

Robertone, Patricia

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## RETELLING NARRAGANSETT LIVES

The silhouettes that emerged from the RI-1000 graves were those of Narragansett men, women, and children. Their names are unknown or, at least, were not entered into any records of vital statistics kept by English colonists. Some were probably born when Roger Williams was compiling lists of words and phrases and observing behaviors that he subsequently entered into *A Key*. However, even this effort offered little assurance that the stories of these Narragansetts would be made known to later European Americans. Except for the information that he furnished to colonial officials about the identities and actions of prominent men in Native New England, Williams provided few details about the lives of other Narragansetts. For him, biography was neither a comfortable mode of expression nor a literary genre that suited his purposes in writing *A Key*. This reticence, if not reluctance, to tell about Narragansett lives is mirrored in the works of later historians who chose to lavish attention on a few named persons of "royal" or "noble" stature but cast the majority anonymously and impersonally.<sup>1</sup>

For those interred in this burial ground, these graves offer a poignant counterpoint. They contain the neglected stories of the Narragansetts' struggles to survive in the second half of the seventeenth century. Set against the pages of *A Key*, these graves give meaning to much of what has been obscured, marginalized, and silenced about how they conducted their lives within the tangled web of colonialism. To assume that the material inscriptions in these graves merely confirm and extend Williams's ethnography minimizes their importance, but that as-

sumption also makes these deaths and, more important, the lives which preceded them, unremarkable.<sup>2</sup> The archaeological evidence, though ambiguous and at times halting and mute, provides a subtle, even provocative, picture of the lives of these people. This chapter will use the evidence contained in these graves to tell about the complexities and contradictions of Narragansett lives in late-seventeenth-century New England.

The forty-seven graves contained ancestral remains.<sup>3</sup> Each was a single interment, with no evidence to suggest double or multiple burials.<sup>4</sup> Each body was laid out on its right side, facing east, with the legs bent at the knees in a flexed posture, suggesting that the body had been prepared for burial (including being bound and possibly anointed with red ochre) before being transported to the grave. The arms were crossed with the hands cupped and positioned near the face, usually at the mouth or chin. The dead, like the earthen graves that held them, were aligned to the southwest. Exceptions to these observed patterns were few: Two graves contained individuals placed on their left sides facing west, and a third held a corpse oriented on a north-south axis that conformed to the anomalous alignment of the grave itself.<sup>5</sup>

Although Roger Williams did not comment specifically on the relationship between the Narragansetts' burial practices and aspects of their cosmology in *A Key*, recent scholars have explored these connections. William Simmons was the first to detect a meaningful link between attributes of the corpse and Narragansett cosmology. He reasoned that the alignment of the buried corpse, with the skull pointed toward the southwest, corresponded to the direction that the soul exited when it left the body to travel to the land of Cautantowwit and Narragansett ancestors. He also proposed that the arrangement of the body in a flexed (or fetal) position signified a symbolic connection between death and birth, much in the same way that burying the dead in fertile soil reiterated this relationship.<sup>6</sup> By arranging the corpse in a posture like that of a fetus in a mother's womb, the Narragansetts reenacted birth in death and denied the finality of mortal endings by giving symbolic expression to a belief in the process of continuous renewal between the communities of the living and those of the ancestors residing in the afterworld in the southwest.

Similarly, George Hamell linked the corporeal aspect of sidedness to ideas about social and spiritual well-being among Northeastern Algonkian peoples.<sup>7</sup> According to these beliefs, the placement of the corpse on the right side facing east—both life-associated, social directions—would have affirmed Narragansett well-being. Paul Robinson has extended these ideas by arguing that the increased rigor exercised in positioning the corpse to the right and east in late-seventeenth-century burials served as a symbolic declaration of the Narragansetts' political unanimity and dominance over other Native peoples in southern New England.<sup>8</sup> Yet regard-

less of the scholarly interpretation imposed, the careful and consistent treatment of the corpse as revealed in these graves suggests ordered ceremonies, presumably carried out under the guidance of clan elders versed in sacred traditions. In a time of so many uncertainties, these ceremonies not only expressed the community's respect for the dead but also offered reassurances about shared interests in generations of ancestors. Even allowing for improvisations, these traditions were meaningful and comforting to grieving Narragansett survivors.

Like the bodies of the dead, material items were placed in the graves in an orderly manner. Except for body ornaments, grave goods were situated to the east of the corpse and concentrated near the upper half of the body, implying that the well-being inferred from the corporeal aspect of sidedness might have been extended to grave goods. Only rarely were objects positioned opposite the side that the corpse faced. However, the placement of objects in the graves may also have had other meaningful associations, such as expressing symbolic links between objects and particular parts of the human body. Pipes, for example, were typically placed near the mouth of the deceased. Other items seem to have been placed in or between the hands so that they appeared to be held. Spoons were often positioned this way, with the bright and reflective bowl section pointing toward the individual's face or chest, the anatomical site of the soul thought to sustain a person's vital energy.<sup>9</sup>

Similar things were sometimes tied together with cordage or nested one on top of another. In some cases, dissimilar things appear to have been bundled together before being placed in the grave. Some objects found close together may have been placed in animal-hide pouches or bags, along with other perishable substances that had long since disintegrated. Others were wrapped in fabric, judging from the fibers and swatches adhering to them or the skeumorphs (impressions) of weaving preserved in the surrounding soil. Bottles, perhaps originally sealed, had held unidentified liquids. Kettles frequently were buried upside down and sometimes over other grave goods.<sup>10</sup> In one instance, an inverted kettle held soil described as having a "dry sawdust-like consistency," perhaps suggesting offerings of food, which had later become infested with earthworms. Thus the placement of objects within the graves, like that of the corpse itself, was not casual or random but was, at least in certain instances, imbued with more elaborate connotations.

The objects that had been placed in these graves with such orderliness, presumably with the intention of sacralizing them, included Native-made and European-manufactured artifacts.<sup>11</sup> Most were foreign items, typically found in seventeenth-century ships' cargoes as "trade goods." These included such things as cloth; iron hoes, awls, and knives; brass kettles and bells; and looking glasses and glass beads mentioned in *A Key*, all goods that the Narragansetts could have procured from Roger Williams during his short-lived fur trade but also from others

into the later decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>12</sup> No account books document other stock that Williams or his successors at Cocumscussoc, Richard Smith and his son, might have sold to Narragansetts who came to there to trade, but artifacts recently excavated in the vicinity of the trading post and the blockhouse (later known as Smith's Castle) are representative of many of the things found in the RI-1000 graves.<sup>13</sup> In fact, the site's trash-filled deposits speak volumes to contact and trade.<sup>14</sup>

Some items found at the site include columella bead blanks, beaver teeth, a brass tinkling cone, a lead casting sprue shaped rather like a turtle, stone tools, and an occasional sherd from a shell-tempered clay pot, unattributable to any particular time. They offer a furtive glance at Native people who once came here to bargain or perhaps even settle a score, and who, when they departed this world, probably were buried at RI-1000. The European artifacts yield a crude and partial inventory of what Williams and the Smiths might have traded for the Narragansetts' goods and, beginning in the decade or so before King Philip's War, paid for their labor. Half of a lead bale seal tells of the bolts of coarse, thick woollens (or "trucking cloth") and fine worsteds whose quality and price were haggled over, and whose surviving fragments appear in some of the RI-1000 graves.<sup>15</sup> A clear blue, medium-sized seed bead and a sugary-textured, gilded oval one hint of the hanks of beads that the traders dangled before the eyes of their discriminating customers and that eventually came to be threaded by Narragansett weavers onto strands of sinew and cordage. The broken stems of latten spoons matched some that were presented whole and unused; weathered earthenware sherds, with traces of white tin glaze, resemble cups and jars that complemented Native pottery, wooden dishes, and gourds; and numerous fragments of kaolin pipestems alluded to the ready supply of mass-produced pipes that were traded as alternatives to those carved from local stone by Native craftspeople.<sup>16</sup> The shattered green glass from thick, "globe-and-shaft" wine bottles and square-bodied case types, made iridescent by time, speaks of an illicit trade in spirits conducted in spite of restrictions by colonial authorities, though allegedly never by Williams, who denied having any role in selling liquor to the Narragansetts (except in small amounts for medicinal purposes).<sup>17</sup>

The Narragansetts incorporated these and other items into their everyday lives and sacred traditions. They adapted them to suit their purposes, in ways unimagined or considered unattainable to them by Williams and other Europeans, and infused them with meanings that frequently were all their own. As early as 1642, Miantonomi spoke to clan leaders about the dangers of colonialism and urged war against the English, advising them to kill "no Cowes, for they will Serve to cate till our dear be Increased again."<sup>18</sup> At the time, they dismissed his proposal for war, but some must have thought well of his other recommendation, enough to per-

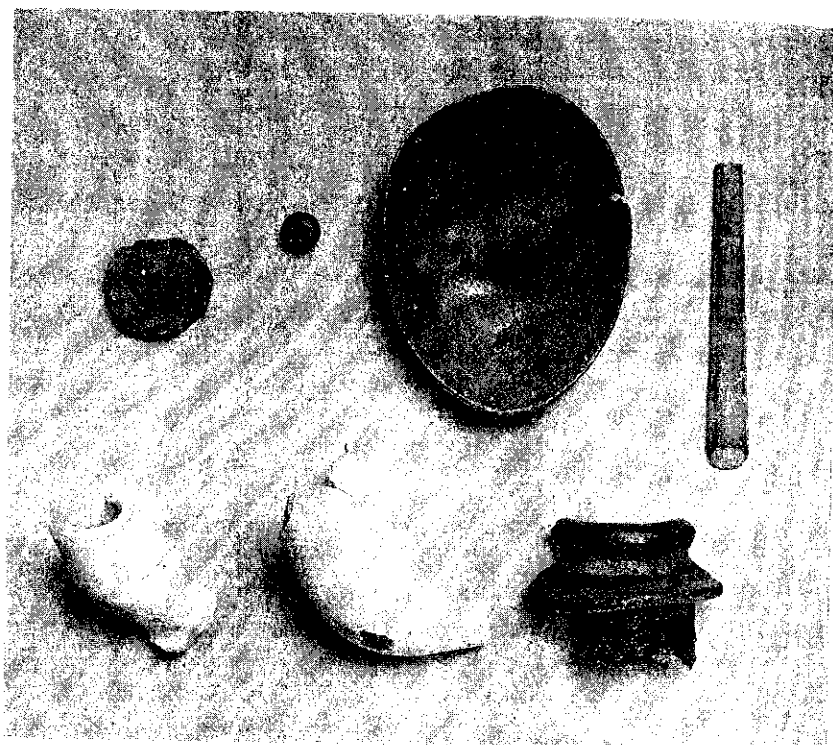


Figure 26. Items of trade from archaeological excavations at Cocumscussoc. Top row: lead bale seal, blue glass bead, latten spoon (bowl and stem). Bottom row: kaolin pipe bowls, glass bottle rim. (Photo: Copyright 2000, Cathy Carver, N.Y.)

suade their people of the wisdom of compromise and the need to make certain trade-offs, especially if these adjustments might help them avoid starvation and give them a chance at a Narragansett future. Toward this end, they continued to live and work in the manner of their ancestors and to follow their sacred traditions, although with some differences.

They acquired brass kettles, repaired damaged ones with sheet-brass patches and rivets that they made themselves, and even replicated these seemingly unreplicable objects using scraps of sheet brass. With other broken pieces of brass, possibly from kettles that were beyond repair, they made rings, combs, beads, bracelets, and spoons. They formed these in a Native style by cold hammering, bending (or folding), cutting, annealing, and brazing.<sup>19</sup> In some instances, they combined cold and hot metalworking techniques to produce objects that provide undeniable testimony of their skill and ingenuity. One such item is a spoon—a hy-



Figure 27. Metal objects from archaeological excavations at Cocumscussoc. Top row: cast lead cylinders, lead shot, lead sprue resembling a turtle. Bottom row: cut brass arrowhead, brass tinkling cone (sometimes made from kettle pieces), iron nail with flattened rosehead, iron horseshoe. (Photo: Copyright 2000, Cathy Carver, N.Y.)

brid in form, material, and manufacturing techniques—that they created by fusing a Native-made handle, cast in the form of an elongated, open keystone, to a European spoon bowl.<sup>20</sup>

Native craftspeople decorated the lustrous surfaces of their brass combs, bracelets, and spoons with the familiar geometric, zoomorphic, and other stylized motifs that they used on clay pots, baskets, and mats. They incised trails of zigzag designs on a small brass bracelet and hammered the same into a raised-relief pattern on the stem of a spoon. They stamped (or engraved) circles or dots resembling a bull's-eye pattern onto the handle or extension of an elaborate comb and punched out others on small side projections so that they could be used to hold thin strands of hair or decorative feathers. They cut the projecting ends of delicate combs and the tip of at least one spoon into identical flaring bifurcated (whale-tail) finials and impressed a small, domed piece of sheet brass, perhaps a decorative tack (or maybe

a button) used on clothing, with an intricate, raised medallion-like motif. The design incorporated a central dot surrounded by V-shaped fields defined by arrowheads and a dotted border that resembles the painted designs appearing on wood-splint baskets made by Native peoples in southern New England during the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

They cast lead stock into ammunition for the muskets they used in hunting fowl, turkeys, and deer—and maybe occasionally pigs and cows kept by the English—and in fighting their enemies. They poured molten lead, and perhaps pewter or brass, into molds to make buttons and other decorative ornaments, some in shapes derived from their totemic clan symbols. They put iron tools to good use, sometimes employing them in a multitude of tasks, including those intended by their original manufacturers as well as quite different ones. They deliberately modified some iron implements, tailoring them to their own needs and tastes, and converted broken tools into usable ones. They did this in a variety of ways (dismantling, reducing, hammering, and forging) that demonstrated their ingenuity and technical skills. In sum, their metalwork was anything but crude.

They used the glass trade beads for ornamentation. Glass beads, the “blue crystals” mentioned by Verrazzano in 1524, were the items that caught the Narragansetts’ eyes in early colonial encounters and continued to hold their interest as consumers even in later decades.<sup>22</sup> They strung and wove glass beads on tightly twisted two-ply cordage and strands of sinew to make bracelets, necklaces, headbands, and other personal ornaments. They sewed glass beads onto deerskin clothing, sometimes using brass hoops to frame their designs, and wrapped strings of beads around other objects as decoration. Using beads of different sizes, shapes, and colors—mostly dark blue, yellow, white, green, and black, but very little red—Narragansett women created designs unseen in the imaginations of bead makers toiling in the factories of Amsterdam or merchants trading them by weight on this side of the Atlantic.<sup>23</sup>

The patterns of the ornamental beadwork display the skill and creativity of Narragansett women in using glass to supplement existing decorative traditions based on shell, quills, seeds, and brass. They used glass beads mostly to make neck and wrist ornaments. The pattern was always one of contrasts, dark and bright. They often interspersed glass beads with shell and occasionally brass. In one exquisite show of artistry, they laced small, cylindrical black glass beads on thin strips of sinew as a background for white wampum beads arranged in an open diamond pattern to form a tiny bracelet, crafted whole or from a segment of a longer woven belt. Although they had small, colorful seed beads, they never incorporated them into the designs for their necklaces. Their artistic creations were not whimsical; instead, they imply the existence of decorative traditions.

The patterns Narragansett women embroidered—on clothing and small leather

accessories, such as pipe and tobacco bags, quivers, and awl and knife cases—have almost all been lost, except on one item; probably a leather pouch, it is completely covered with identical small, spherical beads. Their hide and textile canvases have disintegrated, leaving the beads of their once-intricate designs randomly scattered. However, the unstrung seed beads of various colors found in some graves, often in association with other kinds of beads, hint at the beauty of their patterns. One example is a skin shirt, decorated with brass spirals, mica ovals, seed and shell beads, and glass tubes forming an epaulet on one of the garment’s shoulders. The mica ovals were backed with paper printed with an engraved picture of “Ecce Homo,” an image of Jesus Christ, quite possibly cut from a larger engraving in an illustrated Bible.<sup>24</sup> Thinly veiled in mica, the icon was appropriated as a canvas for beadwork.<sup>25</sup> The women took glass beads, drawn and wound by European craftspeople and traded to them by colonial merchants, and made them their own. Attached to the hides they had worked, the pieces of sinew they had removed from an animal’s flesh, and the cordage they had twisted from plant fibers, the beads became inseparable elements of the women’s own creations.

The European trade goods uncovered in the RI-1000 graves were much more than an index of how accustomed those buried in this cemetery had become to new forms of technology and material culture, or of how they unwittingly acquiesced to more profound changes in their lives and surroundings. These items suppose a much more complicated scenario than one that can be captured in a “continuous narrative” with an inevitable outcome of emerging Anglicization and disappearing “Indianness.”<sup>26</sup> The Narragansetts buried at RI-1000 had embraced new things, even more so than Williams had observed at the time of *A Key*. Even by that time, they had altered their way of life to incorporate elements of English material culture and practices. Some had modified their wigwams, substituting doorframes they made from “English boards and nailes” or “Burch or Chestnut barke” for a “hanging Mat,” or had furnished them with “English Chests.”<sup>27</sup> Others wore English clothes, hunted with guns, and rode horses. They came to rely on many of these things for their survival, but they also imposed their imprints on them. As part of their everyday lives and sacred traditions, they became the tools of their resistance.

Scrutinizing the contents of the graves in the RI-1000 burial ground affords insight into how some Narragansett Indians lived their lives and responded to English colonialism in the generation after *A Key*. Although the stories inscribed in these graves have passed through filters of time and discovery, these factors do not present insurmountable obstacles in trying to learn about the lived experiences of the Narragansetts buried here. Beyond documenting the extent of foreign acquisitions, the artifacts in the RI-1000 graves provide evidence of how the Narragansetts incorporated these goods into their sacred traditions and used them with

more traditional objects to identify connections to kin and community, as they struggled with the perplexities of living their lives as Indians in late seventeenth-century New England.

The Narragansetts buried in the RI-1000 graves ranged from about two and a half or three years to more than fifty years old.<sup>28</sup> Of those whose sex could be determined from their skeletons, females outnumbered males by almost two to one.<sup>29</sup> The population imbalance raises questions about marriage practices, especially polygynous arrangements, and about the effects of disease and war. But it also seems to prefigure the demographic composition of small communities of Native Americans that persisted throughout southern New England, and elsewhere along the eastern seaboard, in the later colonial period. The populations of these later communities were disproportionately female, largely because many of the men had died fighting in colonial wars (ironically often on the side of the colonists), and others had left for periods of time to work in seafaring occupations or as laborers on others' farms to help support their families.<sup>30</sup> Although the Narragansetts buried at RI-1000 had not yet been stripped of their ancestral lands or suffered the full brunt of cruelties that befell Indian survivors of King Philip's War, the demographic profile of the cemetery suggests a community under stress.<sup>31</sup>

Of the forty-seven individuals whose remains were recovered within graves, nine were children aged from about three to four years, whose immature skeletons revealed nothing about their sex. The absence of fetuses, newborns, and infants in the burial ground suggests that these individuals were not buried with other Narragansetts. Exactly where and how their remains were disposed of is unknown, but babies who had reached their third year were afforded the same death rites as other members of the community, suggesting that they had passed a cultural or social watershed in their young lives. The significance of this turning point is illuminated by Narragansett oral history, which tells of babies being nursed for three winters "after which time they began to learn all the ways of their adult counterparts."<sup>32</sup>

For all these children, death had come much too soon, but perhaps not altogether unexpectedly. Although there are no figures available on infant mortality rates, the deaths of very young children would not have been uncommon in New England's Native communities. At RI-1000, the mortality level for those between birth and the age of three may have been as high as 40 percent, so for infants and toddlers the chances of survival were inordinately low.<sup>33</sup> Although the causes of their mortality cannot be determined with certainty from their skeletal remains, the primary pathogens were probably gastroenteric and infectious diseases, including tuberculosis, which may be fatal to young children.<sup>34</sup> Only in one case could the probable cause of death be attributed to a congenital disease.

As with other misfortunes, the Narragansetts must have perceived the causes

of early childhood mortality to be the consequence of Cautantowwit's anger or acts of sorcery. The behavior that triggered Cautantowwit's wrath often was unclear, but forgiveness, and perhaps the restoration of the child's health, could be achieved by ritual supplication, such as hosting a feast in which property was destroyed.<sup>35</sup> If sorcery was believed to be the source of a child's illness, then it is likely that a shaman was called upon to effect a cure. But when the shaman determined through divination that a child's condition was incurable, the prospects for survival must have seemed much less certain. How Narragansett women who had borne these babies and were responsible for nurturing them responded to such dire projections can only be guessed. They had taken their pregnancies and deliveries in stride. They had gone about their normal activities until the beginning of their labor, which, according to Williams in *A Key*, was a "more speedy and easie Travell, and delivery then the Women of *Europe*" and experienced with hardly a complaint, and for many, scarcely a groan. Within a few days after delivery, they resumed many of their activities and soon thereafter were back at work.<sup>36</sup> However, the mundaneness of childbirth, as it appeared to Williams, does not provide a gauge of maternal attachment nor does it help predict how a Narragansett woman would care for a child whose survival seemed unlikely.

Narragansett traditions tell about the abandonment of some newborn infants. According to a story described by Ezra Stiles in 1761, Narragansett mothers who gave birth to "illegitimate" children would do so in the woods, presumably in isolation, and then kill the infant near the rocks, "where they killed so many infants, & their Bones lay about so thick, that they go by the name of the Bastard Rocks."<sup>37</sup> Stiles learned of this practice from a Narragansett who claimed that infant abandonment under these circumstances dated to before the arrival of the English. More than two centuries later, another Narragansett, the Reverend Harold Mars, reported a similar story about a place where the cries of deformed and handicapped children, abandoned because they could not survive the hardships of Native life, could still be heard.

Now one of the older Indian men who was a member of the family would tell of passing by these rocks late at night, and perhaps, if the wind happened to be in the right direction and he would hear what sounded like babies crying and we have heard that story all of our lives and that's how it got its name, the Crying Rocks. Now the story behind that is that, the legend is, that the Indian recognizing the fact that they were exposed to life in the raw so to speak, that when a child was born deformed or crippled in any manner, it was the plan and practice of the Indian people, with proper ceremony, to put that child to death because obviously the child would be handicapped. If he was a man child he would be handicapped as a boy and as a hunter or as a fighter, and so it is said for that reason why they would put a child to death, and this thing having gone on for many years, why there was a build up of little skeletons.<sup>38</sup>

Narragansett oral history offers yet another reason for infant abandonment. According to Ella Wilcox Sekatau, ethnohistorian and medicine woman for the tribe, some Narragansetts also considered infants fathered by non-Natives "imperfect." Rather than incorporating these children into Narragansett communities, where they might be perceived by Rhode Island officials as additional proof of the Narragansetts' loss of "Indianness," some women abandoned them at "Crying Rocks" with other "handicapped" infants or buried them in unmarked graves. Other Narragansett mothers left their "imperfect" babies of mixed heritage as foundlings on the doorsteps of European American houses, where they were adopted through indenture contracts that bound them until adulthood as a supply of household labor.<sup>49</sup>

One could easily read cruelty and indifference in the accounts of "Bastard Rocks" and "Crying Rocks." Imagining a woman abandoning or killing the baby she had carried within her for nine months seems shocking and horrifying, though not unfathomable, to non-Indian thinking. But could the same not be said for enabling a sickly or handicapped infant, surrounded by the premise of death, to survive for only a few months or maybe a year or more? Or allowing a baby who carried the stigma of mixed blood to grow up in a world where its life would be defined by worthlessness and degeneracy in the eyes of European Americans? Or permitting such a child to become the possible object of mounting frustration and uncontrolled rage among close relatives and members of their natal communities?<sup>40</sup> Infanticide, as intimated in these stories, was perhaps as much a necessary evil for some Narragansett women as it was for those of their gender in the communities of the English colonists.<sup>41</sup>

Aside from the circumstances described in these stories, Narragansett babies were accepted and nurtured.<sup>42</sup> According to Williams, no children were fatherless, none for whom the community did not provide.<sup>43</sup> His observations on the subject of "*Relations of Consanguinity, &c.*" suggest that the Narragansetts loved their children dearly. A child's death could evoke inconsolable grief and profuse emotional despair that no self-inflicted wounds could relieve. Not even mournful wailing at dawn and dusk, or during the night, could erase the reminders of the lost child. Although emotion and sentiment are considered to be unanswerable from archaeological evidence, the evidence preserved in the RI-1000 graves provides telling glimpses of how some Narragansett children were cared for during their brief lives and, most especially, in death in late-seventeenth-century New England.<sup>44</sup> Evidence shows children who had been recognized as provisional members of the community but who, as unfortunate as it might seem, came to represent an unfulfilled hope for a future generation of Narragansetts.

The younger children—those between three and four years of age—formed a cohort. They had survived infancy, but not early childhood. They had been weaned

and, presumably, named. The act of naming would have marked a change in the child's personal status, one of many he or she would undergo in the course of an uninterrupted life.<sup>45</sup> With each new stage in life, a new name would be adopted and an old one left behind.<sup>46</sup> Naming conferred new status, but it also bestowed identity by distinguishing the child from generic, unnamed infants.<sup>47</sup> Although the humanity of any Narragansett child was never questioned, naming expressed unequivocally that the child was now a person with unique characteristics.

Naming was not the only means of distinguishing members of this cohort. The material culture in their graves served as another way of marking these individuals. Of the nine three-to-four-year-olds, the graves of eight contained material goods and one did not. The material items in the marked graves appeared to be deliberate inclusions, rather than the result of random events or sheer coincidence.<sup>48</sup> As purposeful and, therefore, meaningful objects, these were of two sorts: objects placed on the person as body ornamentation and those put in the grave presumably as ritual offerings or as personal possessions.

The remains of six young children were ornamented or clothed. Their small wrists were adorned with bracelets, their throats with necklaces; sometimes a child's head was encircled with a headband or an ear embellished with ornaments. Their decorated corpses come as a surprise when one recalls Roger Williams's remarks about the bodily "nakedness" of children. "Their male children goe starke naked," he said, "and have no Apron untill they come to ten or twelve yeeres of age; their Female they, in a modest blush cover with a little Apron of a hand breadth from their very birth."<sup>49</sup> Whether their little bodies came to be covered with the clothing in the years following A Key's publication is unanswerable; but in death, their "nakedness" was not to be seen.

Among Native Americans, the surfaces of the human body singled out for cultural, and specifically decorative, elaboration may provide insights into a variety of concerns about social identity.<sup>50</sup> Bracelets or wristlets, for example, are believed to bind a person to the earth. The wrists of newborn babies among the Algonkian-speaking Delaware were tied with strings of deerskin or cornhusks so that their spirits could not travel far.<sup>51</sup> Bracelets effectively, and metaphorically, connected the individual to the world, much in the same way as do the human body's extremities.<sup>52</sup> Bracelets, as symbols of community and socialization, presumably would have been given to a child at a naming ceremony, so that bracelets given in rituals distinguished the child just as much as a name. Necklaces may be analogous to bracelets; functionally, the neck serves a purpose comparable to that of the wrist to the hands, in that it connects the trunk to the head. Necklaces then may be to the neck as bracelets are to the wrist.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, earrings also may have been linked with imbuing social capability and, more specifically, with activating a child's capacity to receive social information. Thus ornaments, as artifacts that



impose a social form on the individual, are important signatures of the cultural process of socialization.

The ornaments that adorned the three- and four-year-old children were beaded with shell and wampum, either alone or woven with glass and brass. On the left wrist of one child (Burial 10) was a multistrand bracelet made of alternating rows of white and purple wampum. The child's head bore a headband also made of wampum, but instead of alternating bands of white and purple, it had four rows of purple beads to one of white. The headband appeared to have an extension (possibly part of a fastener) at the back made of colored (yellow, turquoise, and clear dark blue) glass seed beads combined with dark (blue and black) tubular ones.

The bracelet that apparently had been placed around the wrists of another child (Burial 11) is suggested from a thread of sinew found in association with mainly brass and glass beads plus one cylindrical shell bead. Some of the brass beads were wedge shaped or triangular and Native cast; others were small and barrel shaped. The glass beads included seed beads in an array of colors and tubular beads in black and white. The remnants of a purple and white wampum headband, perhaps of no more than one or two strands, extended across the cranium of a child buried in another grave (Burial 36), and a bracelet of the same had been placed at the wrists. Ten buttons (five glass and five metal) were clustered nearby. Although the buttons were found in association with a fragment of coarse woolen fabric, it is unclear whether the buttons were sewn onto clothing or were part of an ornament (or even a child's rattle). The head of another child (Burial 21) was wrapped three times around with a band of double rows of small, tubular brass beads. Brass hoops, suitable for attaching beadwork and found in association with wampum-like shell beads in purple and white, suggest that the child was buried in an embroidered shirt. Small shell beads formed part of a poorly preserved earring that had been placed over the left ear of the child in Burial 34.

The most elaborately ornamented child (Burial 37) had wrists tied with several bracelets. Two were made of small, cylindrical black glass beads woven with white wampum onto sinew in a design that resembles those appearing on wampum belts exchanged on ritual occasions. Strands of small brass beads (both barrel shaped and tubular) had been wrapped several times around one of the child's wrists. Another bracelet, of sheet brass, rounded and finished at one end but broken at the other, was etched with a zigzag design centered between borders of deeply incised lines. Three strands of long, tubular black glass beads and white shell beads in different varieties (wampum, long cylindrical, and hourglass) encircled the child's neck, and a delicate spiral of tiny shell beads (none of which survived excavation) appeared to have been worn as an earring. A belt of tubular, dark blue glass beads girdled the child's waist and extended between the legs to form a small apron. Both forearms were enveloped in a deerskin garment richly embellished with seed

beads, brass spirals, mica ovals, and tubes of dark blue glass beads. A pouch made of identical glass beads of white with bright blue and red stripes strung on twine was placed at the back of the individual's head. A cluster of small brass bells (described as "hawk's bells" because their size was similar to those traditionally used by falconers) was attached with Native cordage and found near the hands, forming what may have been another bracelet or perhaps a rattle.

All but two of the ornamented three- and four-year-olds were buried with grave goods. A spoon of European latten metal had been placed in each of their graves, but one child had been given three, plus a small brass spoon (almost teaspoon size) of Native design. Other items found in their graves included bells, hoes, a cup or apothecary jar of white tin-glazed enamel, a tiny, castellated Native-made clay pot with a single corn effigy, a very small glass bottle, a pair of scissors, a metal container or two, and a swivel. Bells, found with two of the three- and four-year-old children, may have been ornamental. Bells were not found in the graves of adults; however, the other items were found with individuals of other ages and genders. Some, like the Native pot and glass bottle, appeared to be scaled-down or miniature versions of the objects found in other graves, but the other items hardly seem like children's things. The hoes, for example, had short, rounded bits that were extremely worn and may well have been reused after part of the original blade had broken. Although these might represent artifacts of socialization, they also may be read as especially poignant offerings, gifts left by a mother or some other close female relative, whose identity was tied to this seemingly mundane object.

Measured in terms of body ornamentation or the number of items per graves, three- and four-year-old children's graves were among the most lavish in the cemetery. Even within this group, five had more things in their graves than the rest.<sup>54</sup> Although such disparities might be taken as evidence of a social inequalities, and even material signatures of inherited ranking (because these children had little opportunity to attain things in their own right), other explanations seem entirely plausible, especially when these graves are compared with those of other young children, whose bodies were unadorned and whose graves were virtually devoid of offerings. An alternative interpretation considers the role of maternal expectations concerning a child's survival. Although many factors might help to determine with reasonable certainty whether a child will remain with the living (e.g., birth spacing, multiple births, maternal health), the circumstances surrounding the child's death, as read from the biological and material evidence in the RI-1000 graves, sheds some light on how the Narragansetts might have attempted to reconcile themselves to the loss of a child in the climate of late-seventeenth-century New England.<sup>55</sup>

Included among the unadorned was a child with hydrocephaly (Burial 42), a congenital condition that manifests itself soon after birth and signals premature death.

It was an unusual burial, not only because of the absence of personal ornaments but also because the grave's shape and orientation were anomalous. This was the only oval grave and the only one oriented north-south. The single "offering," if it could be construed as such, was a sawblade placed behind the child's cranium, perhaps a tool abandoned at the site after preparing the grave or maybe the coffin, as suggested by the presence of a few iron nails. Here then was a sickly and visibly imperfect child, but one who was nurtured for three or four years, perhaps in the hope, however tentative, that death might not come so early. Perhaps not named because of all the uncertainties, the child was still enough a part of the community to be buried in the ancestral cemetery.

The remains of another very young child (Burial 13) without ornaments or grave goods of any kind bore spinal lesions signaling tuberculosis. A skeletal signature suggests that the child may not have died immediately after contracting this highly infectious disease. Instead, the pathogen settled in the child's lung, where it eroded the nearby spinal bones, a sure sign of what medical specialists call a "postprimary" case of tuberculosis. Spared a sudden death, the child lingered until the disease-causing pathogen became reactivated, no doubt because of reduced immunity.<sup>56</sup> For this child, who had withstood this illness and clung to life, even if on a thin thread, this bout of "delayed hypersensitivity" proved to be fatal. In all probability, the child's death did not occur unexpectedly.

In both instances, the deaths of these young children were neither sudden nor entirely unanticipated. The prospects for life at the time of birth were never assured, but if a child survived the first year or a second, then maybe there was hope for another or even more. Although these children were weak and vulnerable, they might have had a chance, however slim, of surviving into adulthood. Their short lives presumably had been lived in an environment of "watchful waiting" by their mothers and the Narragansett community.<sup>57</sup> When they died, they were not excluded from the ancestral burial ground.<sup>58</sup> The absence of bracelets and other body ornaments suggests that they were still nameless, but they were mourned nonetheless.

The causes of death for other three- and four-year-olds buried in RI-1000 are less certain. Without any visible manifestations of disease detectable on their fragile skeletons, one could suppose that their deaths were sudden. These were otherwise healthy babies who for some reason, perhaps not easily pinpointed, became fatally ill. Although the causes of their rapid deaths cannot be diagnosed today with any certainty, gastroenteritis and a host of other infectious diseases, such as influenza, measles, smallpox, and even tuberculosis, would not be unreasonable culprits. For a mother who had nursed a child for three winters, and who had every reason to believe that this one was a survivor, so much so that she asked the elders to name the child, death must have evoked disbelief and inconsolable sorrow. The uncer-

tainty about why Cautantowwit had taken the child, the one with a name, must have been haunting. This was not the kind of pain that was eased by going through the motions. Following the traditions gave reassurances, but in cases like these more medicine was needed: perhaps the shiny, mirrorlike English spoons and, certainly, the beads. The glass ones, many as bright as the daytime sky and as deep as nightfall; the brass, glistening and lustrous; and especially, the shell, white and purple in equal proportions, placed on the body to restore the harmony and balance that had been upset.

The burial ground held remains of other children, whose ages ranged from about six or seven to thirteen years. They had passed the first transitional stage of social life. Many of their graves were erased by the bulldozer; among those that remained intact, several were empty except for the remains of the children themselves. Although their lives had not been menaced by the hazards that posed risks to older members of the community, the conditions of life in late-seventeenth-century New England did not exclude them from susceptibility to chronic illnesses. Five had suffered (and probably died) from chronic tuberculosis, perhaps reactivated because their own poor, age-specific immunity had been compromised.

Although not immune from chronic illness, two younger children, whose ages were estimated at around six to seven or eight years, had exceptional graves. Both were buried with items of personal adornment, but little else. One of the children (Burial 24) was buried wearing a garment profusely embroidered with brightly colored seed beads and some tubular ones. Two small, brass hawk's bells may have been attached to the beaded garment to create a jingling sound as its wearer walked on home ground and, at death, traveled the long and arduous path to the afterworld. The child also wore a delicate bracelet made of translucent yellow glass beads, resembling grains of corn, arranged with white wampum in an alternating pattern. The other child (Burial 41) was buried with a cluster of lead or pewter buttons, which may have been cast by a Native craftsman. The thirteen buttons were placed close to where the child's hands had been positioned, suggesting that they may have been part of a bracelet.

From the material evidence in these two graves, one can suppose that the emphasis at this stage of life was on individual, rather than a shared, identity. Children were permitted to express themselves freely and engage in mischief in ways considered inappropriate for most members of the community.<sup>59</sup> Little in these two graves would suggest that material things played an active role in a child's discipline and training in the late seventeenth century, except perhaps in a most subliminal way. Glass corn-beads threaded on a bracelet may have reminded the child of Cautantowwit's sacred gift. Sounds made by bells and jangling buttons protected the child and offered reassurances that their ancestors had traveled the same ground and made the same journey to the spirit world. Perhaps they were "saw-



cic, bold, and undutifull" as Williams had insinuated, but they certainly did not "want of learning."<sup>60</sup> They watched, imitated, and most of all listened to the stories told to them by the elders. They were works in progress. As provisional members of the community, they were unfinished and uncensored, but most of all they were deeply cherished and indulged, because they were the key to future generations. Unfortunately, the lives of these children were cut short before they had a chance of becoming full-fledged members of the community. Their early deaths must have cast an ominous shadow on the prospect of a Narragansett future.

Some Narragansett children at RI-1000 survived until adolescence. Those from roughly eleven to fifteen years old had begun to show signs of biological and sexual maturity. Measured with a biological yardstick, they were almost men and women. However, their maturity was not simply about chronological age and biology. In a social and cultural sense, it had more to do with character, responsibility, and knowledge. As culturally contingent and socially determined, their coming of age did not simply mean that they had reached puberty. Rather, it marked them as members of a group, having certain responsibilities in the community.

For many Northeastern Native American groups, puberty involved private rituals and public acknowledgment. The private component entailed the grown child's physical separation from the community. Girls were secluded in a small house reserved for the use of menstruating women, where they were cared for by an older woman.<sup>61</sup> Boys were expected "to go forth into the forests and hills," unaccompanied by their fathers or clansmen.<sup>62</sup> According to oral Narragansett traditions, it was during such seclusion that the girl or boy learned "the great mysteries of life" through some combination of fasting, instruction (for girls), prayer, and perhaps the gift of a vision from a *manitou*. These revelations came at the different ages for girls and boys. Even among them, different individuals would have demonstrated their readiness to their parents and the community at slightly different ages. At the end of the period of isolation, young adults were given a new name that was different from their childhood name. The elders chose these "new" names from the pool of available clan names. Thus, they really were not new names, but used and old ones that offered continuity and protection. These names would define the young adults in a kind of verbal shorthand fitted to their appearance and personality. They would bear these names throughout their lives, or at least until the names no longer suited them.

Besides gaining another name, the young adults were given other gifts in acknowledgment of their newly acquired maturity. According to Narragansett tradition, girls were given baskets woven by their mothers and filled with "many useful articles" contributed by the female members of her clan.<sup>63</sup> The gift-filled basket was the young woman's "hope chest," full of "all the useful dainty things . . . required of her society."<sup>64</sup> These articles became her very own, the badges of her

## what about "jewelry is pretty"?

business to assume new responsibilities in the society. The graves of females between the ages of fourteen and twenty-six provide some indication of what these material signatures of this stage of maturity were in the late seventeenth century. Nine of the ten "young women" were buried with body ornaments, such as necklaces and bracelets. Some had rings on their fingers; one young woman had both a headband and a comb. Necklaces were more common among young women than children, suggesting that these ornaments may have been part of the decorative code of their new status. Worn around the neck, necklaces represented the body part associated with communication, but also the head, the locus of understanding. A headband and comb would have similar connotations. All three ornaments—necklace, headband, and comb—pointed to the acquisition of cultural knowledge about adult responsibilities. The rings found with adolescent women were not part of the decorative paraphernalia in children's graves. Rings were worn on the part of the body associated with dexterity. Worn on the hand of a young woman, they might signify that she had learned tasks of adult women and had cast off the things of childhood.

As with ornaments found in the graves of children, those of young women were made of glass, shell, and brass. The most elaborately adorned young female (Burial 22) wore a headband of multiple rows of small, barrel-shaped brass beads interspersed with some purple and white wampum. Her neck was adorned with two necklaces made of a variety of glass, shell, and brass beads. The glass beads included dark-colored cane beads, a few longer ones of the same hue, and some clear, resinous ones with impressed designs and gold overlay. The shell beads occurred in both purple and white, and in a variety of shapes, including wampum. The more complex shapes were rare in the RI-1000 graves. The few brass beads in the necklaces were similar to those found in the headband. The design of the necklaces is unknown. A sheet-brass comb with eight short tines and a broad handle, with flared projections resembling the bifid motif found on other examples of Native brasswork at RI-1000, was also part of the young woman's adornment.

Another (Burial 40) was placed in her grave with a necklace and two bracelets. The necklace was made of dark blue tubular beads mixed with purple and white wampum.<sup>65</sup> The bracelet on her right wrist was made of about four rows of purple and white wampum. The left wrist was wrapped with a long strand made entirely of dark blue tubular beads (similar to the ones in the necklace) and greenish-yellow seed beads, except for the inclusion of a single white, almost colorless, tubular bead. The tubular and seed beads were arranged in a ratio of one to seven.

The necklace encircling the throat of one young woman (Burial 29) was made of glass beads, dark and clear with overlaid brick red stripes, and cylindrical purple and white shell beads slightly larger than wampum. The design also incorporated a small, tubular black bead and a spherical white shell bead. According Ella

Wilcox Sekatau—who is, among other things, an artisan known for her weaving—the pattern was one glass bead to three shell. In another grave (Burial 48), a young woman wore a necklace made of tiny, barrellike brass beads, still strung together. A necklace composed of similar but slightly smaller beads, remarkably also still threaded on what appeared to be twine cordage, was placed on the individual in Burial 18. Eight brass rings, in a variety of “Jesuit” and signet styles, were also among her personal ornaments.<sup>66</sup> Similar rings were found in the grave of another young woman (Burial 19), along with a large assortment of glass beads in different sizes, shapes, and colors—solid and striped (black with white, black with brick red and white, brick red over clear with blue and white)—and even a corn-grain effigy. Fragments of two brass rings, one possibly in a signet style, were found in association with another adolescent (Burial 17) in addition to brass hoops, which may have been used to attach quillwork to clothing. Of the remaining decorated females, one (Burial 47) had a bracelet of white and dark medium-sized seed beads; the other (Burial 49) had a mass of purple and white wampum plus some shell beads in cylindrical and more complex forms.<sup>67</sup>

Some of their beads were similar to the children’s, like the clear, deep blue tubes. Other colors and shapes also were found with young women and children, even corn-beads. Perhaps it was just a matter of supply—that is, what merchants had on hand to trade. But the beads of the young women also could have been acquired on some previous occasion. For girls on the brink of adulthood, these might be beads they had been given when they were first named as three- and four-year-olds. Some might have been lost, others could have been restrung. These beads were personal history, what could be called “life-to-date” beads. Other beads associated with young women were different. They were not incorporated into the glass-beaded ornaments adorning the bodies of children. Some were brick red with the dark centers or the brick red over clear cores with stripes. In fact, any tube bead with stripes in some combination of red, black, or blue with white belonged to their age group alone. Children’s beads had stripes, but they were sky blue with brick red stripes, clear and light compared with the opaque and deeper-colored striped beads of young women. Beads seemed to deepen with the age of the wearer. They went from light (and sometimes bright) to darker, richer, even redder shades, as if to announce that the young woman’s social responsibilities within the community, like the colors of her beads, had intensified.

Of the grave goods buried with individuals belonging to this category of womanhood, some were especially telling of their new responsibilities as clan members. The graves of two young women contained objects depicting clan emblems. One (Burial 17) held a brass spoon made by a Native artisan that in outline resembled a European latten spoon but was decorated with cutout forms of zoomorphic figures located on either side of the point where the bowl and handle

were joined. The two facing figures appeared to represent bears. The bear was (and is) the totem animal of the bear clan, one of several descent groups connecting Narragansetts with other Native peoples across southern New England and the greater Northeast. The other clan emblem placed in the grave of young woman (Burial 22) was that of a turtle, carved into a piece of graphite. Like the bear, the turtle is associated with a clan that has enduring social and spiritual significance for the Narragansetts and other Algonkian peoples. These bear and turtle symbols, the only recognizable clan symbols in the RI-1000 burial ground, were badges that identified clan membership for these young women, much like the adult clan names they had been given to replace their childhood names. Clan organization, which may have begun several millennia earlier to facilitate exchange between peoples living in different homelands, designated appropriate marriage partners, defined their sacred duties, and, in general, created both a broad and profound network of kinship and community for them. That these clans’ emblems were associated with adolescent women makes a compelling statement about the importance of women in Narragansett society and especially about their role in reckoning descent.

The objects encoded with clan totems along with the beads and other items would have been given to young women at the rituals marking their transition from children to adults. The bear-effigy spoon and the graphite turtle were sacred objects. The turtle effigy carved into graphite is especially evocative of more esoteric cultural meanings. Graphite is a substance used to paint or smudge on the face for ritual and perhaps other occasions. For example, Roger Williams noted in *A Key* that mourners blackened their faces to lament the dead. However, among other Algonkian peoples, the child at puberty wore a blackened face. Boys especially were said to wear a blackened face as sign that they were entering adolescence, but girls also were known to have been “smudged” in acknowledgment of their transition from childhood to womanhood. In design and substance, the turtle effigy placed in the young woman’s grave conveys information about clan membership, personhood, and sacred traditions.

A diversity of other items also accompanied adolescent women in their graves. Spoons, in addition to the one with the clan emblem, were common, especially European latten varieties. Glass bottles appeared in the majority of graves within this group. The latten spoons and the glass bottles exhibited few signs of wear resulting from ordinary use, suggesting that they were special offerings for the deceased.<sup>68</sup> The other grave goods were single occurrences of a miscellaneous array of objects. Some, like white tin-glazed cups (or jars), also appeared in a child’s grave, as did a pair of scissors.

The grave of one young woman (Burial 17) held an unusual assortment of objects. In addition to body ornaments, and the glass bottles and spoon diagnostic of

her age group, her grave contained iron kettle hooks, an iron pot or kettle, brass clips, and a wooden mirror box. The hooks and kettle tell of the responsibilities of a mature woman, not one having recently acquired the knowledge to assume this place in Narragansett society. Here was someone who, judging from her grave lot, was both a young woman and a mature one. She was a person inscribed with two female identities, one superimposed on the other, much like the inverted iron kettle that covered the glass bottles in her grave. Double identity implied that she was in two social places at once: She was poised on the brink of womanhood but also had ventured beyond it. She had acquired the gifts typically given to young women at puberty, but her ornaments were few and seemingly worn. She wore only the fragments of two rings, but no beads. Her simplicity was perhaps more than a matter of personal style. Viewed in the context of the other elements of her grave's material assemblage, it conveyed something more. Although she was only recently versed in the responsibilities of her gender in Narragansett society, she had a scar on her pelvis, a mark of pregnancy and parturition. She was not the only young adult woman to have this chiseled groove etched onto her skeleton, but in her case the imprint confirmed what her ornaments and grave goods implied: She had a history in her own right, however brief.<sup>69</sup> Before her fertility and purpose were cut short, she had carried a pregnancy into its later stages and perhaps had even experienced childbirth, along with fulfilling other responsibilities to her clan and community.

The grave of one seventeen-to-eighteen year old female (Burial 26), whose chronological age was within the range of the category of "younger women," lacked ornaments or grave goods of any kind. However, her burial also was unusual in other respects. Her torso, though right sided, almost appeared to be in a prone position; her hands were crossed in front of her face, a position not seen in other individuals buried at RI-1000. The bones of her nasal area exhibited extensive destruction. The erosion is suggestive of a treponemal infection, probably in the form of venereal, rather than congenital, syphilis that was acquired sometime after she had reached puberty. These skeletal lesions, characteristic of the tertiary stage of the disease, could have developed as early as two years after an infective contact or maybe even sooner.<sup>70</sup> Whatever its timing, the infection wreaked havoc on her body. Skeletal stress markers such as traverse lines on the long bones (which in her case were significantly higher than the averages calculated for females within the RI-1000 burial population) and severe dental caries suggest that she may have been already weakened because of malnutrition before becoming infected and most certainly subject to further synergistic responses as a result of it.<sup>71</sup>

Clearly, her condition was far from asymptomatic. The severe erosion of her nasal bones suggests that neither sweating nor medicinal potions cured her of the disease she had acquired.<sup>72</sup> The infection had taken its toll by inflicting pain, de-

pleting her energy, and leaving her defenseless to other diseases. Rather than looking forward to a future in the company of older women and to giving birth to children who would live to become the next generation in her lineage, she gazed at death.<sup>73</sup> She was deathly ill and must have known it, as did others who could not have failed to notice signs of disease. Yet despite the disfigurement to her face, she was buried with the care and respect given to all Narragansett ancestors. The beads and other gifts she had been given at puberty, when her prospects for this life seemed hopeful, did not accompany her to the grave, however. Perhaps they had been destroyed, shed along with her name and other aspects of her identity, in hopes of restoring her to health and keeping her in the community of the living.

By crude estimates, a young Narragansett woman in the late seventeenth-century could expect to live to the age of about thirty-five or forty. In fact, some women buried at RI-1000 lived much longer, a few even well into their fifties. Their bodies showed the wear that comes with age: Their pelvises were scarred by pregnancy; their joints exhibited degenerative arthritis, especially of the spine, elbow, and wrist. One woman's foot showed the consequences of stress imposed by habitual kneeling. A few had Colles' fractures, the technical term for a broken wrist, the kind that could result from attempting to break a fall with an outstretched hand. Several had evidence of osteoporosis, the loss of bone mass that frequently occurs in postmenopausal women. All had poor dental health. In general, they had more caries, abscessed teeth, and antemortem tooth loss than men of comparable age.<sup>74</sup> They had suffered bouts of malnutrition and perhaps had felt pangs of hunger. And like so many others in the community, they too bore the signs of tuberculosis.<sup>75</sup>

Their bodies had earned the insults that come with age. The women had lived through many things that come with longevity. They had grieved over the death of a parent, a spouse, or even a child and learned to deal with life's unfairness and uncertainties. The older ones had lived beyond their years of strength and fertility. Their losses were not only personal; they had seen much change during their lives. There were new tools for doing old things, clanspeople made homeless by disease and war, encroachments on their ancestral lands by the English, tensions caused by alcohol and greed, pressures to convert to the foreigners' religion, and the questioning of cultural traditions. Some probably even remembered Roger Williams.

Their maturity, unlike the acknowledgment of their coming of age, was not marked by ceremony. It did not require a change of name, but it enabled them to name others. Maturity was about assuming adult responsibilities and growing in wisdom. Marriage was part of the package, a requirement for full adulthood and a commitment to fulfill the obligation to reproduce. The marriage itself would have been formally recognized by the consent of the couple's parents and the en-

dorsement of the community. The groom would have presented gifts, which according to Williams were payments of wampum, as a "dowrie" to the woman's family.<sup>76</sup> Whatever the material form, these gifts, perhaps more correctly thought of as a brideprice, were offered in gestures of exchange intended to strengthen the relationship between the two households and clans joined in the marriage.

As wives, Narragansett women were expected to be "loving," "proper," "sober and chaste," and "fruitfull."<sup>77</sup> Although many couples were known to have stayed together for most of their adult lives, some marriages, however well intended, undoubtedly failed.<sup>78</sup> The reasons were probably as simple and as complicated as in any other time or place. Native oral history and colonial records indicate that women sometimes left their husbands because of abandonment but also for political expediency.<sup>79</sup> In cases of adultery, the wronged party could separate from (i.e., divorce) the offending spouse. According Williams in *A Key*, "if the Woman be false," the husband was allowed to take revenge on "the offender, before many witnesses, by many blowes and wounds," even to the extent of murder.<sup>80</sup>

In the course of their reproductive careers, Narragansett women were said to "abound with Children, and increase mightily," but even at the time of *A Key* epidemic and chronic disease had taken the lives of many and reduced the number of births.<sup>81</sup> However, other factors also would have compromised their fecundity. Lactation would have affected the time between pregnancies; its contraceptive effect was ensured by culturally prescribed sexual abstinence, which lasted until the nursing child was weaned three years after birth. This long period of lactation would have regulated birth spacing for any healthy woman to at least three years. Demanding physical labor also could have restricted a woman's reproductive capacity by causing infrequent menstrual periods and by placing enormous burdens on her ability to care for young children. Thus, although physical labor may have contributed to "their extraordinary ease of childbirth," and children were thought to increase agricultural yields, Narragansett women's role in production may have had both unintended and intended consequences for their childbearing histories.<sup>82</sup> In all likelihood, even fertile seventeenth-century Narragansett women were not always pregnant.<sup>83</sup>

As important as children were to Narragansett life, so too was corn. Indeed, much has been made of the ways in which activities of Narragansett (and other Native American) women in southeastern New England intersected with corn. They not only planted the seed but also weeded and hilled the immature plants; gathered and dried the harvest; and ground stored kernels into flour, keeping some as seed for the next year's planting. They were almost solely entrusted with the care of the plant that was much more to them than an important food, considering the symbolism surrounding its place in their daily lives and sacred traditions. In addition to tending the corn, women gathered wild food and plants, including

grasses, sedges, herbs, and dyes. They also collected shellfish, which provided an essential source of protein in their diets and the raw material for bead making. Like the mats woven from cornhusks, bulrushes, and cattails, beads made from shells served as a creative medium through which Narragansett women expressed their artistic skills and their knowledge of cultural traditions. Beadwork and weaving (though certainly not limited to shell or cornhusks and marsh reeds) were as much a part of a woman's burden as their work in the fields and gardens, mudflats, and the other spaces of the homeland. They were all expressions of women's identities and their contributions to the reproduction of Narragansett society.

In death, as in life, older women were distinguished from younger women. Among the women buried at RI-1000, those whose ages ranged from twenty-nine to fifty-eight were undecorated. Unlike younger Narragansett women, they wore no beads. No necklaces or bracelets encircled their limbs; no rings adorned their fingers. Without exception, all eleven "older" women lacked any type of body ornamentation. They were marked, in a sense, by their decorative invisibility. The absence of personal ornaments in their graves suggests a silent discourse in which adult women, in contrast with younger ones and children, were not defined in relation to someone else, such as a parent. Instead, their social position within the community had become redefined in terms of their own life experiences and increasing sense of independence.

Seven of eleven adult women's burials contained some type of grave good.<sup>84</sup> In general, they were mundane objects used in everyday life: tools associated with horticulture, such as iron hoes and stone pestles; items linked with cooking, such as brass kettles and iron pothooks; and still others, like awls (or muxes) and a bone- (or antler-) handled knife, possibly used in beadwork or basketry or other tasks. The hoes showed damage from heavy use; they were not pristine objects obtained or curated for the specific purpose of placing them in the graves of the dead at the time of burial.<sup>85</sup> The brass kettles also exhibited signs of wear. They were battered, heavily charred, and in some cases patched. The stone pestles presumably had been used as well. On ground stone tools, it is often difficult to differentiate use-related wear from that resulting from the manufacture, but the surfaces of these items implied use in pounding and grinding. Two surfaces of one particular pestle exhibited wear. It was smooth and flat on one side of its shaft, and its handle end was worn and chipped, suggesting multipurpose use.

The distribution of these objects among the women's graves suggests that hoes and pestles were buried with women past the age of forty. Among the nine graves containing remains of women of this age, three held hoes, and two, pestles. Three of the graves did not contain any grave goods. The women buried with these objects included a woman aged between forty and forty-five years (Burial 51), whose exceptionally short-bladed hoe exhibited a lifetime of use. It was reused or reworked

after the original blade had been broken. The grave of another woman, between fifty-six and sixty years old (Burial 32), contained a hoe with a broken haft. It retained part of its wooden haft and a wedge that once held it in place. The graves of both women also contained pestles. The other hoe was buried with a woman in her midfifties (Burial 31); it was similar in size and shape to the hoe found with Burial 32. Its longitudinal cracks, visible in X rays, revealed a history of heavy use.

The presence of such tools in the graves of these older women underscores the association between Narragansett women, the land, and cultivation. These items, all well worn from years, even lifetimes, of use, embodied women's activities in providing sustenance and in nurturing cultural traditions. In the time since Williams commented on Native women's preference for "their naturall Howes of shells and wood," they had adopted iron ones and put them to good use.<sup>86</sup> That such items were buried with older women suggests an intimate, if not inalienable link, between these objects, the duties and knowledge they imply, and those who possessed them. Thus, these heavily used and highly curated hoes may have been much more than everyday tools. The same may also be true for pestles. Although effigy pestles found in contact period females' graves have been interpreted as symbols of Algonkian women's importance as food producers and spiritual leaders, because of their lack of wear and their zoomorphic and anthropomorphic representations, noneffigy pestles may have had similar connotations in the context of the RI-1000 burial ground.<sup>87</sup> By taking these undecorated and worn pestles out of circulation and appropriating them for use as grave objects, these ordinary objects became sacralized.

Of the two women buried with pestles at RI-1000, one (Burial 32) was the oldest woman in the burial ground. Between fifty-six and sixty years, her age would have made her old enough to be respected as an elder and imbued with the authority that comes with seniority and accumulated knowledge. Her grave goods—the pestle, hoe, and awl—were objects of her position as a woman in Narragansett society, but they are also simple yet eloquent reminders of her wisdom, confidence, and leadership in matters of social intelligence and cultural traditions.

In contrast, the other woman buried with a pestle (Burial 31) was not an elder. Her skeleton suggested an age between forty and forty years. She may have been old enough to have gained experience and esteem as a clan mother, but she was still what might be called a "young forty," even in that time when forty was not considered young. Besides a pestle and a hoe, her grave included objects not buried with women past forty, such as brass kettles and a bone-handled knife.

The brass kettles in her grave ranged from large to small. The medium-sized kettle exhibited evidence of multiple instances of repair. A sheet-metal patch fastened to its wall appeared to have three other patches riveted to it in subsequent attempts at repair.<sup>88</sup> The smallest kettle (or perhaps pan), like the others, was dam-

aged from use and heavily charred on its exterior surfaces. All of the kettles had been placed in her grave upside down; the largest partially covered the hoe. The presence of two nearly complete iron bails suggests that the handles of the larger kettles had been deliberately removed before being placed in the burial, perhaps with the intention of depriving them of their utilitarian value and thus reinforcing their close identification with the deceased.<sup>89</sup> Sections of iron rods, which appeared to be parts of kettle-rim reinforcements, may have been associated with similar acts of ritual destruction. The only other brass kettle recovered in a woman's grave at RI-1000 was found with a twenty-seven-to-thirty-year-old (Burial 28) who, like other "mature" women at RI-1000, was not decorated with beads or other ornaments.<sup>90</sup> The bone-handled knife in Burial 31 was similar to that found in the grave of a preadolescent girl.

The array of objects in Burial 31 included womanly things, such as brass kettles, that connoted an adult woman's duties to her household and her responsibilities in childbearing and nurturing, but in addition items like the hoe and pestle marked increasing maturity and heralded her entry into the company of clan matrons. These objects were symbolic of the more profound power and understanding that often came with age. Here was a woman in transition, posed between fertility—and the duties attached to it—and the rewards of longevity. Like other mature women and the elders, she had persevered. She had been raised in the ways of her community and clan and had put these lessons to use during the course of her adult life. Along with others of her age, her life experiences gave her the license to share with the next generation of Narragansett women the survival skills so fiercely won in the brutal arena of seventeenth-century New England.

The material inscriptions in the graves of women buried at RI-1000 tell about more than women's roles in motherhood and cultivation. The graves of some older women indicate that they engaged in other activities equally important to the reproduction of the society. Two graves of women past the age of forty (Burials 9 and 32) contained slender iron rods that have been interpreted as drills or muxes used in perforating wampum, much like the ones Roger Williams said they used to bore "their shell money" decades earlier.<sup>91</sup> Although wampum production and trade in seventeenth-century New England were certainly important and widespread, these metal tools may possibly have been awls or needles, rather than drills. Using these needles, which like their hoes were made of European iron, Narragansett women strung, stitched, and wove beads manufactured from local shell or imported brass, and Dutch glass beads obtained from traders, into patterns that were neither casual nor idiosyncratic. Their beadwork—found in the graves of children and adolescent women and their male relatives—was the thread and sinew that joined the young to the community and connected the generations.

These women had passed from youth to maturity, survived childbirth, and be-



come old and wise. Although their deaths may have come as no surprise, the causes are not readily diagnosed. No evidence of trauma suggests that they had met violent deaths. Some may have died from tuberculosis or other respiratory diseases, such as pneumonia or flu, common in late-seventeenth-century New England. Dysentery, smallpox, or any number of things could have killed them. Some may simply have died from what might be described as natural causes. Despite the sparseness of facts surrounding how these women died, there can be no doubt that their deaths left a void in the lives of those who survived them.

Unlike the lives of these women, those of men buried at RI-1000, especially those in their twenties and thirties, should be familiar to European Americans. These were the members of Narragansett communities who typically interacted with the English colonists. These are the ones whom Roger Williams would have written about in *A Key* or mentioned in his letters. This is the cohort that furnished his travel guides, diplomatic contacts, trade partners, and those with whom he occasionally shared food and lodging. It was from these public, male characters that he learned about the Narragansetts and their way of life. Whether identified by their Algonkian (or English) names or left nameless, these are the people who came to represent Native culture in southeastern New England in the seventeenth century.

Despite the aura of familiarity, very little is known about the lives of these men or of younger ones and elders. Even a high-profile individual like Miantonomi, perhaps the best known of all prominent seventeenth-century Narragansetts, is chronicled for only an eleven-year period from 1632 to 1643, when he was between his midthirties and forties.<sup>92</sup> He emerges from the written documents as honorable, charismatic, tough minded, politically astute, vocal, and angry—and the victim of an assassination. Like that of other sachems, this profile derives from textual references that tie him largely to specific events and diplomatic negotiations. However, his life was not played out merely in the arena of intercultural politics.

Like other men in his community, Miantonomi was a son (of Mascus), a nephew (of Canonicus), a brother (of Yotash, Pessicus, Cojonoquant, and possibly others), a husband (of Wawaloam), a father of three sons (among them Canonchet and Moosup), and a close friend to others, perhaps some since adolescence.<sup>93</sup> In the context of these relationships, he was expected to emulate, to respect, to provide, to teach, to share, to travel, to fight, and sometimes to risk his life or die. Yet fulfilling these social obligations became increasingly difficult in seventeenth-century New England. The English had interfered with hunting privileges, limited access to fishing areas, and in general threatened to disrupt his and other Narragansetts' way of life. Surely survival was at stake, but also life as the Narragansetts knew it. There was a possibility that the balance of daily life, the complementarity of tasks, and the duties and obligations that were part of the pattern would all be

upset. The aspects of Miantonomi's life that were overlooked by the English had little to do with intercultural politics, or, in some ways, perhaps everything. Over the next generation or two, these concerns would continue to be important to Narragansett men—including those whose remains were interred at RI-1000.

The men buried in these graves, eleven in all, ranged in age from their late teens to late forties. Most were in their late twenties and thirties. A few were older, and two were in their late teens or early twenties. Compared with women of about the same age, younger men were conspicuously underrepresented among the mortalities. The appalling imbalance is not easily explained. The recruitment of teenage boys as warriors or as farm laborers and servants in English households may have been a contributing factor. However, their removal from family and community for periods of time does not provide an entirely satisfactory explanation for their virtual exclusion from the ancestral burial ground. Their underrepresentation hints at the more complicated patterns of community commonly found in Native New England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but rarely mentioned in written narrations about Narragansetts of the late seventeenth century.

The material inscriptions in the men's graves at RI-1000 suggest that their life histories were different from those of women. Life passages were not as clearly marked, which seems to imply that transitions in the life cycle were not as meaningful for them as they were for women. For example, unlike the women buried at RI-1000, younger men were not distinguished from older ones by the presence of decorative ornaments. Rather, some younger and older men were buried with body ornaments such as headdresses, rings, and a buckle. These personal ornaments suggest complicated individual histories instead of shared group identities forged at critical junctures in the life cycle.

That the heads of some men were singled out for decoration suggests a link between men and the part of the body associated with knowledge, understanding, and speech. Men were the talkers, the interlocutors, and often the spokespeople. They gave the speeches, told the jokes, and uttered the prophecies. Women may have done much of the same, but it was expected of the men regardless of whether anyone was listening (or would admit that they were). Their beaded head ornaments were made of shell and brass but, unlike those of young women and children, never glass beads. The headband of one adult male (Burial 2) was made of multiple strands of small, standard-sized beads cut from expertly prepared sheet-brass tubes. Others were made of wampum. One (Burial 38) was a modest, single strand of purple and white wampum beads. The most elaborate, constructed of many more purple and white wampum beads arranged in rows, was worn by a sixteen-year-old (Burial 3) along with a comb, as is suggested by two fragments of a bone comb found in his grave.

Rings were buried with two adult men in their late twenties to midthirties. The



man in Burial 15 wore six engraved "Jesuit" rings, all on his right hand. Three exhibit identical "IHS I" motifs found in Jesuit symbolism. The others are embellished with variants of a generally similar "L-Heart" design. Rings exhibiting similar motifs also appeared in the graves of adolescent women (Burials 18 and 19). Although Jesuit rings are generally associated with French missionary activity, they hardly seem to be artifacts of a praying Indian, especially a Catholic one, in the context of this Narragansett grave. Here were objects of exchange, perhaps not with the French themselves, but more likely with their Native trading partners, the Mohawks, who had become strong allies of the Narragansetts in the second half of the seventeenth century. From exchange goods, the rings were transformed into personal ornaments that accompanied their new wearer to the grave and into the afterlife, where their earlier symbolism disappeared.

The rings buried with the other adult male (Burial 2) included a brass ring with a thin band and an ornate bezel designed to hold five small, round stones, the only one of its kind among the RI-1000 graves, and a heavy, European-style signet ring engraved with an anchor and heart. A European cast-brass double-style buckle suitable for use on a belt, possibly for a sword, completed his ornaments. Although signet rings were found in other graves at RI-1000, none bore the heart-and-anchor motif. The anchor has been an emblem of Rhode Island since 1647, and hearts appear in a variety of Rhode Island family seals dating from the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>94</sup> One could suppose that this signet ring was used by a prominent colonist who affixed it to a document, perhaps even a deed, along with a signature.<sup>95</sup> Its presence in this grave alludes to a more complicated cultural history. Perhaps given to a Narragansett leader to seal a land transaction thought to involve the transfer or sale of property, rather than certain use rights, the ring was a symbol of misunderstandings. Recovered in the grave of the individual identified so unconventionally and so imperfectly as Burial 2, who wore the brass ring on one of his fingers, it was much more than simply a fashion statement. It was an expression of personal and tribal history, of autonomy and submission, and of appropriation and rejection; it was an artifact with complex and multiple meanings, here all equally valid.

The four decorated males were all buried with spoons. Most of them were Native made of brass and were either badly corroded or fragmentary. One was a miniature, scooplike spoon, 2 inches (5.3 centimeters) long, with a rolled handle unlike any other Native-made brass spoon found in the burial ground. In only a single instance (Burial 2) was a European latten spoon buried with one of the decorated males. One of the spoons had stains of red ochre and fine fur adhering to one end; others were associated with fragments of European woolen textiles, perhaps suggesting that these brass spoons, like their European counterparts, were ritual objects serving as special offerings for the deceased.<sup>96</sup>

The majority of adult men were buried with pipes; some had more than one. Pipes were found only with men. Most were typical of common English pipes shipped to New England in the second half of the seventeenth century, but some were similar to imported pipes that reached America from the late seventeenth into the eighteenth centuries. However, one with an outward flaring bowl, round heel spur, and flattened stem was presumably molded by a Native craftsman to resemble a European-style pipe. The decorative incisions on the bowl mimic the impressed rouletting which often appears on imported pipes.

All of the pipes showed evidence of use. Their bowls were charred, and their stems showed incisor marks. Some of the European pipes even appear to have been cut down and smoothed after their bowls and stems had been broken. The teeth of two men (Burials 25 and 38) had wear facets on their lateral incisors and canines, confirming what the pipes themselves implied about the association between adult men and tobacco. According to Roger Williams in *A Key*, they alone were responsible for cultivating tobacco.<sup>97</sup> Smoking was a male activity: it was something that men did when they gathered in formal councils, in sweat lodges, and in chance encounters in their travels.<sup>98</sup> It facilitated communication, allowing words and ideas to flow between them and to the spirit world. But other times they smoked tobacco as a tonic for their bodies, rather than for their senses. For example, they took tobacco to relieve the discomfort of toothaches, which Williams said caused even "their stout hearts to cry" in pain.<sup>99</sup> The condition of their teeth would not deny this.<sup>100</sup> With a few rare exceptions, "men throughout the Country" were said to have "a Tobacco-bag, with a pipe in it, hanging at their back."<sup>101</sup> Those buried at RI-1000 were accompanied by their pipes. In death, however, their pipes were always placed near their heads, sometimes close to their mouths, never at their backs.

With few exceptions, most of the other objects buried with men were tools. Among them were iron knives, adzes, and craft-related tools that reflected their activities as wampum makers, leadcasters, and metalworkers. These objects typically were buried with younger adult males, rather than older men, whose graves rarely contained any tools. The grave of an adolescent male (Burial 3), for example, contained wooden-handled iron knives, a trade ax, a stone mold, and wampum blanks that tell of his responsibilities and promise as a Narragansett man. These tools relate to skills he would have been taught since childhood (e.g., how to use a knife to skin a deer or an ax to fell a tree), but also to those he would have acquired since becoming an adult. The stone mold and wampum blanks comment on survival skills in a complex cultural universe, things he would have to do in this life and in the next so that his community could continue. Another young man, in his early twenties (Burial 16), might not have shown the same abilities as a hunter. Tall, yet with a gracile build, he was buried with only an iron container.<sup>102</sup>

The grave of an adult male in his late twenties (Burial 25) held ten iron awls sheathed in decayed wood. X rays disclosed two discrete clusters, each with large and small awls. The larger ones were longer than the awls found in women's graves, lending support to the interpretation that they may have had a different function, perhaps as drills or muxes used in manufacturing wampum. The sets of different-sized muxes were carefully maintained and securely held in a wooden case. These things were curated and even treasured, rather than casual and expendable things used once or twice and simply discarded. They were important enough to have been placed in the grave of this individual, who presumably had invested much time and energy in using them during his lifetime. In another grave of a Narragansett man in his late twenties (Burial 15) were cast-lead cylinders and a musket ball, all of the same diameter. The lead castings, which could have been used as ammunition, were made without a ball mold, perhaps by a Native craftsman (even the warrior himself). The other tools in his grave included an adze, a grooved abrader, and an iron hoe with a broken edge. The adze does not exhibit any real signs of use damage, and the broken hoe does not appear to have been reworked, unlike so many others found in the RI-1000 graves.

Burial 38 contained a remarkable assemblage of tools used in the repair and manufacture of iron implements and in other types of metalwork. The tool kit of this twenty-eight-year-old Narragansett man included a claw hammer, a horse-shoe, a chisel-like wedge, various reworked iron artifacts, assorted hardware (perhaps usable scrap iron), a stockpile of recyclable pieces of sheet brass, knives, a flint (or possibly a gunflint), and a whetstone. Among the reworked objects was a kettle-rim reinforcement straightened into a heavy rod; an iron spike tapered to a chiseled edge; and a strip of wrought iron bent into a shape that resembled a handle, possibly intended for use on a heavy wooden object or a tumbler for a very large stock-lock.<sup>103</sup> An iron wedge was recycled from a broken ax or adze. Another with a chisel-like end was made from an iron bar that had been forged into a very low-carbon steel or wrought iron suitable for working wood.

The sophistication evident in reworking this object and some of the others in this grave suggest technical skills not very different from those of European smiths.<sup>104</sup> The individual in Burial 38 was a skilled craftsman.<sup>105</sup> His grave goods give evidence of traditional knowledge in working native copper, practical experience with imported brass, and adeptness in forging iron. He had both the equipment and the ability to repair and adapt brass and iron implements, including firearms, and thereby extend their use life. A clay pipestem (noticeably heavier than those of other European pipes) and a latten spoon—both objects of ritual significance—found with a pile of tools containing many materials and implements for blacksmithing, including a horseshoe, suggest that his powers of transformation may not have been confined solely to metal.<sup>106</sup> Instead of speaking to trade, ac-

quisition, or possibly a youthful apprenticeship among the English, the items in Burial 38 tell a compelling story of Narragansett resourcefulness and resistance in late-seventeenth-century New England.

The men had been prepared for burial with many of the things they had used in this life and presumably could also use in the next. The hunters and warriors were equipped with knives and musket balls they could use for fish and game (and warfare), and axes and adzes for taking the forest and its many resources. They had the tools of their trades for fixing broken axes, patching kettles, repairing guns, and making shell beads. Warriors as well as those past that stage in their lives had their pipes positioned close to them, as if readied to smoke. The old men were buried with neither tools nor pipes, however. Instead of having these objects in their graves, they had the knowledge and memory of these things, and of course the stories to go with them. They could chronicle events, name the English they had guided, speak of long-running feuds, tell of exploits and deceptions, enumerate troubles, and catalog losses. These intangibles they took with them to their graves and to the community of the ancestors.

They were perhaps ready to die. Their aged bodies had become frail with arthritis and severe osteoporosis. In the end, one elderly man may have been unable to conquer the chronic tuberculosis that had plagued him on and off for so long. In spite of their elders' readiness to leave this world for the next, those who survived them still had many reasons to mourn. The elders had contributed so much, and so much would be gone with their passing. Younger men also would have been missed, but perhaps for other reasons. They had not racked up the years. To their way of thinking, they had not survived as many winters. Most were strong and able. Hardly a trace of arthritis was to be seen among them, though more than a few had spondylolysis, a defect in their spines resulting from strenuous activity or even an inherited predisposition, which could have caused chronic back pain or given them considerable discomfort.<sup>107</sup> Only two men seem to have died from tuberculosis.

Why had these men died so young, in the prime of their lives? They showed no blatant signs of trauma, such as fractures, amputations, multiple lesions, or musket balls imbedded in their bones. Some had evidence of periostitis, however, indicating the bone tissue's response to infection. In two cases the periosteal infection was associated with traumatized ribs, but most often it had a nonspecific origin. The lesions on two men's tibias resembled syphilis, or they could have been part of the disease syndrome, but the diagnosis is ambiguous. So, in short, the causes of their deaths are a mystery. Cold, hunger, the indignities of the "bloody flux," spoiled meat, and hunting accidents are all possibilities, but so too is violence perpetrated by human agents. Such mortal wounds cannot always be ascertained in skeletal remains, let alone autopsies, but this does not eliminate them

as possible, and in some cases probable, causes of death. Circumstantial evidence would suggest that such violence was as endemic in late-seventeenth-century New England as tuberculosis, dysentery, and other chronic illnesses that plagued the region's Native peoples long after the first waves of viral epidemics had subsided. The lying-in-wait for ambushes and raids, the preparations for and talk of war, and indeed the bloody skirmishes, surprise attacks, and torture made them weary before their time and sometimes surely killed them.

Even before the fatal blows were struck, some might have begun to think of themselves, and perhaps even of the society, as tired, worn-out, and old. Maybe some doubted the continuation of their way of life. Their sachems had wrestled against incursions on their cultural, political, and economic autonomy; some had entered into treaties intended to gain protection for them from the colonists, including an act of voluntary submission to the king of England. This kind of fighting had gone on for decades, even back to when Roger Williams was in Narragansett country. At times, it must have seemed like a losing battle. They still had their land, at least some or most of it, depending on who was keeping track. They could use it to negotiate with the English by giving use rights, maybe even selling some parcels, in order to gain promises. They knew the dangers of famine, but also the threats posed by disorder and chaos. They had struggled against both in very different ways and yet for the very same reason: to preserve their "Indianness." They had taken jobs among the English; some had left their children in their care temporarily; but most, if not all, had clung tenaciously to their Native traditions. The sacred rituals offered reassurances, the comfort of the familiar, the hope that the pattern set in motion long ago would continue to repeat itself. But even when the vision of the horizon looming before them was clouded, the bonds of kinship and the sense of community were still strong enough to overcome the dissension that might have occasionally surfaced among different factions and individuals.

In summary, the evidence in the RI-1000 graves reveals stories about Narragansetts in the late seventeenth century that have not been told in historical narratives. These are stories about their struggles to survive, make sense of the transformations taking place around them, and maintain kinship connections and community. They bring to light the lives of women, children, young men and women, and elders who were at the margins of Roger Williams's field of vision in the 1630s and 1640s and would barely be noticed by most later scholars. They also reveal people in different dimensions than simply those of politics and entrepreneurship. They tell as much about historical consciousness, and a continuing sense of identity as a people, as they do about material acquisitions and new technological skills. The RI-1000 graves do not confirm predictions about the disappearance of the Narragansetts' "Indianness" which come from *A Key*. Instead, they do much to challenge these notions.

## 8.

### REMEMBERING THE

Buried according to the sacred  
other. After a long and difficult  
in the southwest, where they  
the dear ones, and, like the  
the watchful eyes of a few  
intruders, they would have  
flowing with nature's bounty  
ows, bask in product  
houses free of smoke  
worry or pain. They  
with an abundance  
son; and the clamor

Although the  
the dead could  
unworthy, who  
pear at will and  
was their form  
England Native  
lore that illu  
suggest the  
home and