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Native American Historical Archaeology and the Trope of Authenticity

ABSTRACT

This essay argues that historical archaeology has the potential to complicate and challenge colonial narratives of authenticity, not only in the rich data that it collects and studies, but also in the ways in which it goes about collecting these data. Case studies from colonial New England exemplify the nuanced perspectives on native spirituality and community cohesion offered via historical archaeology. These complex and variegated archaeological histories have the potential to break the dichotomous tropes inherent in public understandings of colonialism. Recent historical archaeological research with the Brothertown Indian Nation also serves to demonstrate the ways in which critical, collaborative, and pragmatic approaches can challenge colonial narratives on a local scale.

Thus in the beginning all the World was America.
—John Locke

Introduction: From *Terra Nullius* to Authenticity

Popular understandings of colonial history and indigeneity perpetuate monolithic cultural essences: Europeans as coloniz*ing*, dynamic, and modern vs. native peoples as coloniz*ed*, passive, antimodern, and disappearing, if not already extinct. As seen in a variety of contexts, ranging from the works of Pulitzer Prize–winning author Jared Diamond—see Wilcox (2010) and B. Williams (2013)—to media coverage and public responses to contemporary indigenous struggles for sovereignty, land, and control of cultural heritage (Den Ouden 2005), these tropes are ubiquitous in American culture. Many of these contemporary narratives tie back to the ideology of *terra nullius*, which was officially codified into British law in 1722 (Ruppel 2008:11)—see also Gosden (2004). Colonizing European nations used the *terra nullius* classification, literally meaning "no-man's-land," to frame precolonial North America as an empty space awaiting and justifying European encroachment, cultivation, and improvement (Berkhofer 1978:120; Ruppel

2008:11–16). For example, in his *Second Treatise of Government*, philosopher John Locke (1821) typified precolonial North America as unimproved wilderness. Of course, to enact their natural rights and to improve said lands, colonists first had to deal with America's indigenous populations (McGuire 1992, 2004), which they initially regarded as subhuman.

Narratives of Indian authenticity sit at the forefront of contemporary colonial politics and—akin to *terra nullius*—function as tools of further conquest. A strict dichotomy between Indian and white defines Indian authenticity for many non-Indians, framing indigenous populations as unable to adapt (Wilcox 2010), homogenous (Grim 1996), and antimodern (Cothran 2010; Lyons 2011). I was reminded of the rigidity of these narratives during a phone conversation in 2007, when a nonnative resident of Brothertown, Wisconsin, summed up the Brothertown Indians' complex history as follows: "They're not Indians anymore anyway." Such conversations are a necessary part of all research projects that focus on privately owned lands or that employ public, collaborative, and community-based frameworks. In this particular instance, I was a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania attempting to plan out the first field season of my dissertation research in Brothertown. After having met a few months prior with the Brothertown Indian Nation at its tribal meetinghouse in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, it was now my responsibility to begin negotiating with different stakeholders, not only to obtain the proper permissions but also to get them involved in the project. The resident continued: "Listen, I like archaeology and all, but I just think you should stick to the pyramids." Needless to say, this particular negotiation presented a sharp challenge for me. Fortunately enough, many of the other landowners and residents of Brothertown reacted more positively, making the project—which ran for three consecutive summers—successful in several regards (Cipolla 2010, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a).

Following the basic logic of the landowner, any indigenous response to colonialism and modernity—other than complete and utter stasis—is framed as *inauthentic*. Such

assumptions are, of course, highly problematic and nearly completely detached from the realities of colonial entanglement, whether from the perspective of the colonized or the colonist. As Scott Richard Lyons (2011:303) notes: "[I]ndeed, colonization was the horse that modernity rode in on. But as with the history of actual horses, Indians quickly appropriated it and proved capable of its mastery."

Narratives of both cultural and biological authenticity do much more than inform popular understandings, however. Overly simplistic perspectives on colonial history remain tools of conquest with which colonists, settlers, and the federal government challenge ties between indigenous North Americans and their homelands (Deloria and Lytle 1983; Grim 1996:362–364; Den Ouden 2005; Ruppel 2008). Authenticity provides a neat and tidy framework with which nonnatives evaluate and classify contemporary native peoples (Deloria 1998:137; Cothran 2010; Lyons 2011; Landrum 2012:185). When native peoples are deemed "inauthentic," those that deem them so typically base their arguments on the fact that there has been *too* much cultural change since the times of Christopher Columbus, Coronado, and the Pilgrims. In this case, evidence of cultural change is used to weaken native connections—legal or otherwise—to lands and cultural heritage in the eyes of their judges.

In this essay, I argue that historical archaeologists have the potential to complicate and challenge the colonial narratives introduced here, not only in the rich data that they collect and study but also in the ways in which they go about collecting these data. The first part of this essay examines a series of case studies from New England, arguing that Native American historical archaeology challenges cultural essences by contributing new information on the complexities of continuity and change in colonial contexts (Ferris 2009; Silliman 2009) and by adding critical depth to simplistic historical narratives. Brief archaeological histories of spiritual and communal negotiation in native New England illustrate archaeologists' abilities to explore and illuminate the "gray areas" between colonizing Europeans and colonized indigenous populations. Examples of indigenous flexibility, agency, and active appropriation of once-foreign beliefs, practices, and materials have the potential to challenge popular narratives and stereotypes.

The next part of the essay turns to the Brothertown Archaeology Project to consider the practices of critical, collaborative, and pragmatic historical archaeology in terms of their ability to challenge colonial narratives further, particularly those manifested in public perceptions of Native American authenticity. The final portion of the essay steps back to consider the future of Native American historical archaeology, pointing out areas in need of further scrutiny and growth.

Archaeological Histories of Native New England

Popular narratives of New England history spare little room for Native Americans beyond their interactions with Pilgrims, their participation in colonial wars, and their confinement to reservations (Den Ouden 2005:19–20; Cipolla 2013a). This is partially due to the fact that many native peoples of New England did not write. Yet, it also ties to simplistic understandings of cultural identity and colonial interaction such as those introduced above. As native peoples negotiated their places in the modern world, they faced hardships, violence, and injustice; they incorporated once-foreign ideas, practices, and materials; and—like everyone else—they changed. Rather than judge such changes in terms of dichotomous cultural essences, historical archaeologists have the ability to explore the "gray areas" of these complex cultural negotiations, the ways in which indigenous peoples made their places in the modern world and actively appropriated once-foreign things. Case studies from the 17th century onward reveal details of everyday life that rarely made it into the colonial records of New England. Moreover, they offer new narratives of Native American flexibility and survival to challenge those introduced above.

Maintaining Faith: Archaeologies of Spirituality and Christian "Conversion"

In the 17th century, Roger Williams (1973:126) observed that the Narragansett understood the world as rife with a spiritual power associated with *Manitoo*, what Williams defined as a god. This spiritual power, *manit*, governed the worlds of many indigenous groups of the Northeast (Simmons 1986; Crosby 1988) and could manifest itself in things, people, and

animals. A variety of deities governed these worlds, the most powerful of which was the Creator, *Cauntantowitt* (DeForest 1964:21–23; R. Williams 1973; Simmons 1986; Crosby 1988:183–192; Bragdon 1996). Cauntantowitt lived in the southwest and controlled life cycles. Upon death, one of the deceased's souls—of which he or she possessed multiple—traveled to Cauntantowitt's house to live with the ancestors. Another deity, *Hobbomock*, was deeply involved in daily life and was a source of personal spiritual power and knowledge (Crosby 1988:189–198). Residing in the east or northeast, Hobbomock was the spiritual force behind pow-wows (i.e., shamans). In certain instances, the souls of the wicked ended up with Hobbomock, who condemned them to haunt the living rather than go to Cauntantowitt's house. Although English colonists often made sense of these beliefs by laminating their own Christian sensibilities over them and framing these two deities as diametrically opposed (i.e., God vs. Satan), native cosmology was far more subtle and complex (Simmons 1986; Bragdon 1996).

Archaeological research shows that 17th-century Narragansetts in Rhode Island typically laid their dead to rest in the flexed or fetal position with the tops of the heads pointing to Cauntantowitt's house in the southwest (Simmons 1970; Rubertone 2001), see also Vitelli (2009). The flexed burial position tied directly to belief in the cyclical nature of life stages in the Narragansett world, and the grave orientation helped facilitate an easy voyage for the soul that resided in the head. The other soul, residing in the chest, required provisions. For this reason, the bereaved typically placed a variety of items in the grave and either hung one of the deceased's garments from a nearby tree or placed it on the ground above the grave (DeForest 1964; R. Williams 1973). Some of these practices appear to have been ancient in origin, enacting traditions that were in place well before the arrival of the English in Narragansett country. These traditions did, however, transform, as English colonists and settlers increased their presence in New England.

As the English increased in number so did the frequencies of European-manufactured goods that indigenous peoples placed into the graves of their deceased loved ones. Constance Crosby (1988) explains this pattern not as corroboration of complete and utter cultural change but, rather,

as evidence for the perpetuation of traditional belief systems. According to Crosby, such items had *manit* for the native peoples that sought them out. From this perspective, the technology of the English and their ability to resist disease meant that they and their gods possessed a greater amount of *manit* than the indigenous population (Crosby 1988:193). Native communities thus extended this spiritual power to European-manufactured goods, making such items highly sought after. Ethnohistorical accounts also document the incorporation of European-manufactured items into traditional native religious and curing rituals, further demonstrating their redefinition in native contexts. According to this interpretation, these items were not harbingers of cultural and religious transformation as much as vehicles for new iterations of deep-seated spiritual traditions (Crosby 1988).

In several regards, Christian conversion thus entailed a cosmological shift of epic proportions, literally turning native belief systems on their end—placing God above rather than to the southwest and putting Satan below rather than to the east. At the same time, God had to supplant multiple deities while a new and comparatively simplistic understanding of the body/soul dichotomy had to be instilled. Beyond these important differences, however, lay some interesting parallels between Algonquian spiritual traditions and Christianity (Seeman 2010:143–184). The materialities of conversion discussed next demonstrate the ways in which Algonquian peoples accepted Christianity on their own terms rather than those of the European missionaries.

By far, John Eliot's work in the Massachusetts Bay Colony represents the most widespread and institutionalized attempt to convert local Native American populations to Christianity during the 17th century (Salisbury 1974; Mrozowski 2009; Mrozowski et al. 2009). Eliot's first successes in preaching to native audiences came in the mid-17th century. Building on this momentum, from 1651 to 1674, he established 14 towns of Christian Indians, commonly referred to as "praying Indian villages" (O'Brien 1997; Cogley 1999). He strategically placed these settlements with hopes of isolating new converts, both from European colonists and from non-Christian natives. Rules and fines were established to prevent "idleness;" to institute sedentary, agricultural ways of life; and to replicate European

values and aesthetics (Salisbury 1974). To help ensconce converts in civility, Eliot produced Bibles written in Algonquian (Bross and Wyss 2008) and imported them to his villages along with an abundance of English-manufactured goods (Brenner 1986; Mrozowski 2009). In whichever form it took, material change from precolonial ways of life was a central component of Eliot's strategy.

In comparison to the Narragansett burial grounds discussed above, Christian Indian graves of the 17th century—including those directly associated with Eliot's praying villages—exhibit more continuity than change. Based on the limited archaeological data available from such contexts, the frequencies and types of grave goods found in praying-village cemeteries closely resemble those recovered from non-Christian burials of the time (Brenner 1986). Most significantly, inhabitants of Eliot's villages continued to place artifacts in the graves of their loved ones (Cogley 1999:244; Mrozowski 2009). This practice was in direct defiance of Puritan beliefs, yet Eliot's praying Indians maintained the tradition. Unfortunately, many praying-Indian cemeteries have been disturbed, and thus much less is known of the original orientation and placement of such graves. At least some burials in praying villages maintained the traditional northeast–southwest orientation (Mrozowski 2009:144), while others likely shifted to east–west orientations in the extended rather than flexed burial position.

Excavations at praying villages serve to further complicate this narrative, demonstrating the "gray areas" that Christian Indians created and inhabited. Archaeological investigation of a praying village in Natick, Massachusetts (Brenner 1986), suggests that, contrary to Eliot's objectives and rules, inhabitants of the village participated in trading networks and maintained nonsedentary ways of life, perhaps even continuing to practice seasonal mobility. Furthermore, inventories of English imported goods contrast sharply with the archaeological record, suggesting that Eliot's imports were quickly traded away or discarded by the Christian Indians of Natick. This pattern makes sense since accumulation of material goods was likely unappealing to local native groups who were traditionally very mobile (O'Brien 1997:18). Diana DiPaolo Loren and Mary Beaudry (2006) analyzed

sewing thimbles recovered from Magunkaquog, another praying village located in Ashland, Massachusetts, and found evidence to support these tentative interpretations. Thimbles recovered from Magunkaquog show little evidence of use wear or modification, suggesting that perhaps they were discarded quickly after their arrival in the village or simply not used at all. Although Eliot intended to prevent "idleness" through craft production, inhabitants of Magunkaguog seem to have simply ignored his guidance and instruction. Alternatively, the disuse of thimbles at Magunkaguog might also relate to the new sets of values with which European goods were often redefined in non-European contexts. In this sense, perhaps thimbles simply had no recognizable utility or symbolic value for the occupants of Magunkaguog.

Stephen Mrozowski and his colleagues (Mrozowski et al. 2009) present compelling evidence that, in addition to disregarding Eliot's rules and regulations, praying Indians also maintained traditional spiritual beliefs. Mrozowski's excavations at Magunkaquog focused on a stone foundation, interpreted as the meetinghouse for the praying-Indian community. Such a structure would have served as a gathering place for teaching and worship, but also as a place for Eliot and other officials to stay when visiting the village (Mrozowski et al. 2009:447). Mrozowski recovered heat-treated crystals from underneath three corners of the foundation, along with an outdoor hearth that contained burned quartz cobble fragments. The distribution of crystals underneath the corners of the foundation seems to indicate that "when the structure was built Native traditions of ancient origin were incorporated into the construction of a building that English observers may have viewed as the antithesis of such traditions" (Mrozowski et al. 2009:456). This interpretation is based on documented uses and meanings of crystals in native societies (R. Williams 1973:13; Miller and Hamell 1986; White 1991:99). For example, Miller and Hamell (1986:316–318) noted that the physical properties of crystals sometimes qualified them as divining instruments for Algonquian peoples. Furthermore, crystals were believed to be otherworldly, assuring "long life, physical and spiritual well-being, and success" (Miller and Hamell 1986:318). Based on these findings, it seems plausible

that at least some of the inhabitants of Eliot's villages saw Christianity as a complement to—rather than as a replacement of—longstanding Algonquian spiritual practices and symbols, and thus added the English God into their cosmology.

Maintaining Community: Archaeologies of Reservation Life

The reservation system—established in Connecticut Colony in the mid-17th century—represented a drastic set of changes for local native groups. Life on the crowded and marginal environs of reservations stood in stark contrast to the precolonial rhythms of everyday life, when indigenous populations engaged in regular seasonal mobility with ready access to a variety of different ecosystems. To make things worse, neighboring European American farmers often ignored reservation boundaries and allowed their livestock to ravage reservation grounds. Numerous colonial documents record native complaints about European American trespassing on tribal lands and of intruding livestock ruining reservation gardens (Den Ouden 2005). In order to "make do" on reservations, native communities adopted novel subsistence practices and sought out new sources of income. Able-bodied males found employment in the outside world. Some left their communities on a daily basis to work on local farms, but most found jobs as soldiers or seamen, which took them away from their reservation communities for months and years at a time (Silverman 2001; Cipolla 2008; Silliman and Witt 2010). Those left behind on reservations coped with these changes and maintained their respective communities. As they did so, reservation grounds became homelands and safe havens (Silliman 2009) central to their communal identities.

Two long-running archaeological projects on the neighboring Mashantucket Pequot (McBride 1990, 1993, 1996) and Eastern Pequot (Silliman and Sebastian Dring 2008; Silliman 2009; Silliman and Witt 2010) reservations in southeastern Connecticut, see also Cipolla (2008) and Cipolla et al. (2007), reveal new information on the quotidian practices of reservation life, often undocumented in any other form. Despite new restrictions on movement associated with the establishment of reservations, members of the Mashantucket Pequot community continued to engage in seasonal mobility during the early

reservation period. Most sites dating between 1650 and 1750 represent short-term encampments for hunting or seasonal planting of corn or apples (McBride 1990:110). The Mashantucket Pequot only began using permanent dwellings in significant numbers during the second quarter of the 18th century. They mainly used wigwams before this time. With the adoption of more sedentary practices, however, came new architectural forms. Mashantucket Pequots began using stone, which was readily available in the rocky reservation soils, to build homes, walls, and other structures. At first, these new dwellings were hybrid in nature, combining elements of wigwams with framed houses. One residential site dating between 1740 and 1760 on the neighboring Eastern Pequot Reservation exemplifies the mixing of architectural traditions (Silliman 2009:219–221). As interpreted by Silliman, the dwelling at this site may have been a wigwam modified with nailed elements and window glass, or a small wooden-framed structure lacking a cellar, crawlspace, and chimney.

Kevin McBride (1990:111–113) interprets many of the mid- to late-18th-century sites on the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation as Pequot farmsteads. Such sites typically consist of a series of dwellings—both framed structures and wigwams—outbuildings, including possible animal pens and sweat lodges, fields and gardens, wells, storages facilities, stone walls, middens, and cemeteries. The presence of multiple-family dwellings on each farmstead implies a communal form of farming.

Stephen Silliman (2009:220–221) also observed new forms of dwelling on the Eastern Pequot Reservation during the second half of the 18th century. At one site dating between 1760 and 1800, he found evidence for "significant surface and subsurface components as well as prominent alterations to the surrounding landscape" (Silliman 2009:220). The site includes two chimney collapses, one full cellar, a rock-and-shell midden, a small trash deposit, a possible root cellar, and a small stone enclosure—possibly used for gardening or keeping animals.

By the early 19th century, increasing numbers of Mashantucket Pequot homes resembled European American framed houses. As McBride (1990:115–116) explained, some scholars interpret these shifts in dwelling style and subsistence base as evidence for a weakening of

Indian cultural patterns, however, the archaeology speaks to a continued emphasis on community. Silliman's (2009:221–224) work on the Eastern Pequot Reservation further bolsters this interpretation, demonstrating a complex admixture of cultural continuity and change. One household site dating between 1800 and 1840 provides a compelling case. The site consists of a large collapsed chimney for a framed house, a crawlspace, and a trash pit. The material assemblage from this site is particularly provocative, including a variety of 19th-century ceramic and glass artifacts along with lithic debitage, a soapstone bowl fragment, a stone celt, and an argillite projectile point dating between the Terminal/Transitional Archaic and Middle Woodland periods (3,700–1,000 years ago). The presence of this ancient material in the midst of an early-19th-century trash deposit warrants further attention to issues of memory, tradition, and identity on the reservation. Silliman (2009:224) suggests that "these items were reincorporated into Eastern Pequot practices that summoned deeper social memories and that brought them back into discourse and visibility." Furthermore, faunal analysis suggests that chipped tools were used for at least some of the animal processing that took place on site (Cipolla et al. 2007; Cipolla 2008). Again, the juxtaposition of materials and practices of ancient origin with then-modern materials and practices on a 19th-century reservation site shows the "gray areas" of colonial interaction along with native agency and creativity during difficult times.

Creating Community: An Archaeology of Ethnogenesis at Brothertown

Not all Native American groups of the Northeast elected to stay within the confines of reservations, however. One such group—now known as the "Brothertown Indians"—emerged in the late 18th century as Christian factions of seven native settlements in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and coastal New York, and moved away from their homelands to start anew in central New York State (Love 1899; Murray 1998; Brooks 2006; Cipolla 2010, 2013a, 2013b; Jarvis 2010; Silverman 2010). In contrast to the ways in which Christianity spread in 17th-century New England, the "Great Awakening" of the mid-18th century saw many native peoples adopt and appropriate Christianity for their own

ends, oftentimes using it as a form of cultural revitalization (Jarvis 2010; Cipolla 2013a). This was certainly the case for Samson Occom, a Mohegan Indian who at a remarkably early age dedicated his life to spreading Christianity to his native brethren (Brooks 2006). By the late 1760s and early 1770s, Occom and several other Christian native leaders began questioning their places in New England and looked west for a new home. After receiving a sizeable tract of land from the Oneida of New York, this group began a slow emigration to their new settlement. In the 19th-century, continued European American encroachment and other land problems in New York influenced the group to move once again, this time to current-day Brothertown, Wisconsin.

Archaeological research at the Brothertown settlements of New York and Wisconsin reveals the social and cultural negotiations that took place as Narragansetts, Eastern Niantics, Eastern Pequots, Mashantucket Pequots, Mohegans, Western Niantics, Montauketts, and Tunxis became Brothertown Indians. Analysis of a large sample of historical documents written by, to, or about the Brothertown community between the late 18th and mid-19th centuries shows a clear shift in uses of the name "Brothertown" (Cipolla 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a). Not only did the name transform from a toponym (i.e., a place name) to an ethnonym (i.e., the name of a group of people), the ways in which Brothertown Indians referred to their new community also influenced the ways in which outsiders eventually referred to (and likely saw) the community. In this sense, the group transformed from a disparate collection of refugee tribes living in the same settlement into a unified tribal entity, "the Brothertown."

In terms of the materiality of everyday life, Brothertown Indians used a variety of European-manufactured materials: they set their tables with mass-produced ceramics and they lived in log cabins. They also modified their commemorative practices to include professionally made grave markers with text inscriptions. As discussed in detail elsewhere (Cipolla 2010, 2011, 2013a), this transformation had both intended and unforeseen consequences. In one sense, it allowed members of the Brothertown community to align themselves with a variety of outsider groups (including, of course, European

Americans), but it also altered the ways in which members of the community remembered their ancestors and related to one another.

The archaeological examples discussed above demonstrate that the complexities of colonial interaction and survival lie neither wholly in past ideas (e.g., identifying as "Pequot," "Brothertown," "English," or "American"), nor in materials (e.g., European-manufactured ceramics, wigwams, or grave markers), but rather in the relationship between the two. The case studies demonstrate historical archaeologists' abilities to study this crucial relationship. As clearer understandings of these complexities emerge through historical archaeology, the discipline can better challenge the colonial narratives targeted in this essay. As discussed next, however, the actual archaeological interpretations are not the only way that historical archaeologists can begin to accomplish this goal.

New Perceptions of the Present

The Brothertown Archaeology Project took a critical (Leone et al. 1987; Potter 1994), see also Palus et al. (2006); collaborative (Nicholas and Andrews 1997; Atalay 2006; Silliman 2008); and pragmatic (Saitta 2003; Cipolla 2013a) approach to the archaeological process. In other words, it attempted to collect and interpret data in a diverse research context that challenged colonial narratives and that took the project's potential nonacademic impacts seriously. From 2007 to 2009, community members, students, volunteers, and archaeologists worked together on an archaeological survey of Brothertown, New York, and Brothertown, Wisconsin, including an intensive survey of Brothertown cemeteries. The collaborative process informed everything from research design and data collection to analysis and interpretation (Cipolla 2013a). As part of this process, nonnative landowners and residents of both Brothertown settlements were exposed to new perspectives on the places and spaces in which they currently live via archaeological fieldwork. In this form, collaboration helped emphasize the native presence in the landscapes of Brothertown, which can easily elude the uninformed and uncritical eye. By interacting with archaeologists and members of the Brothertown Indian Nation in the context of the archaeology project, local landowners and residents were endowed with new senses of their everyday surroundings. More

broadly, these experiences helped to challenge widely accepted cultural stereotypes of "Indianness" and myths of the vanishing Indian. By confronting contradictions of these tropes, the current inhabitants of Brothertown renegotiated their understanding of native communities, past and present. Colonial narratives of authenticity fell under stress when Brothertown's nonnative inhabitants were challenged to make sense of stories of the Brothertown Indians' building the first Methodist church in Wisconsin Territory or constructing the very roadways on which residents drive. The Brothertown Indians clearly define themselves today as an Indian entity, just as their ancestors did. The interconnection between these ideas and the materials of historical archaeology present a problem for simplistic understandings of colonial change.

Through this form of public collaboration, historical archaeologists have the ability to forge new communities (Silliman 2008) as they collect data. In general, cultural heritage sites draw different types of people together, often leading to new connections between groups of people that would not otherwise interact or even encounter one another in their everyday lives. This potential synergy is best illustrated by the interactions of one particular nonnative resident of Brothertown, Wisconsin, and several Brothertown Indians who regularly visit their ancestors' graves just down the road from his house. Of note, these interactions occurred before the archaeology project began but still serve to illustrate the potential that historical sites have for forging new communities. The nonnative resident, born and raised in Brothertown, Wisconsin, fought alongside many Native American soldiers in World War II. He keeps a close watch on the local cemeteries, which is how he recently met several Brothertown Indians. The resident has a keen understanding of changes in the landscape during his lifetime, while his new Brothertown Indian acquaintances know the genealogies and long-term histories of his childhood friends, some of whom were Brothertown Indians. Since meeting and interacting in the cemetery, the local resident regularly attends the Brothertown Indians' annual homecoming celebration and assists with the archaeological project and other efforts to preserve Brothertown history. It is through the formation of new relationships such as this that historical archaeology can begin to quash colonial stereotypes and narratives.

An Unfinished Project

This essay argues that historical archaeologists have the potential to challenge colonial narratives; they can do so both with the rich data that they collect and in the ways that they engage—and conduct research with—the public. The funerary practices, forms of dwelling, and community structures discussed above speak to the diversity of native responses to colonialism and to the agency and creativity of "subaltern" peoples making their places in the modern world. Historical archaeology offers new perspectives on these histories by studying the vital relationship between ideas and materials, in turn, shedding light on the "gray areas" of colonial interaction and survival that are often overwritten by simplistic, black-and-white colonial narratives. The practices of historical archaeology—including those that take place in public—also have the potential to create new forms of public interaction that may serve to debunk these narratives. As demonstrated by the end results of the Brothertown Indian Nation's quest for federal recognition, however, each of these projects remains incomplete.

In 2009, the Office of Indian Affairs denied the Brothertown Indians federal recognition. In the proposed negative findings published by the Office of Indian Affairs (Office of Federal Acknowledgement 2011), the Brothertown Archaeology Project was misconstrued and misappropriated. For example, the report (United States Department of the Interior 2009:12) states that "[s]cholarly archaeological excavations, even of sites in Wisconsin, do not provide evidence that any historical observer made a contemporaneous identification of an existing Indian entity (Cipolla 2007)." While the bibliography of the report lists the source of this statement as "Cipolla 2007, Brothertown Indian Nation Archaeology Project," its origin remains unclear since the project had just begun in late 2006 and no findings had been published by 2007. The fallacious use of archaeology in this case serves as a harsh reminder of archaeologists' responsibilities to the publics that they impact, intentionally or not. The project director's responsibilities on site went hand in hand with his duty to point out these inconsistencies to the federal government and to the public.

Beyond the poor scholarship that went into the Department of the Interior's report, however, lies a much deeper issue concerning the relationship between archaeological data and the federal acknowledgment process. In direct contrast to the above quotation from the Office of Federal Acknowledgement, Brothertown cemeteries studied during the course of the project do indeed provide evidence of outsiders identifying an "existing Indian entity" in Brothertown. The spatial distribution of Brothertown and non-Brothertown graves in the cemeteries illustrates this point precisely. In the largest cemetery in Brothertown, Wisconsin, nearly all of the Brothertown grave markers sit in the southern half of the cemetery, which locals identify as the "Indian half." In other words, the Brothertown Indians consistently chose to bury their loved ones in close proximity to other Brothertown Indians, while European Americans consistently chose to bury their loved ones in close proximity to other European Americans. The importance of this pattern should not be understated. Brothertown Indians and European Americans alike recognized the disparities between their two groups. Other cemeteries surveyed as part of the project provide similar examples of these historically recognized social and cultural distinctions. The fact that local European American residents continue to refer to the southern half of the cemetery as the "Indian half" also suggests that it was known as such since the 1850s, when European Americans and Brothertown Indians began sharing the landscape of Brothertown, Wisconsin.

Although these facts do not change the Brothertown Indian Nation's current political standing, they do highlight an underexplored social use of archaeological data (Mrozowski et al. 2009). One of the criteria that petitioning tribes must demonstrate in order to become federally recognized is that a large portion of its members lived as part of an identified Indian community, distinct from other groups (Office of Federal Acknowledgement 2011). Archaeological histories speak directly to these issues, particularly in cases where the communities in question did not speak and write in the English language as the Brothertown Indians did. In these cases, archaeological remains may represent core pieces of evidence, but archaeologists have yet to fully apply their work in such instances (Mrozowski et al. 2009). This is just one direction in which archaeologists can further

decolonize archaeology and partially redress the injustices of colonialism in the general spirit of critical, collaborative, and pragmatic approaches (Cipolla 2013a).

This final example serves as a reminder that, as a whole, historical archaeology can make differences in the world beyond academia, but it will struggle to do so until it takes its relationship with its various publics more seriously (Sabloff 1998, 2008; McDavid 2002). It is only through deeper engagements with nonarchaeologists that archaeologists will help to do their part in challenging the colonial narratives highlighted throughout this essay.

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