

***Here It Began: 2020 Hindsight or Foresight  
2020 Indigenous History Conference  
Program***

**October 3, 2020 Session I 10:00-12:00**

**Keynote: Here It Began: Introduction to the 2020 Indigenous History Conference (10:00-10:30)**

Linda Coombs (Aquinnah Wampanoag) [bornagainpatuxet@yahoo.com](mailto:bornagainpatuxet@yahoo.com)

The Opening Keynote will introduce the themes and goals of the Conference and explain the need and relevance of incorporating Indigenous history as a part of American history in order to create a truer, inclusive and more comprehensive telling.

**Panel I: Creation Histories (10:30-12:00)**

**Moderator:** Joyce Rain Anderson (Wampanoag) [joycerain.anderson@bridgew.edu](mailto:joycerain.anderson@bridgew.edu)

**Speaker 1:** Bob Charlebois (Abenaki)

I will be speaking about the origins of my Abenaki people. This is, without revealing what I will say, something that will disappoint those semi-informed folks who believe we all migrated from Siberia at the end of the last ice age. My presentation will focus on a number of important topics, not the least of which will be the importance of water plays in both our creation stories, but in our every-day lives. I will also talk and address the stories of our cultural heroes (Attisokan, Attisokanuk), and explain their places in our culture.

**Speaker 2:** Nitana Greendeer (Mashpee Wampanoag)

I will discuss the ways in which understanding the language uncovers creation stories and ways of being that have been otherwise lost or not remembered for centuries when Wôpanâk (Wampanoag language) was not spoken.

Through documents written by our own ancestors in Wôpanâk, many of our stories have remained waiting for us to be able to understand them again. Through learning to read and understand the language, we as Wôpanâk people have begun to be able once again to reconnect to our histories as our precolonial ancestors did. Additionally, not all that is uncovered in the documents are stories. Understanding our language also uncovers worldview and understandings that we may not necessarily fully realize without linguistic information. Some practices or knowledge that remains to this day is better understood through understanding Wôpanâk language.

In this way, to connect to this information is to connect to our ancestors and their way of being and worldview more closely, thus better understanding our own creation.

In my section of the panel I will discuss this idea as well as give examples from Wôpanâk documents that show how we can better understand ourselves as Wôpanâk by reading and understanding the documents written by our ancestors.

**Speaker 3:** Doug George (Mohawk)

The Rotinosionni (Haudenosaunee Six Nations Iroquois) trace our origins to the arrival of a sky being who descended to the earth from the Pleiades star cluster. This being was feminine and was pregnant with

a girl child. In time, the child would have twins. These two were in competition and gave form to the planet and brought about plants, animals, insects and all forms of water life. Ultimately, human beings were formed from the earth in the image of the sky beings. Primary teachings were given to the humans which the Iroquois follow to the present day. The presentation will summarize the Creation Story and its significance to the Iroquois from the beginnings to the present day.

### **30-minute Break**

#### **Panel II: Traditional Life (12:30-2:00)**

**Speaker 1 and Moderator:** Gkisedtanamoogk (Mashpee Wampanoag)

**Speaker 2:** Annawon Weeden (Mashpee Wampanoag/Pequot/Narragansett)

I'm very honored to be amongst this panel of fellow Wampanoag tribal members and advocates. As an indigenous people, many of us are proud to still walk the path of our ancestors while remaining on our ancestral lands. As Masipi people, "Great Water" people, we are also blessed to have our ancient waterways and the understanding of what that balance entails. Land & Water. Fish & Fowl. Male & Female. Plant & Animal beings. Balance. Such simple awareness, much of which is simply embedded in our DNA, before being born into this physical world. The most basic lessons, constantly reinforced throughout many generations of observing unobstructed creation. It's always an honor sharing these insights with those who wouldn't otherwise see or "think outside the box". Thank you for feeling welcome in our circle. Be in the circle or be square.

**Speaker 3:** Donald Soctomah (Passamoquoddy)

Life at the tribal village site before and after the explorers and fisherman made contact. The moccasin trail network of communication had told about people in big ship and the strange new ideas they had.

**Speaker 4:** Paulla Jennings (Narragansett)

Paulla Dove Jennings, Niantic-Narragansett Elder, nationally known storyteller and retired curator, oral historian, author, and lecturer, will share her knowledge of the lifeways of her people prior to the European invasion through today. She will weave stories of how her ancestors lived in balance, gave thanks for the gifts of the land and waters, and how this traditional knowledge was passed down generationally. She will reflect on the ancestral ecological knowledge, foodways, craftsmanship, and healthy lifestyle of the people. She will explore the truths of the "gifts" from the invaders. As well as express the value of the knowledge, resources and philosophies we have shared with them over the last 400 years dispelling stereotypes, bias' and misconceptions. Her stories will demonstrate how an equitable society cares for the people, values humanity, and ensures all are respected for their contributions to the community.

**Speaker 5:** David Weeden (Mashpee Wampanoag)

David Weeden (Mashpee Wampanoag) will bring perspectives as a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) to this discussion. Local culture and traditions inform the Wampanoag of connections to this region since time immemorial, this is affirmed through the oral histories, as well through the archaeological record. Wampanoag presence in the region predates the written records by thousands of years. Some of the oldest potential archaeological sites are suspected of being within the inundated coastal regions surrounding Wampanoag territories. There are present and potential future projects that have may provide further evidence of the paleo environment associated with habitation areas now under waters.

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and other local tribes are actively involved in local and regional archaeology through their respective Tribal Historic Preservation Offices. The involvement of these THPOs supplements the interpretative reporting of archaeological finds with a cultural perspective. Information gained from these studies and investigations can then be utilized by tribes to further educate members of all ages, with incite into the past.

Mr. Weeden considers himself a traditionalist in personal and professional life, actively partaking in cultural activities within the region. As a THPO Mr. Weeden will offer a unique perspective to the discussions on “Traditional Life” of Native Americans in the area.

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## **Session II October 4 10:00-12:00**

### **Keynote: Doctrine of Discovery (10:00-10:30)**

Mark Charles (Navajo)

The Doctrine of Discovery has had a profound and lasting impact on colonialism in the United States. This influence began with the claim that Christopher Columbus discovered lands which were already inhabited and extended to the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, and Supreme Court case law as early as 1823 and as recent as 2020. In this talk, Mark will highlight this dehumanizing legacy and share his vision for creating a more accurate common memory.

### **Panel I: Colonization in American History: Crumbling Mythological Foundations, Revealing Truths (10:30-12:00)**

#### **Speaker 1 and Moderator: Jean O'Brien (Ojibwe)**

Jean O'Brien will discuss Indigenous dispossession and the mythology enshrined in historical narratives in order to conceal the violence of settler colonialism.

#### **Speaker 2. Tom Wickman**

During the frigid winters of the Little Ice Age (c. 1300-1850), communities across the Native Northeast knew how to live well, from the lands and waters of Wampanoags and Narragansetts to the even colder homelands of Penobscots and Passamaquoddies. Average temperatures in the seventeenth century were colder by two degrees Fahrenheit than they had been centuries earlier. Stable snow cover and frozen rivers facilitated travel, education, exchange, and rich subsistence. Native families made preparations to prosper through cold conditions, storing maize and other foods, crafting warm clothing and footwear, designing fuel-efficient housing, and telling stories about winters past. Specific colonial policies beginning in the seventeenth century have created unnatural winter sufferings, and Native people have had to be resilient to survive and thrive. Yet, the non-Native public in New England, the United States, and the world knows more about Plymouth colonists' “first winter” than the thousands of winters of human history in the Northeast that came before it or the four hundred winters of Native history and survivance since then. In part, what I call a “vernal bias” in the historiography of colonial North

America—a disproportionate focus on warm-weather processes of agriculture and transatlantic shipping and trade—has obscured rich and contested winter histories. Devoting fuller attention to winter reveals the twelve-month schedules and processes of settler colonialism as well as the seasonal dimensions of Native sovereignty. Now, anthropogenic climate change threatens winter’s future, and Indigenous activists have defended cold climates as integral to Native futures on this continent.

**Speaker 3:** Darius Coombs (Mashpee Wampanoag)

Darius will address the points of Wampanoag contact with Europeans prior to the settlement of the Pilgrims, with a focus on the impact to Indigenous people. He will the kidnapping and enslavement of Wampanoag and other Native men from the coastal villages and also the devastating plague of 1616 that took up to 90% of the Wampanoag population. He will discuss the impacts of these events at the time of their occurrence, as well as their lasting effect into the present.

**Speaker 4:** jessie little doe baird (Mashpee Wampanoag) **no recording of Jessie’s talk**  
The First Reservations; Praying Towns and the Wampanoag Nation Boundaries

This panel discussion will explore the footprint of the Wampanoag Nation at the time of initial sustained contact and the geo-political problems caused by the English formed ‘praying towns’.

**Speaker 5:** Robert Miller (Eastern Shawnee)

Robert Miller will discuss the Doctrine of Discovery, in which he has identified 10 elements that serve as the justifications for the taking of Indigenous lands and treatment of the peoples, beginning in the 15th century. These elements describe false beliefs and practices, the goals of which were to obtain land (empire) through any forceful means necessary, and which were developed into European colonial and international law. He will apply these 10 elements to the Charter of 1620, and the land patents of 1621 and 1629, where the King of England "gave" Indigenous nations' territories, in what is now "New England" to English settlers in the early 17th century.

### **30-minute Break**

**Session II: October 4 12:30-2:00**

**Panel II: Colonization in American History: The “Gift” That Keeps on Taking**

**Speaker 1 and Moderator:** Lisa Brooks (Abenaki)

The First Indian War or King Philip's War has been described as both an Indigenous resistance movement and a war of conquest; it is often seen as a foundational event in New England history. However, the histories of the conflict are much more complex and cannot be contained by a single narrative. Viewing the war through the lens of kinship allows us to understand multiple places and perspectives. How did settler encroachment, before and during the war, impact Native women and their sustaining fields? How did colonial conflict divide families or bring them together? How did people survive and adapt in their homelands in the wake of the chaos of war? Looking closely at not only conflict, but diplomacy, and focusing on the history of particular places, we can see how the war arose in relationship to multiple Indigenous communities' attempts to protect their land and kin from colonial encroachment, and from multiple colonies' quest to claim "New England" as their own. We can also begin to understand how the

wide-ranging network of kinship in the Northeast allowed Native people to move, and even migrate, to seek sanctuary among their relations.

**Speaker 2: Marjorie O'Toole**

Marjory will share her primary source research documenting both the “term” and the “life-long” slavery of Indigenous people in and around Sakonnet/Little Compton, RI during and after King Phillip’s War. She will explore how Benjamin Church used the threat of slavery to secure an alliance with the Sakonnet people as well as evidence that links him to the mysterious sale of people from Sakonnet in 1704. Discussions of the personal histories of men like Joab the Sakonnet, Peter Awashonks, Amos, and Isaac, and women like Experience Tobe and Fal Solomon will reveal aspects of local Indigenous slavery and indenture well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**Speaker 3: Tyler Rogers (Narragansett)**

**Reframing Rebellion: Indigenous Women in Settler Colonial New England**

In northeastern Algonquian homelands that came to be colonized as “New England,” indigenous uprising is often framed in terms of two large-scale seventeenth-century military conflicts: the Pequot War and King Philip’s War. Yet, during the early eighteenth century, multiple indigenous women were accused of murder by New England settler colonial officials, raising the specter of armed indigenous revolt.

In this presentation, I share stories of one of these women: Patience Boston. A Nauset woman enslaved in her own homelands, Patience Boston was accused of murdering her enslaver’s grandchild in 1734. She was subsequently imprisoned and killed by Massachusetts colonial authorities as punishment for this alleged crime. Locating Patience Boston’s story within a broader genealogy of indigenous women’s ongoing resistance to settler colonial rule, I elaborate the ways in which such stories compel us to reframe rebellion. Indeed, centering indigenous women unsettles colonial histories, past and present.

**Speaker 4: Jason Mancini**

**Beyond Reservation**

Following the Pequot War and King Philip’s War and the creation of this continent's first reservations, nine million acres of Indian Country that is now southern New England evaporated from tribal possession. As forests and fields were carved up and fenced in, physical, legal, and political boundaries in the European tradition emerged. At the same time, European documentation began to paint competing pictures about the presence of Native peoples who remained in their homelands. Most Indian populations continued to be associated with reservations or “Indian towns” while other records suggest that as much as seventy-five percent of the population lived elsewhere. Jason’s reflections will address the spaces of indigenous agency that ignore or challenge settler-colonial boundaries including changing notions of tribal citizenship and indigenous land ownership, global mobility and opportunity through maritime labor, urban migration, and social and political activism. The stories that emerge from hidden, lost, or otherwise obscured colonial records help to illuminate long standing patterns of survivance of the Native peoples of this region.

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**Session III: October 18 1:00-3:00**

**Workshop I: Reclaiming and Reviving Deep Indigenous Histories on Turtle Island (1:00-2:15)**

**Speaker:** Paulette Steeves (Cree)

Indigenous Peoples early histories on Turtle Island have been denied for over a century. Archaeologists denial of Indigenous links to the land prior to 12,000 years ago, has cleaved First People's links to their homeland and created them as recent immigrants to the Americas. Yet, in many oral traditions, Indigenous people say that they have been here forever, since time immemorial. Archaeologists discuss First Peoples of the Western Hemisphere as The Clovis People, however, the only place a pan-hemispheric cultural group the so-called Clovis People ever existed was in the wildest imagination of the archaeological mind. Links to ancestors, land, identities, and history are essential to all people, to their health, healing, and well-being. For people who have survived attempted genocide, erasure of their histories, denial of their links to the land, and forced assimilation, it is vital to their health and well-being to reclaim their histories and links to the land. Reclaiming history is a path of revivance and healing, a detour off a colonial road to extinction, a journey from a painful past to a future of growth and renewal. Knowing and discussing links to land across time and space, family, identity, and culture are fundamental human rights. Archaeological sites on Turtle Island have been dated from 12,000 years to over 130,000 years, far earlier than most Settler archaeologist have acknowledged. Framed in Pyroepistemology this discussion weaves paths to reviving, reclaiming, and respecting Indigenous histories and deep links to the land. Bringing just one flame of many to fires of healing and reconciliation.

### **15-minute break**

#### **Workshop II: Historical Trauma: The Wounds that Won't Heal (2:30-3:45)**

Join us to watch Upstander Project's award-winning short film, Dear Georgina, about a Passamaquoddy grandmother's journey of healing.

Moderator and Speaker 1: gkisedtanamoogk (Mashpee Wampanoag)

Speaker 2: Mishy Lesser (Upstander Project)

Speaker 3: Dawn Neptune Adams (Penobscot)

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#### **Session IV: October 25 10:00-1:00**

##### **Panel I: Wampum Research and Relations (10:00-11:30)**

**Speaker I:** Marge Bruchac (Abenaki)

“Recovering Relationships: Identifying Indigenous Wampum Belts in Museum Collections”

Colonial era Native American and First Nations wampum belts in museum collections are often perceived as difficult to identify due to their patterns of circulation. Historically, wampum belts were created to encode and communicate tribal relations and diplomatic understandings. In museums, however, they were detached from the relations that gave them meaning, and represented as exotic, mysterious objects that represent fractured memories and lost connections. Elite institutions – such as the British Museum in London and Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford – hold a number of distinctive wampum belts dated as having been made during the 1600s and 1700s. Each of these ancestral object-beings has much to communicate; even where mysteries remain, they can still inspire decolonizing discourse around colonial encounters that still affect inter-cultural relationships today. Through the “Wampum Trail” project, Dr. Bruchac has been methodically surveying wampum in museum collections in the US, Canada, and Europe by conducting archival research, material analysis, consultations with Native communities, and cross-collections comparisons to recover object histories and heritage. In 2019, with funding from Arts Council England, she and Dr. Laura Peers

joined the search for Wampanoag wampum belts rumoured to be hidden in England; that query inspired a detailed survey of all surviving wampum belts in English museums. In cases like this, restorative research is called for – not just to locate lost objects and recover provenance data – but to also improve relations with living Indigenous communities and enable better understandings of Indigenous continuities that have been, and continue to be, ruptured by colonial and museological intrusions.

**Speaker II:** Paula Peters (Mashpee Wampanoag)

Since his untimely death in August of 1676, the Wampanoag have longed for the return of Metacom's wampum belt believed to contain the iconographic story of his people. The tribal treasure estimated to be about nine inches wide and as much as nine feet long made of thousands of shell beads was sent to England to be gifted to King Charles as a spoil of King Philip's War and never seen again. In 2019 The Wampum Belt Project restored the tradition of wampum belt making to engage the tribal community in creating and weaving beads made from the quahog shell and storytelling. Project developer, Mashpee Wampanoag Paula Peters will talk about the importance of the project as the contemporary belt tours the UK in 2020 and 2021 raising awareness of the search for the historic belt.

### **15-minute Break**

#### **Panel II: Reconnections: Bringing Family Home (12:00-1:00)**

Paula Peters (Mashpee Wampanoag)  
Terlena Murphy (St. David's Islander)

In the wake of the Pequot War and King Philip's war, and at any instance of conflict with the colonies, indigenous people deemed a threat were either executed or sent off to be sold as slaves. Those who landed on the island of St. David's in Bermuda formed a colony of their own of enslaved servants to the British overlords of the picturesque tropical islands. They lived tribally for generations always knowing who they were, and never forgotten by those who lost them. A reconnection of the St. David's Island Native descendants and their Wampanoag, Narragansett and Pequot cousins occurred in 2002 establishing a lasting relationship between the islanders and the stateside tribes. Paula Peters, a member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe who attended the first reconnection in 2002 as a journalist, and Terlena Murphy of the St. David's Island Native community who also attended the original event will talk about how it happened, why it was important and what the connection is like today.

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#### **Session V: November 1 10:00-11:30**

##### **Panel I: Challenging Colonial Institutions: Decolonizing Methodologies**

**Speaker 1 and Moderator:** Lisa King (Delaware)  
Decolonial in Practice, Not Just Theory: Connecting Land, Education, and Museums

Invoking the idea of decolonization in education is easy to say and hard to do; our educational institutions – K-12, college, and public sites such as museums – were built from colonial structures and on

Indigenous lands. How then, can we imagine decolonial possibilities within structures that were never meant to allow them?

It means that in order to put decolonial ideals into practice, we have to look closely for the opportunities at our institutions and in relationship with Indigenous nations and communities, seeking opportunities to hold space for Indigenous voices, challenging and changing the structures as best we can, even as we recognize that the work will never be finished. In this presentation, I will discuss some of the ways in which opportunities in my teaching of Indigenous rhetorics have led to relationships with my campus museum. In turn, I will show how in working with the museum I have found allies and how we are now working together to rethink how the museum works with regional Indigenous communities to better represent land, histories, and cultures. The beginnings of this effort are focused on an exhibition that centers the mound that stands on our campus, but that receives relatively little recognition in the larger narrative of campus identity. In this way, we are imagining more decolonial possibilities and ways of knowing that have been previously deprioritized or overwritten.

**Speaker 2:** Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko

The museum field is experiencing a critical gaze that is both “of the moment” and long overdue. Museums were built as colonial enterprises and are slow to awaken to the harm caused by their actions which are not limited to the capturing and keeping of Indigenous ancestors, the exclusion and erasure of Black voices, bodies, and creativity, and the positioning of white power in the C-suite and board rooms. Using a decolonizing lens, museums can make change and reduce harm. Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko will talk about her experience at the Abbe Museum where they created a decolonization initiative in 2012 and about the first steps she’s taking as the new director of the Illinois State Museum, which is part of a government agency. Her talk will focus on the practical, activist-oriented approaches to this work that is required of museum workers.

**Speaker 3:** Christine Delucia

**Decolonizing Methods in the Northeast: Promising Strategies, Current Needs, and Limits**

This talk focuses on decolonizing methodologies in museums, archives, libraries, and public history sites. Speaking from the perspective of a non-Native scholar, teacher, and ally, I will focus on three areas: mobilizing documentary, material, and other collections in classroom settings to teach decolonial methods; engaging in public-facing decolonial forms of “doing history”; and pursuing decolonial avenues of research and collaboration. This presentation will spotlight longer genealogies of critical interventions into colonial spaces, such as Amy Lonetree’s *Decolonizing Museums* and numerous community efforts across the Northeast. It will take stock of the present and look ahead to future possibilities. To ground these discussions, the presentation will draw upon concrete examples from the Northeast, ranging from very small local historical societies to much larger sites. Its primary focus is on promising practices and opportunities for social change. But it will also grapple with historical and ongoing challenges, including institutional opposition to decolonization and reluctance to engage in difficult conversations. The presentation will explore some limits of decolonial approaches, and consider where “*Indigenizing*” strategies—centered in and shaped by sovereign Tribal Nations—are most needed

**30-minute break**

**Panel II: Standing Our Ground: Resistance and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (12:00-1:00)**

Indigenous activists Michelle Cook (founder of Divest Invest Protect) and Hartman Deetz (activist and owner of Ockway Bay Wampum) will share their experiences and perspectives on the theme of Native resistance and resilience, followed by audience Q & A and discussion. Topics will include:



- Land and Indigenous Peoples Rights: Mashpee Land and Human Rights Issues
- Investments in Indigenous Rights and Indigenous Human Rights Defenders
- UNDRIP Wampum Belt: Cultural Preservation and Wampum Bead Making As Resistance and Legal Education

**Moderator:** Rae Gould (Nipmuc)

**Speaker 1:** Michelle Cook (Navajo)

*Divest Invest, Protect* calls for the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Divestment is not a new strategy in the world of social justice movements. From divestment campaigns relating to apartheid to human rights boycott, divest, and sanction movements, divestment is an effective tool used by communities seeking justice and visibility. The experience of Standing Rock displays the bank's key role in perpetuating or mitigating company conduct relating to the enjoyment of indigenous peoples' rights. Understanding the role these global financial institutions play and how to keep them accountable is not only imperative for justice in Indian Country, but the United States, and global civil society. Indian women are challenging the world's largest oil and gas funders. In doing so, they are lifting the veil that obscures the role banks and financial institutions play in protecting and respecting indigenous rights. For far too long indigenous peoples call for justice fell into a void, now the world finally hears their cry. Standing Rock, like Selma, represent and mark moments of societal shifts that will continue to emerge and hopefully inspire the creation and development of more just and accountable economic institutions for all. Standing Rock empowered a generation of indigenous people and American citizens to demand justice and accountability from their financial institutions. The *Divest, Invest, Protect* project continues this brave and bold endeavor.

**Speaker 2:** Hartman Deetz (Mashpee Wampanoag)

I will speak on 400 years of the colonial mentality: the commodification of nature and native populations.

**Session VI: November 8 (10:00-1:30)**

**Panel I: Finding Home: Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project (10:00-11:30)**

**Speaker 1 and Moderator:** Jen Weston (Lakota)

Co-founded in 1993 by Aquinnah Wampanoag elder Helen Manning and Mashpee Wampanoag linguist jessie little doe baird, the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project was established as an inter-tribal cooperative project governed by a board of directors elected from all active language students, or WLRP's "language committee." The committee meets quarterly to set program priorities and assess community language priorities.

Originally run entirely by volunteers, WLRP is now a registered 501c3 nonprofit organization with a staff of 12 educators and administrators. WLRP operates a full-time language survival school and language nest serving 30 children from preschool through third grade – with plans to expand through middle school grades in the coming years. After receiving its first major funding award from the Administration for Native Americans in 2010 to support a master-apprentice training program to certify future language teachers, WLRP has since expanded its instructional approach to include K-12 public school language

education opportunities for 100+ Tribal students – primarily in Mashpee Public Schools. Year-round community and elders language classes also meet online and in communities where WLRP has certified language teachers, including Aquinnah, Boston, Bourne/Plymouth, Mashpee, New Bedford, and Wareham. WLRP also offers professional development opportunities for educators, summer language and culture camps for children, and family immersion camps.

WLRP’s founding vision is to restore Wôpanâk (Wampanoag language) as a principal means of expression for the citizens of the Wampanoag Nation. Our team works to achieve our mission to return language home to Wampanoag Tribal households through partnership programs and memoranda of understanding with our four member Tribes who support our work, leadership, and student community: the Assonet Band of Wampanoag, the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah).

**Speaker 2:** Eleanor Coombs (Mashpee Wampanoag)

I will be talking about the positive impacts of community outreach and the importance of the collaboration of Wampanoag language for tribal students in the public school system.

**Speaker 3:** Camille Madison (Aquinnah Wampanoag)

The future of our Nation depends on the investment we make in our youth today. At Mukayuhsak Weekuw (The Children House), we strive for excellence in education as well as being deeply rooted in Wôpanâk language and traditions. Knowing that this has not occurred in our communities for over 400 years, prior to our doors opening, gives me great zeal to serve our youth each and every day.

**Speaker 4:** Tia Pocknett (Mig’kaw)

**Speaker 5:** Melanie Deetz (Assonet Wampanoag)

I will be speaking about the successes and challenges of bringing Traditional Wampanoag Knowledge, Language in particular, into the public school setting and how that has benefitted and helped support our young people as they navigate through the high school experience.

### **30-minute break**

## **Panel II: Feeding Our Spirit: Indigenous Food Sovereignty (12:00-1:30)**

**Speaker 1 and Moderator:** Elizabeth Hoover (Mohawk)

Food Sovereignty In Indian Country

As a result of settler colonial encounters, loss of land, assimilationist policies, and environmental change, Indigenous communities in the United States have experienced dramatic changes to traditional food systems. This has contributed to disproportionate rates of adverse metabolic health conditions; culture and language loss; and ongoing negative economic impacts. Community-based projects seeking to provide healthy food, and in many cases revive traditional seeds and horticultural practices, have been cropping up in Native American communities, in order to impart food production knowledge, help community members to “decolonize” their diets, and work towards broader goals of food sovereignty. This talk will give a broad overview of the Native American food sovereignty movement in the US and discuss the role of community based farming and gardening projects, heirloom seeds and Native chefs in promoting food sovereignty across Indian Country.

**Speaker 2:** Juli Vanderhoop (Aquinnah Wampanoag)

I will discuss my thoughts on the use of open space land in Aquinnah. Working with other like-minded groups, we now have a parcel of land designated for a food forest and have created a design plan for it. This is something that when finished will also have affordable housing and a playground. I hope that by showing people what grows here naturally will inspire more open space land use in these creative ways.

**Speaker 3:** Cassius Spears (Narragansett)

Cassius Spears will share his thoughts and experiences working regionally and nationally within the Native Agricultural environment, touching on the values of food sovereignty, food sustainability and food control from a cultural perspective.

**Speaker 4:** Kristina Hook (Aquinnah Wampanoag)

Kristina will speak about growing up in Gay Head, foraging from what surrounded her family, and how everyday life included gathering from the ocean and its environs, and the woods and fields. She will relate her experiences growing up and listening to her "old ones" talk about the food and medicine that has been given to us, learning to say a prayer of thanks to each plant, tree, or fish and rabbit, or deer. Kristina will also relate the pride she takes in passing on what she has learned to the young people, hoping to inspire them to teach as well.

**Speaker 5:** Sherry Pocknett (Mashpee Wampanoag)

Sherry will talk about her life growing up in Mashpee, knowing the woods and waters of this original Wampanoag village place. Her father taught her to hunt, fish, forage, garden and barter, just as he had learned from his parents and grandparents. Sherry learned to cook from her mother who comes from a large family of many great chefs, who became famous for their indigenous food recipes and service.

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**Session VII: November 15 10:00-1:30**

**I: From the Ancestors' Hands: Artists' Roundtable**

New England Indigenous Artists

Artmaking for indigenous artists is embedded with tradition, for each artist, our values, our culture is inherently what influences our creativity. We are truly ambassadors of the land that we come from and as artists, our art represents each of our own landscapes. This panel will have an opportunity to look at each artist's work, and how they are based in tradition, are being created or reimaged in more contemporary ways.

**Speaker 1 and Moderator:** Dawn Spears (Narragansett)

Drawing on my northeastern woodland culture, I have a contemporary style, free-hand abstract design work that incorporates the vibrant colors symbolism, patterns and elements from the natural world. Painting on clothing has been a longstanding dream for me, I feel like my art invigorates the wearer. Bright, bold designs invoke a sense of confidence and strength that empower one to conquer whatever challenge may lie ahead.

**Speaker 2:** Jim Taylor (Abenaki, Cherokee)

I am a Quillworker, in the style of the Eastern People of the Western Abenaki. I have been doing quillwork for some 30 years now and have quilled hundreds of pieces during this time and each piece has a part of me. Quillwork is an artform that is practiced by so many Indigenous people of Turtle Island from various communities. Quillwork was virtually set aside with the advent of the bead trade brought during Colonization, beads replaced quills but not the various patterns, designs and totems on the items being created to exhibit our “Power” through those patterns, designs and totems. Our POWER was never lost, and through my quillwork, though and art form done by women I feel my ancestors with me as I stich each quill down onto a piece of Braintan Deer or Moose skin. I feel that power with the gift I have been given as and artist from the Creator, and I share that gift freely with other Indigenous people who wish to learn so that it will continue to have the power of the Ancestors.

**Speaker 3:** Robert Peters (Mashpee Wampanoag)

For me being a Wampanoag artist is almost exclusively a spiritual endeavor to give voice to the voiceless and state the unsaid. I view my creations as gifts that have been given to me so I can share them with people like me through performance, sale or gifting. By doing these things in spite of our upstream journey we take back some of the power that has been taken or given away. Every time we tell or listen to our own stories, we take back a measure of power. Every time we support our own businesses we take back power.

**Speaker 4:** Berta Welch (Aquinnah Wampanoag)

Wampum comes from the shell of the quahog, a shellfish that has provided sustenance for our people for thousands of years. The word "wampum" is derived from the Narragansett word for "white shell beads." The mostly white quahog shell has gradations of color from lighter to deep purple at the hinge. My work has refined the natural process cutting, grinding and shaping shell with modern tools. As the dust falls away, I continue to be amazed and thrilled by the unknown design that emerges. Each one is different. With each new piece I create I think of our people who made these beads for centuries. In using the most purple part of the shell I introduce other shells and stones creating unique jewelry. I attribute my creativity to my mother, potter and my father, a silversmith.

**Speaker 5:** Theresa Secord (Penobscot)

As a Penobscot basket maker, I work in a continuum of Wabanaki artists practicing ash and sweet grass basketry for many generations in the Maliseet, Mikmaq, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot tribes in Maine. Once relegated to a nearly forgotten “craft” being kept alive by a few steadfast culture bearers and elders, this remarkable, ancient art form has been adapted and made contemporary by a new generation of young Wabanaki artists, over the past 20 years. This intentional act was carried out by an alliance of Indigenous artists who set out to save their own endangered art form, and did. Now, as the generation who selflessly taught the next passes on, taking their language and first hand knowledge of traditional ecological knowledge and traditional cultural expression with them, we’re made to to reflect on what the legacy of our generation, will be. A review of many baskets, photos and anecdotal stories of our own ancestors, for an upcoming art exhibition, gave me a profound aha moment last year, when I realized that not only did native women make most of the baskets in the historic postcard photos, but they also sold them. In the photo of my great grandmother, Philomene Saulis Nelson selling her baskets on Indian Island, ME in 1953, I see a proud resilient Wabanaki woman exercising her sovereignty by practicing her own economic self-sufficiency. I am proud to part of this legacy and weave

**(30-minute break)**

**II. Telling Our Own Stories: Museum Roundtable (12:00-1:30)**

New England Tribal Museums

**Speaker 1 and Moderator:** Darius Coombs (Mashpee Wampanoag) (WIP/PP)

Darius will engage the panelists in discussion of the work of their respective organizations as well as present on the work of the Wampanoag Indigenous Program of Plimoth Plantation. Topics of discussion will be the appropriate presentation and issues of representation of New England Indigenous tribal histories and cultures; and the importance and relevance of preserving them.

**Speaker 2:** Loren Spears (Narragansett) (Tomaquag Museum)

Voicing Truths

Lorén Spears, Narragansett, Executive Director of Tomaquag Museum will share how the museum transformed from a grass-roots, volunteer-run organization to a nationally recognized museum. Tomaquag Museum, an Institute of Museum and Library Services National Medal winner, is Rhode Island's only Indigenous led museum and the staff educates the public regarding the history of the Narragansett, Niantic and other Indigenous peoples that intersect upon this land. The history, culture, lifeways, arts, sciences are woven through the exhibits, programs, events, and educational resources created to support public knowledge. Through the Indigenous Empowerment Network, we educate, engage and uplift the Indigenous community through arts, education, career development, entrepreneurship and advocacy. Tomaquag Museum works to eradicate bias, stereotypes, inequities, and ensure Indigenous voice not only with our myriad of partners but also through social, political, educational, and environmental advocacy. The museum also works toward decolonization of museums, education and other institutions. Tomaquag Museum shares the stories that must be told, uncovering hidden histories, voicing truths and empowering the next generation.

**Speaker 3:** Adriana Giles Ignacio (Aquinnah Wampanoag) (Aquinnah Cultural Center)

During my participation of the round table I will be speaking about the importance of the Aquinnah Cultural Center during this day and age, especially for the Aquinnah Wampanoag people here on Martha's Vineyard Island where many people think only the Island as a wealthy resort unaware of the indigenous people who still live and survived here.

**Speaker 4:** David Weeden (Mashpee Wampanoag) (Mashpee Wampanoag Museum)

David Weeden (Mashpee Wampanoag) will bring perspectives as a Tribal Historic Preservation Department (THPD) director to this discussion. As part of Mr. Weeden's responsibilities as the THPD director, he is responsible for the operations and maintenance of the Tribal Museum and Old Indian Meeting House (OIMH). These two structures are on the State Register of Historic Properties and the OIMH is on the National Register of Historic Places or eligible.

Mr. Weeden has relevant knowledge to the "Tribal Museums" discussion through his role as the THPD director for the Tribe, with a full understanding of the challenges associated with O&M of cultural facilities such as these. Some of these challenges are limited revenue, patronage, research and exhibit development, as well as staffing. The creation of two new exhibits Mr. Weeden offers insight how the Mashpee Indian Museum is confronting these challenges and keeping the public engaged.

Mr. Weeden has a passion for preserving the past and educating the general public on the rich culture of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. As the Director of the THPD Mr. Weeden will offer a unique perspective to the discussions on "Tribal Museums".

**Speaker 5:** Chris Newell (Passamaquoddy) (Abbe Museum)

Incorporating Native Perspectives Through Equitable Collaboration: Native perspectives in the educational system in 2020 are still relatively sparse. Our school systems are still negotiating to incorporate Native content rooted in methodologies from the 19th century. This presentation will frame practices for incorporating Native content, identifying competent source material, and equitable

collaboration methodologies to build new impactful content to Re-Indigenize history, science, and other disciplines of education.

**Speaker 6:** James Francis (Penobscot)

#### Story of Two-Collars

This presentation tracks the story of two beaded collars in the Penobscot Community. Through these rich narratives, we will look at the role of museums in American and how policies have caused cultural erosion within Native American Communities. This presentation also explore how new pathways for museum can bridge the gap of rifted relationships with the communities whose cultural heritage items they possess. Through digital repatriation, tribal communities can receive images and metadata of cultural heritage items. Reconnecting items that have been stripped from their communities is a true homecoming of these items and the first step in understanding the loss within a community.

Using the Penobscot Nation as an example we will explore, why this work is important in our community, what tools we have employed to ensure we have a collective tribal voice, and how we have begun the work of digital repatriation using tools such as Local Contexts' Traditional Knowledge Labels, and Mukurtu CMS.

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**Session VIII: November 21 (10:00-1:30)**

#### **I. Writing Ourselves into Existence: Authors' Roundtable (10:00-11:30)**

New England Native Authors and Literature

This roundtable features some of the most prestigious authors represented in the book *Dawnland Voices: An Anthology of Indigenous Writing from New England* (U of Nebraska P, 2014). At nearly 700 pages, the book and its sister website, dawnlandvoices.org, have reaffirmed what Indigenous people in the Northeast have always known: that they have vibrant, written literary traditions dating back at least to the seventeenth century. Our guests will discuss their own wide-ranging work, from poetry to history to speculative fiction and screenplays; consider how that work fits within their specific, continuous tribal literary histories; and explore other topics including the role of literature in Indigenous language revitalization.

**Moderator:** Siobhan Senier

Dawnland Voices

This roundtable features some of the most prestigious authors represented in the book *Dawnland Voices: An Anthology of Indigenous Writing from New England* (U of Nebraska P, 2014). At nearly 700 pages, the book and its sister website, dawnlandvoices.org, have reaffirmed what Indigenous people in the Northeast have always known: that they have vibrant, written literary traditions dating back at least to the seventeenth century. Our guests will discuss their own wide-ranging work, from poetry to history to speculative fiction and screenplays; consider how that work fits within their specific, continuous tribal literary histories; and explore other topics including the role of literature in Indigenous language revitalization.

**Speaker1** Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel

Discuss the way in which telling our stories on stage allows us to share our experiences with others in Indian Country through performing them and offering perspectives on our shared commonalities and/or unique differences as well as share the unique rhythms of our people's voices.

**Speaker 2** Carol Dana (Penobscot)

Language and poetry

**Speaker 3** John Christian Hopkins (Penobscot)

Native journalism

**Speaker 4** Cheryl Savageau (Abenaki)

Poetry, memoir

**Speaker 5** Linda Coombs (Aquinnah Wampanoag)

*Massachusetts Chronicles* and the importance of being visible

### 30-minute Break

## II From Traditional Knowledge to Colonial Oversight to Indigenous Integration: Educator's Roundtable (12:00-1:30)

Indian Education in New England

**Speaker 1 and Moderator:** Alice Nash

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers are hungry for more and better training in how to teach Native American histories. This is clear from the passionate applications we received for our NEH Summer Institutes, which focus on Indigenous New England while introducing key concepts applicable to other regions. Challenges for teachers to overcome include lack of materials, competing curriculum requirements, and the need to educate parents, administrators, and other teachers on histories they never learned. Extraordinary changes can happen when teachers are given the opportunity to learn with and from Indigenous communities, and to work collaboratively with each other.

**Speaker 2:** Tobias Vanderhoop (Aquinnah Wampanoag)

I was honored to be asked to discuss the Wampanoag historic ties to education. Early on our people took in English education in our communities and at institutions such as Harvard Indian College. Our people used the knowledge gained coupled with our traditional knowledge to protect and advocate for our people, culture, lands and resources. Successive generations have built the pursuit of higher education into the fabric of our Tribe it is a tool that serves and strengthens our Tribal Nation in the modern day.

**Speaker 3:** Jennifer Weston (Hunkpapa Lakota, Standing Rock)

Numukayuhsunônak: Our Children Speak Two Languages

The Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project (WLRP) is a 27 year old nonprofit educational organization serving four Tribes of the Wampanoag Nation: Mashpee, Aquinnah, Herring Pond, and the Assonet Band. WLRP has also launched partnerships and programs to support "Indian Education for All"-inspired approaches, based on the comprehensive statewide frameworks originating in Montana. Namely, our U.S. Department of Education-funded program, "Numukayuhsunônak: Our Children Speak Two Languages," promotes literacy through family engagement activities, and seeks to increase both English and Wôpanâak language proficiency among Wampanoag students enrolled in Pre-K through Grade 12 in Mashpee, MA. Students in all three of Mashpee Public Schools and WLRP's own language survival school, Weetumuw Katnuhtôtâkamuq, receive both Wôpanâak language classes and culturally responsive support in English reading and writing.

In addition to providing free language- and culture-based after school and in school enrichment programs for K-6 Tribal students in Mashpee Public Schools, WLRP also offers daily World Language credit-bearing courses for grades 8-12, and integrates Native authors and filmmakers into the ELA, History, and school to work career opportunities for all MPS student. Through educator collaborations, guest lectures,

professional development workshops, and curriculum materials purchases, our Numukayhsunônak program has provided MPS teachers, students, and administrators with more than a dozen Native-authored books across K-12 reading levels, and incorporated Native-produced films and teacher guides into the school libraries. For the 2020-2021 school year WLRP and MPS co-authored a schoolwide Land Acknowledgement Statement to recognize and honor the many generations of Wôpanâak people who have lived and been sustained in this territory for more than 10,000 years. Numukayhsunônak launched Year 3 of its five-year project plan on October 1, 2020.

**Speaker 4:** Alyssa Mt. Pleasant (Tuscarora)

Drawing on her work with colleagues in New England, Mt. Pleasant will discuss important ongoing connections among and between campus- and community-based scholars who supported the 2012 Native American and Indigenous Studies Association conference held at Mohegan Sun. Related to this, she will draw on a recent publication about materials and methods in NAIS to discuss ongoing opportunities for grounded cooperation and collaboration.

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**Session IX: November 22 (10:00-12:30)**

**Closing Plenary Sessions:**

**Justice for the Land (10:00-11:00)**

Robin Wall Kimmerer (Potawatomi)

Contrasting worldviews on human relationships to land have been at the heart of the painful history of Indigenous land dispossession and degradation on Turtle Island since the inception of colonization. They continue to play out on our homelands today. Together, we imagine the path of healing of land and relationship that advances land justice, guided by indigenous philosophy and practice.

**15-minute Break**

**Sacred Instructions (11:15-12:15)**

Sherri Mitchell (Penobscot)

“Many recognize that this time represents a critical crossroads for humanity, a teetering point of choice that will determine the future of all life. Yet we seem to have become frozen by fear, unable to determine which path to follow. The good news is that we don't have to make this choice blindly. We have been given all the guidance that is necessary to choose the right path.

We all come into this world with a set of instructions. These instructions guide us to our higher purpose. They lead us to the essential truths that live deep within us. This truth is encoded into our DNA. It is embedded into our genetic memory. It vibrates with us on a cellular level. Every element of life carries this vibration. Every living being has its own vibrational tone. When these tones are combined, they form the voice of creation. If we learn to listen closely, we can begin to hear that voice and allow it to guide our steps in life. Then we can begin to hear that voice and allow it to guide our steps to life. Then we can begin to attune our daily actions with our higher purpose and become who we were meant to be.”



**Ending and Continuing Thoughts (12:15-12:30)**

Linda Coombs and Joyce Rain Anderson

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