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To Make Them Like Us: European-Indian Intermarriage in Seventeenth-Century North America

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"TO MAKE THEM LIKE US": EUROPEAN-INDIAN INTERMARRIAGE IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NORTH AMERICA

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Jennifer Agee Jones
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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
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Master of Arts

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The Indians who lived in and around the seventeenth-century settlements of the French and English in North America provided potential marriage partners for the newcomers, particularly in areas where early sex ratios were uneven. But while settlers may have had the opportunity, very few such unions took place in the colonial era. Powerful psychological barriers prevented most Europeans from marrying Indians. That the Indians were "wild" people without knowledge of Christianity convinced many that marrying them was dangerous to one’s soul. Other newcomers felt less constrained by cultural boundaries and easily shed the trappings of their culture to marry the native way. To colonial officials, such actions provided evidence that the wild land and its inhabitants were a temptation to those struggling to maintain godly communities on the frontier. Such renegades served as a symbol of religious and cultural degeneration that could ultimately undermine colonial endeavors.

Because intermarriage would have proven a means of assimilation between the two groups, its absence underscores the most irreconcilable divisions between Europeans and Indians. The attitudes that prevented Europeans from marrying the natives were the same attitudes that governed most interactions between the two peoples in the seventeenth century. The failure of the two groups to marry one another was one component of a larger failure to cohabit peacefully in seventeenth-century North America.
"TO MAKE THEM LIKE US": EUROPEAN-INDIAN INTERMARRIAGE IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NORTH AMERICA
INTRODUCTION

In 1705 as he was writing his history of Virginia, Robert Beverley reflected on the lack of intermarriage between English colonists and Indians in the first years of settlement. If only the settlers had agreed to strengthen their ties with the natives through diplomatic marriages, Beverley believed, "the Jealousies of the Indians which I take to be the Cause of most of the Rapines and Murders they committed wou’d by this Means have been altogether prevented."¹ For Beverley the passage of a hundred years mitigated the immediacy of the Indian threat to the fledgling colony that prevented the intermixing of the two groups. Yet his statements evoke the profoundly paradoxical way in which Europeans viewed the inhabitants of the New World. The settlers who arrived in the various parts of colonial North America were motivated by diverse reasons for making the perilous crossing to an unknown wilderness. Some came for land, others to fish and trap, and still others arrived to minister to the souls of the heathen natives. Yet for all their diversity, European settlers maintained remarkably similar attitudes towards Indians. For the European observer, the native inhabitants of North America were at once a threat and an opportunity. Europeans feared

the natives’ unpredictable "savage" and uncivilized ways but professed optimism for the potential to turn New World natives into religious servants of Old World leaders.

Nowhere was this paradox more strikingly manifest than when Europeans turned their attention to marriage. For one reason or another, settlers in Virginia, New England, and New France all pondered the possibility or the ramifications of intermarriage with natives. For settlers in Virginia before the 1622 uprising, marriage was a means to cement potential alliances between themselves and the Indian subjects of the redoubtable werowance Powhatan. In New France waves of missionaries arrived to harvest the souls of the friendly Indians who lived along the St. Lawrence and to promote marriage as a means to expedite such conversions to French religion and culture. New England officials never officially sanctioned English-Indian wedlock, but they were forced to confront the consequences of settlers who left tight-knit Puritan communities in favor of lives with Indian mistresses.

Many of the settlers and colonial leaders who arrived in North America could conceive of societies in which Indians were welcome. But the conditions that Europeans placed on the Indians made for few unions acceptable by the standards of the newcomers. For colonial leaders, acceptance hinged on the natives’ responsibility to repudiate their lifestyles and to adopt Christian religion.
These two goals were usually, but not exclusively, intertwined. In all three areas of colonial North America, officials outwardly contended that conversion was central to the colonizing efforts. Indeed, in New England and especially in New France, considerable effort and resources were turned to this goal. Missionaries such as John Eliot and Experience Mayhew in New England and the many Jesuits who passed through the St. Lawrence Valley and Great Lakes in New France dedicated their lives in the New World to civilizing and Christianizing the Indians.

Not surprisingly, given the stringent and ethnocentric prerequisites to intermarriage imposed by the Europeans, few marriages between settlers and Indians occurred in the seventeenth century. Yet liaisons between European men and Indian women were not uncommon. Although the documentary record gives few details about the nature of such unions, many men left European communities to marry à la façon du pays. The attention that colonial leaders paid to such "renegades" underscores the magnitude of the sin that such men committed. When men turned their backs on European settlements and cultural traditions to live among the Indians, they proved to be a powerful symbol of the fate that could befall good Christians in the wilderness. The severe punishments reserved for runaways in Virginia and New England underscore that, to societies struggling to survive on the edges of a wilderness, succumbing to the temptation
of the wild land was a sin not taken lightly by those left behind.

The early avowed acceptance of marriage by many of the Europeans who came to the New World was part of a larger intention to bring Indians into the European community through the cultural vehicles of civilization and Christianity. That many colonial officials seemed to entertain the possibility of miscegenation shows that early attitudes towards Indians, while complex, were also remarkably hopeful and free of overt racism. The virtual absence of intermarriage within the European communities echoed the failure of European goals for the transformation of the North American Indians. Marriage is the most intimate and sacred tie between people. That such an institution could not be encouraged in the European community signalled that other interactions with Indians would also fail to meet early expectations. And while a few men lived with Indian wives on the frontier, it meant little in the way of ties between two cultures as eventually Europeans wrested the continent away from the native inhabitants entirely.

The key to understanding the significance of miscegenation in the seventeenth century lies in understanding the attitudes and assumptions about Indians of the leaders of the colonies. Those who formulated colonial policy--the governors, the ministers, the missionaries--
espoused an idealistic and hopeful vision of race relations in North America. But the common men who rejected European life to live with the natives also provide an important key to understanding miscegenation. Such men pursued a radical and unsanctioned course of action that brought severe words and legislation from colonial leaders. It is in the actions and words of two kinds of men that the dynamics of early attitudes towards Indians, marriage, and the wilderness can be understood.
A whole country of English is there, man, bred of those that were left there in '79. They have married with the Indians and make 'em bring forth as beautiful faces as any we have in England; and therefore the Indians are so in love with 'em that all the treasure they have they lay at their feet.\textsuperscript{2}

Ben Jonson, George Chapman and John Marston, \textit{Eastward Ho!} (1605)

These lines spoken by the character Captain Seagull in the popular Jacobean-era satire suggest a tantalizing popular conception of the fate of the lost Roanoke colony - that the settlers were benevolently absorbed into the Indian community in the New World and were still living there in the early seventeenth century. As a popular drama contemporary with the Virginia Company’s venture, \textit{Eastward Ho!} suggests a congenial attitude toward Anglo-Indian intermarriage in the New World. Yet the colonists who traveled to Virginia between 1607 and 1622 did not manifest a willingness to marry the native people. During the initial years of colonization only one settler married a native Powhatan woman and only one other voiced willingness

\textsuperscript{2}Ben Jonson, George Chapman and John Marston, \textit{Eastward Ho!}, ed. C. G. Petter (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1973), 60. It is commonly believed that, although the date is incorrect, the passage refers to the 1587 expedition to Roanoke.
to do so. Despite an unbalanced sex ratio within the colony and a seemingly favorable attitude towards Indians among leaders of the colony, no other English man was willing to enter into a private, marital relationship with a Powhatan woman.

The reason that English men did not marry Indian women lies in the attitude towards Indians that settlers brought from Europe. It was not an attitude of explicit racism. Instead, the implacable cultural arrogance of the English and the conviction that any Indian desiring to join them should renounce their way of life prevented the two groups from intermarrying. No less than their compatriots who traveled to New England, Englishmen to the south carried a vision of what their colony was to be, a vision that was grounded in the religious world view characterizing English thought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ultimately, religion provided the most powerful barrier between the two groups. Englishmen refused to marry Indian women because the natives were not Christians. Marriage to pagan "savages" endangered not just individual souls, but the collective English attempt to settle a colony on the edge of the wilderness.3

3Historian David D. Smits argues that myriad reasons on both sides prevented Indians and Englishmen from marrying in seventeenth-century Virginia, but he calls particular attention to "the Virginia colonists' fears that intermarriage would threaten English standards of civilization in the New World" ("'Abominable Mixture': Toward the Repudiation of Anglo-Indian Intermarriage in Seventeenth-Century Virginia,"
Initial English contacts with the Indians in the New World seemed promising. While on a reconnaissance mission to Roanoke in 1584, Arthur Barlowe and his men encountered Granganimeo, the brother of Indian chief Wingina, and wrote that initial relations were characterized by goodwill on both sides. Barlowe and his men traded hatchets and axes for Indian goods and food to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. The Indians were so satisfied with the trade relationship that within a few days, they invited the Englishmen to their village. While there, the Englishmen were treated well, receiving care and food from the Indian women. Barlowe wrote in his narrative of the voyage that "for a more kinde, and loving people, there can not be found in the world, as farre as we have hitherto had triall." 4

The initial goodwill between the two groups, however, did not last. Ralph Lane, who led the short-lived 1586 settlement, reported that Wingina's kinsman, Ensenore, "the only frend to our nation that we had," died in April of

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that year. After his death, relations between the two
groups soured. During a trip up the Chowan and Moratuc
Rivers in search of copper, Lane’s group was attacked by
Indians who "lighted a vollie of their arrowes" at them. In
this instance, Lane wrote, the Indians "did no hurt God be
thanked to any man." But upon his return to the settlement
he discovered that the local Indians had attempted to starve
the men left behind. The Indians around Lane’s settlement
further offended the English when they "began to blaspheme,
and flatly to say, that our Lord God was not God, since hee
suffered us to sustaine much hunger." As hostility grew,
Lane kidnapped the local Indian chief Menatonan and his son,
further provoking the already strained relationship between
the two groups.⁵

The 1586 colony lasted only a few months before the
settlers returned to England. In 1587, John White again
traveled to Roanoke with 115 settlers including women and
children. Initial relations with the natives seemed
promising. The first Indians the group encountered
initially approached menacingly. But Manteo, an Indian who
had returned with the English following the 1584 voyage,
spoke to them in their own language. The Indians then
greeted the English warmly:

Assoone as they heard, they returned and threwe
away their bowes, and arrowes, and some of them
came unto us, embracing and entertaining us

⁵Ibid., 32-5.
friendly, desiring us not to gather or spill any of their corne, for that they had but little. White and his men responded with assurances that the corn was safe and that they desired only goodwill and fraternity: "to live with them as brethren, and friends." Such promises were not kept. White's men soon encountered and attacked a group of Indians they believed to be hostile, killing many before they realized that they were friendly Croatoans.

While the descriptions of the colony sent back by men such as Lane and Barlowe proved that relations with Indians could easily turn hostile, two men left records of the relationship with Indians around Roanoke that promised more congenial and uncomplicated Indian relations. Thomas Harriot, a member of the 1585 expedition, wrote that the Indians around Roanoke were "not to be feared; but that they shall have cause both to feare and love us, that shall inhabite with them." The paintings of the natives by Roanoke leader John White also depicted the Indians favorably. White's images emphasized benign cultural aspects of Indian society. Other contemporary engravings that circulated in the sixteenth century graphically

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6 Quinn, *Virginia Voyages*, 99.
7 Ibid., 101-2.
depicted native brutality. But White's scenes showed native people in non-threatening settings such as sitting around a camp-fire or dancing in tribal ritual. Moreover, White's Indians wore more clothing than contemporary descriptions indicated that New World people wore, a detail about Indians that did not go unnoticed in Europe. Theodor de Bry, who made engravings of White's paintings, modified the images in order to tame and civilize the inhabitants of the New World and portray them in a more positive light for inhabitants of the Old.9

While the Roanoke experience ended in violence and hostility, Englishmen who arrived in Virginia twenty-two years later exhibited a selective memory about Indians. They seemed much more willing to believe the benevolent writings of Harriot and the mild renderings of White than to recall the difficulties that had plagued the settlements. Filled with confidence and enthusiasm, Englishmen once again intended to bring religion and civility to the Indians. The settlers to Virginia in the early years of the seventeenth century expected that good example and the clear superiority of the English way of life would "reduce" the Powhatans to godly humility. But the Indians in Virginia proved no

easier to convert than the Indians around Roanoke, and no wide-scale mixing of the two groups occurred in the seventeenth century.

The initial impulse to return to Virginia after the lost Roanoke colony was, as many historians have argued, largely economic. Englishmen were not blind to the immense profits that flowed into the Spanish empire from the New World. Propagandists in England in the late sixteenth century argued that England should take her share of New World riches and trade goods. By the early years of the seventeenth century a company was formed in England to seek profits in Virginia. The Virginia Company of London was established with the expectation that the new colony would be a resource of materials and products that could not be had cheaply on the European market. Settlers were expected to produce, among other things, pipe-staves, pot-ash, pitch, tar, silk, wine and iron.

Due to poor organization and unrealistic expectations, Virginia was a disappointment for investors and a disaster for colonists. The first group of settlers who arrived in Jamestown were unprepared for the harsh, semi-tropical

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environment and unwilling to do the work necessary to survive. John Smith recorded that of the 105 who were initially sent to the colony, 36 were classified as gentlemen and only 12 were labeled laborers. Many of the rest of the settlers were servants who were brought by colonists of higher rank. Out of the 120 men who arrived next, 28 were classified as gentlemen, and another 28 were so classified in the third group of 70 settlers. Some skilled craftsmen were sent in the initial groups of settlers including a jeweler, a perfume maker, goldsmiths and a barber. But on the whole, the group was filled with far too many men either with no skills or with skills that were not appropriate for carving an existence out of the wilderness.

Given the composition of the early settlers, it was not surprising that the initial years of colonization were characterized by an insufficient will to work and a correspondingly low food supply. Under John Smith’s militant command the Virginia settlers had been forced into modest self-sufficiency. But after his departure for England in 1609, the colonists experienced six months of starvation. Some of the settlers fled to live with the Indians. Of the rest, only sixty remained alive by spring.

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Only the timely arrival of Sir Thomas Gates with shiploads of provisions saved those who survived the "starving time." Although this famous period of starvation soon ended, periodic food shortages continued to plague the fledgling colony.\textsuperscript{13}

Not only were the first settlers starved for food, they also suffered from a lack of female companionship. Unlike the pattern of settlement in New England in the seventeenth century, most of the settlers who went to Virginia were men. During the first years of settlement virtually no English women traveled to the colony. More than a year passed before any women at all arrived in Virginia. In 1608, Smith recorded the arrival of "the first gentlewoman and woman servant that arrived in our Colony."\textsuperscript{14} After eighteen years of settlement there were still only 100 women for every 350 men, and this sex ratio remained skewed for the rest of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{15} Consequently, few men in the earliest years of settlement had wives. In order to remedy this, the Virginia company sent shiploads of women to the colony. Smith noted that in 1618 the Virginia Company


\textsuperscript{14}Lyon Gardiner Tyler, ed., \textit{Narratives of Early Virginia 1606-1625} (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 155.

\textsuperscript{15}Morgan, \textit{American Slavery - American Freedom}, 407.
sent ninety "young women to make wives."\textsuperscript{16} But the number of women sent was never enough to provide wives for all the male settlers. That the company required a man to pay the passage of a woman before he could marry meant that the women were essentially sold to the settlers with the most money. To make matters worse, most women who emigrated to the colony in the late 1610s and early 1620s were servants, barred by social custom from marrying before the end of their indenture.\textsuperscript{17} These conditions insured that only the richest men in the colony had wives. The majority of settlers in early Virginia went without the companionship of an English woman.\textsuperscript{18}

That the English did not marry Indian women is curious. The English were starved for both food and female companionship; marriage with native women would have fed both hungers. Moreover, intermarriage would have provided an alliance between the English and the Powhatan chiefdom--a circumstance Powhatan himself must have realized. In 1608 John Smith recorded that the Indian leader had made an


\textsuperscript{17}Irene W. E. Hecht, "The Virginia Muster of 1624/25 as a Source for Demographic History," \textit{William and Mary Quarterly}, 3rd ser., 30 (January 1973), 81-82. Frontier conditions in Virginia mitigated this restriction somewhat. Still, out of 334 servants in the colony in 1624, only 24 were married. "What is surprising," writes Hecht, "is not that Old World traditions were violated, but that they were so frequently observed."

\textsuperscript{18}Morgan, \textit{American Slavery - American Freedom}, 111.
overture of peaceful relations by announcing that all his subjects "should so esteeme us and no man account us strangers nor Paspaheghans, but Powhatans, and that the Corne, weoman and Country, should be to us as to his own people." But Smith refused the offer. Moreover, Powhatan marriage customs gave women considerable autonomy in selecting a mate; it is debatable whether Powhatan could have compelled his kinswomen to marry the colonists against their will anyway.20

Despite John Smith's rebuke of Powhatan's offer, the attitudes of many of his contemporaries suggested greater optimism about Indians and a qualified willingness to welcome them into the English community. The first directive of the charter of the colony declared that the purpose of the settlement was to bring the Indians to "the true service and knowledge of God" while encouraging them to become subjects of the English king.21 Other efforts to encourage Indians to join the English stressed the prerequisite of civility and conversion. An Indian school was planned to train young Indians in English religion and social customs. Colonial officials also encouraged English


21Hening, Statutes at Large, 1: 68-9.
families to take Indian children into their homes and proposed that, in return, English people be sent to live with the natives.\textsuperscript{22}

Despite frequent skirmishes before 1614, leaders of the colony expressed considerable hope that the natives could be convinced to work for the English. When friendlier relations ensued after 1614, the colony launched more ambitious plans. In 1616 fund-raising began in English parishes for a proposed Indian college in the colony. Ten thousand acres of land was set aside at Henrico in 1619 and designated the site of the proposed school. George Thorpe, one of the Virginians most optimistic about the potential of establishing a biracial community, was selected to head the project in 1621.\textsuperscript{23}

On the surface, then, all the forces in colonial Virginia seemed to point towards intermarriage and assimilation of two cultures. Yet, with two exceptions, no English man appeared to be interested in marrying an Indian woman. The reasons for the lack of intermarriage lies in the psyches of the newcomers. While Englishmen appeared willing to welcome Indians into their communities, their


hospitality was contingent upon the repudiation by the Indians of their former way of life. Those in charge of the colony established the standard. But not all men felt exactly this way. Some fled to the Indians—presumably for food but perhaps, too, for female companionship.

Regardless of how they felt about intermarriage with the natives, few Englishmen seemed troubled by the color of Indian skin. Indeed, Englishmen in the early seventeenth century believed that Indians were innately like themselves. John Smith wrote that the Powhatan Indians were "of a colour browne when they are of any age, but they are borne white." 24 The Reverend Alexander Whitaker agreed, claiming that "one God created us" and that "we all have Adam for our common parent." 25 In New England, Roger Williams' attitude towards Indians mirrored those of the Virginia settlers. In the 1620s he wrote the Indians were "tawnie, by the Sunne and their annoyntings, yet they are borne white." 26


26 The Complete Writings of Roger Williams (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1963), 1: 80; The idea that New World natives were born white but darkened because of the way they lived was held by most Europeans in the colonial period. Alden T. Vaughan believes that this belief gradually disappeared in the eighteenth century and was replaced by racist attitudes toward Indians. "From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian," American Historical Review 87, no. 4 (October 1982), 917-953.
Clearly, the settlers to Virginia did not judge Indians by standards of conventional racism. For many years they believed that the Indians were potentially the same as Europeans.

But obviously Europeans found much to deride about Indians. Most evident to the Englishmen in Virginia was that the Indians lacked "true" religion and the trappings of civilization that went with its practice. Englishmen called Indians "barbarous people" and "naked slaves of the devil."27 Many early settlers to Virginia, blind to the nature of native religious beliefs, held that Indians worshiped Satan. One of the earliest visitors to the colony wrote that the Powhatans "have conference with [the devil], and fashion themselves in their disguisements as neere to his shape as they can imagyn."28 Whitaker, who ministered to his flock around Henrico and who was responsible for converting Pocahontas, wrote from Virginia in 1613 that the Indians "serve the divell for feare, after a most base manner, sacrificing sometimes (as I have heere heard) their owne Children to him."29

Not surprisingly, Englishmen appeared apprehensive about Indians. Benign attitudes of hospitality and

27 Ibid., 24-25;

28 Strachey, Historie of Travaile, 82-84; Whitaker, Good Newes, 24.

29 Whitaker, Good Newes, 24.
assimilation existed alongside profound fear and suspicion of a people who seemed to worship Satan and who had proved capable of great brutality. George Percy reported that in 1609 two messengers who had been sent to negotiate with the Indians for possession of an island did not return and were later found to have been gruesomely sacrificed. "Their Braynes," he reported, "weare cutt and skraped outt of their heades with mussell shelles."30 On another occasion men who had fled the English settlement to seek food from the Kecoughtan Indians were murdered and later found by the English "with their mowthes stopped full of Breade beinge donn as it seemethe in Contempte and skorne."31 The English could not help but be wary and frightened of such wild creatures. But they took revenge on such actions many times over with as much brutality and bloodshed as the Indians.32

The foundation for English fear and the justification for such ruthless treatment of Indians was religion. Indeed, strident Christianity underscored all that the Virginia Company intended to accomplish. The adventure to Virginia was as much religious as secular. Historians have emphasized the obvious differences between the settlers to New England and the first settlers to Virginia. The two

31 Ibid., 265.
32 Ibid., 270, 271-72, 276.
groups, so the argument has gone many times, had different motivations for coming—one religious and one secular. One society aimed, collectively, to create a godly city on a hill; the other was composed of atomistic proto-capitalists who quickly turned to tobacco as a source of financial gain. According to Jack P. Greene, for example, the Plymouth colony was characterized by a "deeply and persistently religious orientation," while "Virginia’s orientation was almost wholly commercial from the beginning." T. H. Breen has argued that Virginians did not simply behave differently, they also thought differently from New Englanders. They came to North America with an entirely different mind-set. Breen characterized the Chesapeake settlers as extreme individualists whose "privatistic values" and economic impulses prevented the development of strong community ties. This, he argued, made Virginians intrinsically different from settlers to New England.

Yet in two 1954 articles, Perry Miller cautioned that too much had been made of the differences between Puritans

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34 T. H. Breen, "Looking Out for Number One: Conflicting Cultural Values in Early Seventeenth-Century Virginia," The South Atlantic Quarterly 78, no. 3 (1979), 342-60.
to the north and tobacco-producing Virginians to the south. All the initial settlers who arrived in the first half of the seventeenth century lived in the same mental universe, a mental universe in which religion and a person's relationship to God was central to all else. As Miller pointed out, settlers to New England and Virginia "were both recruited from the same type of Englishmen, pious, hard-working, middle-class, accepting literally and solemnly the tenets of Puritanism." Such people, Miller claimed, regardless of where they settled, "could conceive of the society they were erecting in America only within a religious framework." Indeed, just like New Englanders, settlers to Virginia viewed their colony in terms of covenant ideology. They believed that they were led to Virginia just as Abraham was led to the promised land. In 1609 London minister William Symonds espoused just this message in a sermon before a group of settlers about to embark for the colony. "Out of these arguments, by which God inticed Abram to goe out of his Country," Symonds preached, "such as goe to a Christian Plantation may gather many blessed lessons. God will make him a greate

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nation."

As Symonds' sermon suggested, a strong element of nationalism also underscored the religious ideology surrounding the establishment of Virginia. England and Spain competed not just for riches in the New World, but also for souls. At stake for Englishmen was whether the multitudes of peoples found in the new lands to the east would hear the true religion of Protestant England or the false theology of Catholic Spain. In his 1585 work of propaganda, Richard Hakluyt argued that England should colonize the New World before Spain spread the word of false religion. Too many heathens of the Americas were brought only "from one error into another" when Spain converted them to Catholicism. "Now if they, in their superstition," he wrote of the Spanish, "have don so greate thinges in so shorte space, what may wee hope for in our true and syncere Relligion." 

If religion and imperialism were intertwined so too were religion and commerce. Miller argued that modern historians who separate motivations into discrete categories of secular and pious miss a fundamental aspect of the way Virginians ordered their universe. The pious intent of most of the early literature of colonial Virginia was not, writes

36William Symonds, A Sermon Preached at White-Chapel, in the presence of many, Honourable and Worshipfull, the Adventurers and Planters for Virginia (London, 1609), 35.

37Hakluyt, "Discourse of Western Planting," 216-17.
Miller, a mere "sanctimonious masquerade" for base economic motives. Instead, the desire to prosper was seen as a larger teleological plan for a people who believed they were favored by God. Reverend Alexander Whitaker's tract Good Newes From Virginia spelled out a long argument for accepting the Christian duty of converting Indians and working hard for profit in Virginia. If a settler was to work in Virginia with a charitable heart for the souls of the savages, Whitaker assured him, "in the end you shall find riches and hounour in this world, and blessed immortality in the world to come." Far from being antithetical goals, piety and economic prosperity were part of the same mission in the New World.

That the sense of religious mission was strong among many who went to Virginia is emphasized by the fact that English men did not marry Indian women. The English were profoundly disturbed by the fact that the people they encountered around Jamestown were heathens. An individual concern for the fate of their souls in the afterlife prevented English men from marrying Powhatan women in the colony. If an English man were to marry a devil-worshiping native woman he would imperil his soul by simultaneously succumbing to the temptation of the flesh and the temptation of evil. Such a man would also sin against his own people.

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38 Miller, "Early Literature of Virginia," 102; Whitaker, Good Newes, 32-44.
By turning his back on civilized society and religion, a man weakened the colonial venture and served as a symbol to the rest of the colony for what could befall those who were not devout enough. In his 1609 sermon, Symonds warned prospective colonists of this danger. "Then must Abrams posteritie keep them to themselves," he told them, after explaining the covenant. "And this is so plaine, that out of this foundation arose the law of marriage among themselves." If Virginians broke this rule against marrying savage, foreign people, they risked destroying the success of the plantation.39

One settler to Virginia left an explicit and detailed account of his religious concerns over marrying a native woman. John Rolfe was the only English man to marry an Indian woman in the first fifteen years of settlement in Virginia. Rolfe agonized over his decision to marry Powhatan's daughter, Pocahontas. In a letter to Governor Thomas Dale he worried about "the heavie displeasure which God conceived against the sonnes of Levie and Israel for marrying strange wives." Despite his great attraction to the Indian princess, he worried that she was not civilized and not a Christian. "Her education hath been rude," he told Dale, "her manners barbarous, her generation accursed, and so discrepant in all nurtriture from my self." Yet, eventually Rolfe asked himself "Why dost thou not endevour

39Symonds, A Sermon Preached at White-Chapel, 35.
to make her a Christian?" His marriage to Pocahontas proceeded because he believed that by marrying her he was saving her soul rather than losing his own.

Rolfe's actions were unprecedented and extraordinary in the context of the time. His letter to Dale describes the enormous weight of the decision on his mind. His deliberation over whether to marry Pocahontas was a matter, he admitted, "which toucheth me so neerely, as the tendernesse of my salvation." He undertook the idea of marriage, he said, with "religious feare," and his long period of reflection over whether to marry her caused "a mightie warre in my meditations." Rolfe was not oblivious to the criticisms that he knew would follow the news of his marriage. He believed that men of "the vulgar sort" would charge that he was only indulging sensual desire by marrying the native woman. But he contended that if such feelings were his true motivation, he could easily "satisfie such desire...with Christians more pleasing to the eie." He also claimed that his marriage was not the act of a man who had given up hope of ever returning to England, nor had he given in to despair during his temporary sojourn in Virginia.

In John Rolfe's defense of his actions lies evidence that not all men shared Rolfe's concern for religion and civility. In his letter to Dale, Rolfe inferred that his

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40 Tyler, Narratives of Early Virginia, 242.
41 Ibid., 243.
motivations were far different from those men who were "mean in birth" and only in the colony "to obtain a ma[t]ch to [their] great content." No evidence exists that men traveled to Virginia for the explicit purpose of marrying Indian women. But throughout the first few years of Virginia's existence, many settlers fled into the woods to live with the natives. Such apostates caused considerable concern to colonial officials. Governor Dale believed it such a violation to "runne away from the Colonie, to Powhatan, or any savage Werowance else whatsoever" that he deemed it a crime punishable by death. When such traitors were returned, Dale meted out physical punishment as vicious and brutal as anything the English ever inflicted on the Indians. These "crewell tortures" were designed "to terrefy the reste for Attempteinge" to run away themselves.

Food was clearly one motivation for running away. But as Rolfe's letter suggests, a relationship with an Indian woman might have motivated those of "meaner birth." That the Lawes Divine, Morall and Martial stipulated such a draconian punishment for those men who left indicates that the lure of life in the wilderness with a native woman was a crime not taken lightly by leaders of a colony struggling to

42 Ibid.

survive."

Although John Rolfe was the only settler who married an Indian within the English community, one other man professed his intention to do so. In 1614 Governor Dale asked Powhatan's permission to marry his younger daughter. He sent Ralph Hamor to Powhatan with trinkets and gifts and instructed him to make his proposal to wed Pocahontas's twelve-year-old sister. According to Hamor, the reason for the proposal was that Dale "conceived there could not be a truer assurance of peace and friendship, than in such a naturall band of an unified union." Powhatan refused to give up his daughter, first claiming that she had been promised to another werowance and finally declaring that he loved her too much to give her to the English.

Despite Dale's willingness to marry an uncivilized, unconverted Indian, his proposal is understandable in terms of European notions of diplomacy and alliance. The English understood their relationship with Powhatan in a European context. To a people accustomed to monarchy and royal

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44 Peter Force, comp., *Tracts and Other Papers* (New York: Peter Smith, 1947), 11; Gary Nash contends that so likely was it that men of the lower class would run off to live with Indian women if given the chance, that the explanation for the absence of large-scale intermarriage before 1622 is probably "to be found in Indian desires" rather than European ones: *Red, White and Black*, 282.

figures of authority, it was natural to cast Powhatan as a kind of "savage" king--made manifest by Captain Christopher Newport's attempts to "crown" him in 1608.4 6 As the king's representative in Virginia, Dale's willingness to marry Powhatan's heathen daughter mirrors the willingness of James I's son Charles to marry the Catholic princess Henrietta Maria in 1624. Dale was the leader of a tenuous colonial outpost, and he could not help but be struck by the lessening of tension that followed Rolfe's marriage to Pocahontas. "Ever since the marriage," wrote Ralph Hamor in 1614, "we have had friendly commerce and trade, not onely with Powhatan himselfe, but also with his subjects round about us."4 7 Dale's decision was made possible because John Rolfe had already made the initial agonizing decision to marry a native woman. Furthermore, Dale's decision was a public decision made in the best interests of the colony. That Dale was already married to a woman in England confirms that his proposal of marriage was not an intimate matter between two people, but one intended to secure peace and stability between two nations.

In 1622 the delicate mental balance between fear of Indians and hope for their salvation was decisively tipped toward fear and hate. When Powhatans attacked the English


in an attempt to drive them out of Virginia, they simultaneously annihilated the optimism of even the most hopeful colonial leader that the Indians could be assimilated into English behavior and manners. When, according to historian Roy Harvey Pearce, "Virginians discovered they had to destroy or be destroyed, they ceased trying to understand the Indians, for such understanding presumably would avail them little." 48

Although John Rolfe married Pocahontas and Thomas Dale made a bid to wed her sister, no other colonist left any indication of his attitude toward marrying Powhatan women. But this void in the documents suggests that those men most likely to marry Indians were the ones least likely to leave an articulate mark in the record. Men of the "vulgar sort," those who John Rolfe implied possessed vile motives for travelling to Virginia, may have run off to marry Indians the Indian way. Governor Dale’s treatment of such runaways was harsh, emphasizing that those left behind found such apostasy detrimental to the collective venture in the wilderness. Most men likely thought as Rolfe did, that marriage to an Indian was dangerous to one’s eternal salvation. But most men who thought that way, and all the men who left a written account of the first years of the colony, had a stake in the colony and in English society.

If men in Virginia did flee into the wilderness for food and female companionship, it was likely those less constrained by cultural boundaries--men who could more easily shed European trappings of civilization to live the Indian way.
CHAPTER 2

FRENCH-INDIAN INTERMARRIAGE IN THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The French missionaries who arrived in Canada in the early seventeenth century pursued a vigorous plan of assimilation with the native population. Part of their vision for an integrated society included the promotion of intermarriage between the Indians and the French. Through marriage with the native peoples, the French believed that they could accomplish their twin aims of saving souls and establishing an outpost of empire. Marriage would facilitate the conversion of the natives while producing a new generation of people of mixed heritage who would be raised as French citizens and pious Catholics. While French missionaries recognized the enormous task of converting the Indians, they remained stubbornly optimistic that they could eventually civilize them as well. Even as they relinquished their goals for forcing the Indians to become sedentary, they continued to hope that religion and good example would impel them to be more like the French. By the second half of the century, most missionaries in Canada realized that such goals were impractical and headed west for a fresh start in converting and civilizing new tribes. With one of the two requirements for becoming French perpetually unfulfilled, French hopes for wide-scale intermarriage did
not occur.

Like other colonists in the seventeenth century, the French had known of the aboriginal populations in the New World for over a century before they arrived. Indeed, Frenchmen had gained first-hand experience with Indians in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Between 1534 and 1541, Frenchmen reconnoitered the Canadian coastline and St. Lawrence River and professed plans to establish a colony. In 1534 Jacques Cartier was sent to Canada to find a northwest passage to the Far East and to bring back riches. In the course of this and two subsequent voyages to Canada, Cartier encountered many Indians, established the first precedents for trading trinkets for furs, abducted ten St. Lawrence Iroquoians, and took to France shiploads of what he believed to be gold and diamonds. In 1541 Jean-François de La Rocque, sieur de Roberval, was commissioned by Francis I to plant a colony in New France. Roberval’s colony failed, and Cartier’s gold and diamonds proved to be worthless pyrite and quartz crystals. With little to show for four voyages to Canada, France turned its attention to establishing colonies further south in the Americas and abandoned the St. Lawrence Valley for the rest of the century.49

During their brief time in New France neither Cartier nor Roberval expressed serious concern for converting the natives. Seemingly, both men and the government officials who backed them in France believed that religion was only secondary to the promise of riches as a motivation for planting colonies in the New World. The king did claim that the goal of Roberval’s colony was to convert the natives to Roman Catholicism. Yet the veracity of this claim is unlikely since Roberval, the man with whom this great task was charged, was a Protestant. When these two sixteenth-century Frenchman did mention conversion of the natives they suggested that it would follow naturally as the culmination of conquest or good example.50

When the French returned to Canada in the early seventeenth century, they established a colony in which Indians were the focal point of two interrelated goals. The Indians supplied the furs which were a major export from the area in the early seventeenth century, and they supplied the souls that French missionaries traveled to Canada to save. The first missionaries, the Recollects, arrived in 1615 intending to turn nomadic pagan Indians into civilized Christian farmers. The Recollects were never numerous enough to make an impact on Indian religion and culture. They soon invited the Jesuits to share the mission to


50Axtell, The Invasion Within, 32.
Canada. Both the Recollects and the first Jesuits believed that the best way to convert the Indians was to persuade them to abandon their nomadic ways and to adopt the trappings of civilization. In 1639 Father Paul Le Jeune wrote that the goal of the missionaries was "to induce [the Indians] to become sedentary."\(^{51}\) In 1629 the English seized the St. Lawrence Valley and forced the French from the colony. When the colony was restored to French rule, the Recollects were prevented from returning, and the Jesuits, better suited to the task, became the sole missionaries in Canada. After their return to North America, the Jesuits abandoned their plans for civilizing the Indians before converting them. After 1640 they worked more closely with the trading company by allowing Indians to continue their nomadic, hunting way of life while the missionaries attempted to bring them the word of God.\(^{52}\)

The missionaries who came in the seventeenth century were not under the impression that converting the Indians would be a simple task. Unlike Cartier who believed that Indians would be "easy to convert," the Jesuits maintained that such a change in heart would come only after hard work and much instruction. In 1616 Father Pierre Biard articulated the prolonged process of conversion. The Jesuit


\(^{52}\)Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 37-38, 59.
fathers would have to "catechize, instruct, educate, and train the Savages properly and with long patience, and not expect that in one year, or in two, we can make Christians of people who have not felt the need of either a Priest or a Bishop." Jesuits were not interested in the kind of technical, nominal conversion that satisfied many Spanish missionaries in Latin America. They took seriously their mission in Canada and fully expected that it would take more than mere example to bring the Indians to Roman Catholicism.

Although the Jesuit missionaries who came to New France in the first half of the seventeenth century brought with them a more realistic notion of the effort involved in converting Indians, they were still guided by optimistic generalizations about the nature of the natives. The French recognized the "barbarism" of the Indians, but believed that it was possible to mold them into more civilized, religious, and sedentary people. At their most optimistic, they regarded Indians as closer to nature and uncorrupted by the material world of Europe: "sans roy, sans loy, sans foy."

In 1648, Father Paul Le Jeune, superior to the Huron missions, wrote that Hurons possessed a kind of innocence and goodness that no longer existed in other parts of the world. He likened the forests where they lived to "the Terrestrial Paradise" of Eden, and believed that "their practices manifest none of the luxury, the ambition, the

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avarice or the pleasures that corrupt our cities. With experience the French began to regard the Indians with less optimism. But even well into the seventeenth century, the Jesuits were as likely to list the Indians' virtues as their vices. In 1639 Father François du Peron, while pointing out that the savages were "importunate, visionary, childish, thievish, lying, deceitful, licentious, proud, [and] lazy," still conceded that they were patient, liberal, and hospitable.

The attitudes of the Jesuit missionaries toward the Indians was not one of racial superiority. Rather, like most Europeans in the seventeenth century, they regarded the Indians as essentially white. While settlers in the more temperate climates ascribed the Indians' darker skin to the sun, French settlers believed that the Indians' color had also been affected by the paints and oils they applied to their skin and to the more rugged conditions of the lives in the wild. Father Julien Perrault in a letter to Father Le Jeune espoused a typical attitude about the color and race of New World Indians. "Their skin is naturally white for the little children show it thus," he wrote in 1634, "but

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the heat of the Sun, and the rubbing with Seal oil and Moose fat, make them very swarthy, the more so as they grow older.\textsuperscript{56} Marie de L'Incarnation, an Ursuline nun who moved to Quebec to start a school for Indian girls, agreed that the natives' skin color was the result of external conditions and not indicative of a fundamental difference from the French. She explained in a letter to her son in 1645 that "their skin is almost chestnut brown because of the grease that most of them rub all over themselves."\textsuperscript{57}

To missionaries like Father Perrault and Marie de L'Incarnation the Indians appeared to be genetically like themselves. It was only their savage culture and their ignorance of Christianity that the missionaries lamented. The superiority with which they approached the Indians was cultural, not racial. If the Indians could accept the precepts of Christianity and be impelled to assume the habits of civilized men, the French in the early seventeenth century were willing to accept the natives as their own people.\textsuperscript{58}

Not only did the French believe the natives to be fundamentally like themselves, they also found them to be

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., 8: 159. See also Ibid., 1: 279, 38: 257, and 47: 241.


\textsuperscript{58}Vaughan, "From White Man to Redskin," 917-953.
very attractive people. Many of the Jesuits wrote with admiration about the natives' physical appearance, stressing their robust health, attractive bodies, and youthful appearance. "They are of lighter build than we are; but handsome and well-shaped," commented Father Pierre Biard, superior to the Huron missions, in 1616. "You do not encounter a big-bellied, hunchbacked, or deformed person among them." Father Perrault agreed. He wrote in 1634 that "there is nothing anomalous in their physical appearance; you see well-formed men, good-looking, of fine figures, strong and powerful." And in 1653, Father Francesco Bressani wrote:

They are not very dark, especially in their youth; they are strong, tall in stature, and well-proportioned: more healthy than we,--not even knowing the name of many diseases common in Europe....They are not found either hunchbacked or dwarfed, or very corpulent, or with goiters, etc.

To the French observers, there was nothing inferior about the way the Indians looked.

The Jesuits also found much to admire about the character of the Indians. The missionaries found the Indians to be intelligent, neighborly, and stalwart people. And although they exhibited vices, it was because of their lack of Christianity and civility, not inherent character

59 Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, 3: 75.

60 Ibid., 8: 159.

61 Ibid., 38: 257.
flaws. Father Biard noted in 1612 that the Indians "love justice and hate violence and robbery, a thing really remarkable in men who have neither laws nor magistrates."\(^{62}\) Father Perrault commented wryly that "as to their intelligence, if we may judge from their conduct and from their way of dealing with the French, they are not at a great disadvantage."\(^{63}\) Father de Peron agreed with Perrault's assessment of the Indian's intelligence. "They nearly all show more intelligence in their business, speeches, courtesies, intercourse, tricks, and subtleties, than do the shrewdest citizens and merchants in France," he observed. Many Jesuits noted approvingly that the Indians possessed a grave manner and natural modesty. Indeed, Perrault argued that the only thing "they do lack is the knowledge of God."\(^{64}\) Perrault's comments in 1634 were representative of the hopes that all the Jesuits had for the Indians in the early part of the century:

Now what consoles us in the midst of this ignorance and barbarism, and what makes us hope some day to see the Faith widely planted, is partly the docility they have shown in wishing to be instructed, and partly the honesty and decency we observe in them.\(^{65}\)

Many seventeenth-century writers reserved special

\(^{62}\)Ibid., 2: 73.

\(^{63}\)Ibid., 8: 159-161.

\(^{64}\)Ibid., 8: 161.

\(^{65}\)Ibid.
praise for the native women they encountered. Far different from women of the Old World in their strength and occupations, Indian women nevertheless possessed attractive characteristics according to the Europeans who observed them. Pierre Radisson, a young man who traveled to New France in the early seventeenth century and spent time as a captive of the Iroquois, watched a "fair comely lass" give birth. He noted how different Indian and French women were. She "went to bed as if yt had ben nothing," he recounted, "without moan or cry, as doe our European women."66 "Sweet-tempered, peaceable, and tractable" were the terms Chrestien Le Clerq used to describe native women. A Recollect priest who worked among the Canadian Indians in the 1670s and 1680s, Le Clerq further noted that Indian women were "very modest, chaste, and continent."67 Moreover, he observed that Indians women "had much affection for their children."68 The belief that Indian women were modest and chaste drew many approving comments from the Jesuits. Father Perrault even found reason to contrast Indians women favorably with women from Europe. They "are less naked than the men," he wrote, "quite the reverse of


68Ibid., 91.
what is practiced in many Christian lands, to the shame of Christianity."\textsuperscript{69}

The French who came to Canada in the seventeenth century found much to admire in the Indians. The Jesuits found them to be physically attractive, mentally astute, and tractable enough to convert to Christianity. They observed that the native women were sweet-tempered and maternal. The attitudes the French had toward the Indians in New France clearly did not impose cultural boundaries to miscegenation. Indeed, French men often appeared all-too-willing to run off into the wild to live with Indian women. That the policy of intermarriage came to be considered a failure by many seventeenth-century Frenchmen was not because mixing of the two peoples was not occurring; it was simply taking place the wrong way.

The official French attitude toward intermarriage was born out of the memory of fourteenth-century demographic disaster. To Europeans increasingly concerned with the dependence of a nation-state’s strength on a large population, the Black Death demonstrated how easily populations could be decimated and a state’s power weakened. The large aboriginal population in Canada provided the perfect solution. If a small number of Frenchmen and clergy could be sent over, many seventeenth-century French officials believed that the natives could be made French

\textsuperscript{69}Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, 8: 159.
citizens through marriage and conversion without sacrificing a large portion of France's population. Samuel de Champlain twice told the Indians that "our young men will marry your daughters, and we shall be one people."\(^{70}\) Section 17 of the charter of New France also related this hope for intermarriage between the French and the Indians.

The Savages who will be led to the faith and to profess it will be considered natural Frenchmen, and like them, will be able to come and live in France when they wish to, and there acquire property, with rights of inheritance and bequest, just as if they had been born Frenchmen, without being required to make any declaration or to become naturalized.\(^{71}\)

Marriage was thus early identified as one of the best ways to assimilate the Indians into French culture. Many of the early missionaries who went to Canada in the seventeenth century expressed hopes that intermarriage would occur and their delight when such unions were realized. Father Le Jeune wrote that intermarriage would benefit both the Indians and the French. "If this were done," he reported in 1636, the French "would readily come into their Country, marry their daughters, teach them arts and trades, [and] assist them with their enemies...."\(^{72}\) When such marriages

\(^{70}\)Ibid. 5: 211, 10: 26.

\(^{71}\)Quoted in Olive Patricia Dickason, "From 'One Nation' in the Northeast to 'New Nation' in the Northwest: A Look at the Emergence of the Métis," in Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown, eds., The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America (Manitoba: The University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 22.

\(^{72}\)Thwaites, ed., Jesuit Relations, 10: 27.
actually resulted, the Jesuits were quick to recount them in their Relations. In 1639, Father Le Jeune wrote of the impending marriage of one young couple:

A worthy and pious person has given a hundred ecus for the wedding of a young Savage girl sought in marriage by a young Frenchman of very good character.\textsuperscript{73}

Another Jesuit related the marriage of another pair in 1662.

On the 19th, the marriage of Laurant du Boc and Marie Felix, a huron girl, took place. The sum of 500 livres was given to her as marriage-portion out of the property of her deceased mother, an excellent Christian, which had been well looked after.\textsuperscript{74}

Despite the enthusiasm for intermarriage among the Jesuits and colonial officials, few unions actually took place. The records of the colony documented very few such unions. Only eight marriages, for example, found their way into the fragmentary seventeenth-century parish registers of the province of Quebec.\textsuperscript{75} While the seventeenth-century records are far from complete, they clearly indicate that sanctioned marriages between the French and Indians did not occur very often. Still, intermarriage was taking place to a considerable extent in the colony. French men married Indian women à la façon du pays: they married them the Indian way.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., 16: 35.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., 47: 289. See Appendix.

\textsuperscript{75}See Appendix.

\textsuperscript{76}Dickason, "Emergence of the Métis," 22-23.
The extent to which this kind of marriage occurred is difficult to measure, but it undoubtedly took place. Few cultural barriers seemed to prevent this informal intermixing. French attitudes towards Indians in general were favorable, and French men did not display any particular squeamishness about sexual relationships with native women. At the end of the seventeenth century, the Sieur de Dièreville visited Acadia. He observed that although the natives were savages, "they do not fail to attract the Youth of both sexes in Quebec who are inclined by their evil impulses toward wrong doing." Moreover, he recounted, French men went to live with the Indians so that they could be with Indian women.

The Boys become worse than the Iroquois themselves, & that is the reason they are so well-received; otherwise they would not be worth having. Their Kindred appeal to them in vain, these Renegades will not return to them; they prefer the Iroquois. To wanton Maidens, they appear shapely and tall, and fit for their delight, so unafrighted by their horrid mien, they go with them to gratify their lust. Women are always pleased by size and strength....

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Ibid.
That European men were easily lured to Indian women was also mentioned by Jean Cavelier, a priest who traveled to Canada through the interior of the North American continent in the 1680s. After journeying for an entire day, Father Cavelier's party stopped near an Indian village for the night. "We camped two leagues from the nearest cabins, for fear our soldiers would debauch themselves with the women," he wrote.80 A few days later his fears were realized. "Several of our people," he complained "had debauched themselves with women during the four days rest we spent in the village of the Cenis."81

Many European men seemed to have few qualms about engaging in sexual or marital relationships with native women. Indeed, the marriage customs of many of the Indian tribes in New France probably made it very uncomplicated for French men to live among the natives. Le Clerq noted, for example, that the Micmac Indians had free choice in the decision of whom to marry. Their parents did not "force the inclinations of their children in the matter of marriage, or to induce them, whether by use of force, obedience, or affection to marry men they cannot bring themselves to like."82 In 1637, Father Le Jeune related the attitude


81Ibid., 107.

82Le Clerq, New Relation of Gaspesia, 259.
held by some of the Huron Indians toward marriage with the French. Le Jeune and a companion traveled to Iahenhouton to propose to the local chief that the French and the members of his tribe intermarry. The chief replied that "it was not necessary to go through so many ceremonies:"

That those Frenchmen who had resolved to marry were free to take wives where it seemed good to them; that those who had married in the past had not demanded a general council for that purpose, but that they had taken them in whatever way they had desired.83

With Indian women free to choose their marriage partners and Indian marriage being relatively informal compared to marriage in the Catholic Church, many European men must have found it natural and uncomplicated to slip into an Indian way of life.

That French men would so easily leave the French community to live with Indian women in the forest was of great concern to the Jesuits and the colonial officials. Such actions were positively contrary to France's plans for empire and conversion in Canada, for rather than making Indians French such practices transformed the French into "savages." Father Le Jeune conveyed his concern about the way some French in Canada had chosen to intermarry with the Indians to the Huron chief at Iahenhouton.

The Father replied to this that it was very true that the Frenchmen who had hitherto married in the country had not made such a stir about it, but also that their intentions were far removed from

ours,—that their purpose had been to become barbarians.

The next line Father Le Jeune wrote in his relation of 1637 encompassed the great fears and hopes of the French in Canada. "Their purpose," he wrote referring to the men who left to live in the Indian community, "had been to become barbarians, and to render themselves exactly like them....We on the contrary, aimed by this alliance to make them like us." 84

Despite such glaring problems in the attempt to create "one nation" in Canada, official policy called for encouraging intermarriage throughout the seventeenth century. Even when unions occurred between French men and unconverted Indian women, officials in the colony attempted to insure that the offspring of such unions were raised in the French community. 85 Perhaps because of the difficulty in converting Indian women to Christianity before marriage, Pierre de Sesmaisons wrote in 1648 requesting permission from the pope to "permit the French who inhabit New France to marry the savage girls although the latter are neither baptized nor yet much instructed." 86 After 1680, the French government provided funds for dowries of fifty livres

84 Ibid., 19.

85 Dickason, "Emergence of the Métis," 26-27.

each for Indian women who married French men. Very little of the money was ever claimed, and by the eighteenth century, official encouragement for intermarriage waned.87

Although many of the missionaries hoped that intermarriages would still take place in great numbers in the colony, some of those who came to the colony to attempt to convert the Indians were losing faith in the venture towards the end of the century. The problem was not that the missionaries to New France were ineffective in their goal of conversion. The Jesuits were the most successful missionaries in North America. According to Father Le Jeune, 450 Indians had been converted in New France by 1639. But after the Jesuits changed their conversion policy in 1640, the number of healthy adult converts increased considerably. Over 10,000 Indians were baptized in Canada in the seventeenth century. Some of these conversions were natives close to death, who received baptism "after rather slight instruction but sufficient to allow their receiving that Sacrament in that condition."88 But many more were instructed by the Jesuits in Catholic Catechism and observed for considerable time to ensure that they had become

Christians in their hearts.⁸⁹

The true impediment to marriage was in the failure of the Jesuits’ second goal: civilization. While many Indians became Christian, few abandoned their traditional lives in favor of European customs. In her first years in the colony Marie de l’Incarnation wrote of her great hopes for the Indians and the colony. A year after her arrival, she wrote of her tremendous pleasure among the Indian women. "The candour and simplicity of their spirits," she wrote, "are so delightful that they cannot be described." She believed that Indian men were just as promising as converts and French citizens as the young native girls in her school. Mère Marie described "noble and valiant chiefs [who] go down on their knees at my feet, begging me to make them pray to God before they eat." She likened their gentleness and humility to children and found she could "have them say everything I wish."⁹⁰

But after several decades with the Indians, Mère Marie had begun to lose faith in their potential to accept both Christianity and French culture. In 1668 she wrote to her son with weary resignation about the Iroquois. "I do not know whether they will be more capable of being civilized than the others or whether they will keep the French

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elegance in which we are rearing them," she lamented. "I do not expect it of them, for they are Savages and that is sufficient reason not to hope." 91 Civilizing the savages was nearly an impossible task, she told him: "of a hundred that have passed through our hands we have scarcely civilized one." 92

It was well into the seventeenth century that missionaries such as Marie de l'incarnation began to lose faith in the Indians' potential. Unlike the English settlers in New England and Virginia, French officials and missionaries held to their goal of bringing Indians into the French community. Certainly part of the reason for the hopeful French attitude towards Indians lay in the central role Indians played in the economic foundation of the colony. Without Indians to supply fur, the tiny French colony on the St. Lawrence would not have survived. While Indians in Canada played an essential role in the function of the colony, Indians around English settlements stood in the way of expansion. Not surprisingly, Anglo-Indian relations soured quickly as Englishmen pushed Indians off coveted land. Historian W. J. Eccles, however, suggests that French idealism towards Indians transcended mere differences in colonial economics. Unlike English settlers to the south, Frenchmen were generally more willing to

91Ibid., 341.

92Ibid.
respect and honor Indians. That many maintained a genuine interest in creating "one nation" well into the seventeenth century demonstrates that attitudes towards Indians were inherently more favorable in Canada.

Still, the French attitude toward intermarriage bore considerable similarity to the English. For when the closest, most intimate connections between two people was considered in New France, Jesuits were virtually unwavering. For a marriage to be sanctioned, the Indian woman had to be converted and civilized. The danger was that if marriage could make the Indians more like the French, it could also do the reverse and make Frenchmen more like the Indians. In their concern for the men who traveled into the interior and who married à la façon du pays, Jesuits sounded much like settlers further south who worried that apostates in the wilderness threatened the success of the colonial venture. If Jesuits appeared less vehement in their concern, it was perhaps because the coureurs de bois in the interior contributed to the economy whereas New England apostates merely contributed to "declension." But both Jesuit and Puritan realized that marriage that occurred the wrong way was not just an issue for individuals, but a symbol of the worldly dangers that could befall all Christians. Ultimately, the failure of the missionaries to civilize the Indians spelled the failure of the plan for "one nation." French hopes for the Indians were no more successful than
those of the English when they tried to "make them like us."
CHAPTER 3

THE NEW ENGLAND REPUDIATION OF INTERMARRIAGE

While religious and lay leaders in New France and Virginia expressed optimistic plans for the assimilation of Indians, leaders in the other North American colony established in the first quarter of the seventeenth century revealed no such hope. New England legislators once brought up the issue of intermarriage between their own people and the Indians, but they never referred to it again. They probably found little reason to address the matter. Unlike settlers to New France and Virginia, New Englanders traveled with their families to the colony. The colony enjoyed an even sex ratio from the beginning of settlement, and so a Puritan man would have had plenty of recourse to a wife of his own culture.

Yet more than a balanced sex ratio is needed to explain the lack of intermarriage between Puritans and Indians. Much more than in either Canada or Virginia, extreme cultural and religious forces combined to prevent the marriage of Indians and Europeans in the early years of colonization. The reasons that New England men did not marry Indian women sheds light on the forces that prevented

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such unions in other parts of colonial North America. What emerges when the case of New England is compared to the experiences of Canadians and Virginians is that European cultural values prevented marriage with Indian women. Men in all three areas fled into the wilderness to live the Indian way. But those left behind held such powerful desires for "civilization" and such apprehension of apostasy that Colonial officials refused to sanction such unions.94

The Puritans who moved to New England in the seventeenth century carried with them a community ideal that influenced the pattern of their settlement and their later diffusion into the countryside. At their first arrival they established tight-knit settlements carefully planned and ordered around the church and civil government. Puritans discouraged isolated farmsteads, fearing that those who

chose to live away from the center of settlement would fail to live up to the religious expectations for the colony. Not long after the initial wave of settlement, William Bradford observed that the failure of the people to remain together "in Christian and comfortable fellowship" amounted to "ye ruine of New England, at least ye churches of God ther." If Bradford's assessment of the colony seemed overly pessimistic, it nevertheless revealed the extent to which Puritans valued their cohesive communities.95

New Englanders never sought to include Indians in their communities the way Virginians or Jesuits did. Legislation passed in the first few decades of colonization in New England served to keep Indians at a comfortable distance. In 1629 the Court of Assistants enacted "for the avoyding of the hurt that may follow through our much familiaritie with the Indians, wee conceive it fitt that they bee not permitted to come to your plantacion but at certaine tymes and places to bee appointed them."96 In 1637 the Massachusetts Bay colony legislature ordered "that every


towne should have power to keepe away all strange Indians." 97 Boston's Court of Assistants established "a trucking howse" in every community in 1632 so that Indian traders could "avoide...comeing to severall howses." 98

To a considerable extent Puritans had less to worry about from their Indian neighbors than did settlers in the Chesapeake. Far fewer Indians lived near the English settlements in the northern colony than lived in close proximity to Jamestown. In 1616 and 1617 a shipborne "plague" swept through New England decimating the Indian population. The area from Plymouth to Massachusetts Bay was hard hit. John Smith, who surveyed the New England coastline in 1614, observed abundant evidence of agriculture and habitation in the region; by 1620 the only evidence of the once-thriving population was heaps of skulls and other bones left unburied due to the swift course of the epidemic. Because the epidemic so decimated the Indians, the Puritans did not initially face the problem of wresting control of land away from them. Indeed, Puritans viewed the plague as a sign that the new lands were cleared by God to sanction their mission in the New World. 99 Englishmen could


98 Ibid., 1: 96.

conveniently employ their legal concept of *vacuum Domicilium*. Indians lacked both the numbers and the industry to work the abundant lands in New England. Consequently, the English asserted their civil right to appropriate land not being used. While such an acquisitive attitude toward land would eventually bring the English and the natives into conflict, a probability that Puritan leaders acknowledged, New Englanders initially faced fewer conflicts over resources than did the early settlers to Virginia.\(^{100}\)

Nevertheless, Puritans feared that Indians could attack them at any time. The New England settlers were well aware of the fate that befell the Virginia colonists in 1622 due to their "too much confidence" in the Powhatan Indians. In 1628 Matthew Cradock warned the New England settlers "not to bee too confident of the fidellitie of the salvages."\(^{101}\) Colonial legislators seemingly felt as Cradock did; they passed laws that prohibited sales of English weapons to Indians. In 1642 the Connecticut legislature prohibited colonists from trading "any Instrument or matter made of iron or steele" with the Indians because the Indians


\(^{101}\)Shurtleff, ed., *Massachusetts Bay Colony Records*, 1: 385.
appeared to be ready to "combyne themselves togethers...to prepare for warr." The punishments for not complying with such rules were severe. In 1632, the Massachusetts Bay Court of Assistants ordered that Richard Hopkins "shalbe severely whipt, & branded with a hott iron on one of his cheekes, for selling peces of powder & shott to the Indeans." Despite attempts to prevent Indians from arming themselves with European weapons, the natives found easy access to guns. If they could not obtain them through the English, they could trade furs to the French or the Dutch in exchange for firearms. So abundant were guns among the natives that Bradford acknowledged the Massachusetts Indians to be well-armed by 1627.

Puritans believed that such dangerous and unpredictable "savages" needed to be converted to Christianity and brought to civilization. As in Virginia, New Englanders derided the Indians' way of life and their ignorance of Christianity. At the same time, they professed optimism about the inherent nature of savages and the ability of Indians to repudiate barbarism to become more like Europeans. The seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, designed in 1629, depicts an

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102 Trumbull and Hoadly, eds., Connecticut Colony Records, 1: 74.


Indian imploring the Puritans to "Come over and help us." One settler wrote that conversion of the Indians was to be "the mayne end of our plantacion." Yet relatively few missionaries traveled to New England to minister to the Indians. Those who did also served as parish ministers, proselytizing to the Indians in their spare time.

Still, these missionaries were dedicated and required much of their potential converts. They vigorously and relatively successfully sought to correct the two failings of native life. On the one hand, they wanted to bring Indians the knowledge of God and Protestant theology. But this could not be accomplished without first "reducing" the Indians to civility, deflating their sense of arrogant self-importance, and forcing them to occupy their mortal place on the Christian hierarchy. To this end, New England missionaries established "praying towns" to segregate the Christian Indians from the unconverted of their own people and from the English. The first and most successful praying town, Natick, was founded by John Eliot in 1651, and by 1676 thirteen more were established. While Eliot ministered to the Indians at Natick, another Puritan minister, Thomas Mayhew, tried to bring Christianity to his flock at Martha's

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Vineyard. 106

For Puritan missionaries, conversion was not a simple task of baptism and pronouncement. Indeed, Eliot and Mayhew insisted that Indian converts demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of Christianity before becoming members of the church. In order to determine if the natives were ready to join the Puritan church, ministers examined them thoroughly on the basic precepts of Protestant theology. 107 But the New England missionaries adhered to the requirement that the Indians adopt the traits of civilized Europeans before they could become Christians. In a 1651 letter, Eliot wrote that Indians "must have visible civility, before they can rightly enjoy visible sanctitie in ecclesiastical communion." 108

While the number of Eliot’s and Mayhew’s converts was not large, some Indians were successfully converted in the seventeenth century. Not only did they cut their hair and agree to a sedentary life in a praying town, they also mastered the complexity of Puritan theology. John Eliot claimed that he had converted well over 1000 Indians in the


seventeenth century, although he inflated this number for
propaganda purposes. Still, over 40 percent of the
population of the praying towns converted to the newcomers' religion.\textsuperscript{109}

While Puritan missionaries found success in their
tries to convert and civilize Indians, Puritans never
found room in their societies for these sedentary Indians.
The leaders of Connecticut wrote in 1646 that in the event
that Indians were "willing to submit to the ordering and
government of the Englishe thay may accepthe of them." But
the legislators qualified that such acceptance would be
"uppen such terms as may be safe and honorable to the
Englishe."\textsuperscript{110} Even as they were professing an intention
to allow Indians into their communities, Puritan leaders
revealed an underlying unwillingness to carry through on
such promises. New Englanders did not officially welcome
Indians into their fold in the seventeenth century. Even
those Indians who adhered to the newcomers' religion and

\textsuperscript{109}Francis Jennings counts only 79 converts in all of the
Indians Eliot claims were converted. James Axtell argues that
Jennings' numbers fall well short of the actual number of
converts and contends that over 40\% of the inhabitants of the
praying towns converted. Francis Jennings, \textit{The Invasion of
America: Indians, Colonialism and the Cant of Conquest}
(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975; New
York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), 250-53; Axtell, "Were
Indian Conversions Bona Fide?," in \textit{After Columbus: Essays in
the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America} (New York: Oxford

\textsuperscript{110}Trumbull and Hoadly, eds., \textit{Connecticut Colony Records,
1: 139-40
cultural standards were segregated in praying towns. While Puritan leaders could not control the every interaction between their own people and the natives, they still never entertained serious thoughts of cultural assimilation.

Even though intermarriage was proscribed within the European community, New Englanders could still flee into the wilderness to live the Indian way. Those most likely to renounce European ways were those who regularly encountered Indians away from the Puritan communities. In 1629 colonist John Endecott complained to the legislature about the "prophane and dissolute living of divers of our nation, form [sic] traders to those parts, and of their irregular trading with the Indians." The penalty for "so great & unsufferable abuses" was stiff. In 1642 the General Court of Connecticut ordered that those who "departe from amongst us, and take up their abode with the Indeans in a prophane course of life...shall suffer three yeares imprisonment at least."\textsuperscript{111} Measures were taken to compel the runaways to return to the English community, and Indians were required by the courts not to harbor renegades.\textsuperscript{112}

The English took such measures against renegades because such men represented the danger that could befall good Christians in the wilderness. The wilderness was a

\textsuperscript{111}Trumbull and Hoadly, eds., \textit{Connecticut Colony Records}, 1: 78.

place where a man, separated from his neighbors and his community, could easily backslide, becoming more like the heathen Indians and less like the pious English. By choosing to live with Indians, a man repudiated all that the Puritans tried to create in their society. Instead of civilized and godly, he became wild and heathen. Missionaries in New England labored hard to bring Indians both Christianity and civility. The converted, sedentary Indians were intended to be one of the great successes of the New Zion. That Englishmen degenerated into barbarism could only signal failure to the leaders of the colony.

In 1676 the English recovered one such renegade. Joshua Tift was caught pillaging an English farm with a group of Indians. Because of "some Discontent amongst his Neighbours," he had allegedly "turned Indian, married one of the Indian Squaws, [and] renounced his Religion, Nation and natural parents." The English who apprehended him observed how thoroughly he had "conformed himself to them amongst whom he lived." And they found him guilty of the most serious sin an English runaway could commit: he was "as ignorant as an Heathen" in religious matters.\(^{113}\)

The punishment for Tift was intended to be swift and

absolute: he was sentenced to die "the Death of a Traytor." Other renegades were treated with equal severity. Increase Mather reported the discovery of a runaway in 1676. The "wretched English man" had "apostatized to the Heathen, and fought with them against his own Country-men." He was executed shortly after his return to the English.115

Some runaways, like Tift, revealed no desire to marry Indian women. Yet others left evidence of such desires, desires that led them away from communities of their own people and into the villages of the Indians. European men were not squeamish about sexual contact with Indians. In 1679 Plymouth leaders fined Christopher Blake five shillings for his drunken sexual advances towards a native woman. William Makepeace was sentenced to be whipped in 1672 for a similar offence.116 But other men's relationships with native women went much further than the clumsy, drunken advances of Blake and Makepeace. In 1637 Roger Williams recorded the evil deeds of a William Baker who had run away from Connecticut to live with the Indians. He had acquired two native wives, and one was with child. He could also

114 Hubbard, Indian Wars, 162.
115 Increase Mather, A Brief History of the War with the Indians in New England (London, 1676), 20.
speak "much Indian," surely a sign of his apostasy. Baker was not the only such renegade known to Williams. Williams reported that five or six more lived with the Pequots.\textsuperscript{117}

New England's most infamous renegade, Thomas Morton of Merrymount, raised the ire of colonial officials by peddling guns and ammunition to the natives. Miles Standish was sent to capture him and return him to the Council of New England to answer for his behavior.\textsuperscript{118} Historians ever since have accepted the Puritan critique of Morton, casting him as the leader of a drunken rabble who armed the enemy at the expense of the safety of the Puritan communities in New England. But Morton's challenge to Puritan authority went far deeper than merely selling guns to the natives. As historian Karen Ordahl Kupperman points out, economics provided part of the answer. Morton furnished the natives with an effective tool with which to challenge Puritan interests in the fur trade.\textsuperscript{119} In other ways, too, Morton's interactions with the natives clearly deviated from

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{117}Williams, Complete Writings, 6: 65-66, 84-85. Baker was ultimately captured and returned to Connecticut where he received several beatings for his "villainy." Ibid, 6: 95.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{118}Bradford, History of Plymouth Plantation, 2: 47-57.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{119}Karen Kupperman, "Thomas Morton, Historian," New England Quarterly 50, no. 4 (1977), 660-64. Kupperman argues that the Puritan conviction that Morton was an "irresponsible libertine" surrounded by drunkards and renegades has discredited Morton as a historical source. Kupperman contends that Morton's history of New England deserves a more credible reading, and that the "official" version of these familiar events was skewed by Puritan angst and biases.}
Puritan ideals. Where the Puritans regarded Indians with some suspicion, as residents of a wilderness that they derided as inferior to European civilization, Morton welcomed them at Merrymount. Distinctly separate from the closed communities of the Puritans, Morton and his cohorts entertained the natives, speaking their language and sharing guns and provisions with them. Perhaps most significant to the Puritans, Morton and his men shared their beds with native women. Bradford observed Morton and feared that others would follow down the same road, giving in to licentiousness and depravity. In every regard, Morton served as a powerful metaphor to Puritans. They abhorred him and his fraternity of trouble-makers for their repudiation of Puritan community, standards, and authority, and they feared that others would succumb to the temptation of such a corrupt lifestyle. Morton was a man gone wild through his excessive intimacy with the Indians, a powerful and distressing image for the Puritans.\footnote{Michael Zuckerman, "Pilgrims in the Wilderness: Community, Modernity, and the Maypole at Merry Mount," \textit{New England Quarterly} 50, no. 2 (1977), 255-77; Smits, "We are Not to Grow Wild," 9-11; Kupperman, "Thomas Morton, Historian," 662.}

The attitude toward renegades held by New England’s leaders reveals the psychology that prevented Englishmen in New England from marrying Indians. Beyond having little need to marry Indians, Puritans found much wrong with native
life. Their reluctance to admit even the Indians at Natick and Martha's Vineyard into their society kept Indians and Puritans apart and prevented marriage. Puritans were also apprehensive about the savages in their midst, and their concern was compounded by the specter of men of their own ranks degenerating into barbarism. Puritans responded to Indians with a more extreme dislike for the "savage" way of life and ignorance of Christianity. Unlike the Virginians, New Englanders did not express much desire to include them in their society once they were transformed by good example and instruction. And unlike Canadians, the Puritans did not care to assimilate the native population through intermarriage. New Englanders carried a similar mind set with them to the New World, but more than settlers to other areas of North America, they had little desire to include Indians in their communities.
Europeans who arrived in New France, New England, and Virginia in the earliest years of colonization brought with them abundant hope for their potential to transform North American natives. Conversion of the ignorant natives was an important colonizing goal in all three areas of North America. Virginians were commanded by their charter to make conversion of the Indians their foremost task, more important even than securing goods and material to send back to England. An Indian depicted on the seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony beckoned Englishmen to come over to help him, an emblem of the professed English commitment to transform the native population. And waves of missionaries traveled to New France with the intention of saving souls and adding scores of new subjects to the realm.

Because of this initial missionary zeal, Europeans in all three areas of colonial North America did not immediately reject the possibility that Indians might one day join their own communities. Nor did they outlaw marriage between their own people and the natives. But for all their early optimism and professed desire to have the Indians live among them, little intermixing of any kind took place within the European community. And except for John
Rolfe and a handful of others in New France, European men did not enter into European-sanctioned marriages with the Indians.

The failure of the two groups to meet on the most intimate level was due mostly to the religious mentality Europeans carried with them to the New World. The reluctance of most men to enter into marriages with unchristian women prevented extensive intermixing in the seventeenth-century. Europeans could not allow outsiders to slip into their families and communities. They imposed rigid prerequisites that prevented Indians from living among them, even had the Indians desired it.

Europeans pinned their success in the New World on upholding such cultural prerequisites. Indians who chose a sedentary lifestyle, fully accepted European religion, and adopted the external trappings of European culture would ostensibly be welcome in their communities. But the English and the French found their initial goals untenable. The Jesuits eventually abandoned hope for convincing Indians to live a sedentary life; New England officials segregated successful Indian converts into their own "praying" towns; and attitudes towards Indians changed quickly in Virginia when in 1622 the natives proved to be dangerous and unpredictable rather than docile and malleable.

The Indians, by contrast, proved much more flexible and pragmatic in absorbing strangers into their families and
Many white settlers captured by the Indians so completely adapted to the Indian way of life that they refused to return when "rescued" by their people, or did so only reluctantly. Many men fled European communities voluntarily to live among the natives, and doubtless many took Indian wives *à la façon du pays*. Colonial officials were greatly concerned by the actions of such men and frequently meted out severe punishments when the renegades were recaptured by their own people.

Despite their professed willingness to allow Indians into European communities and families, colonial leaders condemned the actions of renegades who lived among and married natives. Unconverted, uncivilized Indians roaming the wilderness around European settlements made the newcomers anxious. As the events of 1622 demonstrated, Europeans had good reason to fear the Indians; the native people could be a formidable enemy. But the Indians also disturbed Europeans on a deeper level. For people struggling to erect godly communities in the wilderness, the wild land and its inhabitants served as a powerful metaphor for religious and civil regression. Renegades who turned their backs on their own culture to live with the natives committed not just an individual act. They served as a

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pointed reminder to those left behind that European settlement was tenuous; it could be destroyed altogether through an Indian attack, or subverted by degeneration to "savagery" within its own ranks.

These convictions about the nature of Indians and the importance of transforming the people along with the land provided the major deterrent to intermarriage in seventeenth-century North America. The more pious Europeans did not marry Indians because Indians were ignorant of Christianity. The inevitable conclusion that all Indians were incorrigible heathens unlikely to be converted was enough to convince most European men that marriage was not only undesirable, but inherently dangerous to their souls. Such sentiments were intensified by the specter of men from their own settlements turning wild to live among the Indians.
## APPENDIX

### RECORDED MARRIAGES BETWEEN FRENCH AND INDIANS

### IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CANADA\(^{122}\)

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<td>1662</td>
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<td>Laurent Dubocq</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Jean Durand</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Catherine Annennontak</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marie Miteouamegoukoue</td>
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