

Amherst and the Native World

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It should not be surprising to find an essay on Native Americans and Native Hawaiians in a book about the history of Amherst College. Amherst, after all, was inspired by missionary zeal, and Native Americans and other indigenous peoples were early objects of evangelism. The college's founders had set their sights on bringing Christian civilization to the world, but Native Americans were never far from their minds. "There is scarcely a town in the valley," the college's first historian wrote, "whose soil was not sprinkled with blood in the early wars with the Indians."¹ Another college chronicler wrote: "The forests were haunted by unseen foes," and local residents "could never be free . . . from fear of catastrophe."²

Professor W. S. Tyler reported, in his 1873 history of the college, that its early leaders sought "to commemorate the sufferings and sacrifices by which our fathers won this valley to civilization, learning and religion." Trustee Noah Webster celebrated that victory and assured those gathered to launch the new institution that they would find their generosity rewarded as Amherst graduates became "the instrument of converting a family, a province, perhaps a kingdom of Pagans and bringing them within the pale of the Christian church."³ Transforming "kingdoms of Pagans" was a central ambition of early Amherst; that goal was reflected in the institutional seal, designed by professor of Latin and Greek Nathan Welby Fiske and stamped on all official documents: "*Terras Irradiant*" ("They Shall Enlighten the Lands").

The handiest lands to "enlighten," in 1821, were the indigenous territories in North America and the islands of Hawai'i. "Pagan kingdoms" in the Middle East and Asia attracted missionary attention, but in the 1820s, the Natives of North America and the Pacific were most immediately accessible.⁴ In its early decades, Amherst's missionaries were uniformly committed to converting the "pagans" in these areas to Christianity and "raising up" their nations to civilization. By spreading the gospel, Amherst's ministers expected to create a world of Christian communities. Over time, however, the graduates who traveled to the accessible indigenous communities in North America and Hawai'i dropped that second task. As the United States expanded across the continent and incorporated native peoples in North America and the Pacific within its boundaries, ministers from Amherst abandoned "raising" the nations and turned their attention to persuading their congregations to assimilate into the general American population. By 1900, promoting "American-

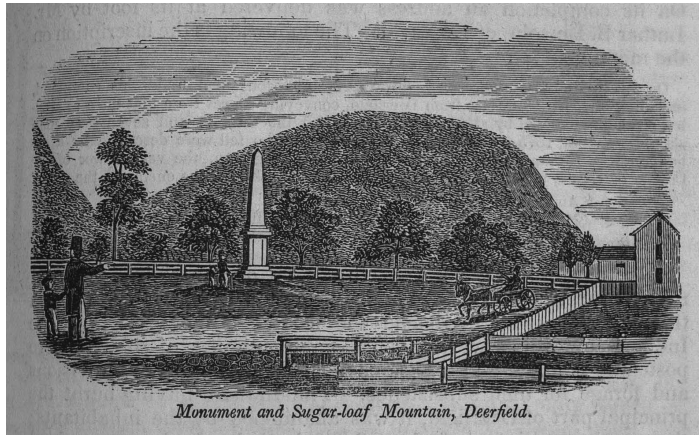


Figure 1. The “Bloody Brook” monument in South Deerfield, MA, erected in 1835 to commemorate a battle that took place during the Massachusetts Colony’s seventeenth century war with “King Philip” (Metacom). Many Amherst students and college leaders attended the monument’s dedication. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

ization” had become the unifying goal for both the college’s graduates in the native world and for the college itself.

In the twentieth century, Amherst’s ambitions regarding indigenous peoples shifted yet again. Across the globe, the protestant churches that had traditionally supported Amherst began to question using the gospel alone to uplift “pagan” peoples. Progressive churchmen and women asked if it might be more important that missionaries adapt to foreign cultures to better promote economic development, education, and modern health care. At the same time, advocates of “Americanization” within the United States questioned their nationalistic rhetoric and began exploring the contributions of cultural traditions that were not European—or even Christian—to national life. At the college, a more diverse student body—as well as the decline of religious education and a classical curriculum—encouraged a more cosmopolitan outlook. Amherst faculty and students engaged in contemporary issues and were less enamored of the traditional curriculum. By the 1990s, both global cultures and indigenous traditions within the United States had become subjects of study—native peoples were no longer objects of conversion. By the time of its bicentennial, a college founded in a valley “won for civilization” had made a place within its curriculum, its community, and its history for the peoples who earlier had been viewed as agents of violence and targets of dispossession. They had become partners in inquiry and fellow agents of enlightenment.⁵

The story of Amherst’s engagement with the native world can be sketched here in three parts: the mission era, the era of expanding US nationalism, and the era of rising cosmopolitanism. In each section, we can witness Amherst’s engagement with native peoples and the resonance of that engagement on campus.

MISSIONARIES

At its founding, the college's curriculum reflected its evangelical vision. Classical learning was fundamental for an institution committed to carrying Christian civilization to the world, but from the start, modern thinkers were also featured among the students' required texts. Thus, in addition to exploring the political ideas of the ancient Greeks, Amherst students read Enlightenment thinker Emer de Vattel's eighteenth-century treatise on international relations.

Vattel's *Law of Nations* was written as European nations struggled to move beyond religious warfare of the Reformation Era and extend their empires across the globe.⁶ Vattel proposed a new world order based on international trade and stable diplomatic relationships. This vision, Vattel wrote, required "a just and rational application of the Law of Nature to the affairs and conduct of nations."⁷ He argued that in a civilized world, "states . . . may acquire rights . . . by pacts and treaties."⁸ Treaties, like foundational agreements within a single state, would be the source of stability and order. While Vattel did not imagine that stateless indigenous peoples would participate in this new world, he did recognize that "pagan" nations such as those in the Middle East and Asia could be diplomatic and economic partners of Europeans.⁹

From Vattel's perspective, the most important divide in the world was between those who cultivated the earth and those who did not. "The whole world," he wrote, "is appointed for the nourishment of its inhabitants. . . . Every nation [is therefore] obliged to cultivate the ground that has fallen to its share." Those who fulfilled that obligation should be recognized as nations, while "those people . . . who having fertile countries, disdain to cultivate the earth . . . deserve to be exterminated as savage and pernicious beasts." Such "idle" communities, he argued, must eventually give way to enterprising states.¹⁰ But, he added, "idle" communities could save themselves by learning to "cultivate the earth." Missionaries could be pivotal instruments in that economic conversion.¹¹ Vattel's view fit neatly with the missionary outlook of the Protestant leaders who participated in Amherst's founding. They were enthusiastic supporters of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the protestant society headquartered in Boston that, by 1821, had already embarked on an ambitious campaign to bring the gospel to the world. ABCFM missionaries agreed with Vattel, that individual conversion need not subvert the rule of local rulers. The goal should be individual conversion and the eventual "raising up" of the "pagan" nation through trade and diplomacy. As a consequence, the ABCFM strategically targeted communities where trade and diplomatic activity had already begun. Its missionaries would encourage this enterprise and guide the pagan nations towards Christianity. The ABCFM sent its first missionaries to India and Hawai'i because those places were already engaged with European powers. These same considerations caused ABCFM officials to focus their North American efforts on tribes like the Cherokees and the Iroquois groups in upstate New York, whose leaders had already demonstrated an openness to literacy, treaty-making, and the market economy.¹²

The Amherst graduates who became missionaries among Native Americans and in

Hawai'i were agents of the ABCFM. They pursued the twin goals of Christian conversion and the uplift of "pagan" societies into civilized nations. As an early chronicler of the college declared, "The American Board was calling so loudly for laborers . . . it [is] absolutely necessary that some new effort should be made to secure an adequate supply."¹³ Most clergy who attended Amherst chose "home" missions within the settled communities of the United States, but several dedicated graduates answered the ABCFM's call. In December 1829, for example, on the eve of his departure for Hawai'i, Reuben Tinker (1827) announced that "four hundred millions of immortals . . . are resting this day on our hands." Their salvation, he added, "must be accomplished . . . by our individual exertions, charities and prayers."¹⁴

Tinker was among the first to join the missionary effort in the islands that would eventually come under American rule. He would soon be joined in Hawai'i by Isaac Bliss and Benjamin Wyman Parker (both of the class of 1828). His contemporaries who served Native American communities on the continent included Hiram Smith (1823), Nathaniel Fisher (1826), and Asher Bliss (1829)—all assigned to Iroquois tribes in upstate New York. (Matthew Scovell, a nongraduate, left Amherst in 1826 to serve as a missionary to the Cherokees.)¹⁵ By the 1840s, these early missionaries would be augmented with two additional graduates: Daniel Dwight Hitchcock (1844), who had been born at the ABCFM Cherokee mission in Georgia and who returned to the tribe as a physician, and Sereno Bishop (1846), another missionary son who was born in the Hawaiian islands, educated in the United States, but who returned "home" in 1853 following his ordination.

These nine represent the first generation of American missionaries who devoted their "exertions, charities and prayers" to the salvation of native peoples. They focused the bulk of their attention on religious instruction and literacy. Tinker, for example, edited a Hawaiian language mission newspaper, *Ke Kumu Hawai'i* ("The Hawaiian Teacher"), that published translations of bible texts, along with letters from church members and short pieces on the world beyond the islands. Benjamin Parker and his young wife opened a mission on rural Oahu Island. There, their granddaughter later recalled, "they found a loyal body of simple, industrious and exceedingly lovable people to whom they brought the message of Jesus Christ."¹⁶

Asher Bliss and Daniel Hitchcock followed similar careers in North America. Bliss was "warmly welcomed" at the Cattaraugus reservation in western New York, when he and his wife arrived there in 1832.¹⁷ The pair ministered to a congregation of Christian Senecas and established a network of primary schools in the community. The ABCFM reported in 1839 that, under Bliss's leadership, the tribe had "gone forward cultivating their ground, erecting new buildings and manifesting more industry and enterprise generally than at any former period." The missionary leaders looked forward to a new spirit that would encourage the tribe to "commune together at the Lord's Table."¹⁸ Hitchcock began his service a decade later in Indian Territory where the Cherokees had been moved after being expelled from Georgia. He took up his post immediately after graduation, married the daughter of Samuel Worcester (a renowned ABCFM missionary to the tribe), and continued on until his death in 1867.¹⁹

While the North American missions attracted a number of early graduates, they found the tribes at the center of their efforts were soon embroiled in conflicts with the United

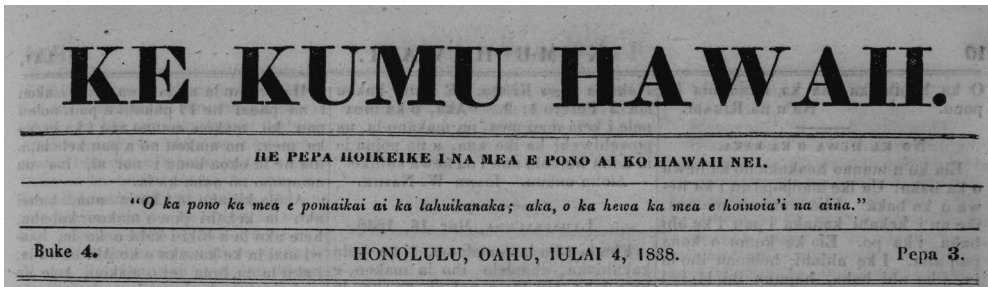


Figure 2. *Ke Kumu Hawai'i* (“The Hawaiian Teacher,” a newspaper edited by Amherst graduate Reuben Tinker (1827). The masthead reads: “A messenger of justice and good life in Hawai’i,” and below that: “The justice and good fortune enjoyed by the nation, along with the sins and wickedness in the land.” Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

States. Both the Senecas in western New York and the Cherokees in Georgia were targets of the “removal” policy advocated by Andrew Jackson. Jackson declared (falsely) that settlers and Indian tribes were incapable of living together peacefully and that native peoples must therefore relocate west of the Mississippi. Tribes like the Cherokees and Senecas had lived alongside Europeans for more than a century, but the expansion of cotton agriculture in the South and commercial expansion that accompanied canal building in New York made removal popular among voters. Jackson’s program was fiercely opposed by ABCFM missionaries, who argued that these enterprising nations deserved to have their treaties honored and to be treated according to the law of nations. The secretary of the ABCFM, Jeremiah Evarts, was removal’s most outspoken opponent. He argued that removing these increasingly Christian tribes from their homes would be a national sin.²⁰ As a petition submitted by church leaders to the Massachusetts legislature in 1830 argued, removal “would probably bring upon us the reproaches of mankind and would certainly expose us to the judgements of Heaven.”²¹

But Jackson prevailed. By 1840, the bulk of the native population in states east of the Mississippi had been forced west, delivering the affected tribes both physical suffering and a stunning blow to their national identity.²² The ABCFM reported in 1840 that removal had thrown the New York tribes “into great distress and despondency. . . . The whole transaction,” the report added, “is characterized by falsehood, dishonesty and oppression.”²³ This defeat also shook the confidence of missionaries. As the board reported the following year, “The circumstances of the Indians . . . for ten years past . . . [has] created in the Christian community extensively and especially among candidates for missionary employment, an unhappy despondency respecting Indian missions and an aversion to engaging in them . . . The prospects for a change in the political atmosphere were poor,” the report added, deepening the “impression . . . that the Indians are doomed to speedy extinction.”²⁴

In the aftermath of the disastrous removal era, the ABCFM urged missionary training grounds like Amherst to make “special efforts” to “awaken the missionary spirit in young men pursuing a course of liberal education.”²⁵ But the college’s gospel evangelists now set their sights elsewhere. Only Daniel Dwight entered the North American mission field after

1840—and he returned to the Cherokee community that had been his boyhood home—and those who had earlier chosen Native American missions gradually moved away. Hiram Smith, Nathaniel Fisher, and Matthew Scovell appear to have ended their Indian ministries by midcentury, while Asher Bliss, laboring amidst a shrinking community of Senecas at Cattaraugus, was reassigned in 1851 “to the duties of ministry among the whites.”²⁶

The Hawaiian missions followed a similar path. At first, Reuben Tinker, Benjamin Parker, and the other ABCFM clerics had great success with individual conversion and efforts to extend literacy to the Hawaiian nation. At the same time, the missionaries remained loyal to the local monarchs who were often pressured by visiting ship captains to surrender their chiefly authority or ally themselves with foreign powers (particularly Great Britain and France).

The most prominent missionary ally of the Hawaiian government was William Richards, a Williams College graduate who arrived in the islands in 1823. Soon fluent in Hawaiian, Richards served as an effective counselor to island rulers until 1838 when he resigned from the mission and became a full-time political advisor to King Kamehameha III. In that post, he participated in the drafting of the kingdom’s first written constitution. In 1842, he and Native Hawaiian Timothy Haálillio were named special envoys to the United States.²⁷ By 1850, the ABCFM leadership in Boston concluded that the Hawaiian mission’s success justified its closure. This young Christian nation could proceed alone. The formal closing of the Hawaiian mission came in 1863, when the Boston headquarters ended its financial support of pastors in the islands and supervised a reorganization of the Hawaiian churches that placed native ministers in charge of local congregations. “We see,” the ABCFM declared, “a Protestant Christian nation in the year 1863, in place of a nation of barbarous pagans only forty years before—self-governing in all its departments, and nearly self-supporting. . . . We regard this Christian community . . . as demonstrating the triumphant success of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”²⁸

While it appeared that the Hawaiian nation had been successfully “raised up,” the resident American missionary community shifted its focus from nationhood to the quality of the islands’ “civilization,” expressing growing skepticism regarding the abilities of the islands’ native peoples. This negative view grew more prominent after 1850, following the annexation of California to the United States. Honolulu suddenly came within the commercial orbit of San Francisco and its booming community of merchants and as a consequence, the American population of the islands rose sharply. These new residents began calling for closer commercial and military ties to the United States. Sereno Bishop (1846) was among the most outspoken advocates of that position. While he had been born in the islands and had ministered there for decades, shifting circumstances altered his loyalties. After serving several native congregations in the 1850s and 1860s, he moved to Honolulu, became involved in real estate development, and edited the Hawaiian Evangelical Association’s newsletter *The Friend*. From this position, he wrote critically of the monarchs who struggled to defend Hawaiian sovereignty, claiming that local Christianity was not “self-sustaining.” Native leaders, he wrote, were “actively sapping and breaking down the feeble honesty and imperfect probity of the native people.” He argued that corrupt local monarchs were incapable of leading a civilized nation. They were sure to produce “[a] gen-

eral lapse away from civilized and constitutional government back toward the license and despotism of the heathen past.”²⁹

NATIVES AND THE AMERICAN NATION

At its founding in 1821, Amherst was an obscure frontier institution, struggling to bring Christian learning to the world. Thirty years later, the territory of the United States extended to the Pacific, and the nation referred to itself as an “empire,” whose Manifest Destiny appeared obvious: to settle the North American continent and “civilize” the lands beyond. This transformation of American national identity had a profound impact on the public’s view of the indigenous peoples living under its expanding sphere of influence. Once viewed as distant, “pagan” nations, North American native communities had become internal residents of the United States who were either doomed to extinction or, at best, destined for years of “tutelage” before they could join the modern nation. As America’s influence in Hawai‘i grew, native people there came to be viewed in a similar way.

At midcentury, the Amherst College campus was also affected by the bursting size and power of the United States. Enrollment grew, the college began attracting students from beyond rural New England, and the intense religious atmosphere of the missionary era faded from prominence. Campus-wide evening prayers were abandoned and revivals became “less frequent and less powerful.”³⁰ Secular fraternities became a fixture of social life, athletic competition began, and, despite the persistence of a classical curriculum, a growing proportion of Amherst graduates chose careers outside the ministry. At the celebrations surrounding the college’s fiftieth anniversary in 1871, for example, a survey revealed that while nearly 50 percent of all living alumni were ministers, only 25 percent of the graduating class planned to follow that precedent.³¹ Amherst presidents and most board members continued to be clergymen, but new ideas appeared. Instruction in the sciences and mathematics expanded with the construction of Walker Hall in 1868, and among the faculty, there was general acceptance of evolution and new secular approaches to philosophy. Student perceptions of politics and economics were no longer dependent on the diplomatic vision of Vattel’s *Law of Nations*; during the 1830s, that text was replaced in the senior curriculum by Jean Baptiste Say’s *Political Economy*, a celebration of free-market manufacturing and global trade.³²

As the college’s graduates and faculty became more reflective of the expanding American nation-state, attitudes toward native peoples also shifted. Students appeared sympathetic to the conditions of indigenous people, but they also adopted the popular idea that Native Americans were doomed to extinction. In 1857, for example, students presented a program to celebrate “Ye Birthday of Pocahontas.” It consisted of a number of humorous pieces celebrating “ye wild Indians” and “ye days when ye salvages lived in ye land.” It concluded with songs celebrating the students’ devotion to local hard cider and expressing their disdain for the college’s prohibition rules. (Amherst had banned alcohol at its founding; the first college in the United States to do so.) They sang of Pocahontas’s father: “Powhatan never interfered, nor cooling drinks denied her, Then why should Profs make such a fuss

And growl 'cause we drink cider?"³³ No longer "pagans" eager for the gospel, the Natives in this performance were simply backward drunkards. An article in the student-run *Amherst Magazine*, five years later, underscored that view. In a short story set in frontier Wisconsin, the unnamed authors described how a group of Winnebago Native Americans performed their dances for local settlers in exchange for liquor. At the end of the day, "the tired spectators repose comfortably in their homes," they wrote, "but the poor red man wraps his blanket about his weary and intoxicated body . . . utters a little drunken gibberish, gives a wild howl . . . and is lost in his sleep of inebriety."³⁴

The shift in the college's view of Native Americans can be seen in the career of Francis Amasa Walker of the class of 1860. Walker served in the Civil War before going on to a distinguished career as a government statistician, economist, and, later, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In his early years in Washington, DC, however, Walker's reputation as an efficient administrator won him an appointment as Commissioner of Indian affairs. Walker was inexperienced, but not shy about announcing his view of the Natives' predicament. He argued that it was impractical to view Native American tribes as nations or to take their treaties seriously. Native people required substantial rehabilitation before they could participate in American society. Without government assistance, he wrote in 1872, Native Americans would soon be swallowed up by the progress of the nation: "The westward course of population is neither to be denied or delayed for the sake of the Indians . . . the Indians must yield or perish." The government's duty was simple: "To snatch the remnants of the Indian race from destruction." With an eye to the dwindling group of religious leaders who defended treaty-making, he declared that the Natives' friends should "exert themselves in this juncture and lose no time."³⁵

Francis Walker was likely aware that one of the best known "friends" of the Native Americans of his day had spent her childhood in the town of Amherst. Helen Hunt Jackson (1830–1885), a poet and polemicist, was the daughter of Nathan Welby Fiske, the designer of the college seal and author of its motto "*Terras Irradiant*." In the 1870s, she turned to "the Indian Question" in the hopes of encouraging sympathy for native communities too often dismissed as "savages." The ultimate product of her efforts was *A Century of Dishonor*, a powerful chronicle of the American government's mistreatment of the Native Americans. Published in 1881, Jackson's indictment was delivered in a blood-red binding to every member of Congress.

When it appeared on legislators' desks, Jackson's call for the humane treatment of Native Americans featured an introduction by Amherst president Julius Seelye, a former professor of philosophy at the college and the first alumnus to become campus chief executive. Seelye had also served a term in Congress as a Republican representative from western Massachusetts and had sat on the Indian Affairs Committee where he had observed, firsthand, both the bloody consequences of frontier conflict (Custer's defeat at the Little Big Horn occurred during his term) and the legendary corruption in the Interior Department's Office of Indian Affairs. Seelye's prominence made him a logical choice to promote Jackson's book.

In his introduction, Seelye argued that conversion to Christianity was only the starting point of native uplift. Whether the "pagan" in question was one of the "cannibals of the

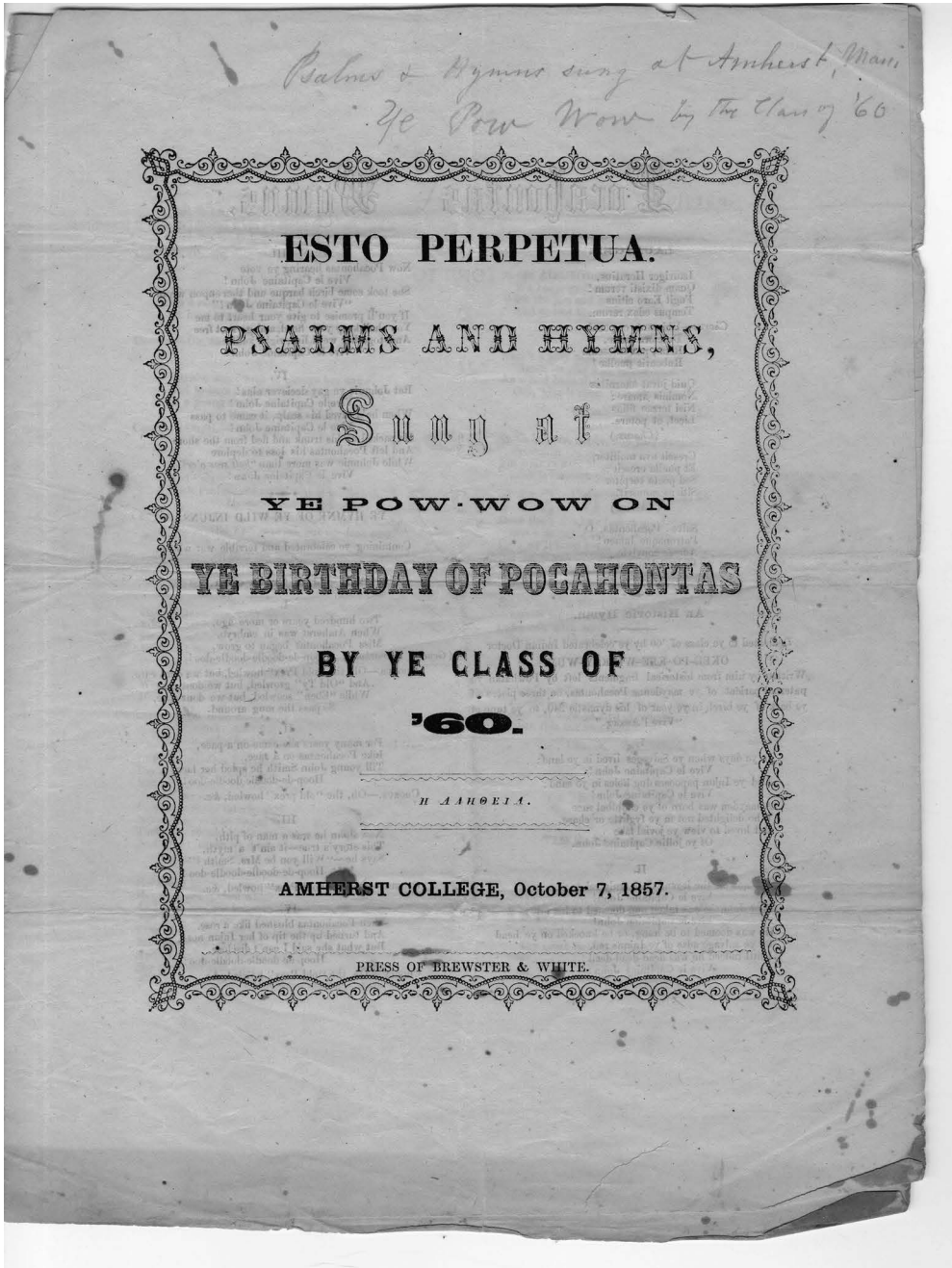


Figure 3. Sheet music for the student celebration, "Ye Pow Wow on Ye Birthday of Pocahontas By Ye Class of '60." Courtesy of Amherst College Archives.

South Seas" or "the wildest and most savage of the North American Indians," Seelye wrote, he required "a spiritual gift" that "quickens his desires and calls forth his toil." But a spiritual gift was not enough. "Christianized though he might be, [the Native American] would need, for a longer or shorter time, guardianship like a child."³⁶ In Seelye's view, the guarantees enshrined in Indian treaties were based on the "false view . . . that an Indian tribe, roaming in the wilderness . . . is a nation. . . Indian tribes are not a nation," he observed, and humanitarians like himself and Ms. Hunt should oversee their progress. "It becomes us wisely and honestly to inquire," he added, "whether in order to give the Indian his real rights, it may not be necessary to set aside prerogatives to which he might technically and legally lay claim."³⁷

The careers of the Amherst graduates and college officials who became involved in Native American affairs in the remaining decades of the nineteenth century reflected Walker's and Seelye's paternalism. Samuel Augustus Stoddard (1862) served as a missionary in Native American territory from 1874 to 1883. He, like his predecessors in the removal era, left his native congregation when conflicts arose between local tribes and the white "sooners" who called for an end to tribal protections. George Waldo Reed (1882) served a mission congregation at Little Eagle, South Dakota, on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation from 1887 to 1927. Like Stoddard, Reed pursued the goal of converting native people to Christianity while deferring to the expansion of US controls. Reed argued that the purpose of his plains mission was "to stand firmly against heathen practices and to teach . . . people wisdom and righteousness." He devoted himself to training indigenous preachers as well as to traditional pastoral duties.³⁸ But he also endorsed the government's effort to bring "discipline" to the reservations.

The final—and perhaps best known—Amherst "humanitarian" in Native American affairs in the nineteenth century was Merrill Gates, who succeeded Julius Seelye as college president in 1890. Gates had been named to lead Rutgers University at the age of thirty-four. He was neither an alumnus nor a minister, but he shared his predecessor's commitment to paternalism in Native American affairs.³⁹ Gates supported the expansion of government boarding schools—institutions based on the assumption that separating children and their parents was an essential aspect of education—and the forced division of reservations into individual homesteads (a project spearheaded by President Seelye's congressional colleague, representative—later senator—Henry Dawes from nearby Pittsfield, Massachusetts).

Amherst's engagement with Native Hawaiians during the last decades of the nineteenth century followed the paternalistic trajectory of Walker, Seelye, and Gates. During the late nineteenth century, the kingdom of Hawai'i was in a state of almost perpetual crisis. An 1875 free-trade agreement with the United States removed all tariffs on Hawaiian sugar and brought unprecedented prosperity to the realm. But this new wealth fell almost entirely into the hands of the foreigners who owned the major sugar plantations in the kingdom and quickly deepened Hawai'i's entanglement with the United States. (Agreements with the United States during this period also granted it exclusive rights to Pearl Harbor.) Powerful businessmen like California's Claus Spreckels were able to use their

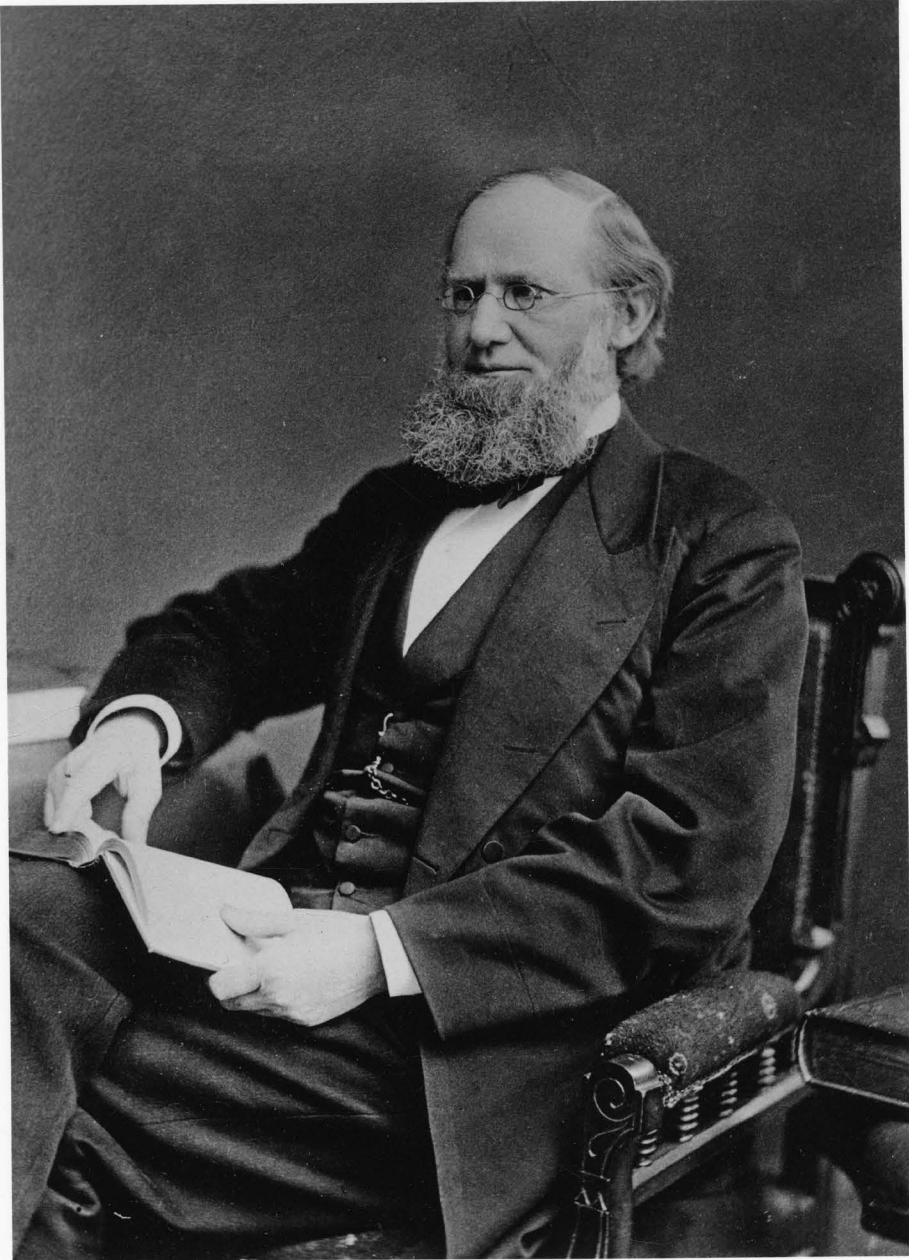


Figure 4. Julius Seelye (1824-1895), professor of philosophy and member of congress (1875-77), who served as Amherst's President from 1876 to 1890. Seelye wrote the introduction to Helen Hunt Jackson's polemic attack on the U.S. government's treatment of Indians, *A Century of Dishonor* (1881). Courtesy of Amherst College Archives.

sugar profits to expand their land holdings in the kingdom and erode the power of the local monarchs.

Sereno Bishop argued that Hawaiians were doomed to extinction unless they could bring American immigrants into the Kingdom. Their “only hope,” Bishop wrote, “physically, socially and politically, is in renouncing the corroding vices of heathen life” and accepting in turn the fact that “Anglicized civilization . . . is inevitably to prevail. Their only good prospect,” he continued, “is heartily to fall in line with it.”⁴⁰

While provocative and popular among local whites, *The Friend's* opinions were inconsequential for Hawaiians until January 1893, when Queen Liliuokalani was forced to abdicate her throne by a group of white businessmen aided by US troops. When President Cleveland rejected the insurgents' request for immediate annexation, the rebels declared Hawai'i a Republic and dispatched lobbyists to Washington, DC, to plead their case. Bishop and his colleagues enthusiastically endorsed these actions. *The Friend's* editor declared that Liliuokalani's “caprice and arrogance” had called forth “the wrath and power of the . . . long suffering whites.”⁴¹ Bishop was quick to cast the conflict as a struggle between civilization and barbarism. “Hawai'i is the final outpost of occidental civilization in the western hemisphere,” he later wrote. “It immediately confronts the inferior but tenacious civilization of the Orient. Here the two forms meet and grapple.”⁴²

The annexation issue remained unresolved until 1898, when the outbreak of the Spanish-American War—and the acquisition of the Philippines—pushed Congress to make the island nation a US territory. Bishop was overjoyed—and unconcerned—that annexation would take place over the objections of the native community and without a democratic plebiscite. For him, the conflict with Spain was “the harbinger of the coming Kingdom of God.”⁴³ And his friends back at Amherst seemed to agree; the college awarded him an honorary degree in 1896, a time when Queen Liliuokalani was actively campaigning for the restoration of her throne. Support for annexation was also strong among Bishop's Amherst colleagues who had emigrated to Hawai'i. These included Frank Alvan Hosmer (class of 1875) who, in 1890, left Great Barrington High School to assume the presidency of Oahu College (now Punahou School), an institution created in 1841 by Hawaiian missionaries for the education of their children.⁴⁴ Hosmer shared Bishop's disdain for the Hawaiian monarchy and his enthusiasm for annexation. Other Amherst graduates with similar views included Oliver Taylor Shipman (class of 1879), who became a rancher on the island of Hawai'i, and Arthur Burdette Ingalls (class of 1890), who taught briefly at Punahou before becoming a Honolulu customs officer following the imposition of American rule.

NATIVE PEOPLE AND AMHERST'S SECOND CENTURY

By the turn of the twentieth century, Amherst had aligned itself firmly with America's national institutions and global aspirations. College leaders had replaced the founding dream of bringing “pagan” nations to the gospel with a vision of Amherst graduates occupying the front ranks of the nation's professions and business enterprises. In their view, the native peoples under American rule, whether in North America or Hawai'i, were not citi-



Figure 5. Queen Liliuokalani (1838-1917). Liliuokalani was overthrown by American settlers and U.S. troops in January, 1893. This image from the frontispiece of *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen*, a plea for the restoration of her throne, published in 1898. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

zens of nations ready to be “raised” to civilization, but backward folk in need of discipline and uplift.

But despite the fervent convictions of Francis Walker, Julius Seelye, and Sereno Bishop, progress and civilization are not static concepts. History continues. Definitions of progress evolve, as do ideas surrounding the meaning of conversion and civilization. And native peoples persist. Despite the United States’ conquest of North America and Hawai‘i, the indigenous peoples of those places sustained their communities and rejected the marginal roles assigned to them. Amherst’s engagement with the native world during its second century illustrates these facts.

On September 28, 1913, the Dakota physician Dr. Charles A. Eastman came to Williston Hall to speak to the Amherst College Christian Association on the topic “Some Experiences Among the Indians of the Northwest.” The most famous Native American of his day, Eastman had been born into a Minnesota Dakota band in 1858. His family converted to Christianity when he was a child and enrolled him in mission schools at an early age. A star student, he ultimately found his way to Dartmouth College (class of 1887) and Boston University Medical School, where he received his medical degree in 1890. Eastman began his career as a physician (he attended the victims of the Wounded Knee massacre in 1890), but he soon shifted to lecturing on Native American affairs.⁴⁵

In 1903, Eastman, his wife Elaine Goodale, and their six children moved into a house on Belchertown Road in Amherst. “During his residence in Amherst,” the *Boston Globe* reported, the Dakota physician “entered into the social and educational life of the town and his children have taken high rank in the school. His wife,” the article noted, was “president of the Amherst Indian Association, composed of leading women of the different churches.”⁴⁶ During his nearly two decades in Massachusetts, Eastman published memoirs and commentaries on native life and traveled widely as a speaker and advisor to organizations such as the YMCA, the Boy Scouts, and the US Office of Indian Affairs. Handsome, articulate, and deeply engaged with the task of defining Native Americans’ place in modern American life, Eastman embraced the “civilization” promoted by Julius Seelye and Sereno Bishop, but he rejected the idea that Indian people lacked a rich cultural tradition. In a speech to the Harvard Union in 1906, for example, he declared, “The Indian is a true philosopher, and as such has never been surpassed by any representative from civilization.”⁴⁷ His family’s presence in the town of Amherst and his public career were tangible reminders of dispossession’s legacy. And they demonstrated that native people were not backward, and had not disappeared.⁴⁸

Eastman’s appearance in Williston Hall may well have marked the beginning of a shift in Amherst College’s view of the native world. The Dakota physician conceded that he had learned a great deal from “civilization,” but he insisted in his lectures that Native American culture was “imbued with the spirit of worship.” Jesus’s humble and virtuous life, he often noted, suggested to many native people that the Christian savior must have been a Native American.⁴⁹ Claims like these occurred randomly and unpredictably in Amherst classrooms during the early years of the twentieth century, but they multiplied in number and intensity over the decades, as others questioned the fixed assumptions underpinning the public’s faith in “Americanization.”

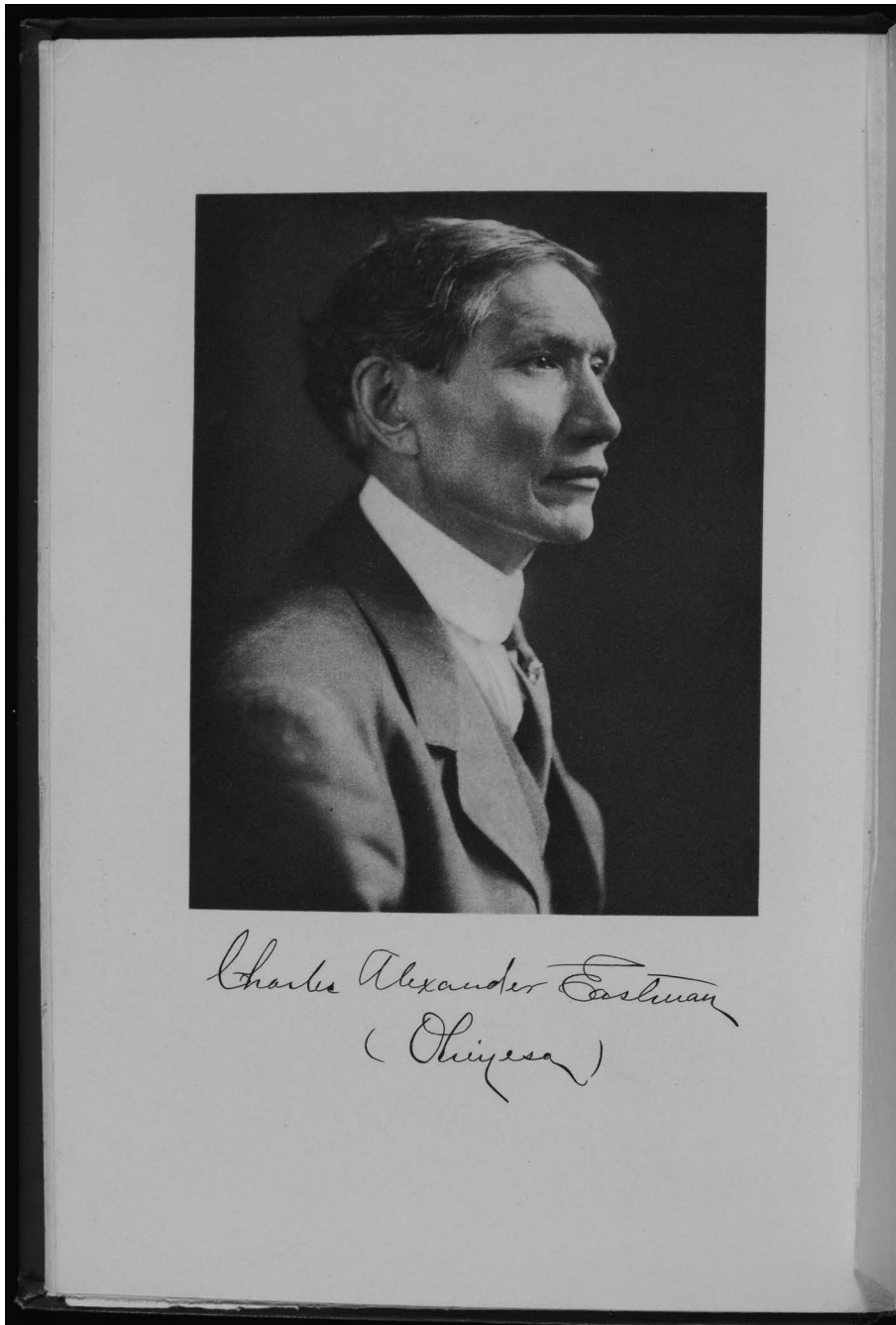


Figure 6. Charles A. Eastman, the Dakota physician who lived with his family in Amherst in the early twentieth century and lectured on the college campus in 1913. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

One thread of this process of reexamination can be traced through the career of the Amherst student who likely invited Dr. Eastman to campus: the president of the Christian Association Theodore A. Greene. The son of an Amherst-educated pastor (Frederick William Greene, 1882), Greene was an idealistic Christian activist. Soon after graduation, Theodore A. joined the staff of the Broadway Tabernacle, a Manhattan church founded by abolitionist Lewis Tappan that had long advocated progressive causes such as bringing women into the clergy, promoting world peace, and ending racial segregation. Greene went on to lead the First Church of Christ in New Britain, Connecticut, where he supported progressive causes and became active in the new ecumenical organizations such as the Federal Council of Churches (forerunner of the National Council of Churches) and the World Council of Churches. At the time of his death in 1951, he had just been appointed director of the Washington, DC, office of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.⁵⁰

Reverend Greene's career ran parallel to the course of liberal Protestantism in the twentieth century. When he was its leader, the Amherst Christian Association encouraged students to work in schools and settlement houses to address the needs of immigrants and the poor. Over the ensuing decades, social justice issues drew the college's students and faculty away from orthodox religion. In the process, liberal Protestant leaders like Greene and others of his generation began to argue (as Charles Eastman had in his lectures and essays) that mission work either in the United States or overseas should focus on alleviating poverty and illiteracy rather than focusing solely on the gospel. Greene attended the World Council of Churches' founding congress in Amsterdam in 1948, and was also an early leader of Church World Service, an ecumenical organization dedicated to promoting economic self-help across the globe.⁵¹

Amherst's curriculum in the twentieth century also came to reflect this liberal Protestant approach to social progress. College catalogues indicate that courses of study gradually shifted from the fixed, classical curriculum of the late nineteenth century and toward disciplinary-focused programs that explored issues of economic injustice, international trade and politics, and racial and cultural differences, both inside and beyond the United States. As the number of academic departments grew, they began offering new majors in the social sciences—economics, political science, psychology—and encouraging explorations of literature and history that addressed the American past. In 1930, for example, a course in international relations covered the workings of the League of Nations, the World Court, and the Pan-American Union. Anthropology courses on human origins and the evolution of culture appeared in 1939, and in 1950, the history department offered its first course on westward expansion, one that proposed to trace the "influence of the frontier" and the "growth of American nationalism." Cultural anthropology was added in 1960, promising students an opportunity to develop projects on "the dynamics of culture change in modern times." These areas of study offered windows onto indigenous experiences and opportunities for reflection on the nature of the native world.

None of the curricular shifts in the twentieth century would have occurred without a corresponding shift in the community of students and teachers who shaped and experienced them. Over the first half of the twentieth century, the college became less identified with its sectarian Christian roots. Amendments to the college charter removed the require-

ment that clergymen sit on the board of trustees. Chapel services became less frequent, and then shifted to nondenominational topics before becoming nonreligious “assemblies” and then being dropped altogether. Changes in the size and composition of the faculty and student body occurred slowly before World War II, but in the prosperous decades following the conflict, growth and increased diversity came quickly. Enrollment grew from less than eight hundred in the 1920s to nearly two thousand by century’s end. Most of these students came to Amherst from beyond New England, and a steady (and expanding) stream of them came from African American, Jewish, and Catholic families. After 1975, half of Amherst’s students were female, and over the ensuing forty years, the college was led by Catholic, Jewish, and female presidents.⁵²

As Amherst grew more cosmopolitan and its curriculum opened doors to student learning about contemporary events and a variety of cultural traditions, a place opened on campus for native people. That opening took place first in the classroom, as student interest and faculty curiosity introduced the native world to the college curriculum. During the 1960s, humanities and social science offerings addressed American racial minorities and issues of social justice, but it would take several years for courses on Native American subjects to be taught. Barry O’Connell, a member of the English faculty, first introduced native authors into his survey of American literature, and then in the early 1980s, he began offering courses focusing exclusively on indigenous topics. During that same decade, O’Connell and colleagues from Smith and the University of Massachusetts joined forces to organize a committee that, by the 2000s, had become the Five College Native American and Indigenous Studies Program.⁵³ The expanding presence of indigenous topics in the college curriculum also inspired the Robert Frost Library to acquire a major collection of books by Native American authors and to promote research in its archives.⁵⁴

At the same time, Amherst sought to recruit members of previously under—or un—represented groups to Amherst. Two Native American scholars were appointed to the faculty in 2012, and the admissions office worked to bring Native Americans and Native Hawaiians to the student body. The presence of senior indigenous faculty members insured that native topics would continue to be present in the curriculum and that underrepresented students would continue to find themselves reflected in the life of the college. The numbers of native students remained relatively small, and their experiences were sometimes difficult, but the effort to make the college a welcome place for people from diverse backgrounds would continue.

AMHERST AND THE NATIVE WORLD

The story of the college’s engagement with the native world reminds us that for Americans, indigenous history and United States history are deeply interwoven; neither thread can be fully understood without reference to the other. As an institution whose history extends back to the era of the nation’s founding, Amherst College has been part of this interweaving process. The college’s students, faculty, and administrators have encountered Native Americans and Native Hawaiians—both real and imagined—since the day of its found-



Figure 7. Amherst College Rare Book School, 2018. Drawing on the Amherst College Library’s extraordinary Kim-Wait/Eisenberg Native American Literature Collection, a dozen scholars from institutions across the United States explored a variety of research and scholarly topics in a program led by Michael Kelly, head of Archives and Special Collections, and Professor Kiara Vigil of the Department of American Studies. Courtesy of Amherst College.

ing. And, as they sought to bring “enlightenment” to the lands, they discovered the reality of the native world, grasping eventually both its complexity and its potential.

NOTES

1. W.S. Tyler, *History of Amherst College During the First Half Century, 1821–1871* (Springfield, MA: Clark W. Bryan, 1873), 18. I am grateful to Michael Kelly, head of Archives and Special Collections at Amherst’s Robert Frost Library, for his many suggestions and frequent help. I have also benefited from the editorial suggestions provided by fellow authors in this volume, especially Richard Teichgraber III.

2. Claude Moore Fuess, *Amherst: The Story of a New England College* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1935), 12. The specter of past conflict was also reinforced by living local memories. In particular, Tyler refers to the college “officers” involvement with the dedication in 1835 of a monument to Englishmen killed near South Deerfield in King Philip’s War (p. 19). In addition, the Abenaki family of Deerfield captive Eunice Williams visited the area—perhaps regularly. The latest report indicates a visit in the spring of 1838, which involved a meeting with “ten or twelve” Amherst students. See Elizabeth Huntington to Edward Huntington, May 20, 1838, Porter-Phelps-Huntington Papers, Porter-Phelps-Huntington House Museum, Hadley, Massachusetts. I am grateful to Lisa Brooks for sharing this document, which was transcribed and annotated by Amherst student Christine Miranda.

3. Ibid., Fuess, *Amherst*, 19. For more on the memory of Native American warfare in New England, see Christine DeLucia, *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), especially chpt. 5.

4. For an account of the American Protestants' global ambitions at this time, see Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

5. For more on the idea of "making room" for native history in the American past, see Philip J. Deloria, K. Tsianina Lomawaima, Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, Mark N. Trahan, Loren Ghiglione, et al., "Unfolding Futures: Indigenous Ways of Knowing for the Twenty-First Century," *Daedalus* 147, no. 2 (Spring 2018): 14.

6. See W. S. Tyler, *History*, 77–79. Vattel was Swiss. The first English edition of *Laws* appeared in 1760, but interestingly, an American edition was published in Northampton in 1820.

7. Emer de Vattel, *The Law of Nations* (Northampton, MA: S. Butler, 1820), 3.

8. Vattel, *Law of Nations*, 12. Vattel explained: "To establish on a solid foundation the obligations and laws of nations, is the design of this work. The *law of nations is the science of the law subsisting between nations and states, and of the obligations that flow from it*" (emphasis in original), 46.

9. Vattel, 13.

10. Vattel, 99.

11. Vattel, 218.

12. See Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, especially 19–29. Native American communities were never uniform in their outlook. There were dissenting groups within the Cherokees, Senecas, and others who opposed the missionaries' message.

13. *Annals of Amherst College: The Soil, The Seed, The Sowers* (Northampton, MA: Trumbull and Gere, 1860), 3.

14. Reuben Tinker, *Ought I To Become a Missionary?* (Dedham, MA: L. Powers, 1831), 1.

15. Rev. Samuel Cheney Damon (class of 1836) also served in Hawai'i from 1842 until his death in 1885 but was not an ABCFM missionary. As pastor of the Seaman's Chapel in Honolulu, Damon devoted himself to temperance causes and preaching to a largely white congregation.

16. Caroline Parker Green, "Benjamin Wyman and Mary Elizabeth Parker," *The Friend* (May 1933), 106.

17. *Memoirs of American Missionaries Formerly Connected with the Society of Inquiry Respecting Missions in the Andover Theological Seminary* (Boston, MA: Pierce and Parker, 1833), 189.

18. *Annual Report of the ABCFM* (Boston, MA: Crocker and Brewster, 1839), 153; and *Memoirs of American Missionaries*, 187.

19. "Daniel D. Hitchcock" file, Amherst College Archives, Amherst College, Amherst, MA.

20. For a description of Evarts and his campaign against removal, see Francis P. Prucha, *The Great Father* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 200–8.

21. *Boston Christian Register* 9, no. 5 (January 30, 1830).

22. For a recent overview of the removal process in both the North and the South, see Jeffrey Ostler, *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), chpts. eight and nine.

23. ABCFM, *Annual Report*, 1840, 188.

24. ABCFM, *Annual Report*, 1841 (Boston, MA: Crocker and Brewster), 48.

25. ABCFM, *Annual Report*, 1843 (Boston, MA: Crocker and Brewster), 56. The pleas for more North American missionaries continued. Among the most poignant came in 1849 when the ABCFM leadership noted that "the melancholy fact that [the Native Americans] are melting away . . . urges us to

evangelize the wasted and wasting tribes as quickly as possible. We owe them a great debt; and if, in the inscrutable providence of God, they must perish from off the earth, those who have entered into their inheritance are surely bound to do everything in their power to prepare them for, and aid them on their way to that rich and glorious inheritance of the saints in light, from which they can never be expelled." See ABCFM, *Annual Report*, 1849 (Boston, MA: T. R. Marvin), 69.

26. ABCFM, *Annual Report*, 1851 (Boston, MA: T. R. Marvin), 163.

27. For a fuller treatment of Richards's career and the complexities of Hawaiian national politics in the early nineteenth century, see Noelani Arista, *The Kingdom and the Republic: Sovereign Hawai'i and the Early United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

28. Rufus Anderson, *The Hawaiian Islands: Progress and Condition Under Missionary Labors*, 3rd ed. (Boston, MA: Gould and Lincoln, 1865), 325–26, 328. The local churches became self-supporting, but the ABCFM supported the pensions of retired Hawaiian missionaries.

29. *The Friend* 47, no. 10 (1889), 79; and 45, no. 9 (1887), 71.

30. See Fuess, *Amherst*, 151–55.

31. W. S. Tyler wrote in his *History* that "if they only carry their Christian principles with them into the secular professions and the high places of influence in the state as well as the church, . . . it is a result which would gladden the hearts even of those good men who founded the institution in prayer and faith chiefly for the education of ministers" (645).

32. Jean Baptiste Say, *A Treatise on Political Economy* (Philadelphia, PA: John Gregg, 1830). Say shared Vattel's belief in the benevolent effects of increased trade, but he was not concerned with international law or the advancement of justice. "Wealth," he wrote, "is essentially independent of political organization" (ix).

33. Thanks to Michael Kelly for discovering "Esto Perpetua. Psalms and Hymns Sung at Ye Pow Wow on Ye Birthday of Pocahontas By Ye Class of 1860," Amherst College, October 7, 1857. For debates on campus, see "Hitchcock Society of Inquiry," March 14, 1890: "Has the treatment of the Indian by the U.S. been more inhuman than that of the Irishman by England?" "The Mountain Meadow Massacre," 1877.

34. "The War Dance," *Amherst Magazine*, May 1, 1862, 408.

35. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 1872, reprinted in F. P. Prucha, *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, 3rd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 139.

36. Julius Seelye, "Introduction," *Helen Hunt Jackson, A Century of Dishonor* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1881), 1, 2, 3.

37. Seelve, "Introduction," 4, 5. It is striking that Seelye's reasoning followed so closely the rationale for removal that had been put forward by Andrew Jackson and his supporters.

38. Rev. G. W. Reed, "Among the Indians: Missionary Work in Out-Stations," American Missionary Association, Congregational Rooms, Fourth Avenue and Twenty Second Street, New York, n.d., 6. Amherst College Special Collections, Amherst College, Amherst, MA. Amherst College Special Collections also contains a remarkable letter from Reed to his classmate W. H. Thompson, written in the immediate aftermath of the killing of Sitting Bull on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. Reed observed that the elimination of "the old rascal" had prevented a wider Native American war. See George W. Reed to W. H. Thompson, December 31, 1890.

39. Despite his meteoric rise, Gates had a troubled tenure at Amherst. He became embroiled in conflicts with both the faculty and student body and eventually lost the confidence of the board of trustees. He resigned in 1899, replaced by alumnus (and minister) George Harris of the class of 1866.

40. *The Friend* 45, no. 8 (1887), 63.

41. *The Friend* 51, no. 2 (1893), 9.

42. *The Friend* 55, no. 10 (1897), 76.

43. *The Friend* 56, no. 5 (1898), 33. The undemocratic aspects of the annexation are explored in James L. Haley, *Captive Paradise: A History of Hawai'i* (New York: St. Martin's, 2014), chpt. 19. See also Noenoe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

44. While the school was not officially restricted to whites (it admitted a small number of children of Hawaiian elites), its students were largely drawn from Protestant families and the children of the American business community.

45. See *Annual Report of the Amherst College Christian Association, 1913–1914*, 10. The previous year's report thanked "Dr. C. E. Eastman" for speaking at one of the association's Sunday evening meetings. The report added that its Sunday gatherings were "thrown into open discussion" after presentations by speakers (one of whom was President Meiklejohn). It also noted that based on the success of these lively meetings, the group would devote one Sunday per month in the coming year to "a forum on religious and ethical questions appertaining to college life." Presumably, Eastman's formal lecture in September 1913 came as a result from his earlier appearance before the group. See *Annual Report, 1912–1913*, 7.

46. "Dr. Eastman Returns," *Boston Globe*, October 25, 1910, p. 2.

47. "Talks of the Real Indian," *Boston Globe*, October 24, 1906.

48. See the *Hartford Courant*, February 15, 1908, "Training of the Young Indians," p. 2.

49. See Charles Eastman, "Civilization as Preached and Practiced," quoted in Frederick E. Hoxie, *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era* (New York: Bedford/St Martin's, 2001), 76.

50. "Rev. Dr. T. Greene Is Dead in Capital," *New York Times*, June 10, 1951.

51. The shift in Protestant thinking during the decades encompassed by Theodore A. Greene's career is cogently summarized in David A. Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017). Hollinger's survey traces the powerful role of missionaries and missionary children in the twentieth century's reexamination of America's role in the world. These Protestant church men and women were among the leading critics of US policy in Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, often putting them at odds with political interests, military officials, and more conservative evangelical Christians. While Theodore A. Greene traveled below Professor Hollinger's radar, he was sympathetic to the cosmopolitan trend the historian describes. At the time of his death, Greene was involved in a number of ecumenical Protestant organizations, among them the ABCFM, the organization that had dispatched missionaries to Native American communities and to Hawai'i in the first decades of the nineteenth century, which was increasingly engaged with social justice and economic reform as well as evangelism.

52. One of the faculty members who enthusiastically supported the growing diversity of the Amherst campus and student body in the second half of the twentieth century was Theodore P. Greene (class of 1943), the son of Charles Eastman's campus host, Theodore A. Greene.

53. In 1992, Professor O'Connell became the first Amherst faculty member to make a significant scholarly contribution to the field of Native studies when he published *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, A Pequot* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press). Presented as an edited collection of Apess's writing, the volume includes extensive annotations and an introduction that offers a comprehensive view of the author's life.

54. The Kim-Wait/Eisenberg Native American Literature Collection is housed in Amherst's Robert Frost Library and contains works produced from the eighteenth century to the present.