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Thomas M. Wickman, *Snowshoe Country: An Environmental and Cultural History of Winter in the Early American Northeast* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018) ISBN: 978-1108426794

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Introduction by Kara Murphy Schlichting, Queens College CUNY

In North America, winter is on the horizon. In my home of New York City, winter can be blustery and cold. This city is a fair weather metropolis, seasonally embracing outdoor life in warm weather only. The coming winter of 2020-21, with the ongoing need for social distancing and outdoor congregations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will likely force a reconsideration of the typical retreat indoors at the arrival of cold. From this vantage point of changing seasons and the need to rethink winter practices, **Thomas Wickman's *Snowshoe Country: An Environmental and Cultural History of Winter in the Early American Northeast*** is an reminder that the interiority of a New York winter is a construct of this community and era. Offering an intellectually rich vision of cold weather, *Snowshoe Country* explores how the Wabanaki to the north of Massachusetts Bay embraced winter as a season of mobility, independence, and power. This roundtable offers, in turn, a lively discussion that moves beyond the "vernal bias" of colonial history.

Impatient with colonial European complaints about winter hardships, Wickman centers his history around the Wabanaki view of cold weather as having its own opportunities. As **Jon T. Coleman** points out, with this perspective *Snowshoe Country* successfully situates the Wabanakis' hold over Dawnland in the Little Ice Age. Both English colonists' and Wabanakis' geographic and seasonal vulnerability rose and fell alongside the Northeast's seasonal cycles; Coleman asks Wickman to consider seasons beyond cold weather, to reflect on how colonization might connect the Wabanaki and Dawnland with other seasons, sovereigns, and geographies. **Andrew Lipman** highlights Wickman's argument that local environmental knowledge made winter a season of mobility and new prospects for the Wabanaki. Lipman reflects on Wickman's consideration of the adaptive technologies of snowshoes—technology that enabled the Wabanaki to embrace "the fullness of American nature in winter" (6). He commends *Snowshoe Country's* innovative environmental history framing of seasons as culturally constructed and politically loaded. What new questions, he inquires, can environmental historians ask if they model Wickman's attention to seasons and seasonality?

Rachel B. Herrmann considers Wickman's contributions to work on "kinetic empires" of Native Americans who exercised power through their mobility. She also points out the way Wickman, by focusing on what he characterizes as the First Anglo-Wabanaki War, brings attention to an era often overlooked in colonial U.S. history, and offers innovative analysis of the era of winter mobility and violence from the first to the fourth Anglo-Wabanaki Wars. **Molly A. Warsh** also reflects on the contributions of *Snowshoe Country* to scholarly conversations on political ecology and settler colonialism, in particular Wickman's contribution of seasonality to the history of settler violence and survivance. Both Herrmann and Warsh assess Wickman's engagement with settler colonialism, asking him to further theorize the concept for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and Dawnland. Warsh also underscores the importance of *Snowshoe Country's* restoration of an ecological

perspective to early colonial history with a new analysis of the Little Ice Age as an era of “creative realignment and resilience” that avoids a Eurocentric narrative that emphasizes hardship.

In reply to Warsh and Herrmann’s generative questions on settler colonialism, sovereignty and survivance, and the full roundtable’s consideration of seasonality in environmental history, **Thomas Wickman** offers us a valuable historiography of climate history, Native American and Indigenous Studies scholarship, and Vast Early America. Drawing connections between over eighty pieces of scholarship in his in-depth footnotes, Wickman expands his historiographic survey past the geography of his monograph with a literature review that considers hemispheric scholarship spanning south to the Caribbean and Mexico, to the northern Pacific Ocean, and from the Sierra Nevada to inland prairies. In addressing questions of political ecology, Wickman contends that paying attention to climatic fluctuations and social relations “can raise readers’ consciousness about unstable pasts and contested futures.” Bodies, places and weather are all imbricated in our climate-changing world. While climate history often focuses on macro-scaled events like the Little Ice Age or global trade and migrations, Wickman’s attention to a single season in a specific place reveals how climate essentially dictates seasonal environmental change, peoples’ daily lives, community knowledge, and technologies. By paying attention to how communities responded to seasonal weather, Wickman offers a window into the political and cultural construction of a winter weather-world, and asks readers to consider what it might look like to bring climate change into the spatial and temporal contexts of the present, as he has done for Dawnland and the Wabanaki in the past.

Before turning to the first set of comments, I would like to pause here and thank all the roundtable participants for taking part. In addition, I would like to remind readers that as an open-access forum, *H-Environment Roundtable Reviews* is available to scholars and non-scholars alike, around the world, free of charge. Please circulate.

Comments by Jon T. Coleman, University of Notre Dame

Thomas Wickman invites environmental historians to stick their heads where the sun shines least in *Snowshoe Country*. Fooled into a vernal bias by colonial sources written in and about the summer, historians of higher latitudes assumed that winter represented a universal down time. Shorter days and longer nights, they thought, drove people inside to huddle in clumps near hearths. Wickman makes it clear that colonial New England was never *hygge*.

Winter empowered the Wabanaki, an Algonquian-speaking nation who ruled Dawnland, a territory stretching from what would become northern Massachusetts to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. As average temperatures dropped during the Little Ice Age, the Wabanakis took advantage of colder conditions to expand and intensify their winter hunting of beaver, moose, caribou, and deer. Snowshoes gave them access to animal prey, and snowshoes offered them political advantage. Wabanakis used their winter mobility to raid English towns. The raids punished frontier settlements, slowed expansion, and made European invaders fear winter, tightening the Wabanakis' hold over Dawnland.

Wickman targets the vernal bias to reveal indigenous power. He hopes to counter the tendency of both environmental and colonial historians to erase Native people and sovereignty with grand, Eurocentric theories of climate change and global trade. When seen from winter in Dawnland, the outcome of the Little Ice Age, the Columbian Exchange, or the English conquest was always uncertain and never complete. The Wabanakis used winter knowledge and technology to combat settler colonialism over the entirety of New England's history. The struggle continues to this day. Through language, stories, and rituals tied to place and season, the Wabanakis deploy their ancestral attachment to winter hunting grounds to remember and to retain Dawnland.

The Wabanakis' mobility and environmental fitness contrasted with the English settlers who remained stuck in winter for most of the seventeenth century. English colonists began to stay in North America year-round in the 1620s. (Prior to this decade, traders from many European nations arrived in the summer and left. A handful of colonial ventures attempted to overwinter prior to the 1620s and failed.) At Plymouth, the invaders struggled to feed themselves and their domestic animals in the wintertime. They relied on Native hospitality and often rewarded help with violence. As seasons passed, English people and animals grew more numerous on the coast and in the Connecticut River Valley. They waged wars of expansion and damaged local indigenous winter resources. They, for example, let their pigs root in the region's oyster beds. By the 1690s, the English had flipped winter vulnerability in locations like Boston's Neck. They erected a fence across the span separating the peninsular city from the mainland and passed a series of laws to limit Native mobility and freedom of association. Indigenous people had been traveling to the Neck for centuries to harvest shellfish during the winter, but under colonial rule,

this move turned deadly. Several Native women froze to death after being labeled vagrants in their homeland.

The experience of the Algonquian-speaking nations nearer to the coast in southern New England and the Wabanaki underscores one of Wickman's main arguments: environmental advantage was elusive. Winter vulnerability rose and fell against a complex backdrop of human and natural factors. The wars with the Wabanakis exposed English captives to indigenous snowshoe technology, and, in the Third Anglo-Wabanaki War (1703-1713), the English strapped on their own "racquets" and patrolled the Wabanakis' winter hunting grounds to harass the families residing there and demonstrate their ability to move and to fight in the cold. Lower than average temperatures initially aided the indigenous people in southern New England too, until colonization shifted the balance of costs and opportunities. Nations like the Narragansetts, Wampanoags, and Pequots spread the costs of winter across habitats and food sources. They dispersed into smaller groups and harvested oysters and frostfish. They hunted and trapped deer, and they utilized caches of dried maize. When they first arrived, the English colonists were eager for the Indians to bear the costs of their winters as well. They stole, begged, and bargained for corn. The Natives' winter power thwarted bullying for food as a colonization strategy. While indigenous people moved and thrived in the colder months, the English clustered, starved, and hung on until an influx of fresh colonists arrived in 1630. Old settlers sold provisions to the new arrivals imported by the Massachusetts Bay Company and the economies in the coastal enclaves began to sustain themselves. Eventually, these colonists found a market for maize, pork, and timber in the sugar plantations in the Caribbean. By sending calories south, they cultivated a method and a reason for enduring harsh northern winters.

And then they covered their tracks. Settlers wrote Native people out of the history of New England, insisting that they disappeared after King Philip's War or the French and Indian War. Over time, winter lost its status as a verb. Long ago, dour Puritans may have starved and froze, but later generations of white New Englanders forgot the daily exertions that went into wintering. They certainly disregarded the Native knowledge, resources, and assistance that made wintering possible.

Wickman deserves praise for excavating a suppressed history by following the snowshoe tracks into seasons and landscapes inaccessible to shut-ins like William Bradford, John Winthrop, and Cotton Mather. These men produced a blizzard of fair-weather words that hid the true nature of power in the region. Wickman uncovers the regional movements, the subsistence practices, and the cultural legacies that created and maintain indigenous homelands in New England. Still, there are costs to this approach, and I am eager to hear how the author weighed them.

The action in the book takes place in a region Wickman defines as "the Northeast." The Wabanakis' Dawnland sits in this region, but the geographic scope of the study exceeds Dawnland. Wickman also chronicles the winter subsistence labors of Native people who resided below the "snowshoe line." I am convinced that these groups

belong in the story: they illustrate the contingency of political ecology and many of them took refuge in the Wabanakis' winter hunting grounds following King Philip's War. However, the inclusion of southern New England opens the door for considering the spaces and people that related to Dawnland as well as the indigenous power that emanated from there. How did colonization connect winter, the Wabanakis, and Dawnland with other seasons, sovereigns, and territories? How did these relationships influence the accumulation and the loss of power that defined indigenous space? I realize these questions steer Wickman away from his main purpose: restoring winter and Dawnland to the prominence it once held. Yet, self-determination in a colonial political ecology required connections with far-flung environments and resources. The Wabanakis, for instance, pressed the English for gunpowder during peace negotiations to improve the yield of their winter hunts. Wickman reports that they did not need European firepower to survive in winter. They claimed to be "starving" when supplies of gunpowder ran low because they saw a chance to import power, to take advantage of diplomatic gift exchanges that strengthened their claims to territory and sovereignty.

The English performed their own version of colonial power transference. Their hold on New England spaces grew tighter the more commodities they exported to the sugar islands in the Caribbean. Their ability to withstand winters in higher latitudes depended on trade, moving New England corn, grass, oysters, and acorns south in the form of meal and muscle. They shipped calories stored in summer for winter to recoup commodities generated on plantations that never knew a frost. Colonial spaces exploited plants, animals, and people who met the sun from many angles at the same time. By spotlighting winter and Dawnland, Wickman exposes environmental history's tendency to pass over the local and the seasonal for grand theories that assumed the decline of indigenous power. The next step may be to concoct a geographic framework and a historical narrative that respects contingent ecological power in place as well as ecological power based in movement and simultaneity.

Comments by Rachel B. Herrmann, Cardiff University

When historians (including this author) write about winter in colonial American history, they have tended to depict colonists barricaded inside the wooden fort at Jamestown, or living in rough New England dwellings, within sight of the ships that brought families to North America at the close of the wrong season. We think, in other words, of stationary people sheltering in place for several months of the year. Thomas Wickman challenges this notion with *Snowshoe Country*, which at its heart is a history of movement that fits neatly into but also expands upon current work on kinetic empires. This recent wave of scholarship has shown that on plains, grasslands, and—more recently—on coasts, oceans, river valleys, and swamps—Native Americans intentionally moved to exercise power by practicing diplomacy, committing violence, and occasionally offering submission to non-Native polities.¹

Wickman joins these scholars in urging readers to prioritize analyses of Native American responses to environmental changes before turning to how colonists dealt with seasonal challenges. What he does differently is to shift our focus from migration that responded to temperate concerns on land and water to movement that anticipated and reacted to snow and ice. He presents readers with a winter world in motion, and he does so by homing in on a period usually included but not emphasized in the colonial U.S. history survey. In these surveys, King Philip's War (1675–78) usually merits a mention, but its later years involving the Wabanaki have until recently been passed over to emphasize the death of Metacom (or King Philip) in 1676.² In characterizing that conflict as the First Anglo-Wabanaki War and showing how it fit into a broader era of violence encompassing the First through Fourth Anglo-Wabanaki Wars until 1725, Wickman makes several contributions. He demonstrates that Wabanakis continued to migrate throughout all seasons of the year, that they did so more competently than English colonists, and that it was only over the course of several decades that colonists also acquired enough knowledge to learn to move with varying levels of ability through winter snow and ice (200, 216).

¹ Pekka Hämmäläinen, "What's in a Concept? The Kinetic Empire of the Comanches," *History and Theory* 52, no. 1 (2013), 81–90; Christopher L. Pastore, *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Daniel O. Sayers, *A Desolate Place for a Defiant People: The Archaeology of Maroons, Indigenous Americans, and Enslaved Laborers in the Great Dismal Swamp* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014); Joshua L. Reid, *The Sea is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs, an Indigenous Borderlands People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015); Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015); Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indigenous Prosperity and American Conquest: Indian Women of the Ohio River Valley, 1690–1792* (Williamsburg, VA: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2018).

² For recent exceptions see Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018); Christine DeLucia, *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).

Wickman's interest in knowledge acquisition reveals the process by which colonists gained a baseline of know-how for coping with wartime in winter. Wickman traces Wabanaki patterns of movement, and argues that the successes that Wabanakis enjoyed encouraged English adaptations. Wabanaki migrations were themselves recent developments in the seventeenth century. Before the colonial period, Native Americans in the Gulf of Maine wintered on the coast, as faunal remains in shell middens demonstrate. It was in response to colonization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that Native Americans began to winter further into the interior, relying on extensive use of snowshoes to travel, trap moose and beaver, and undertake subsistence activities. It took until the time of the Third Anglo-Wabanaki War from 1703 to 1713 for English colonizers to acquire similar skills (10, 36). In Wickman's theorization of the structure of settler colonialism in the northeast, then, the best way to survive as a settler was to learn how to move just well enough to push Wabanakis out (18–19).³

The Wabanaki retained power by moving seasonally during a time that the English considered fixity the only option, and the English only gained power by learning to unsettle themselves during wintertime. This shift in English behavior makes me skeptical about the relative value of the term "settler colonists" for characterizing these English invaders. I am certainly not the only historian to raise queries about the usefulness of this concept in early American history, nor am I the first to point out that scholars who refer only to non-Natives as settled peoples unconsciously reproduce colonial ideas about proper, "civilized" forms of land use.⁴ Jeffrey Ostler has recently argued that the term remains useful in helping scholars to "critically interrogate the ideological assumptions behind those misreadings," and I suspect that Wickman would agree.⁵ But Ostler is writing about the late eighteenth century. Some of the more vocal critiques of settler colonialism, furthermore, have come from historians interested in the same time period as Wickman. These critiques have emphasized similar narratives about powerful Native Americans, hapless Dutch, English, French, and Spanish colonists, and the exploration, trade, and resource extraction that sometimes took precedence or occurred alongside the eliminatory campaigns necessary to make settler colonialism fit its own definition.⁶

³ Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409, esp. 388.

⁴ For a recent forum on settler colonialism and early American history, see Jeffrey Ostler and Nancy Shoemaker, eds. "Forum: Settler Colonialism in Early American History: Introduction," *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019): 361–450. On settlement see James H. Merrell, "Second Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, vol. 69, no. 3 (July 2012): 451–512, esp. 473.

⁵ Jeffrey Ostler, "'To Extirpate the Indians': An Indigenous Consciousness of Genocide in the Ohio Valley and Lower Great Lakes, 1750s–1810," *William and Mary Quarterly* 72, no. 4 (October 2015): 587–622, esp. 593n14.

⁶ Ostler and Shoemaker, "Settler Colonialism in Early American History," 363; Nancy Shoemaker, "Settler Colonialism: Universal Theory or English Heritage?" *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019): 369–74; Susanah Shaw Romney, "Settler Colonial Prehistories in Seventeenth-Century North America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019): 375–8, esp. 378; Stephanie E. Smallwood, "Reflections on Settler Colonialism, the Hemispheric Americas, and Chattel Slavery,"

In *Snowshoe Country*, colonists' knowledge acquisition seems to develop as settler colonialism's structure hardens. Wickman works quite hard to show readers how and why the epistemology of snowshoes mattered to the Wabanaki, and he also observes that English colonists disagreed over why they had begun to use snowshoes to move through winter spaces (200). I wondered here what role indigenous knowledge played for Wickman's settler colonists. Recent work by Christopher Parsons has suggested that, at least in seventeenth-century New France—whose territory overlapped with some of the regions Wickman covers—colonists did not initially experience the sense of confusion and wonder articulated by the Spanish colonists whose Caribbean expeditions preceded their own forays further north. French writers wrote confidently about North American plants, peoples, and practices, but they were more likely over the course of the century to acknowledge the Native Americans whose knowledge informed their own.⁷ My questions for Wickman, then, are to press him about how he is theorizing settler colonialism for this time period and place, specifically. How did the act of unsettling oneself make one into a settler colonist? How powerful did colonists need to become for settler colonialism to become structural, rather than aspirational? What role did seasonal movement play in facilitating or resisting its emergence? Finally and relatedly, how did the acquisition or erasure of indigenous knowledge fit into this model in the English northeast?

William and Mary Quarterly 76, no. 3 (July 2019): 407–16, esp. 410, 413; Tiya Miles, “Beyond a Boundary: Black Lives and the Settler-Native Divide,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019): 417–26, esp. 423, 425; Jennifer M. Spear, “Beyond the Native/Settler Divide in Early California,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019): 427–34, esp. 428–9; Allan Greer, “Settler Colonialism and Empire in Early America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (July 2019): 383–90, esp. 387–89.

⁷ Christopher M. Parsons, *A Not-So-New World: Empire and Environment in French Colonial North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018); Rachel B. Herrmann, “Q & A with Christopher Parsons,” May 29, 2019, *The Junto: A Group Blog on Early American History*, <https://earlyamericanists.com/2019/05/29/qa-with-christopher-parsons/>

Comments by Andrew Lipman, Barnard College

As William Cronon reminded us a quarter century ago, there is nothing “natural” about nature. Concepts like “nature” and “wilderness” are inherently anthropocentric ideas. Humans’ understandings of the ecosystems that contain them are always changing.⁸ Thus two distinct peoples living in the same time and place could experience a seemingly “natural” event like a season in drastically different ways.

The cultural construction of seasons is the focus of Thomas M. Wickman’s creative and insightful new book, *Snowshoe Country: An Environmental and Cultural History of Winter in the Early American Northeast*. He argues that Natives and colonists began with diverging technologies and strategies for winter life in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that their distinct ways of approaching winter landscapes played a dynamic role in Native peoples’ defenses of their own sovereignty as colonists started creeping around the edges of the continent.

In the Julian calendar favored by English colonists through most of this period, winter marked an ending. It closed a cycle of farming and the year itself, and the new year dawned after the vernal equinox. Even after English speakers adopted the Gregorian calendar and moved the beginning of the year closer to winter solstice, their association of the season with death, rest, and scarcity remained a powerful one. Yet, Wickman argues, “for indigenous people in northeastern North America, freeze-up and snowfall represented new beginnings” (1). Even in the most brutal cold, Native peoples found vitality in the darkest months of the year, engaging in long distance hunts that sustained their communities long before and well into the colonial period. In the same snowy woodlands where colonists saw a foreboding stillness, Native people found abundant life and activity.

Wickman’s work is timely. As average annual temperatures climb at an alarming rate across the globe, historians are more aware than ever before that neither climates nor seasons are fixed phenomena. *Snowshoe Country* is set in the moment of global cooling from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries that climate scientists have colloquially dubbed “the Little Ice Age.” Wickman’s indigenous-centered analysis complements new books by Anya Zilberstein and Sam White that examine how a changing climate shaped the European colonization of North America, while also speaking to recent geographically-centered scholarship that foregrounds Native ethnobotany, transit networks, and technology in the contest for the Northeast.⁹

⁸ William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” in Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995), 69-90.

⁹ Anya Zilberstein, *A Temperate Empire: Making Climate Change in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Sam White, *A Cold Welcome: The Little Ice Age and Europe’s Encounter with North America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2017); other recent works that reread the indigenous geographical strategies in this period include Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008);

As the title indicates, snowshoes play a crucial role in Wickman's argument. In his standout opening chapter that is rich with analysis of material culture and winter ecologies, he explains how central this technology was to indigenous families in the Northeast, especially for Wabanaki peoples, who called them *unk-mock* (22). Men and women both participated in creating each pair of snowshoes, which could vary widely in shape, size, and color. The winter footwear featured prominently in Wabanaki storytelling and numerous colonial descriptions of Wabanaki life. Some indigenous parents may have even bound their infant's feet "inward from the cradle" to shape their stride for snowshoeing later in life (28).

Outfitted with their specialized winter kit and gear, indigenous snowshoers crossed frozen landscapes at impressive speeds and over lengthy distances. Wickman gives a detailed portrait of how Native equipment gave indigenous hunters a distinct advantage in trapping, hunting, and fishing, as they sought various meaty and fur-bearing species on land, and caught the runs of frostfish in early winter. Far from being hunkered down in the cold, Wabanaki peoples' abundant knowledge and adaptive technologies made their winters an active season of opportunity.

By comparison, colonists were poorly equipped. As Wickman cannily points out, it was the very act of "overwintering" that transformed Europeans from visitors into colonists. The season could make or break a colony—hunger and exposure caused Englishmen to abandon the Popham Colony in 1608 and killed half the colonists in Plymouth Colony from December 1620 to March 1620/1. Rather than ape the cold-weather practices of their Native neighbors, the early English settlers "rejected as much as they adapted" and "outsourced" overland transport and communication in the winter to more capable Native couriers (57).

Periods of intense cold in 1640s, 1660s, 1690s, and 1700s disrupted relations between indigenous peoples and colonists, while remaking both natural and built environments. The brutal winters that preceded King Philip's War "underscored colonists' enduring weaknesses and limitations" (93), but their improvisations during the conflict finally forced the English to accumulate "extensive, firsthand, embodied knowledge of" the region's seasonal snowscapes, leading some to conclude "that winter should become a season of war" (91).

Native people living in various states of bondage around colonial Boston faced a novel winter land-and-waterscape that could be as foreboding to them as the woods seemed to the first generation of overwintering Europeans. Certain chokepoints in

Christopher L. Pastore, *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), Katherine Grandjean, *American Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2015), Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2015); Matthew R. Bahar, *Storm of the Sea: Indians and Empires in the Atlantic's Age of Sail* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Christopher M. Parsons, *A Not-So-New World: Empire and Environment in French Colonial North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

the geography of colonial settlements—especially the treacherous passage along Boston Neck—proved lethal for enslaved and indentured Native people. The most prominent examples came in the winter of 1685/6, when the diarist Samuel Sewall noted that three such individuals perished “on the Neck” (144, 148). Wickman sensitively examines how colonial servitude, poverty, and alcohol made winter transit especially dangerous for the indigenous children and women eking out a living at the margins of colonial towns (152-3).

For Wabanakis to the north of Massachusetts Bay, a trend of unusually frigid seasons coincided with open conflicts with English intruders. The solid snowpack in these years, combined with many generations of cold-weather innovation, “made winter a season of power” for Wabanakis defending their sovereign territory from settlers. Through a careful rereading of colonial wartime accounts and captivity narratives, Wickman explores how Wabanakis’ winter knowledge aided them in maintaining their “material independence” through their asymmetrical advantages in the cold snaps of the Second and Third Anglo-Wabanaki Wars (1688-99, 1703-13) (192).

However, their seasonal superiority started to ebb as colonists learned to use indigenous tools and practices. Wickman cites colonial Governor Joseph Dudley’s introduction of snowshoe patrols in the winter of 1703-4 as a turning point, as the English started making and distributing the footwear at a much larger scale than ever before. This material appropriation, combined with a warming trend in the mid-eighteenth century, made winters harder for Wabanaki families. Colonists began to craft a narrative of triumph over Native landscapes. While still viewing snowscapes as an inconvenience, they became more confident of their abilities in the winter, even starting to see the season as time for recreation. Wickman applies Gerald Vizenor’s concept of resourceful “survivance” to explain how many indigenous people of the northeast continue to see winter months as moments of cultural vitality in the present.

Snowshoe Country closes with an impassioned call to remember that seasons and climate change have a history, that indigenous people continued to face “unnatural disasters and environmental injustices” in the present (290). The recent global pattern of hotter summers and milder winters clearly frames Wickman’s view that “snow and ice have politics”: no season exists separately from its human context. This insight, which Wickman develops so convincingly, raises the question: what other seasonally-defined places in the Early American landscape might benefit from this approach?

Just as other scholars have found indigenous autonomy on rivers and the ocean, Wickman reveals surprising temporal and seasonal dimensions in the winter landscape that help explain continued Native survival in the Northeast. At its finest moments, the book reimagines historians’ maps and calendars with its fresh take on a familiar region. And it reminds us that very idea of winter has a contested past, while the season faces an uncertain future.

Comments by Molly A. Warsh, University of Pittsburgh

In *Snowshoe Country: An Environmental and Cultural History of Winter in the Early American Northeast*, Thomas Wickman weaves together records of early English experiences of colonial winters, Native record-keeping, and a precise, deep knowledge of the landscapes at the heart of his study. The result is a thoughtful, surprising, and illuminating book, one that opens new vistas onto familiar historiographical territory—colonial New England—through a combination of painstaking research and interdisciplinary acumen. *Snowshoe Country* is a stellar exploration of a regional political ecology and a must-read for anyone interested in the seasonality of settler colonialism. A subtle and productive tension between materiality—of objects and archives— and community storytelling gives this wonderful book buoyancy as the author steers the reader through his vivid narrative of northeastern winters in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Wickman brings to life a cold, rich, and violent landscape, abundant in resources and conflict.

For a book that privileges in its title a material item (snowshoes) and then convincingly emphasizes their transformative power as a “technology”, Wickman includes just one image of them. This could be a remarkable refusal to fetishize snowshoes’ materiality or simply a reflection of his press’s aversion to expensive image inserts. But I think it is the former rather than the latter. Wickman is interested in the cultural and environmental knowledge that snowshoes embodied. The prominence of the footwear in the title is, in my view, a bit of a bait-and-switch, to the degree that one might be expecting a book about material culture (which it is not.) Instead, Wickman uses snowshoes as an entry point into the region’s political ecology, considering how they both enabled traditional Wabanaki lifeways and later disrupted them. Once European settlers gained access to and skill in deploying snowshoes, this essential technology further enabled them to disrupt Native lifeways through war and settlement far from the North American littoral.

Wickman’s central premise—a simple one that is more surprising than it should be, as he himself notes—is that historians have adopted a colonial bias against winter and persist in depicting the season as a period of dearth and famine. Just as he rejects a fixation on objects that might privilege an inaccurate reverence for the aesthetic art of a craft above its utilitarian and political power, Wickman is equally opposed to uncritically repeating colonial European lamentations about cold weather hardships. Instead, Wickman turns the usual perspective on winter on its head, asking “What good came of the colder weather of the Little Ice Age for human and non-human life?” (16) An interest in Native “survivance” runs throughout the book (made explicit in Chapter 8, “Seasons and Survivance”) and enables his diplomatic critique of a certain strand of recent scholarship within the field of environmental history. He writes “The concept of survivance presents a useful counterbalance to a tendency among historical climatologists to produce narratives of nature overpowering people” (274).

His interest in survivance does not mean that Wickman ever looks away from the violence of settler colonialism and the endless warfare of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, his central point is that historians' excessive attention to colonial complaints about barren winter landscapes and hardship has obscured a Native reality in which winters in the northeast were a season not of hibernation but of abundance and activity, at least until the advent of European settlers. Indeed, one of Wickman's key contributions is to force readers to realize the limitations of the colonial view of winter as necessarily a time of hardship (part of what he later labels a "vernal bias" in the archives) and to restore an earlier Wabanaki view of this season as one characterized by its own bounty and opportunities. In the wake of European incursions into North America, the coastline was frequently plagued by violence and contestation for land and natural resources. In this dangerous political climate, the winter months enabled Native peoples who were adept at navigating these frozen landscapes and waterways to move away from the violence-ridden littoral and into the game-rich forests of the western and northern parts of the region. At the heart of the political ecology that Wickman explores is a political and natural ecosystem in which expertise made winter landscapes a refuge from violence and dispossession as well as a source of abundant sustenance for those who knew where and how to find it. Winter ceased to be a season of respite for the region's indigenous peoples as European colonists acquired Native technologies and winter know-how, allowing them to pursue their political and economic aims on indigenous lands year-round.

Wickman is also precise and insightful on the seasonality of settler violence and the political import of seemingly mundane patterns of resource use and migration. His notes, for example, that the act of building fires to stay warm was both ecological and political. He asks: "What did it mean to build several thousand winter fires per day—or hundreds of thousands over the course of a season? This is a political question associated with settler colonialism and impinging on indigenous sovereignty, not simply an ecological matter" (82). In other words, settler colonialism functioned differently in different seasons—on land and at sea—as Native inhabitants of the Northeast noted early on. Writing that "In the early 1640s, Native nations continued to monitor the ways that year-round English settlement converged in detrimental ways with severe climatic conditions" (80), Wickman then quotes a speech by Narragansett sachem Miantonomi to the Montauks on Long Island, calling it "an extensive critique of the recent ecological upheaval in the Northeast" (80). This is indeed what this book is about: restoring an ecological and cultural perspective on the region's early colonial transformations.

One of Wickman's central points is that when European colonists learn how to survive and extend their power through the Northeastern winter, violence and warfare could be year-round phenomena, rather than confined to summer months. In other words, Wickman underscores that seasonal mobility—or stasis—was never random and it was never apolitical, for either colonial settlers or Native peoples of the Northeast. "Structures of colonialism" in his words, profoundly shaped peoples' experiences of the seasons. One of Wickman's most impressive achievements in my

view is that he both conveys a sense of the non-human imperatives and power of the natural world while also emphasizing the natural world's embeddedness in cultural practices. The most searing example of this—and a great example of Wickman's attention to language throughout the book—is the shift in the Wabanaki name of the January moon from “Mekwas'que”, meaning “the cold is great” to “Onglusamwessit” meaning “it is hard to get a living”(228). This linguistic change reflected the privations inflicted by the Anglo-Abenaki wars of the early eighteenth century and stands as a stark illustration of how steady colonial encroachment on Wabanaki lands shaped their experience of the year.

Wickman also raises interesting questions about the future of environmental history and opens the door to a critique of a Eurocentric emphasis on the hardships of the Little Ice Age. His simple point that this was not the case for all peoples in the Atlantic Americas is a profound and much-needed corrective. Wickman's book resonates more with these cultural histories of people in places—the two books that I found myself thinking most of as I read *Snowshoe Country* were Anya Zilberstein's *A Temperate Empire: Making Climate Change in Early America* (Oxford University Press, 2016) and A. Roger Ekirch's *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2005)—than with historians' recent burst of enthusiasm for climate science. Both implicitly and explicitly, Wickman's work rejects a data-driven reductionism that leaves little space for the Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) methodologies that are critical to his own approach to and understanding of the early modern past.

There are so many vivid evocations of particular times and places throughout Wickman's study that will stick with me. But it is not just the archival gems that linger. It is also his approach, a deft combination of archival sleuthing and the ethos and practices of NAIS and American Studies. The result is a rich, thoughtful book that makes me think in new ways about how I approach the cultural and environmental history of the early Americas.

Response by Thomas Wickman, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut

I am thankful to Kara Schlichting for leading this roundtable and convening historians whose work I have admired: Jon Coleman, Rachel Herrmann, Andrew Lipman, and Molly Warsh. All four respondents address approaches to environmental history, appropriately for an H-Environment roundtable review, but they also probe intersections with the fields of Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) and Vast Early America.¹⁰ The respondents think “with the grain” of my regionally focused study and pose generative questions about how this study of one season can be woven into a much larger history of many simultaneous and related seasons. In doing so, the roundtable raises crucial historiographical questions about the interdisciplinary study of time and space. How can NAIS methods reshape histories of climate and environment? What does *Snowshoe Country* say about the tempo, natural history, and periodization of settler colonialism? How can scholars study and teach about the interconnected seasons of the Americas and of Atlantic and Pacific worlds? In short, I appreciate how all four roundtable participants show a willingness to rethink our shared and overlapping fields.

In *Snowshoe Country*, I track how people made their own seasons and set seasonal expectations for others in ways that were not predictable or predetermined. As Warsh puts it, “seasonal mobility—or stasis—was never random and it was never apolitical.” The book documents winter struggles for well-being and power during some of the coldest stretches of the Little Ice Age, and it asks how settler colonialism and Native sovereignty and survivance still frame the ways people talk about “New England winters” and about climate change in the twenty-first century. Published in the series *Studies in Environment and History*, alongside works about nature and people across the planet, *Snowshoe Country* should cause scholars to question received assumptions in their fields and to look for historical insights about what has made seasons good or bad for people in the past at particular times and places. Such seasonally specific studies have the potential to create a usable past not just for global climate activism but for sovereignty struggles and fights for environmental justice. Rather than recovering what was better about a preindustrial past, as environmental historians sometimes do, historical political ecology can raise readers’ consciousness about unstable pasts and contested futures.¹¹

¹⁰ Alyssa Mt. Pleasant, Caroline Wigginton, and Kelly Wisecup, “Materials and Methods in Native American and Indigenous Studies: Completing the Turn,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 75:2 (2018): 207-236; Karin Wulf, “For 2016, Appreciating #VastEarlyAmerica,” *Uncommon Sense—The Blog*, <https://blog.oieahc.wm.edu/for-2016-appreciating-vastearlyamerica/>. Accessed September 10, 2020. For critical feedback to earlier drafts of this roundtable response, I would like to acknowledge and thank Caitlin C. Rosenthal, Katharine Gerbner, Zayde Antrim, and Ross Mulcare.

¹¹ For problem-oriented historiography and critical reassessments of processes and structures too often seen as apolitical, see Diana K. Davis, “Historical Approaches to Political Ecology,” *Handbook of Political Ecology*, eds. Gavin Bridge, James McCarthy, and Tom Perrault (London: Routledge, 2015), 263-275; Molly Warsh, *American Baroque: Pearls and the Nature of Empire, 1492-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018). I took as one inspiration Katherine Grandjean’s history of

As Warsh notes, the Little Ice Age did not cause suffering everywhere in the Americas, and we need more stories of creative realignment and resilience. Because seasonal suffering often resulted from colonial policies, it should not be seen necessarily as a natural result of past climate change. Scholars should question conventional narratives of extreme climatic events and dramatic societal collapse, which have been especially pronounced when archaeologists and historical climatologists have written about Indigenous histories. The roundtable conversation suggests that integrating climate studies within a hemispheric context will continue to produce comparative insights and common frames of reference. Climate-related adaptations took many forms across the Americas. For example, people used their knowledge of ecological diversity across elevation gradients to respond to climatic change along the Andes, Appalachian, and Sierra Nevada ridges, as well as upon the many mountainous islands of the Caribbean. Recent climate studies of regions in early modern Mexico have been sensitive to the cultural specificities of seasonal and climatic experience, especially with regard to the control of water. On the prairies and plains of North America, new scholarship has revealed, Indigenous polities controlling both sides of an ecotone responded nimbly to shifting environmental stressors and political challenges. Indigenous Studies research has shown that diverse subsistence strategies and careful seasonal scheduling often produced stability, reinforced borders, maintained good relationships, and contributed to sovereign control of large spaces, even during extreme weather conditions. In other words, seasonal knowledge, intentional mobility, and calibrated diplomatic schedules have contributed to the staying power of Indigenous polities.¹²

contested communication networks. Katherine Grandjean, *American Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015). On survivance, see Gerald Vizenor, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

¹² For the comparative study of parallel and simultaneous events across the Atlantic, see Sam White, *A Cold Welcome: The Little Ice Age and Europe's Encounter with North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017). White argues that climatic stresses in Spain and its colonies at the turn of the seventeenth century created openings for limited English and French colonization in North America, and in this sense the book is integrative, not just comparative. On resilience, see Dagomar Degroot, *The Frigid Golden Age: Climate Change, the Little Ice Age, and the Dutch Republic, 1560-1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Thomas Wickman, "Narrating Indigenous Histories of Climate Change in the Americas and Pacific," *Palgrave Handbook of Climate History*, eds. Christian Pfister, Sam White, and Franz Mauelshagen (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 387-411. On climatic adaptation along elevation gradients, see for example Lambert A. Motilal and Thayil N. Sreenivasan, "Revisiting 1727: Crop Failure Leads to the Birth of Trinitario Cacao," *Journal of Crop Improvement* 26:5 (2012): 599-626. For water in Mexico, see Georgina Endfield, *Climate and Society in Colonial Mexico: A Study in Vulnerability* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008); Bradley Skopyk, "Undercurrents of Conquest: The Shifting Terrain of Indigenous Agriculture in Colonial Tlaxcala, Mexico" (PhD dissertation, York University, Toronto, 2010); Bradley Skopyk, *Colonial Cataclysms: Climate, Landscape, and Memory in Mexico's Little Ice Age* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2020). On the North American plains, see Robert Michael Morrissey, "The Power of the Ecotone: Bison, Slaves, and the Rise and Fall of the Grand Village of the Kaskaskia," *Journal of American History* 102:3 (2015): 667-92; Robert Michael Morrissey, "Climate, Ecology, and History in North America's Tallgrass Prairie Borderlands," *Past & Present* 245:1 (2019): 39-77. See also Pekka Hämäläinen, "The

I hope that *Snowshoe Country's* temporal flow inspires other seasonal histories attentive to climatic fluctuations and social relations. Seasonal histories should represent the instability of cyclical phenomena and creatively synthesize the dynamic interplay between the “circles and lines” of history.¹³ As Lipman suggests, future scholars might identify other places for “seasonally-defined” studies, and in doing so, each scholar might define seasons differently. There certainly has been scholarship about seasons and seasonality for quite some time, even if people seldom have called their work seasonal history. Caribbean historians have been innovators in studying the seasonal contours of political economy, plantation ecologies, wartime epidemiology, and adaptation to disasters. The transatlantic slave trade wove together disparate agricultural calendars across at least four continents and coordinated shipping routes with shifting seasonal winds and currents. Enslaved people knew these intersecting schedules well and applied seasonal knowledge to sustain themselves and their communities. But enslavers and their trading partners accrued power by exploiting “plants, animals, and people who met the sun from many angles at the same time,” as Coleman puts it. Because exports to the West Indies from the 1640s forward became crucial to the viability of the New England colonies, winters in the Northeast became inseparable from seasons of sugar cultivation in the Caribbean.¹⁴

Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power in the Southwest Borderlands,” *WMQ* 67:2 (2010): 173-208; Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Juliana Barr, “Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the ‘Borderlands’ of the Early Southwest,” *WMQ* 68:1 (2011): 5-46. Scholars should be selective in applying the concept of a “kinetic empire,” and exceedingly cautious employing the term nomadic. Pekka Hämäläinen, “What’s in a Concept? The Kinetic Empire of the Comanches,” *History and Theory* 52:1 (2013): 81–90. Seasonal mobility and sedentism have been perfectly compatible in human history. See James Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).¹³ John Demos, *Circles and Lines: The Shape of Life in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). On structures and “conjunctures,” see Peter Burke, *French Historical Revolution: the Annales School 1929-89* (Cambridge, Eng.: Polity, 1990), 56, 112, 116. Preindustrial histories in particular have sensitized scholars to seasonal dimensions of histories in ways that should inform the study of later periods. See Joyce E. Chaplin, “The Other Revolution,” *Early American Studies* 13:2 (2015): 285-308.

¹⁴ Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin, 1986); Matthew Mulcahy, *Hurricanes and Society in the British Greater Caribbean, 1624-1783* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Sherry Johnson, *Climate and Catastrophe in Cuba and the Atlantic World in the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); John R. McNeill, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Stephanie Smallwood, “Reflections on Settler Colonialism, the Hemispheric Americas, and Chattel Slavery,” *WMQ* 76:3 (2019): 407-416; Stephen D. Behrendt, “Ecology, Seasonality, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade,” *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500-1830*, eds. Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 44-85; Strother Roberts, *Colonial Ecology, Atlantic Economy: Transforming Nature in Early New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019); April Lee Hatfield, “Chesapeake Slavery in Atlantic Context,” *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Tony Perry, “In Bondage When Cold Was King: The Frigid Terrain of Slavery in Antebellum Maryland,” *Slavery & Abolition* 38:1 (2017): 23-36. See also Warsh, *American Baroque*. I want to acknowledge

Future seasonal histories do not have to focus on a single season, necessarily. Environmental histories of the Pacific world have modeled how to connect many different seasons across long distances, especially Gregory Cushman's *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World*, which follows bird migrations, guano extraction, labor circuits, and neocolonialism around the world's largest ocean, animated partly by the seasonal dynamics of what came to be known as El Niño and La Niña. In Vast Early America, including Pacific worlds, winter is just one of many seasons, each with interconnected histories and futures. One way for "big histories" to slow down and to acknowledge greater complexity is to describe the political ecologies of seasons.¹⁵

At the same time, the sustained study of one season over a long span of time can foreground Native continuance. Following Lisa Brooks' *Common Pot*, and consistent with claims made recently in Christine DeLucia's "Terrapolitics in the Dawnland," the book centers Native practices that sustained human and nonhuman life. Frostfishing is more important to my book than the fur trade. Storytelling on winter nights receives more attention than rivalries between sachems. Rather than treating the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as preludes to a U.S. national story or within narratives of Indigenous or environmental decline, my book frames this period within an Algonquian *longue durée* and historicizes phases of New England settler colonialism that continue to the present. Contemporary poetry is as important to my study as almanac-diaries or the journals of winter scouts. In this sense, Warsh is right that both NAIS and American Studies have informed my "ethos and practice."¹⁶

In spatial terms, the respondents' thoughtful questions about the possible benefits of a larger geographical frame are consistent with the global and hemispheric ambitions of leading NAIS scholarship. As Coleman remarks, colonization widened economic and political links across vast distances, and Native nations integrated new goods from widely differing climates. As a regional environmental history, *Snowshoe Country* situates grounded events and local ecologies within wider routes,

here a fruitful online Q+A about seasonality with M. Blake Butler for the NiCHE New Scholars Reading Club, August 12, 2020.

¹⁵ Gregory T. Cushman, *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World: A Global Ecological History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Joshua L. Reid, *The Sea is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs, an Indigenous Borderlands People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Ryan Jones, *Empire of Extinction: Russians and the North Pacific's Strange Beasts of the Sea, 1741-1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014); John F. Richards, *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

¹⁶ Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Christine DeLucia, "Terrapolitics in the Dawnland: Relationality, Resistance, and Indigenous Futures in the Native and Colonial Northeast," *New England Quarterly* 92:4 (2019): 548-583; Cheryl Savageau, *Mother/Land* (Cambridge, UK: Salt, 2006). Commonplace narrations of the first settlers' "starving times," often in winter, are paradigmatic examples of O'Brien's concept of "firsting," a trope sometimes reproduced in works of early American environmental and climate history. See Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

territories, and spaces of control in northeastern North America. Rather than following trans-oceanic mobility, as excellent new scholarship has done, however, *Snowshoe Country* examines patterns of winter movement along north-south and coastal-inland gradients, over short, medium, and long distances, up to several hundred miles, but rarely in the thousands of miles. The larger-scale geopolitics and routes of transit sometimes remain outside the frame. Other scholars might find ways to follow what Herrmann calls “movement that anticipated and reacted to snow and ice” across greater distances. Indigenous ways of wintering have been dynamic and interconnected across the Native Northeast, from Pequot to Mi'kmaw territories, but did winter practices have the same spatial reach as marine forms of knowledge and maritime travel and exchange? The stakes of the question have been put into bold relief by numerous new saltwater environmental histories, including by Lipman and Warsh (as well as forthcoming work by Herrmann). Within the study of the Northeast, future Indigenous environmental histories have an opportunity to continue synthesizing new findings about summer and winter, saltwater and freshwater, and local and global mobilities.¹⁷

Studying micro-mobilities tends to yield insights about ecological relationships and life-sustaining practices, rather than the geopolitics and life-taking power often emphasized at larger spatial scales. Indigenous place names and the winter ecologies of minor species of plants and animals are more visible at higher levels of resolution, with seasonal livelihoods requiring recursive movement within and across territorial bounds. Snowshoe paths knit together Native nodes of rendezvous, residence, and sustenance on small and medium scales. In this sense, as Warsh writes, the book uses snowshoes as an “entry point into the region’s political ecology,” as others have done with maize. Starting in the north and foregrounding Wabanaki sovereignty, the book centers the social processes of crafting snowshoes for one’s family members, of planning snowshoe routes for particular historical situations, and of telling stories or writing poetry about snowshoeing. Further south, below the snowshoe line, other combinations of seasonal practices have made for good winters, from the underground storage of maize to the production of wampum and hunting of white-tailed deer. These practices and these histories have been complementary, of course. Snowshoes were shared southward and maize northward. In the late seventeenth century, some Native people from southern New England looked for winter refuge among Wabanakis, and some Wabanakis joined

¹⁷ David Chang, *The World and All the Things Upon It: Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016); Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). I see *Snowshoe Country* as complementing powerful saltwater histories, which tend to tilt toward warmer-weather processes. See Christopher L. Pastore, *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014); Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Matthew R. Bahar, *Storm of the Sea: Indians and Empires in the Atlantic's Age of Sail* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). For a work bringing to together hyper-local and vast connections, see Christine DeLucia, *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (New Haven, 2018).

kin who had relocated to the St. Lawrence River. Northward mobility and southward returns were part of the long-term struggle for sovereignty and the flexible practices of survivance, and so were more localized patterns of back-and-forth travel and labor across well-known winter lands.¹⁸

With Indigenous ways of thriving within their homelands in winter as a baseline, *Snowshoe Country* historicizes the ways that colonial laws, resource demands, and wars have created new kinds of cold-weather suffering at particular times and places, and how Indigenous communities and nations have coped and persisted. Settler colonialism is one part of that story, but it is decentered, regionalized, seasonally described, and defamiliarized. To answer Herrmann's question, I see English settler colonialism in the Northeast as structural from the second winter. Yet settler processes in the Northeast shifted by season and morphed over linear time, with unpredictable consequences. By the 1680s, for example, diaries and legal records show that urban colonial spaces became sites of unnatural winter suffering for isolated Massachusetts, Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Pequot, and Mohegan individuals, especially women, who nevertheless persisted in accessing winter subsistence sites occupied by colonial cities including Boston and New London. By 1704, colonial patrols of Wabanaki winter lands further north caused new winter vulnerabilities for Native families at traditional subsistence sites. English snowshoe patrols in the early eighteenth century were an improvised expression of a settler-colonial vision within the context of some of the coldest swings of the last millennium. Winter patrols were assembled belatedly, after Wabanaki winter raids of the 1690s, to

¹⁸ For high-resolution climate histories, see Clark Alejandrino, "Toward a Higher Resolution Climate History of Monsoon Asia," Duke Global Asia Initiative Webinar, September 23, 2020. On maize, see especially Lisa T. Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018); Katherine A. Grandjean, "New World Tempests: Environment, Scarcity, and the Coming of the Pequot War," *William & Mary Quarterly* 68:1 (2011): 75-100; Jason Hall, "Maliseet Cultivation and Climatic Resilience on the Wəlastək/St. John River during the Little Ice Age," *Acadiensis* 44:2 (2015): 3-25. In many parts of North America, maize horticulture supplemented other seasonal worlds of plenty. See especially Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indigenous Prosperity and American Conquest: Indian Women of the Ohio River Valley, 1690-1792* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018). For Indigenous and environmental histories of the Northeast, in addition to those already cited, see Jean O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790* (New York: Cambridge University, 1997); Jean O'Brien, "'They are so Frequently Shifting Their Place of Residence': Land the Construction of Social Place of Indians in Colonial Massachusetts," in *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous People, 1600-1850*, eds. M. Daunton and R. Halpern (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 204-216; Christopher M. Parsons, *A Not-So-New World: Empire and Environment in French Colonial North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018); Zachary Bennett, "'A Means of Removing Them Further From Us': The Struggle for Waterpower on New England's Eastern Frontier," *New England Quarterly* 90:4 (2017): 540-560; Ashley Elizabeth Smith, "Re-Membering Norridgewock: Stories and Politics of a Place Multiple" (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 2017); Micah A. Pawling, "A 'Labyrinth of Uncertainties': Penobscot River Islands, Land Assignments, and Indigenous Women Proprietors in Nineteenth-Century Maine," *American Indian Quarterly* 42:4 (2018): 454-487; Micah A. Pawling, "Wəlastəkwey (Maliseet) Homeland: Waterscapes and Continuity within the Lower St. John River Valley, 1784-1900," *Acadiensis* 46:2 (2017): 5-34; *Wabanaki Homeland and the New State of Maine: the 1820 Journal and Plans of Survey of Joseph Treat*, ed. Micah Pawling (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).

protect large overwintering populations of settlers. To rephrase Herrmann's formulation, to provide year-round security for one hundred thousand settlers, a couple thousand men learned how to move just well enough over the snow to terrorize Wabanaki families. It was not about survival so much as settler comfort. Curfews preventing Black or Indigenous people from being out after dark in colonial cities (especially onerous restrictions in wintertime) had a similar logic, supporting an entitlement to security among English colonists who seldom went far in winter themselves. Some English volunteers for snowshoe companies sought out scalp bounties that were explicitly eliminatory. The threat of winter massacres of Wabanaki families at subsistence sites made winter a season of want at northern sites that previously were sites of abundance in cold times, and the projection of force shored up twelve-month settler colonialism. In colonial cities including Boston, winter became increasingly seen as a season of settler recreation, with snowshoes appropriated and separated from their origins and functions within Native communities. Because climate fluctuated and colonial policies and aims changed in ways that were not unidirectional, settler colonialism has to be contextualized in particular moments and spaces and not reduced to a singular definition or model. As Warsh reflects on these diverse histories, "settler colonialism functioned differently in different seasons—on land and at sea." Settler projects have endured because of their flexibility, because of their continual change, because of their incompleteness, and because of their contradictions.¹⁹

¹⁹ Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8:4 (2006): 387-409. To address Herrmann's interest in the imperfect and contradictory nature of the term "settler," I certainly would agree with the observations that English settlers were highly mobile from the beginning and deployed mobility in new ways over time and that most if not all Indigenous nations of the Northeast have maintained continuous settlements within their own sovereign territories. For an assessment of southern and northern New England processes, see John G. Reid and Thomas Peace, "Colonies of Settlement and Settler Colonialism in Northeastern North America, 1450-1850," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, eds. Edward Cavanaugh and Lorenzo Veracini (New York, 2016), 79-94. With regard to temporal questions about settler colonialism in North America, periodization has received attention elsewhere. In the 2019 forum on settler colonialism in the *William & Mary Quarterly*, contributors were asked to address the "who, when, where, and what," and many of the essays focused on the question of "when" as a chronological problem, with greatest emphasis on identifying the beginning of settler colonialism. By contrast, scholars have devoted little attention to the seasonal or cyclical "when" of settler colonialism. See Jeffrey Ostler and Nancy Shoemaker, "Settler Colonialism in Early American History: Introduction," *WMQ* 76:3 (2019): 364. For deep structures and broad trajectories of settler colonialism, see Jeffrey Ostler, "Locating Settler Colonialism in Early American History," *WMQ* 76:3 (2019): 447. On the complexities of colonialism (not necessarily settler colonialism) as it affected Indigenous social formations and lands over time, see Michael Witgen, "A Nation of Settlers: The Early American Republic and the Colonization of the Northwest Territory," *WMQ* 76:3 (2019): 391. On gender, families, and households, see Susannah Shaw Romney, "Settler Colonial Prehistories in Seventeenth-Century North America," *WMQ* 76:3 (2019): 375-382. My analysis of the material cycles and seasonal imaginaries of settler colonialism stresses environmental and political continuities and instabilities over rigid periodization. For complementary work on settler colonialism, regional geographical imaginaries, and emerging climate science, see Anya Zilberstein, *A Temperate Empire: Making Climate Change in Early America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). For northern colonial ecologies and calendars, see Liza Piper, "Freeze-up, Break-up, and Colonial Circulation," *Journal of Northern Studies* 13:2 (2019): 17-41.

Sovereignty and survivance have remained in ongoing tension with settler colonialism in the Northeast for four centuries. Wabanaki people have persisted, including the contemporary nations of Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Maliseet peoples, as have Native nations to the south, including Nipmuc, Wampanoag, Narragansett, Pequot and Mohegan nations. Within Indigenous intellectual traditions, seasonality has remained central to education, to the production of history, and to year-round processes of self-determination. Stories traditionally have been told between first and last frost, and the stories themselves often feature richly imagined seasonal worlds. Tribal governments operate twelve months a year, and language revitalization proceeds apace. The public-facing Akomawt Educational Initiative was named with the Passamaquoddy word for “snowshoe path,” affirming Indigenous futures and alluding to distinctive Native knowledge. Despite resistance, Native intellectuals, activists, and elected officials continue to lead, and non-Native environmental historians and scholars of Vast Early America should listen and follow.²⁰

As the winter of 2020-21 approaches, ongoing crises of environment, climate, and governance coincide with commemorations and critiques of Plymouth colony’s 400th anniversary. Working and teaching in Hartford, I am increasingly conscious of the ways urban environmental sustainability is often framed with nostalgic tropes evoking a colonial past, rather than with more rigorous reckonings with Indigenous, Black, and settler-colonial histories. I am turning my research toward river-based histories here at Suckiaug/Hartford. But every year around October, wherever I have lived in the Northeast, I find myself asking questions that initially inspired this earlier project on winter. How did people in the past winter here? What good things come in the colder months? What will future winters bring?²¹

²⁰ Mt. Pleasant, Wigginton and Wisecup, “Materials and Methods,” 229; Akomawt Educational Initiative, <<https://www.akomawt.org>>. Accessed August 26, 2020. See also *We Still Live Here: Âs Nutayuneân* (documentary film, directed by Anne Makepeace, Oley, PA: Bullfrog Films, 2010); Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed, 2013); Nick Estes, *Our History is the Future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota Access Pipeline, and the Long History of Indigenous Resistance* (London: Verso, 2019); Kyle Powys Whyte, “Our Ancestors’ Dystopia Now: Indigenous Conservation and the Anthropocene,” *Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*, eds. Ursula Heise, Jon Christensen, and Michelle Niemann (New York: Routledge, 2017), 206-215; Zoe Todd and Heather Davis, “On the Importance of a Date, or, Decolonizing the Anthropocene,” *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 16:4 (2017): 761-780; AHR Exchange, “Historians and Native American and Indigenous Studies,” *American Historical Review* 125:2 (2020): 517-551.

²¹ “Here It Began: 2020 Hindsight or Foresight, Indigenous History Conference,” Bridgewater State University, Organized by Linda Coombs and Joyce Rain Anderson, October 3-November 22, 2020, virtual sessions, <https://www.bridgew.edu/event/indigenous-history-conference>. Accessed October 6, 2020. Thomas Wickman, “Our Best Places: Gender, Food Sovereignty, and Miantonomi’s Kin on the Connecticut River,” forthcoming, *Early American Studies* 19:2 (Spring 2021); Alexandra R. Contosta et al., “Northern Forest Winters Have Lost Cold, Snowy Conditions That Are Important for Ecosystems and Human Communities,” *Ecological Applications* 29:7 (2019): e01974, pp. 1-24.

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