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Author(s): Virginia DeJohn Anderson

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King Philip's Herds: Indians, Colonists, and the Problem of Livestock in Early New England

Virginia DeJohn Anderson

ON a late spring day in 1669, the ambitious younger son of a prominent Rhode Island family received a letter from the town clerk of Portsmouth. Like many of his neighbors, the young man raised livestock and followed the common practice of placing his pigs on a nearby island where they could forage safe from predators. But that was what brought him to the attention of Portsmouth's inhabitants, who ordered the clerk to reprimand him for "intrudeinge on" the town's rights when he ferried his beasts to "hog-Island." The townsmen insisted that he remove "Such Swine or other Catle" as he had put there, on pain of legal action. They took the unusual step of instructing the clerk to make two copies of the letter and retain the duplicate—in effect preparing their legal case even before the recipient contested their action.¹

It was by no means unusual for seventeenth-century New Englanders to find themselves in trouble with local officials, particularly when their search for gain conflicted with the rights of the community. But this case was different. We can only wonder what Metacom, whom the English called King Philip, made of the peremptory directive from the Portsmouth town clerk—for indeed it was to him, son of Massasoit and now sachem of the Wampanoags himself, that the letter was addressed. Because the records (which directed no comparable order to any English swine owner) do not mention the outcome of the dispute, we may suppose that Philip complied with the town's demand. The episode was thus brief, but it was no less

Ms. Anderson is a member of the Department of History, University of Colorado, Boulder. She thanks Fred Anderson, James Axtell, Bernard Bailyn, Barbara DeWolfe, Ruth Helm, Stephen Innes, Karen Kupperman, Gloria Main, Daniel Mandell, George Phillips, Neal Salisbury, Richard White, and Anne Yentsch for their helpful comments. She also thanks participants at seminars held at the Charles Warren Center at Harvard University, the American Antiquarian Society, and the Massachusetts Historical Society for their responses to earlier drafts of this essay. Generous support was received from a Charles Warren Center fellowship, a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, and a grant-in-aid from the University of Colorado Council on Research and Creative Work.

¹ Clarence S. Brigham, ed., *The Early Records of the Town of Portsmouth* (Providence, R. I., 1901), 149–150. On the use of islands for grazing see Carl Bridenbaugh, *Fat Mutton and Liberty of Conscience: Society in Rhode Island, 1636–1690* (Providence, R. I., 1974), 16–17.

important for that, because it involved the man whose name would soon be associated with what was, in proportion to the populations involved, the most destructive war in American history.²

For three centuries, historians have depicted Philip in many ways—as a savage chieftain, an implacable foe of innocent Christian settlers, and a doomed victim of European aggressors—but never as a keeper of swine. Although the Hog Island episode may seem unrelated to the subsequent horrors of King Philip's War, the two events were in fact linked. Philip resorted to violence in 1675 because of mounting frustrations with colonists, and no problem vexed relations between settlers and Indians more frequently in the years before the war than the control of livestock.³ English colonists imported thousands of cattle, swine, sheep, and horses (none of which is native to North America) because they considered livestock essential to their survival, never supposing that the beasts would become objectionable to the Indians. But the animals exacerbated a host of problems related to subsistence practices, land use, property rights and, ultimately, political authority. Throughout the 1660s, Philip found himself caught in the middle, trying to defend Indian rights even as he adapted to the English presence. The snub delivered by Portsmouth's inhabitants showed him the limits of English flexibility, indicating that the colonists ultimately valued their livestock more than good relations with his people. When Philip recognized that fact, he took a critical step on the path that led him from livestock keeper to war leader.

Successful colonization of New England depended heavily on domestic animals. Nowhere is this better seen than in the early history of Plymouth Colony. Not until 1624—four years after the *Mayflower's* arrival—did Edward Winslow bring from England “three heifers and a bull, the first beginning of any cattle of that kind in the land.” This date, not coincidentally, marked the end of the Pilgrims' “starving times” as dairy products and meat began to supplement their diet. By 1627, natural increase and further importations brought the Plymouth herd to at least fifteen animals, whose muscle power increased agricultural productivity.⁴ The leaders of Massachusetts Bay Colony, perhaps learning from Plymouth's experience,

² Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York, 1958), 243–244; for a detailed account of the impact of the war on one town see Richard I. Melvoin, *New England Outpost: War and Society in Colonial Deerfield* (New York, 1989), 92–128.

³ Historians, when they have investigated livestock at all, have generally done so from an ecological perspective; see, for instance, William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York, 1983), and Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (New York, 1986).

⁴ William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York, 1952), 141; Nathaniel Shurtleff and David Pulsifer, eds., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England*, 12 vols. (Boston, 1855–1861), XII, 9–13. See also Darrett B. Rutman, *Husbandmen of Plymouth: Farms and Villages in the Old Colony, 1620–1692* (Boston, 1967), 6, 14–15.

brought animals from the start. John Winthrop regularly noted the arrival of settlers and livestock during the 1630s, often recording levels of ship-board mortality among animals as well as people. Edward Johnson estimated that participants in the Great Migration spent £12,000 to transport livestock across the ocean, not counting the original cost of the animals.⁵

Early descriptions often focused on the land's ability to support livestock. John Smith noted that in New England there was "grasse plenty, though very long and thicke stalked, which being neither mowne nor eaten, is very ranke, yet all their cattell like and prosper well therewith." Francis Higginson informed English friends that the "fertility of the soil is to be admired at, as appeareth in the abundance of grass that groweth everywhere." "It is scarce to be believed," he added, "how our kine and goats, horses, and hogs do thrive and prosper here and like well of this country." Colonists preferred to settle in areas with ample natural forage. Salt marshes attracted settlers to Hampton, New Hampshire, and Sudbury's founders valued their town's riverside fresh meadow. Haverhill's settlers negotiated with the colony government for a large tract for their town in order to satisfy their "over-weaning desire . . . after Medow land." Most inland clearings bore mute witness to recent habitation by Indians, whose periodic burnings kept the areas from reverting to forest.⁶

The size of a town's herds soon became an important measure of its prosperity. As early as 1634, William Wood noted that Dorchester, Roxbury, and Cambridge were particularly "well stored" with cattle. Other commentators added to the list of towns with burgeoning herds. In 1651, Edward Johnson tallied the human and livestock populations for several communities as a measure of divine favor. His enumeration revealed that towns with three or four dozen families also contained several hundred head of livestock.⁷ Like Old Testament patriarchs, New England farmers counted their blessings as they surveyed their herds.

⁵ John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. James Savage, 2 vols. (Boston, 1825–1826), I, passim; Edward Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, 1628–1651*, ed. J. Franklin Jameson, *Original Narratives of Early American History* (New York, 1910), 54.

⁶ John Smith, "Advertisements for the unexperienced Planters of New-England, or any where . . ." (1631), in Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, 3d Ser., III (1833), 37; Higginson to His Friends at Leicester, Sept. 1629, in Everett Emerson, ed., *Letters from New England: The Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1629–1638* (Amherst, Mass., 1976), 31; *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence*, ed. Jameson, 188–189, 195–196, quotations on 234–235. See also William Wood, *New England's Prospect*, ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Amherst, Mass., 1977; orig. pub. 1634), 33–34. For the choice of Indian clearings for English settlement, see Howard S. Russell, *A Long, Deep Furrow: Three Centuries of Farming in New England* (Hanover, N. H., 1976), 22.

⁷ Wood, *New England's Prospect*, ed. Vaughan, 58–60; Samuel Maverick, *A Briefe Description of New England and the Severall Townes Therein Together with the Present Government Thereof* (1660), (Boston, 1885), 8–15; Paul J. Lindholdt, ed., *John Josselyn, Colonial Traveler: A Critical Edition of "Two Voyages to New-England"* (Hanover, N. H., 1988), 110–119, 138–141; *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence*, ed. Jameson, 68–69, 72, 110, 188–189, 195–197. In Cape Cod towns during the 17th century, a majority of householders owned cattle and swine; see Anne E. Yentsch, "Farming, Fishing, Whaling, Trading: Land and Sea as Resource on Eighteenth-Century Cape Cod," in Mary C. Beaudry, ed., *Documentary Archaeology in the New World* (New York, 1988), Table 13.8, 149.

Their interest in livestock grew in part from their English experience. Many settlers came from England's wood-pasture region, where they had engaged in a mixed husbandry of cattle and grain. In New England, the balance in that agrarian equation tipped toward livestock because the region's chronic labor shortage made raising cattle a particularly efficient use of resources. Selectmen usually hired one or two town herdsman, freeing other livestock owners to clear fields, till crops, and construct buildings and fences. Until settlers managed to plant English hay, livestock foraged on the abundant, though less nutritious, native grasses, converting otherwise worthless herbage into milk and meat for consumption and sale. Livestock were so important to survival that New Englanders reversed the usual English fencing practices. English law required farmers to protect their crops by confining livestock within fenced or hedged pastures, but New England farmers were enjoined to construct and maintain sufficiently sturdy fences around cornfields to keep their peripatetic beasts out.⁸

Raising livestock had cultural as well as economic ramifications. For colonists, the absence of indigenous domestic animals underscored the region's essential wildness. "The country is yet raw," wrote Robert Cushman in 1621, "the land untilled; the cities not builded; the cattle not settled." The English saw a disturbing symmetry between the savagery of the land and its human and animal inhabitants. America, noted Cushman, "is spacious and void," and the Indians "do but run over the grass, as do also the foxes and wild beasts."⁹ Such evaluations ultimately fueled colonists' own claims to the land. The "savage people," argued John Winthrop, held no legitimate title "for they inclose no ground, neither have they cattell to maintayne it, but remove their dwellings as they have occasion." Winthrop's objection to the Indians' seminomadic habits stemmed from a cultural assumption that equated civilization with sedentarism, a way of life that he linked to the keeping of domesticated animals. Drawing on biblical history, Winthrop argued that a "civil" right to the earth resulted when, "as men and cattell increased, they appropriated some parcells of ground by enclosing and peculiar manurance." Subduing—indeed, domesticating—the wilderness with English people and English beasts thus became a cultural imperative. New England could become a new Canaan, a land of milk and honey, only if, Thomas Morton wryly observed, "the Milke came by the industry" of its civilizing immigrants and their imported livestock.¹⁰

Accordingly, only those Indians who submitted to "domestication" could live in the New England Canaan. They had to accept Christianity, of

⁸ Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1991), 30–31, 151–152, 154–156; Russell, *Long, Deep Furrow*, chap. 4; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 141–142; Rutman, *Husbandmen of Plymouth*, 17–19; David Thomas Konig, *Law and Society in Puritan Massachusetts: Essex County, 1629–1692* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1979), 118–119.

⁹ Cushman, "Reasons and Considerations Touching the Lawfulness of Removing Out of England into the Parts of America" and "Of the State of the Colony, and the Need of Public Spirit in the Colonists," in Alexander Young, ed., *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth, From 1602 to 1625*, 2d ed. (Boston, 1844), 265, 243.

¹⁰ Allyn B. Forbes et al., eds., *Winthrop Papers, 1498–1654*, 6 vols. (Boston, 1929–1992), II,

course; in addition, colonists insisted that they adopt English ways entirely, including the keeping of domestic animals. Roger Williams urged natives to move "from Barbarism to Civilitie, in forsaking their filthy nakednes, in keeping some kind of Cattell."¹¹ John Eliot offered livestock, among other material incentives, to entice Indians to become civilized. He admonished one native audience: "if you were more wise to know God, and obey his Commands, you would work more then [sic] you do." Labor six days a week, as God commanded and the English did, and, Eliot promised, "you should have cloths, houses, cattle, riches as they have, God would give you them."¹²

To assist Indians in making this transformation, Puritan officials established fourteen "praying towns" where they could proceed toward conversion as they earned the material rewards Providence would bestow. The inhabitants of these communities not only would learn to worship God as the English did but also would wear English clothes, live in English framed houses, and farm with English animals. Among the goods sent from England to support this civilizing program were seven bells for oxen, to be distributed to Indian farmers who exchanged their traditional hoe agriculture for the plow.¹³ Soon the increase in livestock became as much a hallmark of the success of the praying towns as it was of English communities. Daniel Gookin reported in 1674 that the praying town of Hassanamesitt (Grafton) was "an apt place for keeping of cattle and swine; in which respect this people are the best stored of any Indian town of their size." He went on to observe, however, that though these natives "do as well, or rather better, than any other Indians" in raising crops and animals, they "are very far short of the English both in diligence and providence."¹⁴

Praying Indians raised livestock as participants in what may be called an experiment in acculturation. By moving to places such as Natick or

120; Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan or New Canaan . . .* (1637), ed. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., *Publications of the Prince Society*, XIV (Boston, 1883), 230. The honey for the New England Canaan would also be an import, since honeybees are not native to America; see Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, 188–189. English concern about sedentarism and the connection to property rights is addressed in Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 130, and Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500–1643* (New York, 1982), 176–177.

¹¹ Glenn W. LaFantasie, ed., *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, 2 vols. (Hanover, N. H., and London, 1988), II, 413.

¹² Letter from Eliot in Thomas Shepard, "The Clear Sun-shine of the Gospel Breaking Forth upon the Indians in New-England . . ." (1648), MHS, *Colls.*, 3d Ser., IV (1834), 57–58.

¹³ William Kellaway, *The New England Company, 1649–1776: Missionary Society to the American Indians* (New York, 1961), 69.

¹⁴ Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England" (1674), MHS, *Colls.*, 1st Ser., I (1792), 185; see also 184, 189, and Lindholdt, ed., *John Josselyn, Colonial Traveler*, 105. On the establishment of the praying towns see James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York, 1985), chap. 7; Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1975), chap. 14; Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The 'Praying Indians' of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot," *William*

Hassanamesitt, they announced their intention to follow English ways—including animal husbandry—in hopes of finding favor with the Christian God.¹⁵ But the praying towns never contained more than a tiny minority of the native population; most Indians rejected the invitation to exchange their ways for English ones. For the vast majority, the cattle and swine that served as emblems of the praying Indians' transformation had a very different meaning. They became instead a source of friction, revealing profound differences between Indians and colonists.

As Indians encountered these unfamiliar animals, they had to decide what to call them. Williams reported that the Narragansetts first looked for similarities in appearance and behavior between an indigenous animal and one of the new beasts and simply used the name of the known beast for both animals. Thus *ockqutchaun-nug*, the name of a "wild beast of a reddish haire about the bignesse of a Pig, and rooting like a Pig," was used for English swine. Finding no suitable parallels for most domestic animals, however, the Narragansetts resorted to neologisms such as "cowsnuck," "goatesuck," and eventually "hogsuck" or "pigsuck." The "termination *suck*, is common in their language," Williams explained, "and therefore they adde it to our English Cattell, not else knowing what names to give them."¹⁶

Giving these animals Indian names in no way implied that most Indians wanted to own livestock. In fact, contact with domestic animals initially produced the opposite reaction, because livestock husbandry did not fit easily with native practices. Indians could hardly undertake winter hunting expeditions accompanied by herds of cattle that required shelter and fodder to survive the cold weather. Swine would compete with their owners for nuts, berries, and roots, and the presence of livestock of any kind tended to drive away deer.¹⁷ Moreover, the Indians, for whom most beasts were literally fair game, struggled with the very notion of property in animals. They assumed that one could own only dead animals, which hunters shared with their families.¹⁸

and *Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., XXXI (1974), 27–54; and James P. Ronda, "Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard," *ibid.*, XXXVIII (1981), 369–394.

¹⁵ The praying Indians never fully adopted the English program for their cultural transformation; see Harold W. Van Lonkhuysen, "A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians: Acculturation, Conversion, and Identity at Natick, Massachusetts, 1646–1730," *New England Quarterly*, LXIII (1990), 396–428, and Kathleen J. Bragdon, "The Material Culture of the Christian Indians of New England, 1650–1775," in Beaudry, ed., *Documentary Archaeology*, 126–131. Their attempts to balance English prescriptions with native preferences suffered heavily after King Philip's War; see Daniel Mandell, "To Live More Like My Christian English Neighbors': Natick Indians in the Eighteenth Century," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XLVIII (1991), 552–579.

¹⁶ Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, ed. John J. Teunissen and Evelyn J. Hinz (Detroit, Mich., 1973), 173–175. An "*ockqutchaun*" was a woodchuck; I am grateful to James Baker of Plimoth Plantation for this information.

¹⁷ Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 101, 108; M. K. Bennett, "The Food Economy of the New England Indians, 1605–75," *Journal of Political Economy*, LXIII (1955), 369–397.

¹⁸ Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 129–130.

Further, the adoption of livestock would alter women's lives in crucial ways by affecting the traditional gender-based division of labor. Would women, who were mainly responsible for agricultural production, assume new duties of animal husbandry? If not, how would men's involvement with livestock rearing alter women's powerful role as the primary suppliers of food? Who would protect women's crops from the animals? How would the very different temporal cycle of livestock reproduction and care be reconciled with an Indian calendar that identified the months according to stages in the planting cycle?¹⁹

Animal husbandry also challenged native spiritual beliefs and practices. Because their mental universe assumed no rigid distinction between human and animal beings, the Indians' hunting rituals aimed to appease the spirits of creatures that were not so much inferior to, as different from, their human killers. Such beliefs helped to make sense of a world in which animals were deemed equally rightful occupants of the forest and whose killing required an intimate knowledge of their habits. Would Indians be able to apply these ideas about animals as *manitous*, or other-than-human persons, to domestic beasts as well? Or would those beasts' English provenance and dependence on human owners prohibit their incorporation into the spiritual world with bears, deer, and beaver?²⁰

Finally, a decision to keep livestock ran counter to a powerful hostility toward domestic animals that dated from the earliest years of English settlement. Because colonists often established towns on the sites of former Indian villages depopulated by the epidemics that preceded their arrival, no line of demarcation separated English from Indian habitation. Native villages and colonial towns could be quite close together, and the accident of propinquity made for tense relations. At least at first, friction between these unlikely neighbors grew less from the very different ideas that informed Indian and English concepts of property than from the behavior of livestock. Let loose to forage in the woods, the animals wandered away from English towns into Indian cornfields, ate their fill, and moved on.

Indians, who had never had to build fences to protect their fields, were unprepared for the onslaught. Even their underground storage pits proved vulnerable, as swine "found a way to unhinge their barn doors and rob

¹⁹ Van Lonkhuysen, "Reappraisal of the Praying Indians," 412–413; Joan M. Jensen, "Native American Women and Agriculture: A Seneca Case Study," *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, III (1977), 423–441; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 36. For an example of the way in which the adoption of domesticated animals—in this case, the horse—disturbed the gender-based division of labor in an Indian society see Richard White, "The Cultural Landscape of the Pawnees," *Great Plains Quarterly*, II (1982), 31–40. I thank George Phillips for this reference.

²⁰ Kenneth M. Morrison, *The Embattled Northeast: The Elusive Ideal of Alliance in Abenaki-Euramerican Relations* (Berkeley, Calif., 1984), chap. 2; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle For Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore, 1992), chap. 1; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 35–36; Elisabeth Tooker, ed., *Native North American Spirituality of the Eastern Woodlands: Sacred Myths, Dreams, Visions, Speeches, Healing Formulas, Rituals, and Ceremonials* (New York, 1979), 11–29.

their garners," prompting native women to "implore their husbands' help to roll the bodies of trees" over the pits to prevent further damage.²¹ Hogs attacked another important food source when they "watch[ed] the low water (as the Indian women do)" along the shoreline and rooted for clams, making themselves "most hatefull to all Natives," who called them "filthy cut throats, &c."²² In Plymouth Colony, settlers in Rehoboth and their Indian neighbors engaged in a long-running dispute over damages from trespassing animals. At first, in 1653, the colonists claimed to "know nothing of" the Indian complaints. By 1656, settlers had erected a fence along the town boundary, but because a stream—across which livestock were "apte to swime"—also separated English and native lands, the animals still made their way into Indian cornfields. Four years later, Philip's older brother Wamsutta, known to the English as Alexander, was still bringing the Indians' complaints to the attention of Plymouth authorities.²³

English livestock also proved to be a nuisance as they roamed through the woods. Cattle and swine walked into deer traps, and the English held the Indians liable for any injuries they sustained.²⁴ Similarly, in 1638, when William Hathorne of Salem found one of his cows stuck with an arrow, he insisted on restitution. Salem officials demanded the exorbitant sum of £100 from local Indians at a time when a cow was generally valued at about £20. Roger Williams pleaded the natives' case with John Winthrop, explaining that the colonists had charged the wrong Indians and that the sachems were outraged because the English held them personally responsible for the fine levied for their subjects' purported offense. "Nor doe they believe that the English Magistrates doe so practice," Williams reported, "and therefore they hope that what is Righteous amongst our Selves we will accept of from them."²⁵

Williams went on to observe that "the Busines is ravelld and needes a patient and gentle hand to rectifie Misunderstanding of Each other and misprisions." He foresaw that endless recriminations would flow from colonists' attempts to raise livestock in the same space where Indians hunted. Native leaders, finding Williams a sympathetic listener, informed him of the "feares of their Men in hunting or travelling," for they had reason to believe they would be held responsible for every domestic animal found hurt or dead in the woods. Williams urged Winthrop to work with

²¹ Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 5 vols. (Boston, 1853–1854), I, 102, 121, 133; John Noble, ed., *Records of the Court of Assistants of the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay, 1630–1692*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1901–1928), II, 46, 49; quotation from Wood, *New England's Prospect*, ed. Vaughan, 113.

²² Williams, *Key into the Language of America*, ed. Teunissen and Hinz, 182.

²³ Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, III, 21, 106, 119–120, 167, 192.

²⁴ See, for instance, Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, I, 143; Charles J. Hoadly, ed., *Records of the Colony and Plantation of New Haven*, 2 vols. (Hartford, Conn., 1857–1858), I, 150. For a description of Indian hunting techniques see Williams, *Key into the Language of America*, ed. Teunissen and Hinz, 224–225.

²⁵ LaFantasie, ed., *Correspondence of Williams*, I, 192.

the Indians to contrive an equitable procedure to be followed in similar cases so that Indian hunters would not feel so much at risk from the rigors of a judicial system that appeared biased against them.²⁶

Instead of recognizing the fundamental incompatibility of English and Indian subsistence regimes, colonial authorities repeatedly permitted joint use of land.²⁷ In so doing, they assumed that Indians would agree that the colonists' livestock had, in effect, use rights to the woods and fields too. Indians could hunt on lands claimed by the English only if they accepted certain restrictions on their activities. Indians who set traps within the town of Barnstable, for instance, had "fully and dilligenttly" to visit their traps daily to check for ensnared livestock and, if any were found, "thaye shall speedyli lett them out."²⁸ The Connecticut government imposed stricter limits on Indian hunters when the town of Pequot was founded in 1649. Uncas, the Mohegan sachem, was instructed "that no trapps [should] bee sett by him or any of his men" within the town, although colonial officials saw no reason completely "to prohibitt and restraine Uncus and his men from hunting and fishing" unless they did so on the Sabbath. Connecticut authorities acquired meadow land from the Tunxis Indians in 1650 and similarly recognized native rights of hunting, fishing, and fowling on the property so long as such activities "be not dun to the breach of any orders in the country to hurt cattle."²⁹ As late as 1676, in the aftermath of King Philip's War, Connecticut officials allowed "friendly" Indians "to hunt in the conquered lands in the Narragancett Country, provided they sett not traps to prejudice English cattell."³⁰

Joint use was doomed to failure, not by Indian unwillingness to comply with English conditions, but by the insurmountable problems that arose from grazing livestock on hunting lands. Accidental injuries were bound to occur and to disturb colonists, while Indians resented the damage done by domestic animals wandering out of the woods and into their cornfields. The behavior of livestock—creatures as indispensable to the English as they were obnoxious to the Indians—undermined the efforts of each group to get along with the other. Attempts to resolve disputes stemming from trespassing livestock led only to mutual frustration.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 193, quotations on 192.

²⁷ On the problems of joint use see Peter A. Thomas, "Contrastive Subsistence Strategies and Land Use as Factors for Understanding Indian-White Relations in New England," *Ethnohistory*, XXIII (1976), 1-18.

²⁸ Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, II, 130-131.

²⁹ Quotation in Kenneth L. Feder, "The Avaricious Humour of Designing Englishmen": The Ethnohistory of Land Transactions in the Farmington Valley," *Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut*, No. 45 (1982), 36.

³⁰ J. Hammond Trumbull et al., eds., *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut . . .*, 15 vols. (Hartford, Conn., 1850-1890), II, 289. Colonial officials eventually prohibited Indians from firing the woods in the autumn—a procedure that killed undergrowth and thus facilitated hunting—because of danger to the colonists' haystacks; Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, V, 230-231.

The Indians were doubtless the first to recognize the difficulties inherent in the joint use of land and the unrestricted foraging of colonists' animals. One Connecticut sachem actually attempted to restrict the *settlers'* use of land that he was willing to grant them outright. When Pyamikee, who lived near Stamford, negotiated with town officials, he tried to make the English agree not to put their livestock on the tract, for he knew that "the English hogs would be ready to spoyle their [the Indians'] corne" in an adjacent field, "and that the cattell, in case they came over the said five mile river," would do likewise. But the colonists would only assure Pyamikee that livestock would always travel under the supervision of a keeper.³¹

In another case, in 1648 in Rhode Island, an unfortunate Shawomet Indian spent five days chasing swine from his cornfields, only to be confronted by an Englishman, armed with a cudgel, who "asked the Indian in a rage whie he drove out the Swine." When he replied, "because they dide eate the Corne," the Englishman "ran upon the Indian," and a melee ensued among the disputants' companions. An attempt to adjudicate the case led to further complications, for the Englishmen involved were Rhode Islanders whereas the land where the incident occurred was claimed by Plymouth. Skeptical of his chances for a fair hearing in the Plymouth court, Pumham, a Shawomet sachem acting on behalf of the aggrieved Indians, asked to have the case tried in Massachusetts.³²

It might seem remarkable that Pumham trusted the English judicial system at all. Yet like Pumham, many Indians used colonial courts to seek redress for damage caused by trespassing livestock. English authorities, in turn, often recognized the legitimacy of such complaints and granted restitution, as in 1632 when the Massachusetts General Court ordered Sir Richard Saltonstall to "give Saggamore John a hogshead of corne for the hurt his cattell did him in his corne."³³ Trespass complaints were so frequent, however, that colonial governments instructed individual towns to establish procedures for local arbitration lest the courts be overwhelmed. In Plymouth Colony, the task of reviewing such cases fell either to town selectmen or to ad hoc committees. If the livestock owner ignored their orders to pay damages, the aggrieved Indian could "repaire to some Majestrate for a warrant to recover such award by distraint."³⁴ Massachusetts and Connecticut adopted similar measures.³⁵

³¹ Hoadly, ed. *New Haven Recs.*, II, 104-107.

³² Forbes et al., eds., *Winthrop Papers*, V, 246-247. Pumham had established connections with the Bay Colony 6 years earlier, when he sold land to settlers from Massachusetts; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 230.

³³ Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, I, 102. For similar instances of town and colony authorities granting restitution to Indians see *ibid.*, I, 121, 133; Trumbull et al., eds., *Public Recs. of Conn.*, II, 165; III, 81; Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, III, 132; IV, 68; Howard M. Chapin, ed., *The Early Records of the Town of Warwick* (Providence, R. I., 1926), 89; and Leonard Bliss, Jr., *The History of Rehoboth, Bristol County, Massachusetts . . .* (Boston, 1836), 44. See also Yasuhide Kawashima, *Puritan Justice and the Indian: White Man's Law in Massachusetts, 1630-1763* (Middletown, Conn., 1986), chap. 7.

³⁴ Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, V, 62; IX, 143 (quotation), 219.

³⁵ Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, I, 293-294; Trumbull et al., eds., *Public Recs. of*

But the colonists were less accommodating than they seemed. They insisted that Indians resort to an English court system that was foreign to them, the proceedings of which were conducted in an incomprehensible language necessitating the use of not-always reliable translators. (In the case described above, one of Pumham's objections to using the Plymouth court was his mistrust of the court interpreters.) Moreover, the English soon required Indians to fence their cornfields before they could seek reparations. As early as 1632, Sagamore John, who received the award of damages from Saltonstall, had to promise "against the next year, & soe ever after" to fence his fields.³⁶ In 1640 Massachusetts law required settlers to help their Indian neighbors "in felling of Trees, Ryving & sharpening railes, and holing of posts" for fences, but this friendly gesture was coupled with stern provisos. Any Indian who refused to fence his fields after such help was offered forfeited his right to sue for damages. In addition, Indian complainants had to identify which beasts had trampled their corn—an impossible task if the animals had come and gone before the damage was discovered.³⁷ Beginning in the 1650s, Plymouth magistrates allowed Indians to impound offending beasts, but this meant either that they had to drive the animals to the nearest English pound or construct one on their own land and walk to the nearest town to give "speedy notice" of any animals so confined.³⁸

Even if they complied with English conditions, Indians could not depend on the equitable enforcement of animal trespass laws. The coercive power of colonial governments was limited—magistrates could hardly march off to view every downed fence and ruined field—and reliance on local adjudication meant that townsmen had to police themselves. New England colonists were notoriously litigious, but it was one thing to defend against the charges of an English neighbor and quite another to judge impartially an Indian's accusations of trespass. When problems arose near the centers of colonial government, Indians could generally get a fair hearing, as did Sagamore John near Boston. But the enforcement of animal trespass laws became more haphazard toward the edges of settlement. Indians in the praying town of Okommakamesit (Marlborough)—thirty miles from Boston—abandoned a 150-acre tract with an apple orchard for "it brings little or no profit to them, nor is ever like to do; because the Englishmen's cattle, &c. devour all in it, because it lies open and unfenced," and they clearly expected no redress.³⁹ Along the disputed bor-

Conn., III, 42–43.

³⁶ Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, I, 99.

³⁷ William H. Whitmore, ed., *The Colonial Laws of Massachusetts, Reprinted from the Edition of 1660, with the supplements to 1672, Containing Also, the Body of Liberties of 1641* (Boston, 1889), 162. In 1662 Plymouth Colony law required settlers to help Indians build fences; see Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, XI, 137–138.

³⁸ Trumbull et al., eds., *Public Recs. of Conn.*, III, 42–43; Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, III, 106, 192, XI, 123, 137–138.

³⁹ Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England," 220.

der between Rhode Island and Plymouth, settlers could scarcely agree among themselves who was in charge. Under such circumstances, as Pumham and his fellow Shawomets discovered, cudgel-wielding Englishmen all too easily took the law into their own hands. Farther away—in Maine, for example—even the pretense of due process could vanish. In 1636, Saco commissioners empowered one of their number to “execute any Indians that are proved to have killed any swyne of the Inglishes” and ordered all settlers summarily to “apprehend, execute or kill any Indian that hath binne known to murder any English, kill ther Cattell or any waie spoyle ther goods or doe them violence.”⁴⁰

Given the deficiencies of the colonial legal system, it is not surprising that many Indians dealt with intrusive livestock according to their own notions of justice. Indians who stole or killed livestock probably committed such deeds less as acts of wanton mischief, as the English assumed, than in retribution for damages suffered. In their loosely knit village bands, Indians placed a premium on loyalty to kin rather than to the larger social group. The strength of these kinship bonds at once limited the authority of sachems (a point lost on the magistrates who had ordered sachems to pay for Hathorne’s cow) and sanctioned acts of violence undertaken in revenge for wrongs done to family members.⁴¹ English authorities did not bother to inquire into Indian motives for theft and violence toward animals. But when, for instance, Pumham and other Shawomets—who had previously encountered irascible colonists and ineffective courts—were later charged with “killing cattle, and forceable entry” on settlers’ lands, it takes little imagination to suspect that they were exacting their own retributive justice.⁴²

Once they took matters into their own hands, Indians could be charged with theft and destruction of property with the full force of English law turned against them. The penalties for such offenses further corroded relations between the groups. Unable to pay the requisite fines—often levied in English money—Indians found themselves imprisoned or sentenced to corporal punishment.⁴³ Thus their options shrank even as livestock populations grew. Retaliation against the animals brought severe sanctions from the English, while efforts to accommodate the beasts on English terms required unacceptable alterations in Indian agriculture and the virtual

⁴⁰ Charles Thornton Libby et al., eds., *Province and Court Records of Maine*, 5 vols. (Portland, Me., 1928–1960), I, 2–4.

⁴¹ Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 41–42; Kawashima, *Puritan Justice and the Indian*, chap. 1.

⁴² John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England*, 10 vols. (New York, 1968; orig. pub. 1856–1865), I, 391.

⁴³ For instances of Indian depredations against livestock see Trumbull et al., eds., *Public Recs. of Conn.*, I, 226; Hoadly, ed., *New Haven Recs.*, II, 361; Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, I, 87, 88; IV, pt. 2, 54, 361; Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Phym. Col. Recs.*, IV, 92–93, 190–191, V, 80, IX, 111, 209; and Samuel Eliot Morison, ed., *Records of the Suffolk County Court, 1671–1680*, Colonial Society of Massachusetts, *Publications* (Boston, 1933), XXIX, 404.

abandonment of hunting. By the middle of the seventeenth century it was clear to the Indians that the English and their troublesome animals would not go away. The English, for their part, assumed that the solution was for Indians to abandon their ways and become livestock keepers themselves.

Some Indians—most notably King Philip—adopted livestock husbandry, though not in capitulation to English example and exhortation. Their adaptation was not a step, either intentional or inadvertent, toward acculturation, for they refused to make the complete transformation advocated by Englishmen who linked animal husbandry to the acquisition of civilized ways. The natives' decision instead fit into a broader pattern of intercultural borrowing that formed an important theme in Anglo-Indian relations during the first decades of contact. Much as settlers incorporated native crops and farming techniques into their agricultural system, Indians selected from an array of English manufactures such items as guns, cloth, and iron pots that were more efficient substitutes for bows and arrows, animal skins, and earthenware. Neither group forfeited its cultural identity in so doing, and when some Indians began to raise livestock—again largely for practical considerations—they deliberately selected the English beast that would least disrupt their accustomed routines.

Indians who raised livestock overwhelmingly preferred hogs.⁴⁴ More than any other imported creatures, swine resembled dogs, the one domesticated animal that Indians already had. Both species scavenged for food and ate scraps from their owners' meals. Although hogs also competed with humans for wild plants and shellfish and could damage native cornfields, these disadvantages were offset by the meat they supplied and the fact that Indians could deal with their own swine however they wished. Like dogs, swine aggressively fended off predators, such as wolves. Roger Williams recorded an instance of "two English Swine, big with Pig," driving a wolf from a freshly killed deer and devouring the prey themselves. Hogs could also be trained like dogs to come when called, a useful trait in an animal that foraged for itself in the woods.⁴⁵

Swine keeping required relatively few adjustments to native subsistence routines—far fewer than cattle rearing would have involved. It made minimal demands on labor, rendering moot the issue of who—men or women—would bear primary responsibility for their care. Keeping cattle would have either dramatically increased women's work loads or involved

⁴⁴ Virtually all references to Indian ownership of livestock specify hogs; see Chapin, ed., *Early Recs. of Warwick*, 102; Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, IV, 66; V, 6, 11–12, 22, 85; Bartlett, ed., *R. I. Col. Recs.*, II, 172–173; Brigham, ed., *Early Recs. of Portsmouth*, 149–150; and Trumbull et al., ed., *Public Recs. of Conn.*, III, 55. See also Robert R. Gradie, "New England Indians and Colonizing Pigs," in William Cowan, ed., *Papers of the Fifteenth Algonquian Conference* (Ottawa, 1984), 147–169; I thank Barbara DeWolfe for this reference.

⁴⁵ Juliet Clutton-Brock, *Domesticated Animals from Early Times* (Austin, Tex., 1981), 73, 74; Williams, *Key into the Language of America*, ed. Teunissen and Hinz, 226.

men in new types of labor tying them more closely to the village site. Cattle needed nightly feeding, and cows had to be milked daily. Most male calves would have had to be castrated, and the few bulls required careful handling. Since cattle needed fodder and shelter during the winter, Indians would have had to gather and dry hay and build and clean barns—activities that infringed on their mobility during the hunting season. Some members of each village would have had to become herdsmen. Losing a cow in the woods was a more serious matter than losing a pig, for pigs had a far higher rate of reproduction.⁴⁶

In return for a limited investment in labor, native hog keepers acquired a year-round supply of protein that replaced the meat they could no longer get from a dwindling deer population. These Indians may in fact have enjoyed an improved diet, avoiding the seasonal malnutrition resulting from their former dependence on corn and game.⁴⁷ Swine also provided products that replaced items formerly obtained from wild animals. Gookin noted in 1674 that Indians “used to oil their skins and hair with bear’s grease heretofore, but now with swine’s fat.” And in at least one instance, Indians fashioned moccasins from “green hogs skins” in place of deerskin. Settlers, in contrast, valued cattle for reasons that had little appeal for Indians. They plowed with oxen, but Indians who farmed with hoes did not need them. Colonists also prized the meat and dairy products supplied by their herds; although Indians would eat beef, most native adults were physiologically unable to digest lactose except in tiny amounts and would have learned to avoid milk products.⁴⁸

Settlers raised hogs and ate pork, but they did not share the Indians’ preference for swine over cattle. Cattle were docile and, to the English mind, superior beasts. Swine, on the contrary, were slovenly creatures that wallowed in mud, gobbled up garbage, and were rumored to kill unwary children. Colonists named their cows Brindle and Sparke and Velvet; no one named pigs. The English kept swine as if on sufferance, tolerating their obnoxious behavior in order to eat salt pork, ham, and bacon. Most of all, swine keeping did not promote hard work and regular habits so well as cattle rearing did. Writers who extolled the civilizing benefits of livestock hus-

⁴⁶ Clutton-Brock, *Domesticated Animals*, 68, 73; Russell, *Long, Deep Furrow*, 35, 88; Percy Wells Bidwell and John I. Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620–1860* (Washington, D. C., 1925; repr. New York, 1941), 25, 31–32.

⁴⁷ The evidence is sketchy but suggestive. One archaeological study of a Narragansett cemetery dating from the mid-17th century (roughly the time and location corresponding to historical evidence of Indian swine keeping) finds that the Indian skeletons show a surprising lack of iron deficiency anemia as well as little evidence of seasonal malnutrition. Such characteristics resulted from an improved diet, and although the specific content of that diet cannot be recovered, it is possible that the consumption of pork was an important factor. See Marc A. Kelley, Paul S. Sledzik, and Sean P. Murphy, “Health, Demographics, and Physical Constitution in Seventeenth-Century Rhode Island Indians,” *Man in the Northeast*, No. 34 (1987), 1–25.

⁴⁸ Gookin, “Historical Collections of the Indians in New England,” 153; Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, IV, pt. 2, 360. On Indians’ lactose intolerance see Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, 27.

bandry doubtless envisioned sedentary Indian farmers peacefully gathering hay and tending herds of cattle alongside their English neighbors, but the reality was hardly so bucolic.⁴⁹

Settlers instead encountered Indians who lived much as they always had, but who now had swine wandering across their lands—and occasionally into English cornfields.⁵⁰ The colonists recognized only grudgingly the Indians' property in animals and usually assumed that the natives' hogs were stolen. In 1672, Bay Colony officials insisted that Indians pilfered swine although they acknowledged that "it be very difficult to proove" that they had done so. Other explanations—that the Indians had captured feral animals or had purchased hogs from settlers—were seldom advanced. The fact that "the English, especially in the inland plantations, . . . loose many swine" and that Indians had hogs invited suspicion.⁵¹

To discourage the theft of animals among themselves and to identify strays, settlers used earmarks. Each owner had a distinctive mark that was entered in the town records, to be checked when an animal was reported stolen or a stray was found. The proliferation of town and colony orders requiring earmarks, as well as the increasing intricacy of the marks themselves—a mixture of crops, slits, "forks," "half-pennies," and so on—provides as good a measure as any of the growing livestock population. The earmark itself became a form of property handed down from one generation to the next.⁵² Instead of assigning earmarks to native owners, however, magistrates ordered that "no Indians shall give any ear mark to their Swine, upon the penalty of the forfeiture" of the animal. An Indian who wished to sell a hog had to bring it with its ears intact; if he sold pork, he had to produce the unmarked ears from the carcass. This practice made native purchases of English hogs problematic, for the animals would already have marked ears. Should the Indian subsequently desire to sell such an animal, he could be required to "bring good Testimonies that he honestly obtained such Swine so marked, of some English." Moreover, Indian owners were at

⁴⁹ For contemporary English attitudes toward domestic animals see Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York, 1983), 54, 64, 95, 96. These attitudes persisted into the 19th century; see Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 21. Colonists concurred with the assessment of the danger of swine to children; see City of Boston, *Second Report of the Record Commissioners* (Boston Town Records, 1634–1660), (Boston, 1877), 145. For naming of cattle see, for instance, George Francis Dow, ed., *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, 9 vols. (Salem, Mass., 1911–1975), III, 361, 428.

⁵⁰ Trumbull et al., eds., *Public Recs. of Conn.*, III, 55n.

⁵¹ Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, IV, pt. 2, 512.

⁵² For ordinances requiring earmarks see, for example, Trumbull et al., eds., *Public Recs. of Conn.*, I, 118, 517; Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, IV, pt. 2, 512–513; and Brigham, ed., *Early Recs. of Portsmouth*, 72–73, and for descriptions of earmarks see, for instance, *ibid.*, 261–286, 288–295, 320–322. Cattle and horses were usually branded, and owners often entered complete descriptions of the animals in town books; see Whitmore, ed., *Col. Laws of Mass.*, 158, 258, and City of Boston, *Fourth Report of the Record Commissioners* (Dorchester Town Records), 2d ed. (Boston, 1883), 35–36.

the mercy of unscrupulous settlers who might steal their animals and mark them as their own. Colonists did not prohibit Indian ownership of swine, but they denied Indians the acknowledged symbol of legitimate possession.⁵³

The Indians' selective involvement with animal husbandry scarcely improved relations between natives and colonists. To the previous list of problems new and equally vexing issues were added, including trespasses by Indian animals, theft, and difficulties with proving ownership of animal property. For settlers, probably the least welcome change appeared when enterprising Indians started selling swine and pork in competition with English producers of the same commodities. Many orders pertaining to earmarks begin with a preamble that assumes that native competition went hand in hand with native dishonesty. In the Bay Colony, there was "ground to suspect that some of the Indians doe steale & sell the English mens swine;" in Plymouth, settlers complained "of Indians stealing of live Hogs from the English, and selling them." Thus magistrates urged colonists to mark their animals to protect their property from native thieves. In fact, the charges of theft were not substantiated; the real problem was commercial, not criminal. Earmark regulations aimed at least as much to make Indian sales difficult as to make Indians honest.⁵⁴

Competition with Indians was more than colonists had bargained for. In 1669—just six years before the start of King Philip's War—the Plymouth General Court proposed to license certain colonists "to trade powder, shott, guns, and mony (now under prohibition) with the Indians" as a means of discouraging the local Indians' pork trade. The magistrates complained that "a greate parte of the porke that is now carryed by the Indians to Boston" was "sold there at an under rate," hurting Plymouth pork sellers. The court felt no need to make explicit connections between its proposal to sell arms and its complaint about competition, but the likeliest explanation is that Plymouth Indians were using the proceeds of their Boston pork sales to purchase guns from licensed Bay Colony sellers, tapping into an arms trade that the Massachusetts General Court had established in the previous year. If the Indians could obtain arms from Plymouth suppliers, they presumably would cede the Boston pork trade to Old Colony producers. The court expressed no particular interest in helping out Boston consumers who spurned the wares of their fellow Englishmen in order to buy cheaper meat; its explicit aim was to ensure that the pork trade would "fall into the hands of some of our people, and soe the prise may be kept up."⁵⁵

⁵³ John D. Cushing, ed., *The Laws of the Pilgrims: A Facsimile Edition of "The Book of the General Laws of the Inhabitants of the Jurisdiction of New-Plimouth, 1672 & 1685"* (Wilmington, Del., 1977), 44; see also Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, IV, pt. 2, 512–513.

⁵⁴ Shurtleff, ed., *Mass. Bay Recs.*, IV, pt. 2, 512; Cushing, ed., *Laws of the Pilgrims*, 44.

⁵⁵ Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, V, 11–12. On the colonial arms trade see

The Plymouth government's concern in this instance testifies to a remarkable set of native adaptations. If the Indians indeed brought pork and not live animals to the Bay Colony, they had learned to preserve meat in a way that appealed to English consumers. Some colonists, noting native ignorance of salting techniques, had assumed that Indians did not know how to preserve food.⁵⁶ We do not know whether Plymouth Indians had learned to salt as well as to sell pork, but there is no doubt that they had identified Boston as New England's most lucrative food market. Almost from the start, Boston merchants and shopkeepers vied with farmers over the relatively scarce amount of land on the small peninsula occupied by the town. As early as 1636, officials prohibited families from grazing more than two cows on the peninsula itself, and in 1647, the town herd was fixed at seventy beasts.⁵⁷ By 1658, swine had become such a public nuisance that Boston officials required owners to keep them "in their owne ground," effectively limiting the number of hogs each family could maintain.⁵⁸ Given these restrictions, many Bostonians apparently gave up raising animals and bought meat from livestock producers in nearby towns, who were also raising stock for the West Indies market.⁵⁹ Did the Plymouth Indians know this when they went to Boston? Their business acumen should not be underestimated. Although he did not refer specifically to the meat trade, Williams noticed that Indian traders "will beate all markets and try all places, and runne twenty thirty, yea forty mile, and more, and lodge in the Woods, to save six pence." Ironically, native enterprise met with suspicion rather than approbation from colonists who liked the Indians less the more like the English they became.⁶⁰

The extent of native livestock husbandry is difficult to measure because colonial records mainly preserve instances in which animals became a source of conflict. The evidence does suggest that Indians residing near English settlements had a greater tendency to raise domestic animals than did those farther away. The Wampanoags, living in the Mount Hope area between Plymouth Colony and Rhode Island, apparently began to raise hogs by the middle of the seventeenth century, after some thirty years of

Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics Among the New England Indians* (Lanham, Md., 1991), 49.

⁵⁶ Morton, *New English Canaan*, ed. Adams, 161.

⁵⁷ Darrett B. Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston: A Portrait of a Puritan Town, 1630-1649* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1965), 206.

⁵⁸ City of Boston, *Second Report of the Record Commissioners*, 145.

⁵⁹ A partial Boston tax valuation for 1676 indicates that fewer than half of household heads owned cattle or swine; see City of Boston, *First Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston* (Boston, 1876), 60-67. On the development of a domestic and foreign market in livestock and meat see Karen J. Friedmann, "Victualling Colonial Boston," *Agricultural History*, XLVII (1973), 189-205, and Darrett B. Rutman, "Governor Winthrop's Garden Crop: The Significance of Agriculture in the Early Commerce of Massachusetts Bay," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XX (1963), 396-415.

⁶⁰ Williams, *Key into the Language of America*, ed. Teunissen and Hinz, 218.

contact with English settlers.⁶¹ The location and timing of their adaptation were scarcely accidental.

The Wampanoags had close contact with settlers and, accordingly, a greater need for livestock than did native peoples living elsewhere. The ecological changes caused by English settlers steadily converting woodland into fenced fields and open meadows around Mount Hope reduced the deer population on which the Wampanoags depended; their swine keeping substituted one form of protein for another. Their trade in hogs and pork may also have been intended to offer a new commodity to settlers as other trade items disappeared or diminished in value. By the 1660s, the New England fur trade had ended with the virtual extinction of beaver. At the same time, English demand for wampum sharply declined as an improving overseas trade brought in more hard currency and colonies ceased accepting wampum as legal tender.⁶² But hogs and pork failed as substitutes for furs and wampum. Most colonists owned swine themselves and—as the response of the Plymouth magistrates in 1669 suggests—evidently preferred to limit the market in animals to English producers.

Wampanoag swine keeping also contributed to growing tensions with colonists over land, creating disputes that were even harder to resolve than those concerning trade. Land that diminished in usefulness to Indians as it ceased to support familiar subsistence activities regained value for raising hogs; indeed, such places as offshore islands held a special attraction to keepers of swine. The Wampanoags' desire to retain their land awakened precisely when settlers evinced an interest in acquiring it. By the 1660s, a younger generation of settlers had reached maturity and needed farms. In Plymouth Colony, bounded on the north by the more powerful Bay Colony and on the west by an obstreperous Rhode Island, aggressive settlers eyed the lands of their Wampanoag neighbors. During the 1660s, new villages were formed at Dartmouth, Swansea, and Middleborough, while established towns such as Rehoboth and Taunton enlarged their holdings—and in effect blockaded the Wampanoags on Mount Hope peninsula.⁶³

No man was harder pressed by these developments than King Philip. As sachem of the Wampanoags since 1662, he had tried to protect his people and preserve their independence in the face of English intrusion. Over time, his tasks became far more difficult. The number of occasions when

⁶¹ Montauk Indians living on the eastern end of Long Island also raised hogs in the 17th century. Like the Wampanoags on the mainland, the Montauks lived in an area surrounded by English settlement and had been in contact with settlers for decades. See Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter, "Journal of a Voyage to New York in 1679–80," *Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society*, I (1867), 126.

⁶² Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 101; Salisbury, "Indians and Colonists in Southern New England after the Pequot War: An Uneasy Balance," in Laurence M. Hauptman and James D. Wherry, eds., *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation* (Norman, Okla., 1990), 90–91.

⁶³ On the expansion of Plymouth settlement see Rutman, *Husbandmen of Plymouth*, 21.

the interests of Indians and settlers came into conflict grew as his ability to mediate diminished. Since Wampanoag land bordered on Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Plymouth, Philip had to contend at various times with three, often competing, colonial governments. Even more problematic were his relations with neighboring towns, whose inhabitants pursued their economic advantage with little fear of intervention from any colony government and no regard for how their actions would affect Indian welfare.

Philip confronted the implications of New England localism most directly in cases of trespass. Colonial governments ordered towns to address Indian grievances but could not or would not enforce compliance. For six years, beginning in the mid-1650s, Rehoboth's inhabitants virtually ignored complaints from nearby Indians about damage from livestock, despite orders from the Plymouth court to solve the problem. In 1664, more than a decade after the issue first arose, Philip himself appeared at court—this time to complain about Rehoboth men trespassing on Wampanoag land to cut timber—and even then he may have hoped for a favorable outcome.⁶⁴ But if he did, the court soon compounded his problems by deciding to refer trespass cases to the selectmen of the towns involved. From then on, Philip and his people would have to seek justice at the hands of the very people who might well own the offending beasts.⁶⁵

The Wampanoag leader's problems in dealing with townsmen whose attitudes ranged from unsympathetic to hostile worsened after the colony government declared its hands-off policy on trespass and reached a low point in 1671, when Plymouth officials charged Philip with stockpiling arms and conspiring with other Indian groups to attack the colonists. He denied the charges and appealed to Bay Colony magistrates to confirm his innocence. But Plymouth threatened coercion if he did not submit to its authority, and Philip signed a compact that further eroded his ability to safeguard Wampanoag interests. This agreement compelled him to seek Plymouth's approval before he disposed of any native territory, but colony officials were not similarly constrained by the need for Philip's permission before they approached Indians to purchase land. He also agreed that differences between natives and settlers would be referred to the colony government for resolution, although the magistrates' record in dealing even with straightforward cases of trespass gave little cause for optimism.⁶⁶

The Plymouth court intended to subvert Philip's authority over his people in order to facilitate the acquisition of Wampanoag land by a new generation of colonists who would, in turn, raise new generations of livestock. As early as 1632, William Bradford recognized that settlers who owned animals required a lot of land to support their beasts. He complained when families abandoned Plymouth to form new towns where meadow was avail-

⁶⁴ Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, III, 21, 167, IV, 54.

⁶⁵ The law requiring town selectmen to decide trespass cases was passed in the mid-1660s; the record contains no specific date. See Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, XI, 143.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, V, 79.

able, but he could not stop them. Instead, he could only lament that “no man now thought he could live except he had cattle and a great deal of ground to keep them.”⁶⁷ Expansion accelerated during the 1660s and early 1670s, once again fueled by a burgeoning livestock population. During the two decades before King Philip’s War, Plymouth officials approached local Indians at least twenty-three times to purchase land, often mentioning a specific need for pasture. Sometimes they only wanted “some small parcells”; on other occasions they desired “all such lands as the Indians can well spare.”⁶⁸

The need to sustain their herds drove the English to seek Indian land, and their expansionary moves collided with an urgent Wampanoag need to preserve what remained of their territory. Joint use of land, although fraught with problems, at least recognized mutual subsistence needs; by the 1660s, however, the practice had greatly diminished. Now the English not only wanted more land but demanded exclusive use of it. They asserted their property rights even in situations when accommodating Indian interests would have presented little threat. Allowing Philip to put his swine on Hog Island probably would not have harmed Portsmouth’s inhabitants and might have improved relations between Indians and settlers. But what was Philip to think of the townsmen’s summary refusal to share land, even when he proposed to use it for precisely the same purpose as they did? In that spring of 1669, Philip personally experienced the same English intransigence that he encountered as the representative of his people. After the Hog Island episode, and even more after his forced submission to Plymouth in 1671, he could not fail to see that while the colonists insisted that he yield to them, they would not yield in any way to him.

In an atmosphere of increasing tension, trespass assumed new significance. As colonists moved closer to native villages, the chances that livestock would stray onto Indian lands multiplied. With both groups competing for a limited supply of land, colonists did not restrain their animals from grazing wherever they could, while Indians grew ever more sensitive to such intrusions. Whenever livestock were concerned, the English ignored the Indians’ property rights, while demanding that the natives recognize English rights. Indians resented encroachment by beasts that usually presaged the approach of Englishmen requesting formal ownership of land that their animals had already informally appropriated. Faced with the manifest inability—or unwillingness—of New England towns to solve the problem of trespass, and discouraged from seeking help from colony governments, Indians often resorted to their own means of animal control; they killed the offending beasts. This response would once have landed Indians in court, but by 1671 they faced far more serious consequences.

⁶⁷ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, ed. Morison, 253.

⁶⁸ Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Plym. Col. Recs.*, III, 84, 104, 123, 142, 216–217, IV, 18, 20, 45, 70, 82, 97, 109, 167, V, 20, 24, 24–25, 95, 96, 97–98, 98–99, 109, 126, 151.

In that year, a group of angry colonists living near Natick very nearly attacked the Wampanoags of Mount Hope for killing livestock that had trespassed on Indian land. Interceding on behalf of the Indians, the Bay Colony's Indian commissioner, Daniel Gookin, begged for forbearance from the settlers, arguing that it was not worth "*fighting with Indians about horses and hogs*, as matters too low to shed blood." He urged the settlers to keep their animals on their own land; if any strayed into native territory and were killed, the owners should make a record of the fact, presumably to facilitate legal recovery.⁶⁹ War was averted, but this incident nonetheless showed that tension over livestock had reached dangerously high levels.

Both sides now understood that disputes over trespassing animals epitomized differences so profound as to defy peaceful solution. Whenever Indians killed livestock that had damaged their cornfields, colonists denounced such acts as willful violations of English property rights—rights that some settlers wanted to defend by force of arms. For Indians, trespassing animals constituted an intolerable violation of *their* sovereign rights over their land. The problem intensified by the early 1670s, for the English were determined to deprive Philip of all means of ensuring the integrity of the shrinking tracts of Wampanoag land, even as they refused effectively to control their beasts. The issue of trespassing livestock generated such tension precisely because it could not be separated from fundamental questions of property rights and authority.

When war broke out in 1675, the Indians attacked first, but the underlying causes resembled those that had provoked English belligerence four years earlier. John Easton, a Rhode Island Quaker, sought out Philip early in the conflict to ask why he fought the colonists; Philip's response indicated that intermingled concerns about sovereignty, land, and animals had made war inevitable. He supplied Easton with a litany of grievances that recalled past confrontations with the English and particularly stressed intractable problems over land and animals. He complained that when Indian leaders agreed to sell land, "the English wold say it was more than thay agreed to and a writing must be prove [proof] against all them." If any sachem opposed such sales, the English would "make a nother king that wold give or seell them there land, that now thay had no hopes left to kepe ani land." Even after they sold land, Indians suffered from English encroachments, for "the English Catell and horses still incresed that when thay removed 30 mill from wher English had anithing to do"—impossible for the native inhabitants of Mount Hope—"thay Could not kepe ther coren from being spoyled." The Indians had expected that "when the English boft [bought] land of them that thay wold have kept ther Catell upone ther owne land."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Gookin's comments were paraphrased in a letter to him from Gov. Thomas Prince of Plymouth. Gookin had heard a rumor that he was accused of inciting Philip to fight against the English; Prince's letter aimed to reassure him that that was not the case; see MHS, *Colls.*, 1st Ser., VI (1799; repr. 1846), 200–201.

⁷⁰ "A Relacion of the Indyan Warre, by John Easton, 1675," in Charles H. Lincoln, ed.,

Because livestock had come to symbolize the relentless advance of English settlement, the animals were special targets of native enmity during the war. Colonel Benjamin Church, who led colonial forces in several campaigns, reported that Indians “began their hostilities with plundering and destroying cattle.”⁷¹ In an attack near Brookfield, Indians burned dwellings and “made great spoyle of the cattel belonging to the inhabitants.” At Rehoboth “they drove away many cattell & h[ors]es”; at Providence they “killd neer an hundered cattell”; in the Narragansett country they took away “at the least a thousand horses & it is like two thousan Cattell And many Sheep.”⁷² As the human toll also mounted in the summer of 1675, English forces failed to stop Philip from slipping away from Mount Hope and only managed to capture “six, eight, or ten young Pigs of King Philip’s Herds.”⁷³

The livestock on which colonists depended exposed them to ambush. Early in the war, Indians attacked “five Men coming from Road-Island, to look up their Cattel upon Pocasset Neck.” Settlers sought refuge in garrison houses and secured their cattle in palisaded yards but could not provide enough hay to sustain them for long. Sooner or later they had to drive the creatures out to pasture or bring in more hay. Philip and his forces—who had a keen understanding of the voraciousness of English livestock—would be waiting. Near Groton in March 1676 “a Parcel of Indians . . . laid an Ambush for two Carts, which went from the Garison to fetch in some Hay.” At about the same time at Concord, “two men going for Hay, one of them was killed.” Settlers counted themselves lucky when they escaped, even if their animals fell victim. When Hatfield inhabitants let their livestock out to graze in May 1676, they lost the entire herd of seventy cattle and horses to Indians who had anticipated the move.⁷⁴

Narratives of the Indian Wars, 1675–1699, Original Narratives of Early American History (New York, 1913), 11.

⁷¹ Church, *Diary of King Philip’s War, 1675–1676*, ed. Alan and Mary Simpson (Chester, Conn., 1975), 75; see also William Hubbard, *The History of the Indian Wars in New England from the First Settlement to the Termination of the War with King Philip, in 1677*, ed. Samuel G. Drake (New York, 1969; orig. pub. 1865), 64.

⁷² “Capt. Thomas Wheeler’s Narrative of an Expedition with Capt. Edward Hutchinson into the Nipmuck Country, and to Quaboag, now Brookfield, Mass., first published 1675,” *Collections of the New-Hampshire Historical Society*, II (1827), 21; Douglas Edward Leach, ed., *A Rhode Islander Reports on King Philip’s War: The Second William Harris Letter of August, 1676* (Providence, R. I., 1963), 44, 46, 58. For other descriptions of attacks on livestock see Church, *Diary of King Philip’s War*, ed. Simpson and Simpson, 172; Samuel G. Drake, *The Old Indian Chronicle; Being a Collection of Exceeding Rare Tracts, Written and Published in the Time of King Philip’s War . . .* (Boston, 1836), 13, 35, 58; and Hubbard, *History of the Indian Wars*, 164, 192, 234, 242.

⁷³ Drake, *Old Indian Chronicle*, 10; the anonymous author of this account subsequently refers to the capture of Philip’s “Cattel and Hogs,” although there is no corroborating evidence that Philip owned cattle; see p. 11. He did own a horse, given to him by the Plymouth General Court in 1665; see Shurtleff and Pulsifer, eds., *Phym. Col. Recs.*, IV, 93.

⁷⁴ Quotations from Hubbard, *History of the Indian Wars*, 83, 195–196, 222; for the Hatfield

The Indians seized and killed cattle mainly to deprive the colonists of food, but some of their depredations also suggest an intense animosity toward the animals themselves. One contemporary reported that “what cattle they took they seldom killed outright: or if they did, would eat but little of the flesh, but rather cut their bellies, and letting them go several days, trailing their guts after them, putting out their eyes, or cutting off one leg, &c.”⁷⁵ Increase Mather described an incident near Chelmsford when Indians “took a Cow, knocked off one of her horns, cut out her tongue, and so left the poor creature in great misery.”⁷⁶ Such mutilations recalled the tortures more often inflicted on human victims and perhaps similarly served a ritual purpose.⁷⁷ Certainly when Indians—who found a use for nearly every scrap of dead game animals—killed cattle “& let them ly & did neither eat them nor carry them away,” they did so deliberately to send a message of terror to their enemies.⁷⁸

Symbolic expressions of enmity, however, were a luxury that the Indians generally could not afford. As the war progressed, with cornfields ruined and hunting interrupted, Indians often needed captured livestock for food. When Church and his troops came upon an abandoned Indian encampment in an orchard, they found the apples gone and evidence of “the flesh of swine, which they had killed that day.” At another site, colonial forces “found some of the English Beef boiling” in Indian kettles. In Maine, where fighting dragged on for months after Philip’s death in August 1676, the “English took much Plunder from the Indians, about a thousand Weight of dried Beef, with other Things.”⁷⁹ Edward Randolph, sent by the crown to investigate New England affairs in the summer of 1676, reported to the Council of Trade on the devastation caused by the war. He estimated that the settlers had lost “eight thousand head of Cattle great and small”—a tremendous reduction in the livestock population but not enough to starve the colonists into defeat or sustain the Indians to victory.⁸⁰

The presence of livestock in New England was not the sole cause of the deterioration in relations between Indians and settlers. But because of their

raid see George W. Ellis and John E. Morris, *King Philip’s War, Based on the Archives and Records of Massachusetts, Plymouth, Rhode Island and Connecticut, and Contemporary Letters and Accounts* (New York, 1906), 227–228, and Melvoin, *New England Outpost*, 101, 107.

⁷⁵ Quotation from an anonymous narrative of the war reprinted in Drake, *Old Indian Chronicle*, 102.

⁷⁶ Increase Mather, *A Brief History of the War with the Indians in New-England . . .* (1676), ed. Samuel G. Drake (Boston, 1862), 132.

⁷⁷ On Indian use of torture see Jennings, *Invasion of America*, 160–164.

⁷⁸ Leach, ed., *A Rhode Islander Reports on King Philip’s War*, 46.

⁷⁹ Church, *Diary of King Philip’s War*, ed. Simpson and Simpson, 133; Hubbard, *History of the Indian Wars*, 276, pt. 2, 223.

⁸⁰ Randolph’s report is in Nathaniel Bouton et al., eds., *Provincial Papers: Documents and Records Relating to the Province of New-Hampshire*, vol. 1 (Concord, N. H., 1867), 344. Christian Indians also suffered losses to their livestock during the war; see Gookin, “An Historical

ubiquity and steady increase, domestic animals played a critical role in the larger, tragic human drama. The settlers had never been able to live without livestock, but as the animal population grew, Indians found it increasingly difficult to live with them. Both sides threatened violence over the issue of livestock—the English in 1671 and the Indians, who made good on the threat, in 1675. The cultural divide separating Indians and colonists would have existed without the importation to America of domestic animals. But the presence of livestock brought differences into focus, created innumerable occasions for friction, tested the limits of cooperation—and led, in the end, to war.

Account of . . . the Christian Indians in New England . . . ,” American Antiquarian Society, *Archaeologia Americana*, II (1836), 451, 504, 512.