

Pitchforks and Perambulation: Borders, Violence, and Mapping in 17th-Century New England

Disputes over boundaries and deeds dominated the records colonists produced in New England between 1630 and 1700. When these disputes were particularly contentious, they became punctuated by rare and dramatic acts: mapping, violence, and indigenous testimony. These infrequent moments in generally mundane records reveal several important points. First, mapping, violence, and English reliance on indigenous knowledge were all powerful tools that colonists only employed out of desperation. The English population in the colonies was rapidly growing and land had become scarce. When they looked at a few acres of land, they saw farms for their children, future divisions of the town, and prosperity. It was this feeling of necessity and desperation that began a serious colonial engagement with mapping. Amongst the colonists, employed mapping far less frequently than violence and it should be understood as an extraordinary act. Second, the mundane land records concealed a greater project. By establishing written legal records, maps, memories of perambulation, and tales of violence over the landscape, colonists replaced the Algonquian spatial epistemology, that they had initially relied on, with an English way of understanding the landscape.

Despite colonists' project to silence them, indigenous people continuously occupied important roles in clashes over the land. For the first twenty-years of English occupation of the New England coastline, they had been utterly reliant on indigenous spatial knowledge. Mapping and land disputes were part of a process of replacing dependence on the indigenous with English knowledge and an anglicized landscape. Nothing could be more English than squabbling over the boundary between two Englishmen, ignoring any indigenous claim. The process of erasure started with the establishment of mundane records noting disagreements, and culminated in open

conflict between the English, instead of against the indigenous. However, when the English had acquired their land in the region, it had been from Algonquians. In turn, when trying to prove their claims, in times of desperation English relied on both documents produced by Algonquians and Algonquian interlopers. In this way, Algonquian forms of spatial knowledge continued to have an impact in the anglicized world of land disputes and maps. When the stakes and marker stones of English colonists failed, they drew on more extreme tools: maps, violence, and Indian deeds. Importantly, these disputes should not be viewed as an entirely positive moment for indigenous people in New England. Certain English targeted Algonquians, a source of legitimacy for their rivals, with violence. Furthermore, English surveyors and cartographers generally ignored indigenous people in the maps they made.

By drawing on maps as a central source, this project hopes to join in the embracing of maps as a useful tool for historians trying to understand cultures. In recent years, certain scholars have begun to push back against the findings of historians of cartography with post-modern leanings, including J.B. Harley. They have erroneously critiqued the assertions that maps are really being about power. While violence is quite obviously an attempt by its perpetrator to assert power over its victim, by showing its equivalence with mapping as a tool, I hope to further the argument that maps are never neutral representations of space, but instead tools of power. Even with the crude and simple maps of colonists, power is still a central component.¹

As the English came to New England, they brought a number of preexisting traditions on how to deal with contentious borders with them. While their traditional methods would both break down and evolve, they help in understanding why mapping and using indigenous

¹ Please note, in quotes used throughout this paper, I have silently modernized “ff” to “f”, “v” to “u”, “i” to “j” when appropriate, and any special p to “pre” or the appropriate extension. Furthermore, “ye” has been lowered and converted to “the.” All other elements of seventeenth-century spelling have been preserved when possible.

knowledge was exceptional. Importantly, English in the 16th and early 17th centuries made almost no maps. They lacked “mapping consciousness,” the awareness of maps as a useful tool. Elites and trained surveyors made the few maps that did exist, not the kind of men who would come to make up the bulk of colonists. These men, such as the erudite surveyor John Norden, often went to Oxford, spoke Latin, and had deep understandings of mathematics.²

Instead, English villagers generally understood and monitored borders through the act of perambulation and textual surveying. Perambulation, the most important being the Rogationtide perambulation, was a practice that started in seventh-century England in which the village priest led the entire community around the parish boundaries and fields. The large group would stop to pray and read the Bible at important points along the way, and the priest would deliberately point out boundaries and property rights of the community. Despite beginning to secularize after Protestant Reformation, it included the raising and lowering of crosses, the closing and opening of books, and the furling and unfurling of banners well into the late sixteenth century. While these components were overtly religious, seeking to expel evil spirits and request good weather from the Christian guide during times of hardship, they also served a secular purpose.³ Perambulations reminded both the community and its neighbors the extent of its bounds, forming important mnemonics through their ritual. To this end villagers added their own rituals to the perambulation, including striking their children at boundary stones. At particularly notable boundary markers refreshments might even be provided to make the memory more durable. To further solidify the border, its history, and local property lines in their memory, villagers also left

² Frank Kitchen, “John Norden (c. 1547-1625): Estate Surveyor, Topographer, County Mapmaker and Devotional Writer,” *Imago Mundi* 49 (1997), 43.

³ John R. Stilgoe, “Jack-o’-lanterns to Surveyors: The Secularization of Landscape Boundaries,” in *Environmental Review* 1, No. 1 (1976), 15-20; Steve Hindle, “Beating the Bounds of the Parish: Order, Memory and Identity in the English Local Community, c. 1500-1700” in *Defining Community in Early modern Europe*, eds. Michael J. Halvorson and Karen E. Spierling (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 205-206.

landmarks on the landscape, including rock piles, crosses, and wooden posts.⁴ Acts of violence, broadly construed, were not unheard over English borders. Borders mattered deeply, enough to be regularly monitored and policed. During some perambulations, rival villages insulted each other, and even struck each other with banners and processional crosses.⁵

Perambulations could also take on a more formal role that included a textual record that allowed communities to maintain property lines and have a record for resolving border disputes. For example, during a 1563 perambulation of Derbyshire, the “jury for the said Boundaries” from the various towns involved carefully wrote up a report of their actions, each officially affixing their name to it. In its official form, the report of the perambulation described a dry walk, following boundary landmarks with names like “Eaton Wall” until the next one was reached.⁶ These textual descriptions took the place of localized maps, which only appeared infrequently in the 1500s and early 1600s, initially associated with court cases.⁷ Instead most mapping done in England focused on county and national mapping, such as Christopher Saxton’s famed atlas of England (1579) or John Norden’s county survey maps (1590s).

English farmers’ and villagers’ lack of interest in maps continued in New England. Elite familiarity with maps and a preexisting Algonquian cartographical tradition served as the primary origins of maps in the first few decades of the colony. The maps made by elites seem to have served as either novelties to keep or send back to friends in Europe or as tools for personal

⁴ Stilgoe, 15-20; David Rollison, *The Local Origins of Modern Society: Gloucestershire 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 71-73; Whyte, 175. For more on perambulation and identity see: Hindle, 206-207, 221-225. For more on perambulation and memory see: Whyte, 175-176; Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 252-273.

⁵ N.J.G. Pounds, *A History of the English Parish: The Culture of Religion from Augustine to Victoria* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 200), 78.

⁶ Boundary Perambulation of Derbyshire, July 30, 1563, Papers of the Ferrers Family of Tamworth Castle, MS L.e., Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

⁷ Peter Barber, “Mapmaking in England, ca. 1470-1650,” in *The History of Cartography*, Ed. David Woodward (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 3: 1597-1609.

information gathering. For example, in 1620, William Bradford sketched a layout of the land plots of Plymouth, at the time of settlement (**fig 1**). Colonists would have found the information he included useless for resolving any disagreements about the land. Bradford only included two lines in the entire map, labeled “high way” and represented no other physical land features.⁸ Alternatively, at least one of the four maps made by John Winthrop, governor of Massachusetts Bay, was made at the request of a friend in England and not by his own volition. Two of the three other maps he made served only as curiosities that he left in his journal. In 1636, Robert Ryeces began to pester Winthrop for a map of New England. He asked for a “plott or mappe of new Englande” twice, asking “you to helpe vs to a mappe of your country as it is now inhabited, & is ioyned with new plantation of Connetticote.”⁹ Sometime around 1637, Winthrop made a map that would have fit Ryeces specifications, showing Massachusetts Bay in its entirety and including pathways. The map also showed careful contours of rivers and coastlines, although likely not enough to be more useful for navigation than a written account (**fig 2**). The skill needed to make this map would have been trivial for someone like Winthrop: several manuals existed for educated Englishmen to learn the skill of surveying, including Richard Benese’s 1565 *The Boke of Measuryng Lande*.¹⁰ However, the same skills would have been unknown to most colonists.

⁸ William Bradford, “The meersteads & garden plots of which came first layed out 1620,” circa 1620, in *The Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England. Deeds, & Cm* Eds. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff and David Pulsifer (Boston: William White, 1861), 1:2.

⁹ Robert Ryece to John Winthrop, September 10, 1636, in *Winthrop Papers*, vol. 3 (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1943), 298-307; Robert Ryece to John Winthrop, January 17, 1637, in *Winthrop Papers*, 346-347; Samuel A. Green, “the subject of the Waters-Winthrop map,” in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 27 (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1891, 1892), 335-337.; Winthrop Family Member, “Tenhills,” October 1637, Winthrop Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston; Winthrop Family Member, [A chart of Massachusetts Bay], Circa 1634, in *The Crown Collections of Photographs of American Maps*, Series 1, Ed. Archer Butler Hulbert (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1907), # 12. The original chart of Massachusetts Bay is in the Sloane Collection at the British Library, London, UK.

¹⁰ Richard Benese, *The Boke of Measuryng Lande: As Well of Woodland as Plowland, & Pasture in the Feelede...* (London: Thomas Coldwell, 1565).

The one existing indigenous map from the same time period served a more clear purpose: establishing boundaries long before most English colonists saw maps as a tool to do so. In 1639, shortly after the Pequot War, the well published minister Henry Whitfield purchased land that would eventually become the town of Guilford Connecticut from the “Squaw Sachem,” Shaumpishuh. The written deed included a simple map of the coastal area that was almost certainly made by Shaumpishuh or her uncle, who was also privy to the deal (**fig 3**). Below the map, written by Whitfield or another one of the English present at the signing of the deed, is a brief description of which parts of the lands the Algonquians gave up, and which parts they reserved (between two rivers).¹¹ Indigenous people already associated maps with a record of land transactions and borders in a way that English colonists did not.

Maps, even more so than the violence that colonists would have been familiar with, were tools of extremity. Evidence suggests that colonists should have look on them unfavorably. Farmers in England treated them with suspicion due to ties to enclosure and taxation and did not fully comprehend the diverse uses they could have. Instead, colonists drew on English traditional methods of understanding landscape and resolving disputes. However these methods did not always work in America, where colonists lacked traditions of written records and community

¹¹ For a discussion of features on indigenous maps and indigenous influences in English maps, see J.B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. Paul Laxton (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 174-195; Margaret Wickens Pearce, “Native Mapping in Southern New England Indian Deeds,” in *Cartographic Encounters: Perspectives on Native American Mapmaking and Map Use*, Ed. G. Malcolm Lewis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 171-186; G. Malcolm Lewis, “Indicators of Unacknowledged Assimilation from Amerindian Maps on Euro-American Maps of North America,” *Imago Mundi* 38, (1986), 22-23, 25; Gregory A. Waselkov, “Indian Maps of the Colonial Southeast,” in *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, eds. Gregory A. Waselkov, Peter H. Wood, and Tom Hatley (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 435-502. For more on Wabanaki mapmaking traditions on bark called *wikhegan* see Harald E.L. Prins, “Children of Gluskap: Wabanaki Indians on the Eve of European Invasion,” in *American Beginnings: Exploration, Culture, and Cartography in the Land of Norumbega*, Eds. Emerson W. Baker et al., (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 112-113; Warhus, *Another America*, 8-11. There is also a well established tradition of indigenous map making discussed in an article I recently submitted for examples see Samuel de Champlain, *Voyages of Samuel de Champlain, 1604-1618*, Ed. W.I. Grant (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1907), 65; Gabriel Archer, *The Relation of Captain Gosnold’s Voyage to the North part of Virginia...* (1625), in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Series 3 (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1843), 8: 73-76.

mnemonics to backup their claims. These had to be constructed in a world that they fundamentally did not understand.

Upon arrival in New England, colonists had difficulty establishing their own ways of understanding the landscape. Instead, Algonquians dominated the region and the English became dependent on them. Algonquians acted as advisors and guides, and the colonists understood their own dependence as a weakness. While eventually they would take steps to establish their own knowledge of the landscape, their initial ignorance and weakness made their dependence unavoidable.

Plymouth, the first colony, only survived because of indigenous knowledge of the landscape. Algonquian guides ensured the survival of the colony and changed how the English understood the New England landscape. Samoset was the first such man to arrive, in January of 1621. In that harsh winter, the colonists desperately needed friendship and knowledge, which Samoset was willing to provide. He was the leader of a Abenaki polity from Maine, and his extensive knowledge of the New England landscape was apparent from his first arrival. The journey from Maine, in winter, was impossible for the English, but he had made it alone and seemingly easily. Once actually among the English, he began to impart important knowledge, both geographical and political. According to English commentators, “He discoursed of the whole country, and of every province and their sagamores.” The next day, he proceeded to go among the local Wampanoag, and learned that they were hostile to the English because of violence from an earlier English expedition to the region. To resolve this conflict, he brought Squanto, another English speaking Algonquian, to act as a diplomat.¹²

¹²*Mourt's Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth*, ed. Dwight B. Heath (Bedford, MA: Plimoth Plantation, Inc., 1963), 50-55. Original published in 1622.

The importance of these simple acts was great. The English, isolated and freezing in a strange land, suddenly had the potential of friendship and some cursory knowledge of the surrounding country. The peace that Samoset, and then Squanto, brought about created a different experience of New England's landscape. Suddenly, instead of dangerous forests, English began describing a place of pathways and wigwams that were open to them. In the course of just a few months, what they had seen as a desolate wilderness revealed itself to be a densely populated community. According to William Wood, "If it were possible to recount the courtesies they have shewed the *English*, since their first arrival in those parts, it would not onely stedly beleefe, that they are a loving people." Other commentators wondered that the English could "walke peaceably and safely in the wood, as in the hie-wayes in *England*, we entertaine them familiarly in our houses, and they as friendly bestowing their Venison on vs." Now, when the English walked "forty, fifty, or threescore miles into the Countrey, they have entertained them into their houses, quartered them by themselves in the best roomes."¹³

Stories in which Algonquians rescued English travelers or lost English became regular. In one instance in the early days of the colony, the Nauset, who the English did not have close relationships yet, helped find a boy who had become lost in the woods. As the English traveled to meet them, they were regularly fed and guided by Algonquians.¹⁴ William Wood recorded several similar instances, including an English man who became lost while hunting for deer saved from freezing to death by Indians. Wood's himself described becoming lost, as his party had left "our compasses at home." They came upon a wigwam, and were invited into the house,

¹³ Mourt's, 62, 82; William Wood, *Nevv Englands Prospect. A true, lively, and experimental description...* (London: John Bellamie, 1634), 78-80. For another example of the importance of Algonquian friendship and knowledge for the English, see John Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop: 1630-1649*, eds. Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 35. Upon arrival in New England, Winthrop is met almost immediately by the Sagamore of Agawam.

¹⁴ *Mourt's*, 62, 69.

fed, housed, and guided home the next day.¹⁵ Wood went as far as to note, “The doubtfull traveller hath oftentimes beene much beholding to them for their guidance thorow the unbeaten Wildernesse.”¹⁶ In other instances, Algonquians captured rebellious English for the colony, including a papist who was fleeing the colony with his “concubine” or saved shipwrecked English from freezing on the coast.¹⁷

English commentaries on the usefulness of friendship hid a darker side of their encounter with Algonquians. The English wanted to make New England into an idealized version of their former home and were deeply anxious about relying too much on indigenous people or incorporating any of their culture. This anxiety included a specific fear of relying too much on indigenous knowledge of the landscape and creating too much of a culturally mixed landscape; a fundamentally indigenous landscape preclude the existence of a true English landscape. Furthermore, if war broke out, reliance on indigenous knowledge would be a tactical liability. In some of the first communications of the Massachusetts Bay Company, they warned John Endicott and other colonists that they “take heed of being too secure in trusting the Indians.” In a later letter, the Company officials noted that “for avoiding of the hurt that may follow through our much familiarity with the Indians, we conceive it fit that they not be permitted to come to your Plantation but at certain times and places[...] If any of the salvages pretend right of inheritance to all or any part of the land granted in our patent, we pray you endeavour to purchase their title.”¹⁸

¹⁵ Wood, 79-80.

¹⁶ Wood, 79.

¹⁷ William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, (1651) ed. William T. Davis (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1908), 156; Winthrop, *Journal*, 43-44. For a few other examples of the importance of Algonquian friendship to the English see Bradford, *Of Plymouth*, 119; Mourt’s, 62-67.

¹⁸ Instructions of massachusetts Bay Company Officials to John Endicott and other Colonists, 29 April, 1629, in *Chronicles of the First Planters of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, From 1623-1636*, ed. Alexander Young (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1846), 155-159.

Even in their first few years of settlement, colonists tried to end their dependence on Algonquian knowledge. Plymouth Colony sent an envoy to Massasoit to help establish friendship but also “at the same time to view the country, and see in what manner he lived, what strength he had about him, and what was the way to his place, if at any time they should have need.” The colonists’ attempts to acquire independent knowledge inevitably involved commodifying the landscape. After observing the paths to Massasoit, Bradford noted that the soil of his village was good. Similarly, Captain Dermer reported to the colony on the land of each Algonquian nation, describing their soil in detail with words like “strong,” “blackish,” and “much like that where the best tobacco in Virginia grows.” He noted that the Pokanokets’ country had the “richest soil, and usch open ground fit for English grain, etc.”¹⁹ In their attempts to apply English understandings of the landscape, the English quickly came to covet indigenous land and imagine it within English hands.

The English were quick to establish their own ways of interacting with the landscape. By the 1630s, mentions of indigenous actors in government records precipitously declined, instead replaced by increasing land dispensations and attempts to resolve disputes between towns and individuals over borders. These disputes arose as colonists established new settlements along Massachusetts Bay. The records of some of the new towns, such as Charleston and Newtown, show hints of tension. In November 1632, the colonial government ordered a committee of men to resolve “the difference betwixte Charles-Towne & NeweTowne” and between Dorchester and Roxbury.²⁰ However, in these early disagreements, resolution appeared to come quickly. In March 1633, a simple record noted that all parties agreed upon the border between Charlestown

¹⁹ Bradford, *Of Plymouth*, 53, 56.

²⁰ *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, Vol. 1 1628-1641, ed. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff (Boston: William White, 1853), 101.

and Newton on the neck with a brief mention of its location.²¹ Similarly, Newtown reached an agreement with Watertown over the extent of their bounds in 1634 with little controversy.²² These early boundary resolutions followed rural English traditions. Men from both towns would meet together and walk along the bounds, marking it out and ensuring neither interest was slighted. The men left written records of their perambulations that used landmarks, marked trees, and the locations of stakes as points of reference. Boston and Charlestown used the Mystic river, a “high, tall pine,” a stake, and a “mrked tree at the foot of the marsh” to note their border.²³

By 1635, the disagreements between towns continued to fester, occupying more and more of the time of the government. Starting in March, the colonial authorities dispatched several committees to resolve differences between towns. For Boston and Charlton, it was to be a “finall determinacion.”²⁴ Unsurprisingly, it was not. In 1636 the towns needed to run the bounds again to find agreement.²⁵ Similarly, in 1638, the council had to admonish Newtown and Watertown, who had run their bounds years before. Watertown received concessions, “wth wch they promise to rest fully satisfied, & never to meddle more about the difference between them & Newetowne.”²⁶ More disputes are alluded to; In July, 1635, the council sent out two men to find, accompany, and compel Indians who were present with “Chickataubut when he solde certain land aboute Massachusetts to Mr Pinchon[...]to sett out the sevall bounds thereof.”²⁷ Many of the agreements the towns reached were nuanced, reminding scholars that indigenous sales of land use and not land ownership would have been familiar to colonists. As the bounds between Hingham and Weymouth were laid out in 1636, the people of Weymouth were allowed

²¹ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 102.

²² *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 139.

²³ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 149.

²⁴ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 139. For less strongly worded examples, see 149.

²⁵ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 162.

²⁶ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 228.

²⁷ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 151.

rights to “make use of all the timber on Hingham syde [of the river]” and Weymouth was prohibited from planting that land.²⁸

While the land lacked traditional community knowledge, the colonists transplanted many ways of resolving disputes from England. Beyond perambulations, towns quickly worked to establish written records of bounds. Starting in 1634, the government passed laws to attempt to ease the disputes. It required towns to create a commission to survey the lands of their towns, making note of boundaries and improvements, and to provide a copy to the government.²⁹ This simple act of ensuring a record of boundary was followed by more pointed legislation in 1635. The council ordered that “the freemen of evy town [...] shall onely have power to dispose of their owne lands, & woods [...] to graunt lotts, & make such orders as may concerne the well ordering of their owne townes.”³⁰ Even as new towns were founded, the government ordered that it be done so in ways that would not “prejudice” other plantations.³¹ Clearly exasperated, the colonial authorities wanted towns to stop fighting.

Towns seeking “satisfaction” regarding their bounds would continue throughout the century. By 1636, colonists would begin to resort to minor acts of vandalism, obstruction, and assault. Richard Saltonstall wrote to John Winthrop Junior that year, complaining that a “mr. Ludlowe and others of Dorchester who would not suffer Frances Styles and his men to Impall grounde where I appointed them at Connecticut.” Beyond physically obstructing Saltonstall’s agents from enclosing ground for cattle and making a house along the Connecticut River, Ludlowe and his friends insulted Saltonstall (who was not present) with “many unbeseeming words such as he [Styles] was unwilling to Relate to me.” In response to this crises, Saltonstall

²⁸ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 161.

²⁹ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1:116.

³⁰ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 172.

³¹ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 206.

demanded John Winthrop Junior send “skillfull men,” and soldiers to lay out his grounds and collect £1,500 in compensation.³² While physical violence did not break out, the formula of this clash would be repeated throughout Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts: Two sets of colonists had interest over land, irrespective of any indigenous claim. One had the strength of the law on their side, and the other the strength of men. The conflict devolved to insults.

Colonists on occasion employed vandalism as a way of attempting to gain an edge in land disputes. Because towns relied on stakes to maintain a visual record of boundaries, discontented factions targeted them. As was mentioned in the case of Saltonstall, his men were not allowed to “Impall,” or lay out stakes, on the ground. The colonists in Scituate, circa 1638, even pulled up stakes laid by the people of Hingham, who they were in a boundary dispute with. Both towns claimed land on the northern side of a brook. Scituate lay to the south of the brook, and the Hingham people had begun to allot a disputed meadow to various families, using stakes to mark allotments. After tearing them out, the people of Scituate “threw them away.”³³

New Englanders generally only resorted to this sort of violence or vandalism in long-running disputes that defied resolution. The dispute between Scituate and Hingham, part of a larger dispute between Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, continued for decades. Starting in 1639, the two towns repeatedly sent out some of their most prominent citizens, like John Endicott the former governor of Massachusetts Bay, to resolve boundary disputes. After one unsatisfying meeting, Massachusetts Bay ordered that the people of Hingham could begin to make use of disputed ground “untill some further order bee taken for a finall determination of the difference betweene us.” They justified such an aggressive stance by citing the “great neede of

³² Richard Saltonstall to John Winthrop, Jr., 27 February 1636, in *The Winthrop Papers*, 3:229-230.

³³ Bradford, *Of Plymouth*, 196. For a more detailed discussion of Scituate’s bounds, see Stilgoe, 24.

hay” and the fact that the said lands were “uundoubtedly within the limits of our grant.”³⁴ Even when given absolute power to decide the boundary, the two colonies could not agree. Bradford claims that when men were sent to run the bounds, the men from Massachusetts tried to take all of Scituate, while the men from Plymouth attempted to take all of Hingham.³⁵ Importantly, in this early stage, colonists never made maps as a tool in resolving their disputes. Of the less than 10 extant maps made in New England between 1620 and 1642, only two could have possibly been tools in land disputes. Colonists’ awareness that maps were useful tools continued to be rare.

The process of English squabbling over land, seemingly petty and benign, served an important purpose: it created an English tradition and English records pertaining to the land. With a self-referential and established body of documents, traditions, and folk-stories of disputes and acts of vandalism, the English had no need to draw upon indigenous knowledge. As has already been established, colonial authorities were extremely anxious about over reliance on indigenous people as guides and informants. English reliance on Algonquians as authorities on borders, at a time when the indigenous politics remained strong, would have been a blow to English claims to dominance. Mundane records resembled home far more than indigenous deeds. Unsurprisingly, the rise of English land concerns in government records was accompanied by a decline in references to Algonquians and the deference that they were formerly shown.

While in the early 1630s, Algonquians appear most frequently in the record being compensated for losses, starting as early as 1637 they appear more frequently being punished.³⁶

³⁴ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 254, 257, 271.

³⁵ Bradford, *Of Plymouth*, 196-198.

³⁶ For examples of English working to compensate Algonquians, see: in Thomas Dudley to the Countess of Lincoln, 12 March 1631, in *Chronicles*, 322; *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 75. Morton had long been a thorn in the side of colonial authorities for other reasons, but it is still telling that they burned his house down in sight of Indians. Dudley to Countess of Lincoln, 12 March 1631 in *Chronicles*, 337.

In March of 1637, the Connecticut General Court at Hartford questioned William Pincheon for “imprisoning an Indian at Aggawam, whipping an Indian and freeing of him,” and also referred to another Englishman’s “failings against an Indian.” Neither man received punishment. Connecticut even ordered that men could “correct or whipp” Algonquians in cases in which the Indians “shall assault or affront their preson, or shall finde them either wasting, killing or spoiling any of their goodes or estate.” The ordinance listed further punishments the English could inflict if Indians trespassed or committed other “injuries.”³⁷ The colony did not want wanton violence, but wanted Indians controlled, subordinated, and off of the land. Similar violence towards Algonquians emerged in Massachusetts Bay. Two Indian women were whipped for “their insolent carryage, & abusing Mrs Weld,” and “Hope, the Indian, was censured for her running away, & other misdemeanor, to be whiped hear & at Marbleheade.”³⁸

The town of Warwick in present day Rhode Island provides a case study of the process of moving from amicable relations with indigenous people, to attempts to push them off the land. Settled later, Warwick followed a delayed timeline. As late as 1653, the town maintained amicable relations with its indigenous residents and neighbors. In this year, men were sent to discuss fencing with the nearby indigenous village, and it was ordered that money be collected to pay for the Algonquians to build fences around their property at Nawsaucut.³⁹ In 1655, the town purchased a large plot of meadows land from Tuckamonon, a sachem of the Patuxet, the shares of which were distributed amongst all the townsmen, with the surveyors getting the best parts.⁴⁰ While deals with indigenous people remained important, English knowledge collected by

³⁷ General Court Record, March 8th, 1637, in *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, ed. J. Hammond Trumbull (Hartford: Brown & Parsons, 1850), 13-14.

³⁸ *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 297-298.

³⁹ Town Records Warwick, R.I., First Book, May 9th, 1653, pg 156, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI.

⁴⁰ Town Records Warwick, Circa 1655, pg 191.

appointed surveyors took precedence over any indigenous knowledge. By spring 1666 the relationship had become far more fraught. The town passed laws warning Indians not to plant within the town commons, and that they “quietly depart from any part or parcel of land broken up by them.” If they did not leave, the town planned on levying fines.⁴¹ Whatever earlier agreements had been struck between Warwick and its neighbors were now void, and the town wanted them off the commons.

Perhaps the most obvious and violent attempt by the colonists to reject Algonquian knowledge of the landscape and establish an English landscape was the Pequot War. Despite difficulties during the war, the colonists used the conflict as a chance to gather information about New England’s territory and discuss its merits and challenges in a particularly English way. Military leader John Underhill took careful note of the prosperity of the Pequots territory, and included descriptions of “the special places fit for *New Plantations*.” He regularly noted the quantity of “pleasant corne” he saw.” Along the Connecticut River the land was magnificent. At the mouth of the river there was “a place of very good soyle, good meadow, divers sorts of good wood.” In fact, “fertile soyle and good meadow” spanned the length of the river that he saw, and it was a “pitie” that such a place was unknown to settlers. Each new piece of Connecticut territory exceeded the last, and many were uninhabited, at least by the English.⁴² Unsurprisingly, during the war the English claimed the new territory as “our Right that God by Conquest hath given to us” and “possesed by iust title of conquest.”⁴³ In the Treaty of Hartford, which concluded the war, the English enshrined some of the strictest boundaries between them and indigenous people to date. The Pequot were to be driven from their homelands, which the

⁴¹ Town Records Warwick, Circa Spring 1666, pg 261-262.

⁴² Underhill, unpaginated preface, 16-18.

⁴³ General Court, “Order of the General Court,” Hartford, May 1, 1637, Add MS 15487, British Library, London, UK; “A Declaration, sent the Coppey Connecticut, about the Pecoits Country, & Quonnapiack,” 20 November 1637, *Records of the Governor and Company*, 1: 216.

English would then claim through right of conquest. Neither the Pequots, nor the English's indigenous allies, would be allowed to own or settle on any part of that land.⁴⁴

With the assumption that local Algonquians were safely under English dominance and denied any claim to English land, colonists continued with their land disputes. By the 1650s, as towns began to run out of land and new divisions for future generations were needed, colonists adopted new strategies. Beyond standard petitions and legal disputes, colonists began to employ violence and mapping, sometimes together, to secure their bounds. Towns would also reinvoke the same indigenous people they had previously driven off to serve as informants as to proper boundaries. Towns, colonies, and individuals all vied for land with these tools. These disputes saw the first significant production of maps by the New England colonists, and likely are responsible for colonial understanding of maps as a useful tool.

Scholars are most familiar with the well-recorded conflicts between colonies. Aggressive political maneuvering, overt violence, strategic map-making, and attempts to draw on indigenous people as allies were all regular features. While every colony in New England disagreed with each of its neighbors, the bounds of Rhode Island caused the most contentious disputes. Starting with its founding in the 1630s, Massachusetts Bay relentlessly attempted to undermine the legitimacy of Rhode Island's boundaries. In the early 1640s, Samuel Gorton, an unorthodox religious leader, became the focal point of one move by Massachusetts to extend its authority. After banishment from other colonies, Gorton followed other religious exiles to Rhode Island, hoping to find a haven. Here, Gorton noted, that "Massachusetts and also Plymouth confessed us

⁴⁴ John Haynes, Roger Ludlow, Edward Hopkins, Miantonomo, and Uncas, Treaty of Hartford (Copy), 1638, Yale Indian Papers Project, <https://yipp.yale.edu/annotated-transcription/digcoll2389>.

to be out of the confines of their patents.”⁴⁵ This changed quickly. According to Gorton, the colonies saw that Rhode Island was becoming a haven for exiles, and moved against it, extending their boundaries, and using dissatisfied people to attempt takeovers. Gorton published several of the letters sent to him by Massachusetts Bay, in which they declared that families in Rhode Island had placed themselves “under the protection and government of this jurisdiction.” Massachusetts followed these declarations with demands that those who did not accept their authority leave or pursue their claims in a Massachusetts court. Tellingly, the declaration stated that “if you shall proceed to any violence, you must not blame us, if we shall take a like course to right them.”⁴⁶ Sowing divisions and discussions of violence seemed regular for Massachusetts.

After other colonists with the help of Massachusetts pushed him out, Gorton eventually founded a new settlement in present day Warwick, “Shawomet.” However, Gorton had made a misstep. This was part of the region that Massachusetts Bay claimed through right of conquest during the Pequot War. To secure their authority, in 1643 the government of Massachusetts Bay dispatch three commissioners and a “guard of 40 able men to attend them.” While ultimately the soldiers took Gorton without a battle, while they marched towards his town, he proclaimed that “we are under command, and have our commission sealed already, to resist you unto death; for this is the law of our God.” The soldiers marched to Gorton’s town with muskets, and according to Gorton, broke a hastily brokered truce to kill cattle, loot houses, and even shoot at a few of Gorton’s men. After capturing Gorton, the Bay government charged him with blasphemous behavior “in this jurisdiction.” He was placed in irons in Charlestown and his followers were confined in several towns. Soldiers seized goods and cattle and sold them.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Samuel Gorton, *Simplicity’s Defense Against Seven-Headed Policy...*, Ed. William R. Stables (Providence: Marshall, Brown and Company, 1835), 47. Original published in 1646 with no editor.

⁴⁶ Samuel Gorton, 47-53.

⁴⁷ Samuel Gorton, 53-55; *Governor and Company of Massachusetts*, Vol. 2 1642-1649, 44, 51-53.

Throughout, Gorton pointed to the deeds he had acquired from Algonquians, or “true natives” as Gorton called them, to the land. In his later account of events, in part used a tool to try and reclaim land, he went as far as to say that he had both consent of the local sachem and the “Free consent of the inhabitants of the place.”⁴⁸ Massachusetts Bay agents in turn claimed legitimacy deriving from indigenous grants. In a letter, the General Court proclaimed that they had “received upon good ground, into our jurisdiction and protection, two Indian Sachems, whose names are Pumham and Saccononoco, who have lately complained to us of some injurious and unjust dealing toward them by yourselves.” The Court went on to call Gorton to appear before them because of their “desire to do equal right and justice to all.” It was for this reason that the Massachusetts Court ultimately sent troops.⁴⁹ Both sides in the dispute recognized the legitimacy of indigenous claims and deeds. The Bay government went further and attempted to use the presence of supposed Algonquian subjects as a reason for military intervention.

This clash should be read as part of political maneuverings by Pumham. Miantonomo, the sachem of the Narragansett, was part to the original land deal with Gorton. Pumham sought to usurp Narragansett power by asserting jurisdiction over land Miantonomo claimed. John Winthrop, in his journal, noted that both Pumham and Sacononoco, came to Massachusetts Bay and declared that they were “overborne by Miantunnomoh, the sachem of the Naragansett, and Gorton and his company.” They further claimed that Miantonomo forced their “hand or mark to a writing.” Miantonomo was summoned and Winthrop claimed that he declared that the two sachems were “free sachems” who on occasion sent him presents and warriors because of his power. Therefore, they could make an alliance with Massachusetts Bay.⁵⁰ Much later, commissioners from England would describe Pumham as being a tool of Massachusetts Bay

⁴⁸ Samuel Gorton, 59-60, 99.

⁴⁹ Samuel Gorton, 95-97.

⁵⁰ Winthrop, *Journal*, 458-459.

against Rhode Island for “twenty years.”⁵¹ However, it is important to see the strength Pumham gained. While perhaps not a subject to Miantonomo, he was less powerful and owed him gifts and troops in times of war. With the strength of Massachusetts Bay, he could redress this power imbalance. Miantonomo would later be captured by Uncas, and the Gortonites tried to free him while the government of Massachusetts Bay condemned him to death at Uncas’s hand. They even cited his beating of one of Pumham’s men as a central cause in his execution. As a result of allegiance with Massachusetts his men were allowed powder and guns, given arms taken from the Gortonites, and on occasion sent Massachusetts Bay troops to support their position.⁵²

Connecticut had similarly contentious disputes with Rhode Island towns, engaging in both mapping, violence, and using indigenous people as a source of legitimacy. As more and more settlers flocked to the region around their border in the 1660s, the two colonies began to take far greater interest in who had the more legitimate claim to the territory between Narragansett Bay and the Thames (Pequot) River. Connecticut, through charter and “right of conquest” during the Pequot War, claimed all Pequot territory and land “bounded on the East by Narragansett-River, commonly called Narragansett-Bay.”⁵³ Rhode Island claimed the same land in their original charter, which specified that Rhode Island was bounded on the west “by Indians called Nahigganneucks, alias Narragansets; the whole Tract extending about Twenty-five English Miles unto the Pequot River and Country.”⁵⁴ With Rhode Island’s claim using the ambiguous word “unto,” the two charters clashed to a unknown degree.

⁵¹ For more evidence to this effect, see both Samuel Gorton, 106; George Cartwright, Samuel Maverick, and Robert Carr. “State of the Colony of Rhode Island from the Commissioner of New England,” 1665, Eg MS 2395, British Library, London. For more on Pumham and the deed see “Pumham, -1677,” Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, <https://yipp.yale.edu/bio/bibliography/pumham-1676>.

⁵² Winthrop, *Journal*, 471-473, 488, 513.

⁵³ “Charter of Connecticut,” 1662, The Avalon Project, Yale University, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/ct03.asp.

⁵⁴ “Patent for Providence Planation,” 14 March 1643, The Avalon Project, Yale University, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/ri04.asp.

In an effort to solidify their claim in 1662, Captain George Denison requested Uncas, the Mohegan Sachem, come to him to confirm the boundaries of the Pequots at “what time the English did Conquer the Pequids” (**Fig 4**). Uncas’s map then showed Pequot territory extending deep into what is today Rhode Island, past the Pequot River and “Pauquatuck” River, all the way to the “weexcodawa” brook.⁵⁵ The English used a map made by and Algonquian and Algonquian legacy of possession to strengthen their own claim. But this also allowed Uncas to directly weaken his traditional rivals, the Narragansett, by delegitimizing their territorial limits.

In the dispute between the two colonies, indigenous occupancy and testimony became a regular tool. In 1662, during an overture at peace, William Benton of Rhode Island wrote to John Allen, part of the Connecticut government. Drawing on previous indigenous ownership for legitimacy, he argued that Rhode Island’s deeds from Algonquians could be produced and had witnesses.⁵⁶ In 1683, when a major conference was held to determine the bounds, the committee relied heavily on a deed signed by the sachems Pesicus and Canoicus which placed their people and land under the protection and government of the King. The final determination drew on English deeds, Algonquian deeds, and Algonquian informants. The commissioners paid special attention to a recorded conference at Hartford in which Ninigret, several other sachems, and over 200 Narragansett met and delivered possession of the territory to men from Connecticut.⁵⁷ English attempts to use Algonquians as a tool gave sachems positions of influence at important colonial gatherings where they would have otherwise been ignored.

⁵⁵ Uncas, “Uncas’ Map of a Portion of the Pequot Territory,” 4 August 1662, Yale Indian Papers Project, <http://findit.library.yale.edu/bookreader/BookReaderDemo/index.html?oid=10682641#page/1/mode/1up>.

⁵⁶ William Benton to John Allen, 20 December 1662, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #4, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁵⁷ Edward Cranfield, William Stoughton, Samuel Shrimpton, John Pynchon, Jr., Nathaniel Saltonstall, Report of Negotiations over Narragansett Country, October 20th, 1683, Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, accessed 14 July 2016, <http://findit.library.yale.edu/yipp/catalog/digcoll:2564410>.

Despite several attempts at peaceful resolution, the border region between the two states devolved into regular violence, including attacks on Indians.⁵⁸ Rhode Island affiliated settlers saw Pequots and other non-Narragansett Algonquians as a potential threat to their claim. As Connecticut claimed the territory of the Pequots by right of conquest, wherever Pequots settled, Connecticut could claim ownership. Like Massachusetts Bay had done with Gorton, Connecticut in particular drew on the complaints of indigenous people as a way of critiquing and undermining the attempts of Rhode Island to protect its claim. In 1664 the Connecticut General Court referred to “diverse Pawcatuck Indians” who came to the court to complain about the actions of “Road Island people.” These men had required “them to forbear planting on there land, threatening to take away there land from them, requiring them to pay them rent for the same, telling them that they will plunder them if they doe not Answer there desires.” The Connecticut Council argued that these actions could undermine the English by inciting Indians.⁵⁹ A few years later, Harman Garret, a Pequot Sachem, and his people were attacked by Rhode Islanders and driven off of their lands because they refused to pay rent. Garrett complained that he was on land east of the Pawcatuck River that “all the pequots declare” as Pequot land.⁶⁰ While giving Connecticut an opportunity to pursue their border dispute with Rhode Island, Garrett also legitimized his claim to territory and his peoples status as Pequots just a few decades after the English had declared his people eliminated and no longer able to inhabit their former territory.

Colonial authorities in the rival colonies also treated indigenous people as agents to undermine the others’ claim. In Warwick, as the town displayed increasing antagonism towards

⁵⁸ “Charter of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations,” 15 July 1663, The Avalon Project, Yale University, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/ri04.asp; Robert Thompson, Benjamen Worsley, Richard Dean, John Brookhaven, [Proposals for the border between Connecticut and Rhode Island], April 7th, 1663, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #5, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁵⁹ Connecticut General Court, “Act of the Connecticut General Court regarding Complaints Against James Budcock,” 10 February 1664, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #24, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁶⁰ Harman Garrett, [Petition of the Pequots to the Connecticut General Court], 6 May 1667, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #29, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

local Algonquians in the 1660s, Connecticut became involved. Two men, Green and Willet, gave the Algonquians a letter that “maid them bould to Continue & plant still on the towns Land.” When a constable was sent to force them to depart with a warrant, around forty Algonquians surrounded him, threatened him, and “did behave themselves very ryotusly.” Violence was only prevented by the intervention of the sachem, Awaskooke.⁶¹ While Connecticut men sought to undermine Rhode Island’s claim, local Algonquians saw an opportunity to use one set of colonists as a tool to ensure they could remain on their land.

Violence on the borderlands did not only target Algonquians. English settlers throughout the area made allegiances with the two governments, with contradictory loyalties existing in the same towns. For the settlers, this was an opportunity to use government power to make grabs for more land or favorably resolve disputes with neighbors. As early as July 1663, shortly before Connecticut’s new charter was signed, a few inhabitants of the town of Narragansett petitioned to join Connecticut. Connecticut happily accepted and the inhabitants asked for the authority to issue warrants to bring anyone who interfered with their land claims to trial.⁶² This began a pattern of violence on the border that continued for decades. Rhode Islanders regularly harassed and threatened their rivals, burning fences, stealing cattle and hay, vandalizing corn, forcing Algonquian “tennants” off land, and even going as far as “pulling downe some of our houses.”⁶³

⁶¹ Town Records Warwick, Circa Spring 1666, Circa 1667, 261-262, 277

⁶² [Petition to join Connecticut colony from Inhabitants of Narragansett], 3 July 1663, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #7, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Connecticut General Court to the Inhabitants of Wickford, 10 July 1663, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #8, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Richard Smith, William Hudson, Richard Lord, Edward Hutchinson, [?], to the Connecticut General Court, 17 July 1663, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #9, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁶³ Council of the Colony of Connecticut to Rhode Islanders, 7 December 1663, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #11, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT. Massachusetts Bay records also exist describing Rhode Islander’s “pulling downe some of our houses.” The Humble Petition of Daniell Gookin, Thomas Danforth (in the behalfs of Harbut [ill], John Payne, Thomas Prentice [...] & other proprietors of Lands in southerntowne in the Pequoit country, 23 October 1663, Massachusetts State Archives Collection, Vol. 2, Colonial, 1638-1720, #43, Boston, MA; Connecticut General Court to Rhode Island Assembly, 17 October 1667, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #30, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Rhode Island Assembly to Connecticut General Court, 14 May 1669, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #41, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT. See also [Petition of the

While tensions escalated between the colonists, relationships continued to break down between the governments. Both colonies petitioned the other to control its citizens, and as they ignored these requests, both took bolder action. Starting in 1664, the two colonies began to alternate establishing courts and sending constables into the disputed territory. Connecticut gave two men, Richard Smith and William Hudson, authority in the region in the summer of 1664. Rhode Island responded by sending a constable to arrest them.⁶⁴ In retaliation, Connecticuters broke into a house of a Rhode Islander and carried him to jail in front of his family.⁶⁵ Similar events took place in 1671, when Rhode Island set up a court on the east side of the Pawcatuck River and attempted to arrest several of the prominent Connecticuters who had settled on that side of the river. Most of them fled across the river, and sent their own constable, along with a number of men on horseback, to declare against the court and require the Rhode Islanders to leave. The Rhode Islanders told the townsmen under their own control to stand against the Connecticuters.⁶⁶ Just a few years later in 1674, Connecticut dispatched its own men to keep a court at Stonington in order to provide government to their citizens in the disputed territory, try cases (presumably over land disputes), and punish anyone who “cotemne [contempt] our authority, or refuse to obey it.”⁶⁷ And then in 1677, George Denison began arresting Rhode Island affiliated people in Narragansett country and carrying them to court in Connecticut.⁶⁸ This

Town of Stonington to the General Court], May 1668, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #32, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; [Order of a Rhode Island Committee formed to Review the Connecticut Border], August 1668, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #37, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁶⁴ Counsell of Rhode Island to Connecticut General Court, 8 July 1664, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #20, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁶⁵ Benedict Arnold to Connecticut Government, 10 March 1664, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #13, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁶⁶ Thomas Minor, George Denison, John Denison, “Petition to the General Assembly of Connecticut,” 17 May 1671, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 1, #82, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁶⁷ Connecticut General Court, Court Order, 8 October 1674, Colonial Boundaries Series 1, Vol. 1, #99, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁶⁸ Rhode Island Colonial Assembly to Connecticut General Court, 21 April 1677, Colonial Boundaries Series 1, Vol. 1, #109, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

would all culminate around the conference held in 1683 over the border, which was supposed to meet in the disputed land. Rhode Island sent troops instead of delegates, and drove off the commissioners from the other colonies and land companies with claims.⁶⁹

The disputes between the colonies seem to have included a murder in 1670. While the exact details are vague, several Connecticuters wrote a report of a murder that made its way into the Connecticut Archives record detailing the boundary dispute with Rhode Island. The document referred to the “Towne of Wickford in Coneticut Colynie” and only listed witness who claimed residence in Connecticut. Others who observed the body were referred to as people who did “not owne them selves In this collynie.”⁷⁰ The divisions in the incident are clear and one can imagine the murder resulting from the escalation of one of the many personal disagreements over ownership that lay beneath the surface of this colonial dispute.

Mapping was not central to the dispute between Connecticut and Rhode Island in the 1660s. However, maps became a regular weapon starting in the 1680s for intercolonial disputes. While enterprising colonists made the first map purporting to show the full boundary between Rhode Island and Connecticut in 1687, New York officials began making maps of their borders with Connecticut as early as 1684.⁷¹ The maps made by agents of the two colonies are some of the first colonial manuscript maps made that show Connecticut in its entirety (**fig 5, fig 6, fig 7**). The Governor of New York, Edmund Andros, and his surveyor, Phillip Wells, were cosmopolitan men, and Andros had a long history as an imperial administrator. They saw maps as a useful tool before most colonists. Tensions between New York and Connecticut ran high,

⁶⁹ Edward Cranfield, William Stoughton, Samuel Shrimpton, John Pynchon, Jr., Nathaniel Saltonstall, Report of Negotiations over Narragansett Country, October 20th, 1683, Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, accessed 14 July 2016, <http://findit.library.yale.edu/yipp/catalog/digcoll:2564410>.

⁷⁰ John Cole, Robert Greene, Thomas Well, Ambros Leery, John Crabtree, Report of a Murder, 12 July 1670, Colonial Boundaries Series 1, Vol. 1, #71, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁷¹ *Calendar of Council Minutes, 1668-1783* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1903), 49, 50, 61.

and each colony sought to gain an edge. During the chaos and devastation wrought by Metacom's War, council records from New York show a bevy of representatives sent to inquire into the boundaries. Perhaps coincidentally, during the conflict, New York also offered to send soldiers and aid to the beleaguered state. Connecticut rejected the offers from Andros on the belief that it was simply a ploy to occupy part of Connecticut and claim it.⁷² Like with Rhode Island, the dispute would continue well into the 1700s.⁷³

The cartographers' stylistic choices on one of the early boundary between the two states makes their intentions abundantly clear (see **fig 5**). The coastline plays no important role, with vague and general details hastily scrawled on as an afterthought. Instead, the focus lies on the borders which are crisp, straight, marked with landmarks, and heavily annotated. The New York Border is carefully described in distance of rods and its relationship to the Hudson River and other landmarks. This focus on the correct positioning of borders is also present in Fig 6 and Fig 7. In both cases the surveyor has employed mathematical surveying techniques to establish accurate bounds referenced to landmarks and distances in rods or miles.

Interested parties regularly contested maps made by their rivals, sometimes making counter maps (primarily in the 1720s and beyond) or attacking the character of the surveyors. A 1642 survey of the border between Connecticut and Massachusetts became a source of particular rancor (**fig 8**). In the 1670s, Massachusetts Bay had to record testimony from men who had been part of the survey to counter claims from Connecticut that it had been done only from the ocean

⁷² Edmund Andros to Connecticut Colony, 4 July 1675, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 2, #29, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Joshua Haynes, Bulhely Gerchsam, Thomas Bull, and Robert Chapman, to Connecticut General Court, 12 July 1675, Colonial Boundaries, Series 1, Vol. 2, #34, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 22.

⁷³ For evidence see *Calendar of Council Minutes*, 279, 290, 297.

by sailors. The testimony regularly refers to the surveyors as “artists,” and provides extreme detail of the observations they made, the marks, and the skill involved.⁷⁴

Boundary disputes on a local scale replicated many of the strategies employed on the colonial scale. Individual colonists and towns strategically employed violence and mapping to defend and extend their claims. For a few acres of land to pass on to their children, colonists would fight and attempt to make maps that they lacked the technical skill to produce. On this local level, they had less interest in indigenous claims, with the exception of deeds. Through deeds, indigenous knowledge of borders and landscape became important, but people on the local level did not have claims to indigenous subjects like colonial governments did. Disputes between towns and individuals were common, but a few became particularly acrimonious.

New London and Saybrook, both growing towns on the Connecticut coastline (formerly the territory of the Pequot and Niantic), had an extremely contentious border. Saybrook’s child town, Lyme claimed a plot of land known as Black Point that New London also claimed. New London had its bounds run in 1648, and immediately after the establishment of Niantic in 1667, troubles arose. The two ran the bounds between them in 1668, using a plot of land that had been given to English veterans of the Pequot War in 1651 as an important boundary point. Black Point’s status was unclear in the settlement though, and both towns sought to divide the land and allot it to their growing populations. Initially to resolve the dispute, men of Lyme asked the court to run the border between the two towns to resolve the dispute for them, but the court saw no compelling reason to do so.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ The Testimony of Richard Callicott Aged About Sixty & Seven, Massachusetts State Archives, Volume 3, #22, Boston, MA; Clarence Winthrop Bowen, *The Boundary Disputes of Connecticut* (Boston: Hames R. Osgood and Company, 1882), 19-20.

⁷⁵ Records from the Connecticut General Court, 17 May 1649, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 1 before 1695, #98, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Record from a General Court of Election, 15 May 1651, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 1 before 1695, #98, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Agreement between town of Lyme and town of New London, 21 May 1668, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 1 before 1695, #98, Connecticut State Archives,

Sometime in the fall of 1671, the issue escalated. Large groups of men from the two towns coincidentally decided to perambulate their boundaries in the disputed land simultaneously and a brawl ensued. While the dozen or so testimonies of the brawl taken in court leave the exact sequence of events unclear, there was some agreement on the following. When the two groups encountered each other, men from New London and Lyme each issued challenges, demanding to know what authority the other had to be there. The constable of Lyme presented a warrant, which gave him the authority to arrest any of the New Londoners who harvested hay from the point. The New Londoners responded rudely, and according to some men from Lyme, one said “we care not a fart for your paper you may keep it to wipe your breech.” The New Londoners then began to “mow” the grass on the point, at times extremely close to the men from Lyme. As a result, a Lyme man threw a punch, and then people began to pull out cudgels. Which faction actually struck first is unclear from contradictory records. A general brawl ensued, that only ended when “a great pitchfork struck down Richard Smith for dead.” The clash was so controversial and involved so many men, that the government of Connecticut had to have the proceedings in Hartford, because impartial men could not be found on the coastline.⁷⁶

After violence and threat of arrest as a method of solving the dispute failed, it fell to the Connecticut government to hear testimony on how to resolve the case. Petitions, depositions about abuses, and maps replaced pitchfork’s and cudgels as tools to resolve a boundary dispute. The maps are striking, as the colonists had no experience in cartography, yet tried anyways. In March 1672, just a month or two after the testimonies about the brawl had been taken, Mark

Hartford, CT; Records of the Connecticut General Court, 11 May 1671, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 1 before 1695, #98, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

⁷⁶ Testimony of Matthew Griswold, 1671/1672, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 1 before 1695, #117, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Testimony of John [Sterens?], 26 February 1672, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 1 before 1695, #122, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Testimony of Several Men Regarding the Brawl at Black Point, March 1672, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 1 before 1695, #123, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Records of the Connecticut General Court, 12 October 1671, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 1 before 1695, #98, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

Griswold, a Lyme man who had been at the center of the brawl, produced a map (**fig 9**). The map has no markers of distance, no notable landmarks, and no angles on it. Instead of the techniques of surveying, Griswold drew what he thought would make his point about the location of the border clear. Colonists made two more maps, similarly informal, of the disputed territory (**fig 10**, **fig 11**).⁷⁷

Using maps in legal disputes over boundaries between individuals and towns continued regularly, paired with violence and references to indigenous deeds and ownership. Surprisingly, there are more maps in the “Private Controversy” sections of the Connecticut Colonial Archive than there are in the “Colonial Land Records” for patents and surveys. In a dispute between Bartholomew Barnard and Thomas Burnham over some farmland in Windsor, a map was made, clubs were waved, corn was vandalized, and indigenous deeds were pointed at. Burnham bought the land from local Algonquians, led by Yantamino, and had witnesses testify to this. However, Barnard had bought the land from Jacob Mygat, whom witnesses had seen Burnham give some of the land to. When Barnard and Mygat sent a letter declaring an intent to divide the land from Burnham, he refused. To solidify their claim, Barnard and his allies also gave goods to Yantamino, who then returned wampum he had originally received from Thomas Burnham. Finally, as Barnard sent workers to begin and plant the land he claimed, Burnham’s family came out to stop them. His wife stood in their way and attempted to take their hoes. Eventually she upended their seed corn and threw it in the dirt. Finally, she went to retrieve a “good Clubb” and obstructed them from working until they gave up. Barnard then brought the case to court, and an unknown

⁷⁷ Mark Giswold, [Map of new London and Old Saybrook], 12 March 1672, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 1 before 1695, #113c, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; [Map of land between New London and Old Saybrook], Circa 1672, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 1, 113b.

cartographer made a map for the court that showed “the Land above now in Controversie” (**fig 12**).⁷⁸

Indigenous people found their ways into these local conflicts in other ways beyond being the holders of deeds. In 1670 in Scituate, John Williams destroyed the home of an Algonquian man hired by James Cudworth, the recognized owner of the land. The Algonquian had been hired to cut wood on the island, but was “forced from his worke,” not only costing Cudworth the profit of the wood that would have allowed him to improve the area, but also bringing “the title of his land[...] into question. While the government fined Williams, he repeatedly appealed the fine as unjust.” In 1673, Williams “impound diuers swine” of Cudworth, again being levied a fine.⁷⁹ As colonial governments made improvement a condition of continued land ownership in titles, Williams likely sought to use his attack on an Algonquian as a way of gaining this land that he desired. Clearly, Williams also believed that the land was rightfully his, and could have alternatively been asserting his claim through violence.

In 1680, a map was presented to the Connecticut Court, likely at the request of John Winthrop, Jr. and James Fitch, to help resolve a boundary disputed which was contingent on the

⁷⁸ The Declaration of Barthollomew Barnard and William Pitkin. Plaintiffs against Tho: Burhham Defendant, October 1667, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #41, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Clark Daniell, Testimony to the General Court, Circa July 1666, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #30; Zackariah Landford, William Goodien, and [?] Gerret, Testimony of workers of Burnard and Pitkin, 15 May 1668, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #44; Testimony of William Williams and his wife, Circa July 1666, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #35; Testimony of William Edwards, 30 October, 1666, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #36; Testimony of Thomas Watts, Circa July 1666, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #31; Testimony of John Stedman, Circa July 1666, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #34; Testimony of Jacob Mygat, Circa July 1666, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #33; Testimony of John [?], Circa July 1666, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #32; Further Testimony of William Williams, 16 October 1667, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #38; Jacob Mygatt, Indenture for land in Hartford, 17 May 1666, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #29; Jacob Mygatt, Barthollemew Barnard, and William Pitkin to Thomas Burnham, Sr., 12 October 1666, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #39; John Allyn and Jonathan Gilbert, [Map of Windsor], 1666, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #42.

⁷⁹ *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth*, 7:160-161, 164, 185, 186. I found this case via a footnote in Stilgoe, 30, which referenced *Records*, 7:160-161. .

location of a specific house (**fig 13**).⁸⁰ In 1683, the Court received two maps in a land dispute involving John Gallop and George Denison along the Mystic River. Both men had fought in the Pequot War, been part of the land disputes with Rhode Island, and Denison had even been there to witness the use of a map when Uncas drew one showing the Pequot Country.⁸¹ Similarly, in 1696, the Connecticut Court received three maps of Joshua Robbins' land to help resolve a claim that Robbins had illegally claimed common land (**fig 14**, **fig 15** and **fig 16**).⁸² In 1702, Billerica residents requested the Massachusetts Government for a “determination of boundary of their farms” and included a crude map in their petition.⁸³ These selected moments of mapmaking to resolve disputes in court are just a few of many examples.

Maps like these are not just some mundane sketches, made flippantly. In the decades before these intense land disputes, they were a rarity in New England. However, as land became more precious colonists were willing to try something new. Indeed, violence should be considered the more traditional behavior, with mappings and references to the indigenous special and rare. The earliest examples of manuscript maps in New England appear in disputes such as these, not in patents or deeds. In general those documents eschewed maps, even into the 1700s. Instead they relied on textual description. It was only when text failed to be a sufficient tool that colonists used maps. When towns, such as Woburn and Billerica, had a dispute that needed the

⁸⁰ The test. Of John Gallop aged about 34 years, 2 June 1680, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #289; [Map of Culver House], Circa June 1680, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 1, #290;

⁸¹ [Map of Disputed Land Near Mystic River], Circa 1683, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 3, #111, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; [Map of Denison and Gallop's Lands], Circa 1683, Private Controversies, Series 1, Vol. 3, #112.

⁸² [Lots of Robbins and Neighbors], Circa 1696, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 2 1695-1713, #58, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT; Thomas Welles, Jonathan Belding, Samuel [ill], A Scheme or figure of the Terr of Lotts: betwen Samuel Dires & Jonathan Demmings, 3 September 1696, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 2 1695-1713, #61; Jonathan Selleck, Thomas Hart, Samuel Fosdyk, [Map of Robbins lott accompany court testimony of surveyors], 1 October 1696, Towns & Lands, Series 1, Vol. 2 1695-1713, #65.

⁸³ [Petition of Michael Bacon & John Wilson, for a determination of boundary of their farms, originally granted to Daniel Gookin & Rev. John Mitchell, & lying in Billerica], 1702, Massachusetts State Archives Collection, Vol. 243, Ancient Plans and Grants, 1649-1775, Boston, MA.

intervention of the Massachusetts Bay government (**fig 17**) maps were needed. As shown by the wide array of actors employing maps (individuals, colonial governments, towns), it was a tool that colonists recognized the potential power of in moments of extremity.

The evidence of violence, mapping, and drawing on indigenous people as tools of extremity to resolve land disputes that I have presented here only scratches the surface. I have records of Massachusetts Bay sending constables deep into Rhode Island to arrest men, maps from across the colonies, and several examples of the persistent voices of indigenous people.⁸⁴ For the purposes of this paper, I have not drawn on Maine or New Hampshire, but each has its own archive of contention. Efforts to understand colonial New England, and colonial North America for that matter, need to acknowledge the centrality of borders in colonial society and politics. The location of borders, disputes over them, and the acquisition of knowledge not only helped shape English epistemology of the landscape, but also set the tempo of everyday life. Furthermore, as shown here, these border drove important cultural developments, including the emergence of mapping as part of the colonial spatial epistemology and the reintroduction of indigenous voices and knowledge into conversations that the English had previously tried to remove them from.

Looking at borders also reminds scholars that the colonists lived in a world of rifts, both physical and social. While murder, arrest, and raids (both legal and not) were commonplace, their ramifications on everyday life need to be acknowledged. Furthermore, the coupling of traditional forms of violence with the employment of tools such as mapping in legal cases also

⁸⁴ For several more examples of violence over borders, but not all, see: *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth*, 7: 56, 116, 117, 193; "State of the Colony of Rhode Island from the Commissioner of New England," 1665, British Library, Eg MS 2395, #429, London, UK; William Phips to Earle Nottingham, 20 February 1693, The National Archives, Co 5, #751/42, Kew, UK. Those from the Plymouth records were brought to my attention by Stilgoe, 30.

reinforces the notion that mapping and violence both should be understood as ways for colonists to exert power over each other and Algonquians. Finally, we must acknowledge and remember that the English maps existed as part of a broader creation of an English base of knowledge about the land. While English maps often contained references to indigenous actors, their existence was part of the creation of a new form of knowledge that no longer relied on the indigenous. Maps, no matter how mundane or narrow in purpose, were part of the process of erasing indigenous claims and markers from the landscape.