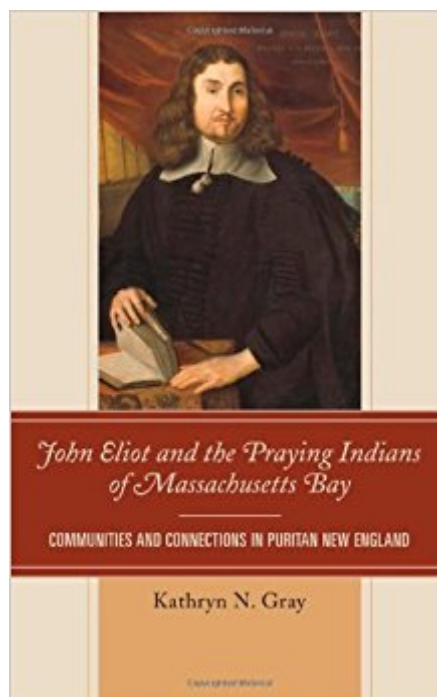


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John Eliot And The Praying Indians Of Massachusetts Bay: Communities And Connections In Puritan New England



Synopsis

This book traces the development of John Eliot's mission to the Algonquian-speaking people of Massachusetts Bay, from his arrival in 1631 until his death in 1690. It explores John Eliot's determination to use the Massachusett dialect of Algonquian, both in speech and in print, as a language of conversion and Christianity. The book analyzes the spoken words of religious conversion and the written transcription of those narratives; it also considers the Algonquian language texts and English language texts which Eliot published to support the mission. Central to this study is an insistence that John Eliot consciously situated his mission within a tapestry of contesting transatlantic and political forces, and that this framework had a direct impact on the ways in which Native American penitents shaped and contested their Christian identities. To that end, the study begins by examining John Eliot's transatlantic network of correspondents and missionary-supporters in England, it then considers the impact of conversion narratives in spoken and written forms, and ends by evaluating the impact of literacy on praying Indian communities. The study maps the coalescence of different communities that shaped, or were shaped by, Eliot's seventeenth-century mission.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In *Connecting Communities in Seventeenth-Century New England*, Kathryn Gray offers a fresh look at the cultural significance of John Eliot's mission. Arguing that Eliot was the hub of a transatlantic discourse melding millennial politics and shrewd promotion, Gray traces the many 'reception communities' in which Eliot was involved. Her use of a range of texts, from

private correspondence, to missionary tracts, to the marginalia of Algonquian Bible readers provides a complex portrait of Eliot's influence. Yet Gray renders with equal clarity the portraits of Eliot's converts, allowing us to glimpse how Natives sought power and influence by merging Christian attitudes with their own. This is a challenging, lucidly argued study indispensable to an understanding of Eliot and his era. (Joseph Fichtelberg, Hofstra University)

Kathryn N. Gray is a lecturer in English Literature at Plymouth University.

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