danckaerts confirmed in 1680 that in New York, “You find these burial places everywhere in the woods, but especially along the banks of rivers or streams near where they live or have lived.” The graves evidenced the physical presence of successive generations of Native Americans on those lands. Moreover, the sites themselves may have evoked a living presence, as van der Donck likened the construction of monuments atop graves to that of houses: “they build a great mound of wood, stone, and earth with a wooden enclosure on top like a little house.” Since ancestors continued to share the landscape with the living community, continuing to recognize those features and constantly recounting histories lodged in the landscape perpetuated historical links between peoples and lands. Participating in that historical narrative about the landscape affirmed an individual’s membership in a community defined by its specific relationship with the landscape it inhabited, and outsiders like Danckaerts could potentially be integrated as they became conversant with those rituals and histories.¹⁵

Nicolls’s efforts to renew and extend earlier treaties fit this pattern, as the English newcomers began to take part in established diplomatic practice, even as those practices were modified. Though the Esopus’s 1664 treaty with the Dutch specified annual renewals at Fort Amsterdam, the 1665 treaty with the English moved the visits to the village of Kingston (formerly Wiltwyck) in the Esopus region. Relocating the visits to the Esopus, site of the contested land cession that had prompted the war and where its Indian casualties lay buried, may well have prompted the new language in which “past Injuries” were “buried & forgotten.” The fate of the buried grievances thus became similar to the fate of buried ancestors: both were committed to “perpetuall memory” to serve as the basis of a new phase of Indian-colonist relations and symbolize an intercultural community coalescing around the Esopus.

The new location for renewing the treaty, and the new language included in the text, suggested that the English were becoming conversant in the

15. Danckaerts, “Observations of the Indians,” 110–11; van der Donck, *Description of New Netherland*, 88–89; Paul Sillitoe, “Beating the Boundaries: Land Tenure and Identity in the Papua New Guinea Highlands,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 55, no. 3 (1999): 333, 337, 340, 348. On collective memory and rituals, including those relating to graves, imparting significance to locales, and integrating peoples, see Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 7, 28–29; Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 32; Newman, *On Records*, 15.

ritual actions that sustained a regional community, acknowledging a shared history on a common site. Subsequent commemorations could focus on the ties represented by a common ancestor or history occupying a gravesite, rather than the conflict that had produced the grave. Despite being positioned in an ongoing narrative, however, the relationship rested less on continuity than on a new context: the English could replace the Dutch and be initiated into Indian traditions and history precisely because they were, in fact, outsiders not directly implicated in the Second Esopus War itself. Lacking that familiarity, they assumed the Dutch role in a regional history the interpretation of which was shaped by those more familiar with it—the Esopus Indians. The treaty and its annual renewals at Kingston helped reconstitute a functioning colonial community encompassing Natives, long-time Dutch residents, and English newcomers not by obscuring a history of conflict, but by relegating it to a past that stood somewhat disconnected from—and in contrast to—the hoped-for peaceful future. Burial sites thus represented the beginning of a friendship, rather than the outcome of animosity.¹⁶

An exchange in a 1666 meeting farther north, at Albany, made this association between graves and diplomatic sites more explicit. English officials, mediating between Mohawks and Mahicans competing over access to Albany's fur trade, told the Indians, "You people are thoroughly tired of all wars and hostilities and will dig a grave of forgetfulness and will put a heavy stone on the grave so that evil will not be able to come out of there again." The Mohawks, on the defensive against an anti-Iroquois coalition of Hudson Valley and New England Indians that had reemerged since the end of the Second Esopus War in 1663, echoed that language in their proposal to the Mahicans and their allies: "All war and shedding of blood will now be put in a grave of forgetfulness and will not be thought of any more." In reaching an accord, the Mohawks and Mahicans and other northern Indians buried not a deceased person, but the war itself; placed in a single "grave," it became a buried object with ties to all the parties involved in its burial, like a common ancestor whose ritual internment unified all those who participated in constructing and maintaining the site.¹⁷

16. O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 13:399–401; Christoph, *Administrative Papers*, 3–4. On community formation, kinship, and specific locales, see Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 21.

17. Livingston, *Livingston Indian Records*, 34–35. On Mahican-Mohawk conflicts, see Hauptman, "Dispersal of the River Indians," 249; Midtrød, *Memory of All*

Constructing or affirming relationships between peoples by participating in gatherings surrounding literal or symbolic burials was hardly a new practice for Hudson Valley Natives. Though he specifically described Indians around Delaware Bay and Manhattan, David de Vries had written in 1654, “They give a party when any one is dead in the house . . . during which time their friends come from other nations on all sides.” The gatherings performed social and political functions, assembling mourners and more distant relations to “contract new alliances of friendship with their neighbors.” The Indians hoped “that as the bones of their ancestors and friends are together in the little bundles . . . so may their bones be together in the same place, and that as long as their lives shall last, they ought to be united in friendship and concord, as were their ancestors and friends.” Mixing the bones of the dead and burying them together symbolically united separate lineages to form a collective identity able to sustain political alliances and cultural affinities between neighboring Indian bands.¹⁸

The burial language that prominently appeared in Indian-colonist diplomacy in New York thus carried with it a host of implications. As part of long-standing Indian practices, it provided existing means of incorporating outsiders into Native communities and networks. Inserted into peace treaties, it recalled a history of conflict that the negotiations aimed to end, the burial symbolizing a turning point in Indian-colonist relations. Framed as a moment that enabled forgetfulness, it nonetheless demanded regular maintenance, the renewal of the agreement’s terms and conditions. That ritual action took place at a specific site—Kingston for Nicolls’s treaty with the Esopus, but often Albany for other agreements—invested with historical significance. Those who participated in treaties and their renewals joined an expansive community extending horizontally to encompass Dutch,

Ancient Customs, 114–16; Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace*, 254–56; Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 97–99.

18. David de Vries, “David De Vries’s Notes,” in J. Franklin Jameson, ed., *Narratives of New Netherland, 1609–1664* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909), 223–24. On gatherings as “canticos,” see “Letter from William Penn,” 234; Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 1:102, 2:500; “Treaty at New Castle between Edmund Andros and Delaware Chiefs,” in Alden T. Vaughan, gen. ed., *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607–1789*, vol. 1, *Pennsylvania and Delaware Treaties, 1629–1737*, ed. Donald H. Kent (Washington, D.C.: University Publications of America, 1979), 36–37. On localized orientations within broader cultural identities, see Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 30. On secondary burials, which appear in the Hudson Valley’s archaeological record if not in written records, see Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 32.

English, and Indian residents, and extending vertically through time to include the deceased, the living, and subsequent generations.¹⁹

In the association of burials and diplomacy intersect a number of threads with which the remainder of this essay is concerned, all of which offered to integrate English newcomers into existing Native networks. First is the preservation of historical memory and its successful transmission to both descendants and community outsiders, as Indians consistently alluded to the past and brought young witnesses to their agreements with Europeans. Second is the emphasis on lines of descent, as Native Americans referred to their own lineages and assigned Europeans lineages that mitigated the unfamiliarity of newcomers by enmeshing them in existing relationships. Third is the assertion of territoriality, a sense of ownership of the lands occupied by a particular community. Land transactions and the debates surrounding them demonstrated this territoriality while allowing new parties to join the group that territory helped define. Finally, all these mechanisms created links between Indians and Europeans that could potentially knit the region's inhabitants into a broader community crossing cultural lines, one Indians defined in terms of kinship and its attendant obligations.



The 1665 Nicolls treaty's durability relied on its transmission to successive members of New York's colonial community, and the descendants of the Esopus Indians indeed renewed their treaty with a series of English governors. Having succeeded Nicolls as governor in 1668, Francis Lovelace ordered a lieutenant to "send to the Sachems of the Esopus who sold their Land to my Predecessor Colonell Nicolls to come and acknowledge the Sale of the said Land before you," and "engage them to doe the like yearly at the same place for the future." That Lovelace dispatched an official to the Esopus indicated that he recognized the area's history. Meanwhile, his insistence on continuing annual renewals acknowledged the importance of maintaining the peaceful relations that enabled the English to construct new settlements, joining the region's Native inhabitants in a history rooted geographically at Kingston and the surrounding area.²⁰

That request made, "a few dayes after appeared Waposhequiqua, and

19. For further examples of burial language, especially burying axes, see Livingston, *Livingston Indian Records*, 42–43, 46; O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York*, 3:324, 327–28; 9:37.

20. Christoph, *Administrative Papers*, 120–22, 131.

Sewakanoma two of those Sachems that sould the Land to the late Governour Niccolls, who ownd their marks with the whole agreement.” As important as the presence of two of the original signees, however, was that “An Indyman who came with them sett his hand to the paper, and they were then obliged to bring two young Men to wittness what they own, the other two Sachems mencioned in that Agreement are dead, but these Sachems that appeared obligd themselves to bring the Successors of those deceased.” By bringing additional witnesses, and also agreeing to bring the successors of the two deceased sachems, Waposhequiqua and Sewakanoma (also Seweck-enamo or Sewakenamo) transmitted to that younger generation the responsibility for upholding the agreement. The parties present at one historical moment thus aligned three distinct eras within a single historical arc: they renewed an agreement originally rooted in the Dutch era, acknowledged an English presence initiated by an agreement between parties—Nicolls and the Esopus sachems—now passing into ancestral status, and established lines of succession in which Lovelace and the younger Indian leadership would sustain the peace in the future.²¹

The arrangement between the English and Esopus evidently succeeded; subsequent renewals involved a third English governor, Edmund Andros, by 1674. Similarly, in August 1669 “Perewyn Sachem of the Hackensack Toppan & Staten Island Indians” appeared before a council on Manhattan Island, “desiring the freindship & amity they lately had wth us in the tyme of the late Governor Coll Niccolls might be continued wth his Honor the prsent Governor.” Like the Esopus Indians, Perewyn, “lately chosen their Sachem,” approached the new English governor, Lovelace, to renew an agreement between their predecessors.²²

Clearly, then, diplomatic lessons were being effectively conveyed to succeeding generations of political leadership. The presence of witnesses allowed the oral transmission of knowledge and practices that European visitors reported. Danckaerts conceded, “they can neither read nor write,” but he added, “because they cannot leave it to their posterity in written

21. *Ibid.* On leading families, political authority, grooming successors familiar with diplomatic agreements, and European assumptions about patrilineality, see Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 28–29, 42; Charles A. Bishop, “Territoriality among Northeastern Algonquians,” *Anthropologica* 28, no. 1/2 (1986): 52. On the significance of the “chain of memory” to group identity among the Delaware, see Newman, *On Records*, 178, 188–89.

22. Renewal with Andros, in O’Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York*, 13:401; quoted in Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 1:35.

form, after the conclusion of the matter all the children who have the ability to understand and to remember it are called together, and then they are told by their fathers, sachems, or chiefs how they entered into such a contract with these parties.” Each provision was “sealed and sanctioned with gifts and offerings” that also served as reminders of major points. Danckaerts noted, “they are gifted with a powerful memory,” and van der Donck asserted the efficacy of this approach when he wrote, “Matters thus concluded with and among them they will exactly remember and perform to the utmost by all possible means,” insisting on the veracity of Indians’ oral records.²³

To further secure their accounts, however, Native Americans sometimes combined their oral traditions with written records. In 1668 “three of the Esopus Sachems who had sould the great Tract of land there to Govrnor Nicolls accompanied wth divers othr Indians came to the Governor & brought the Counterparte of the deed of Purchase desiring to Continue Freindship wch was then Ratified.” Indians adapted to European preferences for written documents by combining the two modes of transmission. When English officials likewise combined these media—when “belts of sewant were written upon, to be kept in token of a continuance of Peace”—they legitimized this practice. Perhaps hoping that by setting the two records side by side they could demonstrate the accuracy of their own record keeping, Indians leveraged written records to obtain English consent in the traditions they transmitted orally.²⁴

Indians consistently drew on their historical knowledge in formulating new agreements or confirming existing arrangements with Europeans. In citing the authority of their traditions as the basis for ongoing relations with colonists, they asked Europeans to consent to the narrative they imparted. When Perewyn in 1669 mentioned his people’s earlier relationship with Nicolls, he invoked historical precedent to formulate a new relationship. In

23. Danckaerts, “Observations of the Indians,” 108; van der Donck, *Description of New Netherland*, 104; Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 42–43. See also Livingston, *Livingston Indian Records*, 46; O’Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York*, 3:323.

24. Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 1:244; Kent, *Early American Indian Documents*, 37; Charles T. Gehring, ed., *Delaware Papers (English Period): A Collection of Documents Pertaining to the Regulation of Affairs on the Delaware, 1664–1682* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1977), 72. See also O’Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York*, 3:560. On Indians preserving written copies of documents and maps, see Grumet, *Munsee Indians*, 117; Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 42.

1655 seven Long Island Indians had met with Peter Stuyvesant to offer “absolute friendship” despite the fact “that formerly, in lord Kieft’s time, there was war between us [the Dutch] and their nation.” According to the speaker, “the present sachem’s father . . . when he was beaten by our nation in the aforesaid war, had directed and ordered his son, now called Tachpauasaan to make peace with the Dutch and the Indians from Narricanses and to keep it, and that he should forget for the future what had happened.” The messenger explained that Tachpauasaan wished to uphold the peaceful relationship he had inherited from his father. The Indians further insisted, “The present sachem has obeyed this command of his father, and has done no harm to the Dutch nation, not even to the value of a dog, and he still intended to continue doing so.” The extension of peace into the future was contingent on the Dutch acknowledging the version of the past the Indians articulated in their proposal, agreeing that peace had characterized the decade since Kieft’s War.²⁵

One common strategy involved recalling powerful Indians electing to maintain peace with struggling European colonists, a formulation that appeared at least as early as 1649 and persisted well into the latter half of the century. In 1674/75 Mahicans at Albany noted, “before they were strong of people and had power. Then the Dutch were but few, but they let them remain and live in peace. Now they are weak and are but few, and the English with the Dutch are now many. They pray to be able to live in peace among us.” Hoping to reconcile Mahican, Dutch, and English historical accounts, the speakers elided a series of earlier wars to argue that the peace they hoped would characterize the future was merely an extension of past relations. They could do so in part because they addressed an English regime divorced from the wars of the Dutch era, even though they couched their own magnanimity in their decision not to parlay their former strength to expel the earliest—Dutch—settlers. A combination of Mahican, Catskill, and Esopus Indians, meeting with representatives of Virginia and Maryland at Albany in 1682, described themselves as “a Smal Poeples, and good friends of the Christians” before making a similar proposition: “Wee have been in good frindship and amity wt the Christians whilst they have been here, and desyre that the Same may Continue.” By reimagining the past as

25. Charles T. Gehring, ed., *Council Minutes, 1655–1656* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 144–46. See also O’Callaghan, *Documentary History of the State of New-York*, 4:100–101; O’Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York*, 13:476. On European writers validating Indian historical consciousness, see Newman, *On Records*, 32.

devoid of conflict, New York's Indians tried to create a history that would better serve as the foundation for friendly future relations, suspecting that present English desires to secure peace would force the colonists to consent to an interpretation of history that privileged peace rather than conflict.²⁶

By asserting a version of history to which they asked English colonists to consent, New York's Native peoples asked the newcomers to participate in upholding that memory, drawing them into a colonial community unified by its common traditions. Initiation into that regional history and the practices involved in maintaining it was one step in integrating European colonists into a network of peoples inhabiting the region; locating them geographically within Native territories was another. This second stage proceeded simultaneously by means of two levels of land transactions: diplomatically in treaties entailing larger cessions, and individually as Dutch and English settlers purchased lands and later sought to confirm and secure their titles. Smaller-scale transactions often relied on personal accounts to determine the boundaries of parcels and their earlier ownership, two concerns that, even as they supported a colonial property regime that seemingly undermined Native sovereignty, nonetheless legitimated the Native historical accounts on which they relied. Indians could thus further integrate English colonists not just by imparting historical memory, but also by parlaying that knowledge into a landscape inhabited by New Yorkers of various cultural backgrounds.²⁷



Nicolls's English government moved quickly to confirm land titles in its newly acquired territory. Dutch records often proved spotty, leaving English

26. Livingston, *Livingston Indian Records*, 37, 67. For Mohawks using a similar approach, see *ibid.*, 41; A. J. F. van Laer, *Minutes of the Court of Albany, Rensselaerswyck, and Schenectady, 1668–1673* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1926), 3:362–63; and O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York*, 3:417–18. Newman reads accounts of William Penn's Great Treaty as a civic myth idealizing a supposed earlier period of peace and an instance of the negotiation between “present needs and past realities” shaping memories; Newman, *On Records*, 96–97, 103, 129–30.

27. On shared stories assigning Indians and Dutch a mutual past, see Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow*, 186–87. On Native participation in colonial property regimes, see Jean M. O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650–1790* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 74–87; David J. Silverman, “‘We chuse to be bounded’: Native American Animal Husbandry in Colonial New England,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (July 2003): 511–48; Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 84–86.

officials to rely on a combination of written documents and oral tradition provided by Indians as well as Dutch and English colonists. These efforts again provided opportunities for Indians to assert their own versions of history—which could bolster their own territorial claims while confirming European titles to specific parcels—and to renegotiate their relationships with a colonial government as it was transferred from Dutch to English control. Taking steps to educate English titleholders and government officials in regional history and their obligations to Indian neighbors helped affirm networks of extended kin while integrating English colonists into a larger colonial community inhabiting an intercultural landscape.²⁸

Land transactions and the disputes surrounding them frequently involved numerous parties, which hints at a wider community concerned with the status of the lands in question. In a 1670 dispute over land at Staten Island, the Indians said “there are five Principall Owners, the rest are only ffriends,” and that “these now Clayming are descended” from the men listed on an original Dutch document, the land “being derived [to] them by their Auncestors.” Of those claimants, one was described as “a Boy,” another was “almost dead,” and a third chose not to appear himself, “but hath Entrusted some here.” Though the deed was finalized on April 13, English records noted, “the young Indiyans not being present at the Ensealing & delive[ry] of the within written deed, it was again delivered & acknowledged before them” two days later.²⁹ Similar instances abound in the historical record. Several additional Indians had witnessed a 1651 deed in which four sachems conveyed lands on the South River to the Dutch, and in 1677/78 Gerrit van Slichtenhorst received a parcel of land from the Mahican sachem “Wattawyt and his son, Appanewayett, with the sister of Wattawyt named Sassi-oncha and her little son named Metschekamek.” Multiple generations maintained land claims on the basis of their descent, but they also cooperated with each other and involved additional witnesses and proxies. Claims

28. For English actions on land titles, see Jeremias van Rensselaer, *Correspondence of Jeremias van Rensselaer, 1651–1674*, trans. and ed. A. J. F. van Laer (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1932), 361, 365, 389; Merwick, *Possessing Albany*, 166, 176–77; Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow*, 70, 81; Grumet, *Munsee Indians*, 116–17. On Native exchange networks and intercultural landscapes, see Bishop, “Territoriality among Northeastern Algonquians,” 44; Van Zandt, *Brothers among Nations*, 9, 169.

29. Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 1:43–48, 338–41. See also Charles T. Gehring and Janny Venema, eds. and trans., *Fort Orange Records, 1654–1679* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 83–84, 179, 197–98, 317–18.

to smaller portions of land passed between individuals within a larger community that retained collective sovereignty over that entire territory, embedding European colonists within Native territories and communities, which was consistent with Algonquian ideas about territorial sovereignty.³⁰

Legitimizing their physical presence in that territory required that newcomers settle with Natives on a narrative about that land. As New York's recently installed English colonial government worked to confirm land titles, it resorted to Dutch records that sometimes contradicted Indian memories. The 1670 Staten Island discussion was meant to resolve a dispute about a 1657 agreement, the Indians insisting that "then only part of it was sold." English officials argued that the Dutch "Record mentions the whole Island, wch is more certaine then what [Aquepo] saith." Neglecting to mention that the record also showed the agreement had been annulled in December 1657, English officials acknowledged, "though there was an Agreement yet nothing of it was paid, for they did not goe off the Island," but promised, "if they will now goe all off, That Agreement shall bee made good to them." Both the extent of the sale and the mode of recalling it were contested. Indians cited their collective memories in arguing that the original price had been for only a part of the island, while English officials referred to written documents to insist the agreement had included the entire island. Only by reconciling competing accounts could the Indians and colonists resolve the dispute, both sides arriving at a shared narrative that enabled them to make the exchange. Ultimately, colonial officials agreed to a higher price for the entire island, a partial concession to Native historical memory that nonetheless legitimized the bounds the English claimed based on Dutch records.³¹

30. Kent, *Early American Indian Documents*, 21–22; Gehring and Venema, *Fort Orange Records*, 253. See also Kent, *Early American Indian Documents*, 17; Gehring and Venema, *Fort Orange Records*, 120, 266; O'Callaghan, *Documentary History of the State of New-York*, 3:612–13; O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York*, 13:505, 515–16. For sachems detailing their succession plans, see O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York*, 13:361; Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 2:461. On land claims and sovereignty, see Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 46–49; Bishop, "Territoriality among Northeastern Algonquians," 38–45; Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 34–35; Grumet, *Munsee Indians*, 118.

31. Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 45–47. See also Gehring, *Delaware Papers (English Period)*, 271; Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 580–81. Similarly, Newman describes the 1737 Walking Purchase as being as much about communication and memory as the literal ground, and he points out that unwritten context as well as writing can be distorted; Newman, *On Records*, 136, 160.

By 1670 Indians in the lower Hudson Valley and in the immediate vicinity of New York City had little choice but to accede to the reality of European power. But with this exchange, they did force English officials to recognize that their historical presence gave them some claim to the island. The annulled 1657 Dutch agreement had “reserved the Priviledge of a certaine part of upland . . . for [the Indians] use for Hunting.” To have ceased all activities on Staten Island would have been to relinquish claims to Native sovereignty that rested on usufruct, and so that provision of the earlier agreement created a landscape shared by Native and Dutch inhabitants. In 1670 English officials sought to terminate this shared ownership and create a more normative English property regime, marked by exclusive possession. Though they succeeded, an addendum to the agreement established that “Two or Three of the said Sachems their heires or successors or so many Persons Employed by them shall once every yeare . . . repair to this ffort to acknowledge their Sale of the said Staten Island to the Governour or his Successors to continue a mutuall freindship betweene them.” Rather than refute Indian land claims, annual renewals would have perpetuated them by sustaining historical memory regarding Indian occupation of the land, turning the 1670 agreement into a landmark event initiating friendship between former Indian residents and Staten Island’s new English owners. Moreover, those regular visits may in fact have appeared to Indians to constitute a continued use of the land, explaining why they were so concerned with having younger people witness the deeds. Thus, the Staten Island Indians, and others engaged in similar actions, forced English colonists to recognize their historical claims both at the time they ceded land and annually thereafter.³²

The primary concern of Indians in such cases was not retaining that land, but defining the meaning of its sale, creating a landscape that reflected the relationships between the individuals or groups involved in the transaction. Intended to sustain that relationship, land deals might stretch over several years. This may explain why in 1669 “Ankrup an Indyman peticioned against Capt. Chambers pretending hee was not paid for certaine Lotts of Lands,”

32. Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 236, 343; see also 450–51. On increasing conflict over land and the meaning of sales by the 1640s, see Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 72–73; Otto, “Intercultural Relations,” 185. On reserved rights and usufruct, see Karl Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 185; Bishop, “Territoriality among Northeastern Algonquians,” 39, 49; Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 31.

but upon arriving and being shown “the Bill of Sale, and the Indyan then ownd his marke, and full satisfaction for the Land.” By briefly contesting the sale, Ankrup managed to secure recognition of his earlier ownership. Perhaps as important as the land that changed hands was the narrative—a history of ownership—and the process of renewing it, both of which maintained the relationship between the parties to the deal itself. In the case of land transactions originally completed during the Dutch era, but confirmed under the new English government, these challenges and their resolutions helped establish relationships with the newcomers and maintain a colonial community comprising Natives and European neighbors. Land disputes thus articulated a history of possession in which European colonists were placed as simply the latest in a long line of related residents with claims to that land.³³

Even as they relinquished lands, then, Native Americans maintained a presence, their past residency implicitly acknowledged in subsequent transactions. Native American and European histories thus intersected when landscape elements invested with meaning for members of different cultures connected them as components of a larger colonial community. That presence often persisted in memory or a shared historical narrative, but it could also take more tangible form. The houses that several New Netherland and New York towns constructed for Native American visitors visibly marked an Indian presence in those locations. The 1664 Esopus-Dutch treaty, for instance, prohibited Indians from entering most Dutch villages, but it did allow that “For their better accommodation a house shall be built for them over the kil” near Fort Orange, and Nicolls’s 1665 treaty provided “That a convenient House shall bee built, where the said Indyans may at any time Lodge without the Ports” of Kingston. Intended to facilitate trade and diplomacy, these houses represented an Indian presence in a primarily European space, symbolically denoting an intercultural colonial community sharing a regional landscape. Although seemingly at odds with colonial policies—informed by colonists’ fear of Indian attacks, and trade company and government efforts to monopolize trade—limiting the duration of Indian visits and prohibiting the lodging of Indians within colonial towns, these provisions facilitated cultural interactions. Like the “houses” built over graves, they represented the legacy of former Native American inhabitation

33. Christoph, *Administrative Papers*, 130. For an example of a land deal stretching across several years, see Gehring and Venema, *Fort Orange Records*, 241–42. On land sales building and renewing relationships, see Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 32.

and doubled as physical locations hosting ongoing relations between colonists and Indians.³⁴

New York's Indians worked during the Dutch and English eras to create a shared space manifesting a history in common with European colonists, the landscape serving as the setting for that common history. Houses, graves, and parcels of land helped establish a regional landscape inhabited by diverse peoples. Engaging with the new English government to contest and confirm land deals originally transacted under Dutch auspices allowed Indians to integrate English residents into their understanding of New York's landscape by positioning colonists in space as well as within historical narratives about that space, educating them in the relationships those spaces simultaneously represented and facilitated. Indians could thus integrate European colonists as part of the social fabric of the regional landscape.³⁵

In addition to obvious desires to remain in familiar environs, and to position Europeans nearby for trade purposes, Indian efforts to establish New York as an intercultural landscape solidified that community against outside threats. When in 1659 "Wyandance, Sachem of Pamanack," deeded a Long Island tract to Lyon Gardiner, he explained that it was because he had "received much kindnesse of him . . . in Our great extreimity, when wee were almost Swallowed up of our Enemyes . . . giving us of his money and Goods, whereby wee defended ourselves." The two men's long personal relationship enabled their mutual defense. Entered into English records in 1665, the deed touched off a debate about the extent of the parcel's boundaries. The ensuing contest between Indian and European neighbors lasted several years, ensuring regular reminders that common defense had motivated the original deed.³⁶

Defensive considerations were certainly a factor when a group of Mahican and River Indians promised New York in 1677, "we shall nott harbour or entertain any of theire enemies . . . and there shall be no shrubs or rubbish grow along the Rivers," and they promised to "keep the Rivers Clear even quite downe to N. Yorke." A brief return of Dutch power in the

34. O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York* 13:376, 399; see also 3:68. On real and symbolic houses, see Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace*, 8–9; Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 30. On Indians at Dutch towns, see Jacobs, *Colony of New Netherland*, 113–16.

35. On European failures to understand the Indian logic of intercultural alliances, see Van Zandt, *Brothers among Nations*, 15; Dennis, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace*, 163, 169.

36. Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 408; the debate continued through at least 1669; see *ibid.*, 417.

early 1670s, and English North America's continued rivalry with New France, left New Yorkers anxious about the loyalty of neighboring Indians. Meanwhile, Iroquois attacks on the Mahicans in 1677 motivated the latter to turn toward New York for protection. In constructing the river as the main conduit of communication between themselves and New York officials and promising to keep it clear of obstacles, the Mahicans positioned themselves as part of an intercultural New York landscape. They also defined themselves and their English neighbors as mutually interested in combatting the intrusions of Iroquois outsiders.³⁷

The Iroquois to the north, and the Mohawks in particular, seem to have constituted the primary threat against which Hudson Valley Indians posed themselves and Europeans as allies, calling on colonists to mediate conflicts between Indians. Dutch efforts to broker peace in 1664, first between Staten Island Indians and the Susquehannocks and Senecas, later between the Catskills and other River Indians and the Mohawks to the north, were apparently successful. And in a meeting with Albany's justices in 1666, the Mahicans "Say that they thank us for the friendship that we made by acting as intermediaries in the peace between their people and the Maquase."³⁸ With the colonial government transferred into English hands, the Mahicans reminded a combination of Dutch and English officials of their responsibilities as mediators in the region. Mahicans regretting Jeremias van Rensselaer's death expressed similar sentiments in 1674/75, noting that "he helped to make the peace between them and the Maquase." The speaker then stated his understanding that "the English and Dutch and their people are now one, and thank us that we took the trouble to make peace between them and the Maquase." In this sequence, van Rensselaer became the bridge providing continuity between the Dutch and English eras and linking the Mahican with the European colonial community. Responding to Indian fears that in van Rensselaer's absence the Mohawks would attack, Albany

37. Livingston, *Livingston Indian Records*, 40. On Mahican-Iroquois relations in the Hudson Valley in 1677, see Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 128–29. On defensive alliances between Europeans and Indians, see Jon Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534–1701* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 18; Hauptman, "Dispersion of the River Indians," 249; Van Zandt, *Brothers among Nations*, 52; Grumet, *Munsee Indians*, 116; Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow*, 123.

38. O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York* 13:361, 378; Livingston, *Livingston Indian Records*, 34–35; Grumet, *Munsee Indians*, 114–15. For Mohawk requests to intervene in Indian affairs, see van Laer, *Minutes of the Court*, 256; Gehring and Venema, *Fort Orange Records*, 53.



Figure 2. Detail from John Ogilby, *Novi Belgii, quod nunc Novi Jork vocatur, Novae [que] Angliae & partis Virginiae: Accuratissima et novissima delineatio* (1670). Ogilby's stylized map attests to the persistence of numerous Indian bands throughout the lower and upper Hudson Valley, despite their diminishing numbers and autonomy by the later seventeenth century. Ogilby's map also positions the Mohawks just west of the river, reflecting the Iroquois's increased presence and displacement of the Mahicans to the east bank by 1670. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

officials reassured the Mahicans, “you still have many friends who will take care of you.” Albany officials who acknowledged the Mahican formulation that the English and the Dutch were one therefore inherited the Dutch responsibility for protecting the Mahicans and upholding the peace the Mahicans had made with both the Mohawks and the English government. New York’s Indians thus incorporated English newcomers into the regional political landscape by assigning them to mediate between Indian nations.³⁹

English officials apparently received this message, continuing to help broker peace between Indians in the New York region. Renewing their alliance with the English at Fort James, the “Hackensack Toppan & Staten Island Indians” in 1669 prompted a letter ordering Albany’s commissioners to inform the Mohawks and Senecas of the alliance. Governor Lovelace instructed Esopus magistrates to support “the Esopus Indians, as also of their proposalls Joyned wth the South Indians & those of Nevisans to make a firme peace wth the Maques & Synnekes.” Lovelace did predict the peace would be short-lived because the Mohawks explicitly excluded some Hudson Valley Indians, and an Iroquois attack on “the one, must needs injure the other, since in all extremities they will recourse one to the other.” Renewed Iroquois expansions by the mid-1670s proved the wisdom of turning the English into mediators, as Edmund Andros was “much displeased about the conduct of the Maquas” and continued to intervene in behalf of the region’s other Indians. Whether their contribution was actually critical or was more peripheral to negotiations between groups of Indians themselves—as Lovelace’s comment about the connections between groups in the Hudson Valley indicated—regular English involvement integrated English officials as allied members of Native networks spanning an intercultural landscape.⁴⁰

39. Livingston, *Livingston Indian Records*, 37–38; van Rensselaer, *Correspondence of Jeremias van Rensselaer*, 326–27; Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 119–26.

40. Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 35, 253–54 (quotes); van Laer, *Minutes of the Court*, 245; Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 377–79. See also van Laer, *Minutes of the Court*, 381; O’Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York*, 13:496; Livingston, *Livingston Indian Records*, 30; van Rensselaer, *Correspondence of Jeremias van Rensselaer*, 413; Grumet, *Munsee Indians*, 113–14. Lovelace was less confident that peace would endure, since Mohawks seemingly would acknowledge a settlement with only some Indians and explicitly excluded others; see Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 377–79. For Andros mediating between the Susquehannas and Iroquois, see Gehring, *Delaware Papers (English Period)*, 112; Kent, *Early American Indian Documents*, 40–41.

It was that mediation that had informed Wyandance's description of Lyon Gardiner "not onely as a ffriend, but as a ffather" in the 1659 deed.⁴¹ Hudson Valley Indians explicitly argued that their relationship with European colonists had changed since its inception, and kinship terms expressed the increased closeness of that relationship. Mahicans and other "Indians from the north" told Albany officials in 1682, "In olden times the Christians called the Indians 'Comrades,' but now we must call each other 'Brothers' and form a closer alliance." Mahicans and River Indians told John Pynchon in 1677, "The Christians and wee many years ago have always been freinds & brethren and now of Late years the Govr Genl is become o[u]r father, we being now butt a very few, and the Christians of the North are our Bretheren." Citing the long-standing nature of a relationship that had progressively tightened, the Indians embedded New York's governor as a senior within a lineage from which both they and English colonists descended. Indians and colonists thus both became the successors of an English governor whose recognition as a father rested on a history of amicable relations; as his successors, each held equal territorial claims and responsibility for sustaining their relationship in the future.⁴²



Whether this new status extended to New York's governor truly reflected a new relationship that had developed between the Hudson Valley's Indians and their English neighbors, or instead indicated continued Indian attempts to instruct the English in their responsibilities within that relationship, it did encapsulate New York Indians' aspirations regarding the new colonial power. Though efforts to integrate Dutch colonists as members of an extended community had met with limited success, the English conquest of New Netherland provided a brief opportunity to attempt again to build the newcomers into an existing regional landscape. Trade and diplomacy could certainly maintain ties between peoples. But by also attaching social relations to elements of New York's landscape, Hudson Valley Indians sought to secure recognition of their claims to ownership and occupancy, a need

41. Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 408; Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 54; Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 84–85; Van Zandt, *Brothers among Nations*, 69–70.

42. Van Laer, *Minutes of the Court*, 276–77; Livingston, *Livingston Indian Records*, 39; Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 87. See also Paltsits, *Minutes of the Executive Council*, 502, and Gehring, *Delaware Papers (English Period)*, 18. On father-kinship terms in these alliances, see Midtrød, *Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 29–31, 87–88, 128; Van Zandt, *Brothers among Nations*, 70, 172.

made more urgent by the pressures of continued Iroquois interference and expanding colonial populations in the valley.

As Native Americans and English officials and colonists engaged in political affairs, ritual practices, and land transactions, Indians articulated a historical narrative in which peace and mutual obligations characterized their past relations with European neighbors. To secure their hold on the colony and its lands through their relationships with Native Americans, English colonists participated in actions that perpetuated Indians' historical memory, implicitly acknowledging Indian articulations of the past. In doing so, they continually affirmed Indians' earlier inhabitation in ways that maintained Natives' presence on lands ostensibly transferred to English control, legitimizing an intercultural landscape on which European colonists and Native American residents shared a common history and inhabitation.

The possibility of integrating English colonists as equal partners into an existing Native landscape ultimately proved illusory and short-lived, as New York's colonial administration systematically extended jurisdiction over Native peoples and a growing English population encroached on Indian territory. Rather than accepting Native historical memories as the foundation for ongoing relationships, English colonists redefined those memories as artifacts of the past as the valley's Native populations and power dwindled in the early eighteenth century. Nonetheless, in the decade that followed the English conquest of New Netherland, New York's Indians worked to make the newcomers conversant in the traditions of an extended regional community composed of relatively autonomous and equal peoples. Their efforts serve as a reminder that the erosion of Native sovereignty was an uneven process, and that the changing colonial world provided moments in which Native peoples creatively combated their dispossession from colonized lands and marginalization from colonial communities.