102. Seven had signed the petition for land tenure reform, an eighth was the wife of a petition signer, and another was the probable wife of a petition signer. One of the female suffrage petitioners had signed the remonstrance against change in land tenure, and three more were the wives or daughters of remonstrance signers. The remaining three signed only the suffrage petition and could not be identified through the Earle census. Even this slim majority of nine becomes much more significant when compared to the almost two-to-one margin of the community against enfranchisement as a whole. See "Petition of the women of Mashpee (1868–69)," Rejected bills, Senate 325, unpassed legislation, Massachusetts State Archives, Columbia Point, Boston.

103. Massachusetts Legislative Papers, 1869, House Document 502: 25.

104. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on Indians Taxed and Indians Not Taxed in the United States (except Alaska) at the Eleventh Census, 1890* (Washington, D.C., 1894), 330.

105. Clifford, *Predicament of Culture*, 336; Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes*, 8–9.

106. While the Massachusetts case has certain unique features, including Massachusetts's unusual position in the forefront of both radical Republicanism and later Indian policy, it also shows many parallels to the histories of other Eastern Indians and groups of mixed ancestry. In fact, the Indians of Rhode Island experienced many similar events, leading to the termination of the Narragansett tribe in 1880: Ethel Boissevain, "The Detribalization of the Narragansett Indians: A Case Study," *Ethnohistory*, 3 (1956), 225–45. See also Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 62. And the paths of Indian and mixed-ancestry enclaves diverged in other eastern locations, with some identifying more with African American groups, some with Indian, and others finding a white identity most comfortable: Michael L. Blakey, "Social Policy, Economics, and Demographic Change in Nanticoke-Moor Ethnohistory," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 75 (1988), 493–502. And we may yet find that at the individual level, some individuals of mixed ancestry maintained more than one ethnic identity depending upon the context in which they found themselves: Keefe, "Ethnic Identity," 35–43; Yinger, "Ethnicity," 151–80.

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9 Unseen Neighbors

Native Americans of Central Massachusetts, A People Who Had "Vanished"

> For every time we make others part of a "reality" that we alone invent, denying their creativity by usurping the right to create, we use those people and their way of life and make them subservient to ourselves.
>
> —Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture*

> To elaborate a fact is to construct it . . . All history is choice . . . seeks out and accentuates the facts, the events, and the tendencies in the past that prepare the present, that permit understanding it, and help to live it . . . makes for itself the past that it needs.
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> —Lucien Febvre, Inaugural Lecture, Collège de France, in *Combats pour l'histoire*

A nineteenth-century discourse of the disappearance of Native Americans projects the extinction, dissolution, and vanishing of the Indian peoples of central Massachusetts.[1] In this, it perpetuates almost "canonical" or regulatory distortions and simplifications of Native experience long part of New England history.

An "official story" resonates across the discourse banishing Indian people from our historical consciousness, denying a past of Indian adaptation, removing Natives from the region's present as it erases persisting Indian

community. Imagining Native experience only across variations of a "disappearance" model, the "authorized" version of New England history is deaf to the voices of individual Indian men and women, blind to actualities of multiple layers of social and political interactions constituting regional Indian community. A world of dynamic nineteenth-century Native social practice is "unseen." Indians who are part of this community are dismissed as racially mixed; they become "colored" and not Indian. The authorized version alleges that what it calls "traditional" culture is gone. Economically exploited as cheap labor, individual Natives are "marginal," people at the edge, disconnected from the social landscape. Or, as even some contemporary scholarly texts put it, regional Indians are "disappeared," a people who vanished in the wake of Metacomet's Rebellion.

Native American peoples of central New England,[2] however, were part of the nineteenth-century social landscape, pursuing established patterns of persistence and cultural survival, affirming their Indian identity. A minority of area residents, Indians lived unevenly distributed in regional towns, in some instances scattered or isolated, at other locales in clusters or concentrations of small yet marked and visible Native communities. They were not, all of them, creatures of white imagination: intemperate, immoral, drunken, or childlike. On the contrary, many were rooted in area towns, stable residents, some of them property owners, woven into the region's social fabric, seemingly "just like their neighbors," but affirming their "Indianness," and often publicly "recognized" or "seen" as Indian.

The public Native identity they affirmed, as individuals and as a collectivity, can be demonstrated through examination of records of the following events or practices: ongoing corporate, legal relationships in which Natives (as aboriginal tribal or band communities) interacted with municipal, county, and state entities on the basis of treaties and legislative covenants; individual relationships between the state and Indians as "wards of the Commonwealth," an arrangement by which guardians administered the legal affairs of Indians connected to families living on corporate tribal lands; official enumeration as *Indian* for the Commonwealth, in legislative reports and state census returns; documentation as *Indian* in original birth, death, and marriage records; depiction and description as *Indian* in town histories, antiquarian publications, and period newspaper accounts; and, through verification of Indian status in court records, many generated, for example, as part of legal actions for recovery of trust money withheld by the Commonwealth when Bay State Indians became citizens in 1869.

Natives' own sense of themselves as distinct and separate was demonstrated in their social practice. For example, five representative Nipmuc families[3] from the eighteenth century to the present reveal a longstanding pattern of intermarriage with Indian cousins and other relatives in towns along the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island borders. These families remained part of a persistent, centuries-old, and socially complex movement of kinship clusters of Indians within their homelands.

Far from "disappeared," Natives of central Massachusetts in the nineteenth century were farmers, plumbers, washerwomen, mariners, chair bottomers or chair caners, "Indian herb doctors," barbers, shoemakers, domestic servants, baggage masters, itinerant entertainers, day laborers, railroad engineers, mill operatives, specialty bakers, broom and basket makers, housewives, and stage coach drivers. Their number included "well-known" individuals identified as Native in nineteenth-century town histories: Benjamin Wiser, deacon and elder of Auburn's Baptist Church in the first quarter of the century; Polly Johns, of Leicester, one of the many "last of the Nipmucs"; Hannah Dexter, apparently "known to many now living" in 1830 as "a doctress, well skilled in administering medicinal roots and herbs," who, in 1821, burned to death, "a tragical end . . . while endeavouring to quell a riot in her household . . . raised by a set of unwelcome visitants, chiefly of a mixed breed of English, Indian and African blood"; Julia Jaha Dailey, allegedly "the last of the Nipmucks" living at Oxford, according to one town history, while a period chronicle of a second town labeled her sister Mary Jaha "the last survivor of the once powerful tribe of Nipmuck Indians"; Ebenezer Hemenway, a well-known janitor at the Worcester city hall, whose mother was an equally familiar Worcester Indian, celebrated in the 1820s and 1830s for custom-ordered wedding cakes; Jacob Glasgow, a "hunter and fisherman"; and "Old Jim Injun" or James Walmsley, who died, aged seventy-five, in 1865 among Natives of Woodstock, Connecticut, where Nedson and Dorus family members also lived; and other Natives like Peter Stebbins, known by many Paxton residents, or John Field of Worcester, a young ventriloquist and musician who entertained at different regional venues in the 1830s. Numerous Native men from the area who saw military service during the Civil War, especially those who became casualties, are likewise described in various town histories.[4] Moreover, many regional town chronicles, even if they often employ conventional nineteenth-century Indian stereotypes, depict individuals like Polly and Joseph Dorus, with four children, "reduced to begging and asking for a place to sleep" and sometimes "hired out to put splint seats in chairs"; or Aunt Sarah Green, who "often said she was a doctor and carried herbs in her basket"; or the Qaun family, who lived in a "shanty" and "wandered for months at a time"—all of these living in the Sturbridge area in the first quarter of the century.

Before 1869, some of the region's Indian people lived at a reservation in Webster (originally part of Dudley), while many others resided in cities and towns in extended family and clan clusters. The majority of Indians in the area were "Nipmucs"; others belonged to various southern New England tribal groups, including several individuals who were part of families connected to or returned from the Brothertown experiment in New York.[5] Indians from other areas had also moved to the region in the antebellum period or

later.[6] Additionally, Natives from northern New England passed through Worcester County, making extended visits; in the late 1830s, a group of Penobscots from Maine[7] made annual summer journeys to Worcester for religious services at the region's first Catholic church.

Other northeastern Natives whose "migrations" into the area are documented include: Narragansett-Niantic individuals and families from Rhode Island[8] migrating to towns along the Blackstone River; people from southern Connecticut;[9] people from New York state;[10] and people from even more distant areas who found their way into Nipmuc homelands. Moreover, in 1900, when New York Indian claims were being resolved in Congress, area Native people connected to Brothertown unsuccessfully filed petitions for their families who had lived at Brothertown to be included in a financial settlement for lands taken in New York State.

The practice of these and other families suggests "unseen" Native American community dynamics. A characteristic extension of Indian families in the area can be sketched across the Vickers family:

> Natives of "Quineshepauge," the Nipmuc homelands of the Blackstone Valley region, members of the Vickers family joined the Natick community in the 1730s, where they remained throughout the century, connected to towns including Mendon, Medway, Medfield, Natick, Grafton, and Upton. Christopher Vickers, a son of Revolutionary War soldier Christopher Vickers, married Mary Curless. In the first half of the nineteenth century, fourteen children of Mary Curless and Christopher Vickers were both at Burrillville, Rhode Island, and Thompson, Connecticut. Of six daughters: one married James Pegan at Thompson, where their family lived; another married a Nipmuc at the reservation at Webster; a third moved to Worcester, where she married, eventually locating to Oxford; and the other three daughters each married Nipmuc men at Worcester. Of their eight sons: five lived and raised families at Oxford; one married a Woodstock Nipmuc, one married a Native from Burrillville; and one married a Native at Hampton, Connecticut.
>
> In the next generation, grandson Edgar Pegan married a Columbia, Connecticut, Native at Thompson; grandson Peleg Browns, Jr., at Woodstock, married Nipmuc sisters Ida Shelley and Hannah Nichols (daughters of Lydia Sprague); grandson Orin Vickers married cousin Emma Vickers, at Oxford; one of their sons, Edwin Vickers, married Nipmuc Amanda Dorus; and another grandson, Charles K. Vickers, married Woodstock-born Nipmuc Polly Dorus, whose children were born at Sturbridge, including Charles Henry Elmer Vickers, 1887–1946, who married Orianna Hewitt, a daughter of Martha Dorus Hewitt; and Samuel Vickers, who married, at Woodstock, Nipmuc Alice Susan Dorus. A more detailed discussion of this single family would demonstrate Native kinship connections to virtually all of the towns of southern Worcester County and northeastern Connecticut.

These examples of extensive Native interactions highlight a diversity of Native persistence and point toward a world of long-term regional Indian interaction on the social and physical landscape of Nipmuc homelands[11]—homelands that Eurocentric cultural imperialism imagines to be purged of Indians.

Despite a droning chorus of regional and national commentators telling them they were "vanishing," the area's nineteenth-century Natives were "living proof" in contradiction of the spurious "extinction" of their peoples. For example, several extended families called by others the "Dudley" or "Pegan Indians," who lived at a "reservation" in Webster up to 1869, maintained a relationship to the town of Webster and the Commonwealth that reflects a measure of continued corporate existence of the region's aboriginal people. Recipients of some $27,059 from the state treasury from 1808 to 1869, they were visited by a legislative committee in 1849 and found to comprise forty-eight individuals in eleven families, some farming on the twenty-six-acre reservation, others employed in surrounding towns.[12] During the 1860s, twenty-seven individuals living at Webster, Spencer, Worcester, Oxford, Gardner, New Bedford, and Thompson, Connecticut, received cash payments or other benefits from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through their state-appointed guardian, on the basis of their status as Dudley or Pegan Band Nipmucs.[13] In the year 1863, twelve individuals or families of this community were provided with foodstuffs, clothing, medicines, tools, and firewood, and their medical, burial, and legal expenses were also paid by the Commonwealth.[14]

Natives were seen and identified as Indians when, from 1790 to 1813, twenty-seven individuals received cash payments from guardians of Indians at Grafton. Between 1786 and 1829, guardians at Grafton also sold twenty real estate holdings, on behalf of sixteen individuals considered Native by the Commonwealth, while guardians purchased real estate for Nipmucs at Princeton in 1801, at Royalston in 1803, and at Worcester in 1825, 1844, and 1857.[15] In 1839 the state provided funds to the Worcester County Judge of Probate to be used, for ten years, to meet the needs of some area Indians; in 1849, the provision was extended for an additional ten years.[16] In 1859, another $1000 was allocated to Worcester Probate Court for the needs of Indians at Grafton and Worcester; and in 1865, state funds were paid to the Grafton selectmen for needs of the town's Indian residents.[17] Even after formal "detribalization" in 1869 when the Act of Enfranchisement terminated guardianship and made Nipmucs state citizens, several individuals applied for and received annuities or cash payments, as Indians, from the Commonwealth.[18]

As Massachusetts Indian Commissioner, in 1860, John M. Earle[19] was able to find many Natives, in part through contact with living Native families whose voices he heard. Earle identified 181 men, women, and children, including non-Indian spouses, as connected to the region's Nipmuc peoples:[20] 147 of these individuals resided in area towns (48 in Worcester); another 21 persons lived beyond central Massachusetts borders; 2 young Nipmucs were

institutionalized, one at a reform school, the other at an insane asylum; and the whereabouts of another 11 Nipmucs, including among them Mrs. Amey Robinson, a "migratory Indian doctor," could not be ascertained. Earle also reported a Nipmuc among several Bay State Indians moving to California, presumably between 1849 and 1861.[21]

The Massachusetts state census of 1865, on the other hand, claimed there were 99 "Indians" in Worcester County, including 18 persons at Mendon; 13 at Webster, at Dudley, and at Grafton; 10 at Southbridge; and 8 Indian people at Sturbridge.[22]

Both Earle's tallies and the state census returns were probably incomplete, but they do provide clear documentary evidence of a nineteenth-century Indian presence. Natives represented a distinct minority of the region's total population, but the figures suggest a significant clustering or concentrating of Indians at specific locales, homeland towns where Native communities coalesced during the antebellum period.[23]

As early as 1800, Isaac Glasko,[24] a Native from Cumberland, Rhode Island, and his Native wife, Lucy Brayton from Smithfield, Rhode Island, relocated to North Uxbridge, Massachusetts, one of the towns in the Blackstone Valley. Isaac was followed to Massachusetts by his father, Jacob, and brother, George, both of whom lived at Northbridge in southern Worcester County, also in the Blackstone area. In 1807 the three Glasko men moved from Northbridge to Connecticut. Jacob Glasko settled at Preston, where his first wife, Martha, died sometime after the birth of their son, also Jacob, in 1815; at Putnam, he married Native Elizabeth Dailey and died at Griswold in 1824. George Glasko, a shoemaker, settled first at Preston, then at Killingly, and finally at Thompson, his children, including Miss Elsie Glasko, taking up residence in various Connecticut towns. When he moved from Northbridge, Isaac Glasko settled at Griswold, Connecticut, where he operated a forge, manufacturing axes, hoes, harpoons, and other metal tools; his children also settled in various Connecticut towns. Isaac Glasko died, eighty-five years old, in 1861 while visiting a daughter at Norwich.[25]

In the 1830s and 1840s, for example, connections within this area can also be seen through the Cisco family, Natives, moving from Massachusetts/Rhode Island borderlands up the Blackstone River:

> Of the children of Hannah Potter and Edward Cisco or Scisco, several moved into Worcester County from Cumberland or Slatersville, Rhode Island. Brother Francis R. Cisco (1811–1892), relocated to Mendon in 1832, marrying a Medfield-born Native, Lucy Coffee; their children and grandchildren were all born at Mendon. In the early 1840s, sister Harriet Cisco married a Native from Uxbridge, where she established her family. In 1843, at Mendon, another brother, George W. Cisco (1819–1902), married Native Lucretia Coffee, their family living at Mendon and Milford. Their son, George Cisco, Jr., born in 1848, was a teamster resident at Smithfield, Rhode Island, in 1870 when he married a Native born in Greenwich, Rhode Island. In 1844, at Grafton, another sibling, Samuel C. Cisco, married Sarah Maria Arnold (1818–1891), whose Nipmuc family had been resident at Grafton, Upton, and surrounding towns since the seventeenth century.

In 1850, the federal census recorded 621 persons of color in Worcester County. Of these, 84 were Native Americans representing 16 families living in Blackstone Valley towns. Of the small Native community here, 7 families and an additional 4 persons lived in white households at Uxbridge, one family lived at Douglas, another at Charlton, 4 at Mendon, 1 at Grafton, 1 Native woman lived in a white household at Blackstone, and 1 family lived at Milford. Native families in the Blackstone Valley comprised almost 20 percent of "colored" people in Worcester County's rural towns and 13 percent of all people of color in the County.[26]

Although some Native families were among town poor,[27] many in the area continued working family farms, functioned as day laborers, or, like the family of Mary Vickers, a Burrillville, Rhode Island, Nipmuc, began seeking employment in Blackstone Valley mills. With adult children or other relatives, Mary Vickers and her sons lived, at different times, in several Blackstone Valley towns. Many in her family were shoemakers in Connecticut in 1850 and had returned to work in mills at Uxbridge, Milford, and Oxford by the decade's end. In Connecticut, they had been part of an Indian concentration in the greater Woodstock area, including another thirteen Native households, four of them headed by Indian shoemakers.[28]

In 1860, Worcester County had fifty-four Native households: thirty-eight were in county towns, thirty-three headed by males, five headed by women.[29] There were another sixteen Native households in Worcester. However, most of the area's Natives lived in rural settings. Data indicate a wide clustering of Indians in an arc extending from the Blackstone River Valley along the southern Worcester County and Connecticut border where 85 percent of Native families in county towns and 70 percent of all Worcester County's Indian families, rural and urban combined, were concentrated.[30]

A comparable, almost arcing or radiating movement can be drawn, in silhouette, in the actual world of Nipmuc family extension, from Framingham and Natick, through the Blackstone Valley, to southern Worcester County towns.

> David Munnalow, participant in a wartime raid, moved from Grafton and Upton to Westboro and Marlboro; his son Abemelich David married at Grafton, and his wife, Patience Abraham, was known as Patience David. Her father had been an English scout during the war, with connections to Nipmucs at Natick; a daughter of Abemelich, known as Patience Abemelich, grew up at Grafton and married Samuel Pegan at the Nipmuc reservation at Dudley. A daughter of theirs, Patience Pegan, married Julius Ceaser, and they became the parents of Betsey Ceaser. Betsey Ceaser and husband, in turn, raised a

family at the reservation, three of their children marrying Nipmucs. One of the daughters, Angenette White Dorus Hazzard, married one Nipmuc at Sturbridge and another at Woodstock where she died. She was mother of eight children born at Sturbridge, Union, Connecticut, or Woodstock named Dorus and two named Hazzard, born at Woodstock. The only son to marry, at Sturbridge, wed a Nipmuc from the reservation. One daughter married another Native at Sturbridge, a second married a Native from Abington, Connecticut, and a third was the mother of eight children from three different marriages. She was married to a Native at Worcester, children born at Dudley; her second marriage was to a Nipmuc at Woodstock, children born at Woodstock and Dudley; and the final marriage was with a Stonington, Connecticut, Native at Webster. A child from the first marriage, Angenette Arkless, born in 1872, chose a husband from another extended Nipmuc family and until recently had living children; she is connected to several hundred contemporary Nipmuc people.

At Shrewsbury, Westborough, and Grafton, Native people clustered. Harriet Forbes, writing in an idiom representing Natives as colorful, amusing characters long remembered and discussed, but debased, drunken, quick to anger, violent, wasteful, and willing to work only until alcohol can be purchased, portrays a squatters' settlement located in the once great cedar swamps along the intersecting borders of these three towns. Here, "degenerate" whites who were emotionally disturbed or mentally ill without family to care for them, Nipmuc Indians who were former slaves left to their own resources when emancipated, and others lived, in Forbes's version, virtually uncivilized lives in swamp "hovels." Her work documented a regional oral tradition among Euro-Americans, retaining information and "quaint" anecdotes about almost twenty-five Nipmuc people resident in the three towns between 1785 and 1840. Additionally, she described in detail a group of "celebrated" tramps "wandering" from Framingham to Grafton and Upton, associated with Sarah Boston or Phillips (her father was named Boston Phillips), who was a "gigantic Indian woman . . . weighing nearly three hundred pounds and . . . very tall" who dressed in garments usually worn by men, wrapped in a blanket, and earned her living working in the fields alongside men.[31] Part of a Nipmuc family at Grafton, Sally Boston has been depicted in several area town histories.

At antebellum Southbridge was a recognized locale called "New Guinea," occupied by members of related Nedson, Dorus, and Dixon Nipmuc families. Dismissed in a 1901 writing as "Negroes, Indians, or half-breeds,"[32] the occupants of this neighborhood were of an Indian heritage so well documented that this small gathering at Southbridge can be seen inscribed within the spheres of the extended regional Native American social community, and thus can be "recovered."

At Woodstock (originally "New Roxbury," a Massachusetts town), on the Connecticut side of a border drawn through specific Nipmuc settlement areas, thirty-eight Indians (including Nedson, Dixon, and Dorus families) constituted a small community during the early nineteenth century. In 1850, for example, eighteen Indian families in the Woodstock area and in adjoining towns represented a continued Native presence in the townships of northeastern Connecticut, created from the precontact Nipmuc settlements Wabaquasset, Senexet, and Quantasset. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Woodstock Native community continued expanding to become, in 1900, a site to which almost all Nipmucs had social connection. Even Nipmuc craftsmanship was retained here; as recently as the 1920s baskets (now at the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford) were collected from this community, as "there could be found in many Woodstock homes specimens of this handiwork."[33]

Additionally, there was a Native presence in Worcester County associated with individual family or clan groups, such as those Nipmucs who were associated with Esther Pegan Humphrey in western county towns:

> Esther Pegan (1763–1860) was wife of Thomas Humphrey. Born at the reservation at Dudley, Esther married Thomas Humphrey, lived in Sturbridge and then in Barre, where some of their children were born. One of their sons was married twice at Spencer, and raised a family; his first wife was Native. A second son was married three times, also at Spencer. Another son established himself in the Woodstock area, and another settled at Charlton. The only daughter married at Spencer, moving to New Braintree. In the next generation, the daughter's children lived in Barre, Palmer, and New Braintree, two women marrying other Natives in these towns. Of the other grandchildren: two women from Spencer were married at Spencer, one to a Nipmuc from Dudley; one grandson married at Brookfield; and another married a Hopkinton-born Nipmuc, settling at Gardner. A great-grandchild, for example, Mary Etta White (born 1869) married another Nipmuc, James Belden, at Worcester in 1888, and one their daughters, Mary Olive Belden (born 1890), had, in this century, two marriages, each with children, at Putnam, Connecticut, both marriages to men from other Nipmuc families.

While a Native community existed in rural areas of the Worcester County/Connecticut/Rhode Island borderlands, an urban Indian community grew at Worcester, which mushroomed from a village to a major industrial metropolis in the course of the nineteenth century.

In 1840, 144 people of color lived at Worcester, in some 27 households. Seven of these households were Indian families. The 32 people in Native households comprised more than 20 percent of all "colored" people at Worcester.[34]

By 1845, Worcester's total population had grown to 12,000 persons in 2,000 families.[35] Among these residents, as the city directory shows,[36] were 22 "colored" households, 9 of which represented a clustering of Indian families.[37] More friends and relatives of Indians at Worcester made their way to town in the late 1840s.

In 1850, there were fifty-one people in twelve Native households at Worcester. Male Native household heads were five of the fourteen "colored" barbers in town;[38] five were laborers, and one reported no occupation.

Whether African or Native, "colored" people at Worcester in 1850 were in many ways bound to regional landscapes: of the 185 people of color, most had been born in northeastern states and it was a community of more mature adults.[39] Natives were part of a stable "colored" community forming at Worcester in the 1850s: some 8 of 34 household heads owned property; 70 percent of women had been born in the state; 86 percent were born in the Northeast; 92 percent of adults were literate; 60 percent of minors were attending school; and only 7 adult women, 3 adult men, and 2 minors were in white households. Additionally, individuals from Middle Atlantic states were 6 percent and those from southern states 8 percent of the colored population.

In 1855, of fifty adult males in Worcester's "colored" community, sixteen were connected to Native American households: seven of them were barbers (half of the town's "colored" barbers), three were laborers (out of eleven "colored" laborers in town), two were Worcester's only "colored" shoemakers; one was a waiter; one was a farmer; and two males belonging to Indian households reported no occupation.

In the decade from 1845 to 1855, occupations reported by twenty-one male heads of Indian households included: laborer 6, barber or hairdresser 5, shoemaker 5, cook 1, farmer 1, clicker or specialized shoe worker 1, railroad engineer 1, and vault or privy cleaner 1. Eleven Native women were listed in directories as laundresses, one as a "root doctress," and two as wedding cake makers.

In this decade, Native people had anchored themselves at Worcester: of some thirty-three "colored" births during the 1850s, eight were in Native households; and, of forty-five deaths, ten were in these same Indian households.[40] Additionally, at this time, Nipmuc men owned two hairdresser's or barber's shops: Edward B. Gimby owned his place of business, with Native relatives among his employees; the second establishment, where other Nipmucs including the proprietor's cousin Alexander Hemenway and John Morey earned livings, was owned by James J. Johnson.

In 1860, there were 71 Native people at Worcester, comprising 48 percent of the city's 34 "colored" households and 26 percent of the aggregate "colored" population. These figures reflect the arrival in town of many single adults who boarded with families in these 34 family units. In this community adults aged 16 to 39 comprised 70 percent of the "colored" population; 17 percent of the total were born in the South; another 11 percent came from Middle Atlantic states. Native families, however, remained stable, while "colored" Worcester underwent transformation. Among the 13 adult males who were part of Indian families in 1860, 5 were barbers, 4 were day laborers, and 1 was a shoemaker, 1 a farm laborer, 1 a carpet cleaner, and 1 a jobber.[41]

Finally, in 1870, there were 93 Native individuals[42] at Worcester in 22 families. Twenty of these units were headed by males, 2 by women; they were part of a total "colored" population of 524 persons. The 93 Natives represented almost 18 percent of the total population, and the 22 Native families represented 23 percent of the city's "colored" families.[43]

"Colored" Worcester, however, had undergone changes in these decades: for example, in 1870, only 20 percent of the adult population had been born in Massachusetts.[44] In many ways, "colored" Worcester was becoming a southern city—54 out of 193 adult males and 55 out of 188 adult females were from Virginia, the District of Columbia, or Maryland. However, in this altering environment, Native families persisted.[45]

Movement of Indians into Worcester between 1845 and 1870 reflected the city's development as an administrative, industrial, and commercial center of central Massachusetts. Options for finding mates often were more limited in rural settings, and many Natives had been drawn to the city for social opportunities including marriage. Like their white neighbors in the country, and for many of the same reasons, some Indians left smaller towns and villages in search of employment.

Native families and individuals came to Worcester from Grafton, Westborough, Upton, Charlton, Oxford, Mendon, Uxbridge, Dudley, Webster, Sturbridge, New Braintree, Warren, and Middleborough, all in Massachusetts. Others were drawn from Connecticut towns including Woodstock, Thompson, Ashford, Haddam, Hampton, Union, and Griswold. Several households connected to the Rhode Island Narragansett communities moved to Worcester. Additionally, Wampanoags from the New Bedford and Fall River area settled here, often marrying individuals of Nipmuc heritage.[47] Seeking employment in some instances, marriage in others, and residence with or near relatives in still other cases, Natives—entire families and single individuals—came, incorporating the city into a dense regional web of Native kinship and social structures that extended through Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

Some of the complexity of Nipmuc social structures can be seen in the marriage of Mary O. Belden, born at Worcester in 1890. She was a great-granddaughter of Esther Pegan Humphrey. She married Ernest Lewis, a great-grandson of Nipmuc Lydia Sprague.

> Lydia Sprague had been married four times, at different periods living in Webster, Dudley, Douglas, Sturbridge, Stockbridge, and Woodstock. Of her daughters, one married four times, at Woodstock, Putnam, Conn., and at Webster, with children from each union; three of her husbands were Nipmucs of the greater Woodstock area. Another daughter married Nipmuc Henry Dorus at Sturbridge, where they established their family; and one married, at Sturbridge, a Dudley-born Nipmuc named Peleg Brown, who in second marriage wed another of Lydia's daughters, sister of his late wife. Of the sons of Lydia Sprague,

one married and settled at Woodstock; another moved to Sturbridge, where he and his family lived; and a third married a Nipmuc at Putnam, and, in second and third marriages, Nipmucs at Woodstock, confirming continued kinship networks among Nipmucs. Further confirming such networks, a Putnam-born granddaughter married another Nipmuc, and their son, Ernest Clinton Lewis (born 1891), married Nipmuc women: his first wife connected to Webster reservation families, the second was Mary O. Belden from Worcester. Further, a Sturbridge-born grandson (Peleg Brown) was father of Edgar Brown. Edgar Brown married Native Mary E. (maiden name Brown) of Woodstock. They were parents of Maud L. Brown (born 1894), who married three Nipmucs—a cousin, Lemuel Henries, and two Hazzard brothers; several of her thirteen children are still (1996) living in central New England.

Despite the many forms of Native American presence, nineteenth-century Indian people of central New England are "unseen." They have "vanished," according to insinuations of a discourse of disappearing Indians. They did not "behave" as Indians should act, therefore, they were, culturally, less than Indian; they were "disappearing" as a culture. They represented racial and tribal mixtures, therefore, they were, biologically, not Indian; they were "disappearing" as a race. Confronting communities of Natives adapting and adjusting to changes in nineteenth-century New England and still affirming their identity as Indian, the discourse of disappearing Indians employs models, patterns, templates, and paradigms by which it judges and finds deficient the concrete practice of evolving Indian communities. It projects the "Indian" as a social construction, claiming a monopoly in defining the Native American; it transforms a dynamic presence of nineteenth-century Natives to an "absence of Indians." This discourse even postulates an inability to "find" Natives because it assumes they are "hidden." As they will not be "found," there is little necessity to look for them, to try to "see" them; they are a people who have "vanished."

While it is true that Nipmuc Indians had been dispossessed of much of their individual and tribal lands by the last century,[48] the disappearance of the Natives of central Massachusetts is part of a "cant of conquest," repeated uncritically from nineteenth-century writers who told us Indians were "doomed" to disappear.[49] It is part of an appropriation of regional Native American history and an expropriation of Indian identity. In various disguises, notions of the disappearance of Indians limit the historical vision, obliterating the complex social practice of Native communities in their survival as Indians.

The more obvious articulation of disappearance tells us, simply, that Nipmuc Indians "vanished" in the seventeenth century.[50] Disappearance is, however, expressed in the notion of widespread marginality of period Natives, described, for example, by Barry O'Connell. "[I]n an economic order run by people who despised them," Natives had to find a means to survive, according to O'Connell, so they "labored in the lowest occupations when they had employment at all." Unable "to obtain dependable employment," they worked "outside the prosperous parts of the New England economy" and seemed "to have lived in places as out-of-the-way as their occupations . . . or in racially mixed neighborhoods in cities," often "at the far edge of settlements in poor housing," in "economic marginality." For these reasons, many Indians sold baskets and brooms or "worked the lowest rungs as servants in wealthy whites' households."[51] O'Connell acknowledges that this is not the only role nineteenth-century Natives played, and recognizes a need to explore the diversity of Indian survival in the last century, but others advance marginality as if it were the universal condition of regional Natives.[52] Such a view erases the sometimes quiet but ongoing and active participation of Native people in nineteenth-century social and economic spheres.

The development of a kin-based urban community at Worcester and other sites in the region, as suggested here, challenges "marginality." Central Massachusetts Indian families achieved a stability in residence and employment, in comparison to the region's African Americans and European immigrants. Further, "marginality" as an external economic determination tells little about the relationship of the poorest Indian to Native community: for example, Lydia Sprague (1830–1890) married Shelley, married Nichols, married Henries, and her family appears in several regional histories as representative of quintessential derogatory Indian stereotypes. Yet fourteen children, some thirty grandchildren and fifty great-grandchildren, most of whom married other Nipmucs, place Lydia Sprague at the heart of nineteenth-century Nipmuc community—despite the poverty, illiteracy, and mean living circumstances invoked to make her "marginal." Because it anticipates finding "marginal" Natives, the discourse of disappearance can see little other than "marginality."

This discourse also conflates nineteenth-century notions of "people of color" and African American, as if "ethnicity" or "race" and "pigmentation" or "color" are synonymous. It overlooks a certain "fluidity" or ambiguity in ethnic or color labeling in period documents, causing Natives to "vanish" among "colored" people. With families tallied in the Earle Report, for example, individuals of Nipmuc heritage are sometimes recorded as "Indian," but they are also recorded under other designations or attributions including: black, black Indian, yellow Indian, African, colored, Negro, red Indian, mulatto, mulatto part Indian, of Indian descent, and mixed.[53] Ambiguity is also discernible at individual towns like Thompson, Connecticut, where from 1847 to 1868 in fifty-three manuscript records for "people of color," including Natives,[54] one individual is listed as "Indian" once, as "colored" once, as "black" in some twenty-seven instances, and without any color designation in twenty-three of these records. Of the only family recorded as "Indian" at Thompson during this period—the household of James Pegan and his wife, Hannah Vickers—there is still inconsistency: Pegan family members are sometimes "black," sometimes "Indian," and other times "mulatto."

Earle had found forty-eight persons in Indian households at Worcester, a

number representing over a third of the Natives he enumerated for Worcester County, but there is a comparable inconsistency, if not uncertainty, in identification of "people of color" in Worcester's vital records. In published vitals from 1714 to 1849,[55] for example, the same individuals, some of whom are Native, are "colored," "black," "negro," as well as "Indian." Additionally, in death records for the period from 1807 to 1831, not included within the town's published vitals, another thirty-seven manuscript death notices use the same color descriptors for former slaves and Natives; here, one even encounters a "black child of Fanny Proctor colored person."[56] Likewise, review of all vital records at Worcester from 1849 to 1890 for an individual Native family confirms the same inconsistency and confusion.

In the nineteenth century, however, regional Natives were often not "seen" because, on the one hand, the meaning of "Indian" was constructed for Euro-Americans in cultural terms advocated by early ethnographers, and, on the other hand, "Indian" was viewed in the biological terms of an emerging Eurocentric "race science." The new "science" codified notions of red, black, and white "races" in such a way that the only real Natives were racially distinct and "clear-blooded," the revealing period designation for "full-blooded." Part of a rising binary racial epistemology, this "science" advocated what Marvin Harris called a "policy of hypodescent,"[57] designating as "black," "African," "negro," or "colored" everyone not imagined "pure white." In this way of conceptualizing identity, "one drop" of African "blood" is antithetical to Indian identity, making a person a "negro." Part of the disappearance paradigm is, thus, the allegation of an emergent biological system of classification that nineteenth-century Natives were not Indian but "degenerate remnants" and "impure mixtures of races." As "Indians," they were not to be "seen."

The hypothesis that seventeenth-century Massachusetts "tribes" became eighteenth-century "enclaves" on the way to becoming nineteenth-century "ethnic groups," is, in a subtle way, part of a discourse of disappearing Indians. In a reading of some of the same sources cited here for confirmation of Indian presence, Daniel Mandell, for example, maintains that Native tribes vanish as "tribes," doomed to become "ethnic groups."[58]

Published texts arguing that within the historical record there is a self-imposed Native "invisibility" and "silence," as it were, "obscuring" the area's Indians, also prolong the discourse of disappearance. From this alleged "invisibility" are postulated "evasion," "hiding," and forms of "covert behaviors," when, in actuality, the region's Native Americans were hardly "hidden" or "invisible" in the last century. Ann McMullen, for example, writes that nineteenth-century New England Natives responded to the "stigmatization of their identity," by "covering . . . recognizable symbols" to give an "impression of assimilation"; they opted for "coversion," hiding languages, ceremonies and symbols "rationalizing invisibility," in part, because of a mixed racial heritage or "the lack of a recognizable Indian phenotype."[59]

Instead of "coversion" and "hiding" of Indian identity, "camouflage" and "disguise," terms used by historian James Merrell,[60] might more accurately describe Native interactions with the dominant culture. Moreover, the concrete practice of this region's Natives challenges Indian "invisibility."[61] Failure to "see" Indians refers only to the "vision" of a Eurocentric observer.

Not only do Native people "disappear" in nineteenth-century New England, according to McMullen, but their "disappearance," through an imagined "silence," was a self-selected strategy for survival. Native "invisibility" here is embraced as if historical fact; it becomes a regulative concept at the core of a "new" interpretation implying Natives cannot be "found" on a historical landscape because they themselves were hiding. This variant of the discourse of disappearance would accept an Indian "absence" but claims that this was because Indians were "hiding."

Other variations of the discourse of disappearance include an overarching assumption that Native people cannot be "found" or identified within the conventional source materials: vital records, census returns, military documents, probate files, real estate transactions, and secondary sources such as town histories. One after another, texts represent an "absence" of documentation required to "prove" Native survival and persistence, a position clearly unsupported by closer study of specific Native individuals and Indian communities in this region.

Nineteenth-century Natives in central Massachusetts persistently affirmed their identity and lived the actuality of their extended kinship-based community. They are "absent" only in a discourse laboring to erase them as part of a dynamic and engaged continued presence of aboriginal people within their traditional homelands. Regional Indians remain a "vanished" people, who are not "seen" because they are assumed already "gone," but this is so only within contemporary prolongation of this discourse.

NOTES

1. The following is a revised chapter from a work in progress titled "Native Americans and the Politics of Representation, Indians in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts."

2. Taken as "Nipnet," or "Nippienet," the homelands area of the Nipmuc or "Fresh Water People," corresponding to all of contemporary Worcester County, portions of abutting Middlesex, Hampden, Bristol, and Franklin Counties in Massachusetts plus northeastern portions of Connecticut, and northwestern Rhode Island, an extensive territory in the seventeenth century. Cf. this contact-era statement of Thomas Dudley: "About seventy or eighty miles westward from these are seated the Nipnett men, whose sagamore we know not, but we hear their numbers exceed any but the Pecoates and