

Hannah Muhlfelder

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Report: Massachusetts Historical Society

I worked this summer with the education team of the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS). The MHS is a manuscript library, and the oldest organization in the US devoted to collecting materials for the study of American history. These unparalleled collections include many figures of American history, including Phyllis Wheatley, John Adams, William Lloyd Garrison, and Isabella Stewart Gardner, just to name a few. They also have many documents that were previously unfamiliar to me and gave me a chance to learn more about US history and the founding mythologies that have profoundly shaped our nation.

The education team works on a myriad of programs, including National History Day in Massachusetts, a contest that gets students and teachers involved in hands-on and meaningful research projects about American history. I worked mainly in their classroom and teacher resources, such as History Source, which gives teachers access to digital primary sources interpreted by a subject expert. These are written in a highly accessible manner, allowing teachers to weave new primary sources into existing MA state curriculum standards.

While at the MHS this summer, I primarily focused my efforts and research on the period of history commonly known as King Philip's War. However, this name is misleading, because "King Philip" was a nickname given to the sachem Metacom by English settlers in the Northeast. Native people of the Northeast, especially people belonging to the Wabanaki tribes, refer to what settlers call New England as the "Dawnland." For this reason, MHS staff is calling this source set "The War for the Dawnland."

As the MHS is developing this source set, they are working on reinterpreting the war through a different lens. The new partnerships MHS is growing led us to several meaningful events, including a symposium on the War for the Dawnland hosted by the Aquinnah Cultural Center in Martha's Vineyard and a mishoon building event hosted by the Nipmuc tribe on their traditional lands in western Massachusetts. Throughout these events, we learned that Native history of the War for the Dawnland is about unflinching acknowledgement of colonial violence while recognizing the strength, resilience, and adaptability of the communities who were involved. Many tribes like the Aquinnah Wampanoag and Nipmuc tribes have maintained their

community structures and traditions, and are strengthening their ties to their land and history through community initiatives.

I have learned and gained so much this summer, especially about collections and how to leverage them as a resource to the world beyond the archive. I have deepened my knowledge of U.S history, especially in the period of early encounters in the 17th century. I have benefited from watching the MHS try to reckon with its violently colonial history and forge meaningful partnerships with Indigenous organizations. I feel so grateful to the BUCH for giving me the opportunity to do this work, and to the MHS for giving me such a meaningful experience as an intern.