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Delaware Indians, Colonists, and the Media of History and Memory

ANDREW NEWMAN

University of Nebraska Press : Lincoln and London

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Material from chapter 1 was previously published as
"The Walam Olum: An Indigenous Apocrypha and Its Readers,"
American Literary History 22, no. 1 (2010): 26–56. A version of chapter 2 was originally published as "Mapping a Native Account of European Land Fraud," in *Early American Cartographies*, edited by Martin Brückner, 248–75. Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture. Copyright © 2011 by the University of North Carolina Press.
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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Newman, Andrew.
On records: Delaware Indians, colonists, and the media of history and memory / Andrew Newman.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-8032-3986-9 (cloth: alk. paper)
1. Delaware Indians—Historiography. 2. Delaware Indians—Colonization.
3. Indians of North America—First contact with Europeans—Delaware.
4. Indians of North America—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600–1775.
5. Delaware—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600–1775. I. Title.
E99.D2N49 2012
974.004′97345—dc23
2012012436

Set in Quadraat by Kim Essman.
Designed by Ashley Muehlbauer.

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Royalties from the sale of this book will be
donated to the Lenape Native American Foundation.

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::::::: ACKNOWLEDGMENTS :::::::

I have been looking forward to writing these for years. It is a pleasure to express my appreciation for the people and institutions that have helped me to write this book.

For grant support, I thank the University of California at Irvine, the Huntington Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Library Company of Philadelphia and Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at Stony Brook University, and United University Professionals.

At Irvine, I had the guidance of a wonderful dissertation committee, chaired by Michael Clark, with Sharon Block and Brook Thomas as readers. I am grateful to the department of English at the University of Southern California, especially Joseph Boone, for hosting me through a year-long postdoctoral fellowship. I deeply appreciate the colleagues who have provided support and friendship at Stony Brook University. In my department, these include Peter Manning, Stacey Olster, Joaquín Martinez Pizarro, and Stephen Spector, as well as the brilliant and kind members of my reading group, Helen Choi, Douglas Pfeiffer, Ayesha Ramachandran, and Jeffrey Santa Ana. Susan Scheckel deserves special mention. Thanks also to Margaret Hanley, Lizabeth Rehn, and Martha Smith. My students Matthew Kremer and Michael Pesin provided valuable research assistance. Beyond the department, I am particularly grateful to Ned Landsman, the mentor who has become a collaborator. Thanks also to Donna Rilling, as well as the members of my interdisciplinary Long Island Railroad cohort, especially Daniel Levy and Paul Gootenberg, who

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invited me to present at their Initiative for the Historical Social Sciences and have generously shared their expertise.

I owe thanks to many scholars in early American studies and related fields. Among those I have gotten to know through the collegial meetings of the Society of Early Americanists, I'm indebted to Ralph Bauer, Matt Cohen, Dennis Moore, Gordon Sayre, Teresa Toulouse, Hilary Wyss, and especially Kristina Bross, whose comments helped me to understand my book's priorities. My thanks to participants in the colloquium series at the Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture, the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, and Columbia University. I am very grateful to Fredrika Teute for her generous commentary on early and late versions of this project. Daniel Richter provided helpful feedback on drafts of two chapters. Further thanks to Roger Abrahams, Michele Currie, Evan Haefeli, Sean Harvey, Jaap Jacobs, Michael LaCombe, Mark Meuwese, James Spady, and Dennis Tedlock.

I am grateful to Gordon Hutner, Ed White, and an anonymous reader for *American Literary History*, which published research that appears in different form in my first chapter, and to Martin Brückner and the readers for his edited collection *Early American Cartographies*, which includes a version of my second chapter. Thanks to Oxford University Press and the University of North Carolina Press, respectively, for permission to reprint.

James Rementer has responded to dozens of my e-mailed queries about the history and language of the Delaware Indians, and he generously read through my manuscript. Thanks also to correspondents he put me in touch with, Deborah Nichols-Ledermann and Ray Whritenour.

I could not ask for a more intellectually engaged and supportive editor than Matt Bokovoy of the University of Nebraska Press; he really got what I was trying to do. So did the editorial readers, Amy Schutt and Laura Stevens, and they helped to make it better. My thanks to Elisabeth Chretien, Lona Dearmont, and everyone at the University of Nebraska Press who was involved in the production of this book.

Throughout this process, I have had the unconditional support of two

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extended families, with the added benefit of expert advice. Alexander and Mieke Gelley provided a nurturing environment for my young family during our years in Irvine, and they continue to inspire me through their intellectual and artistic devotion. Ora Gelley and I have been sharing in each other's challenges and accomplishments for years. My parents, Robert and Ruth, and my brother Richard formed a loving household that fostered intellectual curiosity and creativity, and my eldest brother, Michael, has been a role model and advisor. My life has been enriched by the expansion of this family to include Bette Alexander, Gabriela, Ariel, and Pauline Newman, and Francisco Ordoñez, brother and colleague.

This book is dedicated to Mira, Reuben, and the new addition to our family, Levi. *On Records* is partly about the limitations and the possibilities of language; I have never experienced either so fully as when I try to find words that can express what Mira, Reuben, and Levi mean to me. I find: no words.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1819 John Heckewelder, a member of the Christian sect known as the Unitas Fratrum (United Brotherhood), or the Moravians, published *An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations that Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States*. Heckewelder's *History*, informed by three decades of missionary work among the Delaware (otherwise known as Lenape) Indians and related groups in Western Pennsylvania and the Ohio Country, immediately became the primary channel for the transmission of information from the traditional cultures of these displaced persons to nineteenth-century American men of letters.[1] For example, it was the "sourcebook" for the representation of Indians in James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* (1823–1841).[2] Almost two centuries later, it is still qualified as "the basic source on the Delaware."[3]

The first part of the *History* represents the Indians' accounts of their own history. According to Heckewelder, the Delawares told him:

- that "many hundred years ago" they had lived "in a very distant country in the western part of the American continent" and after an epic migration had settled in the region on the Atlantic seaboard spanning the Hudson and Delaware Rivers;[4]
- that their ancestors had been among the first natives to welcome Europeans to North America, and that the first Dutch colonists had asked for as much land as "the hide of a bullock could cover or encompass" and then had cut that hide into strips and claimed all the land they could encircle;[5]

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- that Pennsylvania had been "'a last, delightful asylum'" where they had welcomed William Penn, "'the great and good MIQUON,'" who came bearing "'words of peace and good will'";[6] and
- that before long their "'joy was turned into sorrow,'" for Penn's successors "'now only strove to get all our land from us by fraud or by force.'"[7]

These stories are the topics of the four chapters of this book: the Delawares' origins, their first contacts and land transaction with the Dutch, their first treaty with William Penn, and the "infamous" 1737 Walking Purchase land fraud.[8] Heckewelder gives a good idea of how the Delawares' history can come to exemplify what has been grossly summed up as "the American Indian experience."[9] The accounts he presents pertain to the vexed question of the peopling of the continent, and epitomize the highs and lows of colonial transactions. "Often I have listened to these descriptions of their hard sufferings," he wrote, "until I felt ashamed of being a *white man*."[10] Yet these are not simply Lenape stories; the Delawares' history is also American history. The account of the Indians' migration had a complex bearing on the alleged right of the colonists to supplant them, and the stories of dispossession, whether "peaceable" or fraudulent, correspond to the founding stories of the settlers in the mid-Atlantic region. They were alluded to or represented in popular traditions and in works by the painters Benjamin West and Edward Hicks and the writers Voltaire, Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, and Cooper, among others.

While the Delawares' exemplarity and their prominence in cultural works make their early history relevant well beyond its regional scope, this book's claim to significance beyond even early American and Native American Studies lies in its conceptual explorations. Each of the episodes in this history is controversial, and the controversies hinge on questions about the media of history and memory: can the spoken word be a reliable record of past events? If so, how many links can the chain of communication sustain, as it reaches back through generations? What authority

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do certain material forms, such as wampum (Algonquian or Iroquoian shell beads), or landmarks, or relics, contribute to spoken recollections? Is alphabetic writing a reliable repository for memory, or does it distort memory by alienating it from a necessary interpretive context? Can the intent behind Native American utterances be communicated across the hazards of translation and transcription, even assuming good-faith efforts to do so? As abstract formulations, these questions may be the province of philosophers of language and literacy theorists. As methodological problems, they challenge colonialist scholars. They were also matters of immediate, practical concern to cross-cultural negotiators who were framing agreements of lasting consequence, as well as to members of succeeding generations who were seeking to understand or construe past intentions and occurrences.

RECORDS AND REPRESENTATIONS

This book examines the relations between records, or the "documentation or recording of facts, events, etc.," and representations—depictions, portrayals, symbolic substitutions.[11] In legal contexts, records are considered neutral and objective, while representations are subjective. In current scholarly practice, it is now generally recognized that historical records are partial, biased, incomplete, and necessarily and sometimes deliberately distorted; in other words, all records are actually representations. Nevertheless, there remains an operative distinction between the two terms, which may be ranged along a spectrum from complete objectivity (however ideal and unrealizable) to absolute subjectivity and unreliability. Other concepts sometimes demarcate this spectrum, including past and present, writing and speech, history and memory. The closer the act of writing is to the occurrence of the event it depicts, and the less apparently artful or biased its composition, the more likely it is to be qualified as a record. Outside the domain of art, representations of events typically aspire for such qualification. For example, the literary critic Louis Montrose observes that Sir Walter Ralegh, "in his attempt

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to represent" his *Discovery of Guiana* (1595) "as the transparent record of his discovery . . . must seek to deprecate its style"; that is, Ralegh must minimize the extent to which his writing is shaped by literary conventions rather than observation and experience.[12]

It is Montrose who coined the neat "chiastic" slogan for the loosely defined school of criticism that emerged in the 1980s as the "New Historicism": the New Historicists' "reciprocal concern" with "the historicity of texts and the textuality of history" has had a formative influence on the burgeoning field of early Americanist literary scholarship.[13] As some New Historicists turned from the European Renaissance to contemporary writings about the New World encounters, the intervention they posed toward colonialist historians was the argument that supposed documentary sources were in fact *Representations* (the title of their journal of record). "We can be certain only," writes Stephen Greenblatt, the leading figure associated with the New Historicism, "that European representations of the New World tell us something about the European practice of representation."[14]

There is good reason why representations of New World encounters have proven so fascinating and theoretically productive for cultural critics. These representations are driven by practical and ideological agendas, informed by ancient prejudices, and draw upon extremely limited resources of language and knowledge. The indigenous peoples they depict stand at the cusp of unmapped continents and unfathomable precolonial pasts, and their own historical representations are either mediated by European ones or are even more opaque. Thus the topic presents profound epistemological challenges. Greenblatt's caveat, however, actually backs away from these challenges, and may be less commonsensical than it appears. Interpreting "European representations of the New World" without some empirical knowledge of that world is like interpreting a supposed portrait without any independent knowledge of its subject. We might arrive at a host of plausible and interesting inferences about the "practices" involved, but nothing "certain."

The imputation that historians naively approach documentary sources

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as transparent records depends on an intellectual straw man, or at least an obsolete model of historiography. The field of ethnohistory, conceived in the mid-twentieth-century judicial context of the Indian Claims Commission, both expanded the archive for the study of Native American cultures and developed a pragmatic skepticism toward documents.[15] Francis Jennings brought that perspective to the history of Pennsylvania-Indian relations, and his impassioned scholarship helped make this book possible.[16] Another invaluable resource has been the work of the historian James Merrell. Merrell has disavowed the label "ethnohistorian," arguing that the field's self-definition effectively sectioned off the history of Native Americans from mainstream colonial historiography. Yet in 1989 he claimed that "students of early America"—perhaps owing to European influences such as the Annales school—"are now doing what ethnohistory's champions have been pushing them to do: borrow freely from other disciplines and examine all sorts of evidence to give voice to the historically silent."[17]

However, Merrell's easy metaphorical conception of the historian's task—"to give voice"—positions the historian as the last in the chain of "mediators" who carry the voice of historical Native Americans to the reader.[18] It belies the conceptual, methodological, and even political complexities that his scholarship has helped to bring to light. In an analysis of the representations of speeches by the Delaware leader Teedyuscung that appear in various and conflicting versions of the minutes from a series of 1756 treaty council meetings, Merrell observes that such sources are compromised by the fallible processes of translation and transcription and legitimate questions about the competence and good faith of the persons who carry these out. "Nevertheless," he writes, "most scholars (myself included) find these sources too rich, too abundant, too available, and altogether too tempting to linger long on their faults or avoid them completely." He concludes, perhaps optimistically but hardly naively, that it is indeed possible to hear "genuine echoes of a long-forgotten native voice" in the treaty council minutes. But what would it mean to "listen to" that voice?[19]

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To formulate a chiasmus of my own, it is one thing to consider European representations as records of Native American statements, and still another to consider those represented statements as statements of record. Merrell's question is, primarily, whether the treaty minutes record Teedyuscung's intent, and secondarily, whether Teedyuscung, as a spokesman or medium for other Indians, reliably conveyed the intent underlying the messages he was entrusted with. But his observation that the colonists' faith in the superiority of writing over "oral tradition" was misplaced suggests the compounded problem of one unreliable medium being represented through another. When the erratic, volatile, often (allegedly) inebriated Teedyuscung, in 1756, accused the Pennsylvania Proprietors of having committed "fraud" a generation earlier, he was presenting an oral tradition—a representation of a "message" from the previous generation, which in turn was linked to a message from the generation before that.[20] Heckewelder represents "historical traditions" that purport to reach back much further into the past, ostensibly told to him by Indians who were many miles and generations removed from the places and events they describe. To what extent might we consider written representations of Native American oral forms as records not only of spoken language but also of the sometimes distant historical events that were spoken of?

The history of the Delawares and their relations with colonists reveals a variety of tendencies in the handling of such hybrid, doubly extenuated sources. Colonial officials typically considered their own written renditions of Native American oral performances to be authoritative records of Indian speech, and those produced outside their supervision to be misleading representations. The colonists felt that written records automatically trumped "memory," but when it suited their interests, one of which was to exclude the Indians from having direct access to writing, they were perfectly willing to allow "that the Indians have good Memories, and can remember what was transacted twenty years ago, as if Yesterday."[21] In subsequent generations, popular historians were invested in local oral traditions and open to alternative accounts, and they therefore reached different conclusions about events such as the Great

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Treaty and the Walking Purchase than did some credentialed scholars who confided in official records.

As for representations of native and popular oral traditions, many writers in the nineteenth century and later, while implicitly expressing faith in their chosen medium of expression, were expedient in their judgments. They accepted represented traditions as historical records when their content was useful for their scientific or cultural agendas. Academic scholars, according to their conventional practices, have been more rigorous. Historians and cultural critics such as literary scholars, folklorists, and art historians have largely concurred in qualifying oral traditions as purely subjective representations. The resulting division of labor allows scholars to operate within their disciplinary comfort zones. Historians can exclude representations of oral traditions from their data, while cultural critics can interpret them within the historical context in which they are told and recorded. But the opposing ends of the spectrum offer a false sense of security: the fixed certainty of a documented fact; the liberating confines of an interpretive context "stitched together" by the very interpreter.[22] On the one hand, the fallacy is that an interpretation that excludes unverifiable but possibly significant evidence is less speculative than one that does not. On the other, it is that a representation's basis in fact is less than crucial to understanding its meaning. Scholars who have pulled away from the record-representation poles have produced some of the most innovative recent work in colonial studies.[23] As James Wilkinson observes, while the recent proliferation of forms of evidence that have become subject to historical analysis still leaves us without a foundational basis for interpretations, that "the whole truth cannot be known does not mean that partial truths are unattainable."[24] I would only amend his phrase: not "partial" but *possible* truths.

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY AND THE GREAT DIVIDE

As a study of communications between cultures and across generations, this book taps into the multidisciplinary fields devoted to the concepts of collective memory and language ideology.[25] I discuss collective memory

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(or social or cultural memory; these terms sometimes are used interchangeably and sometimes entail conceptual distinctions) in the succeeding section. Language ideology is less established as a keyword designating a field of inquiry. As defined by Kathryn A. Woolard, it designates "[r]epresentations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world."[26] The relevant scholarship, with contributions from several social scientific and humanistic disciplines, develops the insight that linguistic practices, including forms of speech and writing, are attended by value judgments and implications for the social order. The view that speech is a more (or less) trustworthy medium than writing, or doubts about "the copiousness" of Native American languages, are relevant examples of ideologies of language.[27] Woolard notes that some "of the most provocative recent work on linguistic ideology, clearly tracing the links among linguistic, ideological, and social forms, comes from studies of colonialism."[28]

In recent decades, colonialist scholars have increasingly complicated the familiar "great divide" between native orality and European literacy.[29] Some have focused on how Native Americans adopted and adapted alphabetic writing for their own purposes, and have pointed out that neither the cultures of the indigenous Americas nor those of early modern Europe can be simply categorized on the basis of their use of a single communicative medium.[30] Others, more polemically, have insisted that the notion that the Indians did not write is itself ideological, and depends on a definition of writing that arbitrarily excludes a variety of communicative media, including pictography, the Incan knotted cords known as khipu, and wampum.[31] This intervention in the definition of writing proposes to correct the fallacy that "people without writing" are "people without history" by eliminating its premise—that there are or were "people without writing."[32] My own argument is that while history, like language, is a cultural universal, writing is not, and does not need to be redefined as one. It makes more sense to challenge the automatic link between writing and historical consciousness than it does to reaf-

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firm it by straining to attribute writing, however defined, to all native peoples.[33]

What then *is* writing? It's an impossible question. When I refer to writing in what follows, I refer primarily to uses of alphabetic script. But definitions are contingent on context, and like all communicative interactions and determinations, they are subject to conditions of power, whether institutional or military. Heckewelder nicely illustrates this point in an anecdote in his chapter on Indian "Signs and Hieroglyphics." After explaining that Indians do not possess our "Art of Writing," which he defines as the use of "alphabets, or any mode of representing to the eye the sounds of words spoken," he describes an incident in which a "white man in Indian country" accused a Shawnee Indian of having stolen his horse. Unable to convince the white man of his innocence, the Indian drew "two striking figures" in charcoal: "the one representing the white man taking the horse, and the other, himself, in the act of scalping him; then he coolly asked the trembling claimant 'whether he could read this Indian writing?'"[34] The legibility of this "Indian writing" stands in counterpoint to the illegibility of the documents invoked by colonial grantees. In both cases, though, it is the threat of violence that speaks clearly.

COMMUNITIES OF HISTORY AND MEMORY

Language ideology and collective memory fundamentally converge with the observation by Maurice Halbwachs, an influential progenitor of the contemporary field of memory studies, that it "is language, and the whole system of social conventions attached to it, that allows us at every moment to reconstruct our past."[35] "Mnemonic communities," or communities of memory, "socialize us to what should be remembered and what should be forgotten."[36] This process supports the continuity of group identity—whether that identity is familial, regional, ethnic, religious, or as in many studies of collective memory, national. Importantly, mnemonic communities are also "discourse communities," which is a term that is more narrowly applied in studies of academic literacy. That

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is, they share not only content but also forms, including "participatory mechanisms," genres, and languages.[37] Thus they are defined not only by their collective memories but also by the ways in which they transmit them. Memories are shared through media, including spoken and written language, images, relics, and monuments. The uses of these different forms entail different attitudes and truth claims. They also, importantly, observe conventions that are specific to the groups that employ them. This book analyzes the interactions among several such memory/discourse communities, including the colonial Delawares and their descendants, the colonists and their descendants, and contemporary scholars in several fields, and their predecessors.

The name Delaware applies to more peoples retroactively than it did contemporaneously during the colonial era. The colonial English labeled the Algonquian bands inhabiting the central Delaware valley after the river that flows into the bay they had named for the Virginian governor, Thomas West, the third Lord De La Warr. These peoples designated themselves using variants of the now-standardized ethnonym *Lenape*, which is usually translated as "the people," or "the original people."[38] When the Delawares/Lenapes migrated westward, ceding their ancestral territory to colonists, they mingled with Indians from neighboring areas who "shared linguistic and other cultural patterns."[39] The names Delaware and Lenape came to be applied to the indigenous inhabitants of these areas as well. As a geopolitical entity, *Lenapehoking*, the Delaware homeland, may exist only in retrospect, and the term itself is of recent coinage.[40] Nevertheless, while usages vary, peoples living during the onset of European colonization in what are now Delaware, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, New York City, Long Island, and the Hudson Valley as far north as the Catskills have all been called Delawares or Lenapes.[41]

Some of the descendants of these peoples still inhabit these regions, but the largest communities are in Oklahoma.[42] They use both ethnonyms. Although "Delaware" may be the more appropriate usage in communications with outsiders, according to a folk etymology it is not entirely exogenous. It derives not from an English nobleman but from

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an early colonial interaction: a white man, after asking an Indian what tribe he belonged to, had difficulty pronouncing "Lenape"; when he finally got it right, the Indian said: "'Nal në ndëluwèn! Nal në ndëluwèn!' ('That's what I said, That's what I said!')." They were henceforth called Delawares.[43] According to a version of this story told by Leona Parton in a 1937 interview for the Works Progress Administration, the Indian's interlocutor was William Penn himself. "When making the treaty Penn kept asking over what the Indian said and they used the word Delaware so much that they were called Delaware, though there is another name that is the true name. I can't pronounce it nor spell it for we always go by the name of Delaware."[44]

In the colonial period, the Delawares and the colonists had competing as well as collaborative representations of their interactions with one another. Both sides, of course, maintained and communicated memories through the spoken word. Additionally, the Delawares, like some of their Algonquian and Iroquoian neighbors, used strings and belts made from shell beads, or wampum. Wampum was a "mnemonic device," and more.[45] Its exchanges structured treaty meetings (including land sales); it "embodied" the terms of an agreement; it had a contractual function and, like the colonists' written instruments, it also served as a form of record.[46] Accordingly, wampum has often been compared to alphabetic writing, and sometimes classified as a form of writing. I will discuss this comparison further in chapters 3 and 4.

Like other Native Americans, and like the colonists, the Delawares carried memories out of the colonial era through traditions. Traditions, as defined by the Africanist Jan Vansina's influential *Oral Tradition as History*, are "verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation."[47] They are transmitted through "a chain of iterations" beyond the period in which they supposedly originated.[48] Tradition is distinct, then, from oral history, which refers to accounts told by an event's participants and witnesses. While different Native American groups have used a variety of sign systems, including wampum, the primary medium for their traditions is speech. However, for most scholars,

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and increasingly for Indians as well, the only, necessarily partial, access to these traditions is through recorded (and translated) speech. Peter Nabokov, in his important study of Native American philosophies and media of history, points out that when scholars hold up oral traditions against the "written record," they are typically found wanting: "keen disappointment can ensue when the facts of these stories don't add up or seem 'softer' than hard facts should be. This attitude can mushroom into blanket repudiation, as with anthropologist Robert Lowie's notorious pronouncement in 1915, 'I cannot attach to oral traditions any historical value whatsoever under any conditions whatsoever.'"[49] As Nabokov suggests, when oral traditions are recognized as a dynamic, porous medium, their "historical value" can become more ascertainable.

The opposition between Native American and Western memory practices can easily be overstated. Anglo-American communities, too, have oral histories and traditions, and they have served much the same functions as Native American ones. The adjective most often used to designate these is "popular." Popular traditions have also been subjected to "blanket repudiation." The primary repository—in effect, a medium—for both native and popular traditions is aged persons—the ideal transmission is not between consecutive generations but between the very old and the young. This book, accordingly, mentions many septuagenarians and octogenarians. The aim was to minimize the number of links in a chain of memory by maximizing their length: a single interlocking set could span a century and a half. In the nineteenth century, the task of preserving memories from before the War of Independence was taken up by popular or local historians, who gathered in local historical societies, compared accounts in dedicated "olden time" columns in local newspapers, placed monuments, and compiled sometimes monumental volumes. The paradigmatic work in this genre is John Fanning Watson's *Annals of* Philadelphia, which was originally published in 1830 and was reissued in 1844 in a two-volume expanded edition with the title *Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, in the olden time; being a collection of memoirs,*

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anecdotes, and incidents of the city and its inhabitants, and of the earliest settlements of the inland part of Pennsylvania, from the days of the founders (1830).[50]

A sense in which such memory work can be contrasted with that of Native American tradition-bearers is with regard to place.[51] While Native American refugees strove to maintain a sense of cultural continuity on behalf of a deracinated people, historians like Watson attempted to imbue an exogenous community with a sense of rootedness. This mission was shared, sometimes from an ironic, or even physical, distance by visual artists like Benjamin West and John Trumbull, and writers like James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving, whose commendation was included in Watson's second edition: "he is doing an important service to his country, by multiplying the local associations of ideas, and the strong but invisible ties of the mind and of the heart which bind the native to the paternal soil."[52]

Popular historians sought not only to discover and preserve "traditional and other testimony" but also to restore or substantiate it through archival research.[53] They were not always insensible to the opinions of the practitioners of what Edward Shils calls "scientific or critical historiography."[54] Often, the local historians and antiquarians were men of means and prestige, like Roberts Vaux, a founding member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) in Philadelphia, and William W. H. Davis, founder of the Bucks County Historical Society; they wished to be recognized as serious amateurs. While they were unwilling to concede the disinterested pursuit of truth to professional scholars, they were more avowedly motivated by the love of their regions.[55]

While academic historians and other professional students of the past also manifestly participate in discourse communities, characterized by highly specialized generic forms and, above all, an emphasis on documentation, these scholarly disciplines are not typically considered as mnemonic communities. Yet as Astrid Erll writes, "history is but yet another mode of cultural memory, and historiography its specific medium."[56] Many of the theoretical generalizations about collective memory can be applied to the corpus of scholarship surrounding a given field of

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academic inquiry. For example, it can be divided into a "canon" of standard texts and a vast repository, or "archive"; it is characterized by a large "floating gap" separating a scant few decades—generations?—of current and recent scholarship from foundational texts and figures.[57] In their orientation toward the past, historical fields, like historical memory, also have a "dynamic" relation with present political and cultural concerns.

Thinking of academic historians and other professional scholars as participants in communities of memory is one way to move beyond the opposition between lifeless history and living memory that was a tenet of the early scholarship in the field of memory studies.[58] Instead of opposing history to memory, we can consider the interactions, sometimes conflictive, between discourse communities. Yet the conceptual distinction between history and memory remains useful.[59] I retain the word *history* in my subtitle because the interaction between memory and language ideologies in relations between Native Americans and colonists was historically significant. In many instances, the media of memory were also the media of land transactions and treaties. Moreover, memory itself was a factor in diplomacy, as the parties invoked supposed precedents or called for the renewal of former terms.

MEMORIES OF ENCOUNTERS, ENCOUNTERS OF MEMORIES

For the descendants of the Native Americans and the colonists, the diffusion and deterioration of the community of memory as such was one of the prompts to the production of memory work, in the forms of commemoration, retrospection, and, importantly, research. Yet as each community has a different experience of the discontinuity of the present with the past, they can also come to depend on one another. For example, as I will discuss in chapter 3, when commissioned to corroborate the popular tradition that a Great Treaty took place between William Penn and the Lenapes under the Elm Tree at Shackamaxon soon after Penn's landing in 1682, Peter Stephen Du Ponceau and Joshua Francis

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Fisher invoked the authority of Native American memory. They drew from Heckewelder's description of the Delawares' commemoration of the Great Treaty, noting that the Indians' use of wampum, "with the aid of tradition," enabled their memories of Penn to survive "the lapse of one hundred years."[60]

Similarly, Indians increasingly consulted the work of non-Indian scholars for information about their history. They came to depend on extrinsic archives and the scholars who accessed and interpreted them because, until they began to create their own written records, they had no "passive storing memory" of their own.[61] For example, Richard Calmit Adams, a Delaware Indian who tirelessly served his people as a legal advocate during the period of the Dawes Act (1887–1934), also attempted to restore their history.[62] In *A Brief History of the Delaware Indians* he clearly articulated the relation between his legal advocacy and history writing: "my effort is only to produce a brief and accurate sketch of the history of my people, at the time when the last bond uniting them in tribal relations is being severed by the action of the General Government in segregating their lands, allotting them in severalty, and thereby rendering them in all respects citizens of the United States."[63] Adams was attempting to counter this centrifugal force through history writing, yet his dependence on the writings of non-Indians itself attests to the ongoing disintegration of Delaware community and memory, and the challenges facing a historian of a people who had been radically uprooted from their ancestral territory.

If Adams's rhetorical purpose for his written history was to establish Delaware peoplehood to outsiders, the purpose usually attributed to collective memory is the establishment and maintenance of in-group identity, at levels ranging to families and small social cliques to nations. Theories of memory correlate to the spectrum between subjective representation and objective record discussed above. The central question has been whether the "present is predominantly shaped by the past or vice-versa."[64] For Halbwachs, the present is both a filter and a lens for the past; groups select, forget, amplify, minimize, and perhaps otherwise distort elements from their past according to their present needs

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and circumstances.[65] The more tendentious "presentist" or "invention of tradition" approach posits a top-down construction of memory "as a means of exercising power, to establish or legitimize institutions, to symbolize social cohesion and to socialize individuals to the existing social order."[66] The current, more nuanced view posits that collective memory always involves "a fluid negotiation between the desires of the present and the legacies of the past."[67]

An implication of this "dynamic" view is that traditions might present something of a sedimentary record of their passage through time, including their inception.[68] However, the tendency of memory studies is "to study the existence of tradition in the present without searching for what is beneath it and without asking whether such memories are authentic."[69] The difference for this study is that the receptions of the stories of the Delawares' and colonists' pasts were precisely concerned with issues of truth and authenticity—the validity of the represented memories as historical records. These controversies involved language ideologies, judgments about which media were the most reliable conduits for communication between the past and the present. Importantly, the concern was at both ends; treaties and land transactions involved prospective efforts to relay their results to future generations, and therefore should fit within the purview of a colonialist mnemohistory. Similarly, acts of remembrance were also communications to the future, like switches in a telegraph; there is no easy distinction between retrospective and prospective memory. "Your Leagues with your Father *William Penn*, and with his Governours," Governor Patrick Gordon declared to delegations of Conestoga, Brandywine Delawares, Conoy, and Shawnee Indians in May 1728, "are in Writing on Record, that our Children and our Childrens Children, may have them in everlasting Remembrance: And we know that you preserve the Memory of these Things amongst you, by telling them to your Children, and they again to the next Generation, so that they remain stamp'd on your Minds never to be forgot."[70]

Gordon's speech had been prepared in writing in council, thus we can have relative confidence that the words that appear in the minutes are

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indicative of the ones he pronounced on the occasion of a treaty meeting to settle the peace after an outbreak of murders and retaliations. The written representation of the spoken response of the Indian spokesman, interpreted by a colonist, John Scull, is much more mediated.[71] Nevertheless, it might remind us that the dynamic process of the transmission and construction of memory, perhaps especially in situations of conflict, could involve deliberate suppression as well as retention: "presenting a Belt of Wampum of Eight Rows, they say: They would not have the Governour grieve too much for the rash inconsiderate Actions that of late have been committed; they must be buried & forgot." Somewhat paradoxically, the wampum belt may have functioned as a contract to remember to forget the immediate past and to fixate on the more distant one: "they are extreamely glad & satisfied with what the Governour said to them yesterday, it greatly rejoiced their Hearts that they have no such Speech made to them since the time that the Great William Penn was amongst them, all was good and nothing was amiss."[72]

The distinction Gordon makes between "Writing on Record" and unwritten "Memory" is central to the four chapters that follow. Far from a simple binary opposition, though, what emerges is a complicated and layered interrelationship, involving, for example, written representations of unwritten memories of written records. The first chapter is on representations of the Delawares' accounts of their own origins, and therefore might be expected to observe the familiar fault line between prehistory and the advent of written history with the arrival of the colonists. In the early national United States, the view that Indians were unwilling and unable to learn to read and write, the notion "that history contains no records of a Red or of a Black nation, which has rivaled the Whites, in the high attainments of genius and knowledge," was a basis for skepticism about the possibility of civilizing the Indians and therefore an argument for their removal to lands west of the Mississippi.[73] I argue that the well-meaning opposition to this racial prejudice can help explain the reception, and even the existence, of the *Walam Olum*. This elaborate, ideographic version of the migration tradition recorded by John Heckewelder is the

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"one native record" from "what is now the United States," according to the 1921 *Cambridge History of American Literature*, that "could be called, in our fashion, a book."[74] The *Walam Olum* first appeared as a manuscript, an alleged copy made by the naturalist Constantine Rafinesque of a set of etched cedar sticks that he never brought forward. The authenticity controversy illustrates the interrelationship between media and between communities of memory: one of the evidences against the authenticity of the *Walam Olum* is the lack of attestation for it in the written representations of Delaware oral traditions composed by Heckewelder and his Moravian colleagues and in subsequent ethnographic research. "For a document purporting to contain the most important record of North American Indian origins," writes David M. Oestreicher, the principal debunker of the *Walam Olum* "hoax," "the silence in the record is baffling and astonishing."[75]

While in the case of the *Walam Olum* the absence of collaboration in recorded oral traditions is negative evidence against the authenticity of a document, it is more typical for an absence of corroboration in the so-called documentary record to be cited as evidence against the historicity of an oral tradition. The question is not so much whether the traditional account of an event is an authentic product of a given culture, but rather whether it has any value as a record of that event. The two issues overlap, however; the determination that a given tradition does not issue from the event it purports to represent, or that that event never occurred, contradicts the tradition's implicit explanation of its own provenance and attributes to it a sort of artificiality. In the case of Heckewelder's rendition of the "Indian Account of the First Arrival of the Dutch at New York Island," the represented tradition contains either a record of an implausible event or evidence of European cultural influence. For the most part, as some historians have suggested, the tradition is plausibly congruent, or at least compatible, with Robert Juet's journal of Hudson's third voyage in 1609. But the conclusion of the traditional account diverges sharply from any colonial sources, presenting a parallel, instead, to the classical tale of Queen Dido's acquisition of the site for her citadel at Carthage.

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According to this tale, Dido asked King Hiarbas for as much land as an oxhide could cover, and then cut it into strips, laid it out in a circle, and claimed all that it enclosed. How do we explain the appearance of the "Dido motif" in a native tradition?

I argue that what might seem to be the obvious explanation, that the Indians learned the story from Europeans and incorporated it into a historical tradition as a metaphorical representation of "colonial trickery," depends on questionable assumptions about the transmission of stories, both between peoples and across time.[76] This explanation struggles to account for what appears to be a widespread discursive phenomenon—the appearance of the Dido motif in multiple non-European accounts of the founding of early modern European maritime imperial outposts. My goal in the second chapter is not to demonstrate that, in any particular instance, colonists asked for as much land as a bullock's hide could cover, and then cut the hide into strips to claim land as the site of the fort (as the multiple instances maintain). I do hope to demonstrate that this explanation for the inception of the tradition is at least as likely as the alternative, and therefore, that the near universal refusal in existing scholarship to consider the possibility that Dutch colonists might have employed Dido's ruse is a product of language ideology—of preconceptions about verisimilitude, word-of-mouth transmission, and the reliability of oral traditions vis-à-vis the documentary record. Language ideologies are not necessarily wrong, but they are worth examining.

Adducing the *absence* of a written record as negative evidence against a tradition is perhaps the ultimate expression of the ideology of language that has been called "archival positivism," the dependence on the primary source document as the "vehicle of historical truth."[77] In the nineteenth century, popular historians felt that positivism threatened the tradition that William Penn had met with Delaware leaders, especially the famous Tammany (Tamanend) under a Great Elm tree at the Indian village of Shackamaxon in 1682. Thanks largely to reproductions and adaptations of Benjamin West's historical tableau *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians When He Founded the Province of Pennsylvania in North America* (1771–72),

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the story had become more widely diffused, colorful, and detailed than ever. It was Pennsylvania's civic myth.[78] The treaty was, according to a florid encomium published on its supposed bicentennial, "part of our first inheritance of freedom; a part of the Christianity of the world." Yet there were those who "questioned the precious story," who subjected it to their "narrower scrutinies" and determined that "humanity in its credulity and dependence upon such noble examples, had created out of its own imagination this story of 'The Man and the Sorrowless Tree.'"[79] Skeptics pointed to the unlikelihood or impossibility of some of the accumulated details of the tradition, especially the 1682 date, and especially to the lack of "positive proof."[80]

Art historians indirectly espouse such positivism in their tendency to reduce the treaty tradition to its most prominent expression in West's "Penn's Treaty."[81] That is, the absence of a treaty document is conducive to treating not only the painting but the tradition as a reflection of the political situation in 1771–72 rather than a historical record of an event at the founding of Pennsylvania. Actually, however, there are documentary indications that Penn did hold a significant treaty meeting with the Delawares during his first year in Pennsylvania, and nothing to contradict its location under the Elm Tree at Shackamaxon. Chapter 3 focuses on the response of proponents of the tradition to positivist "doubts," and to the threatened rupture of the "chain of memory," especially with the fall of the Great Tree in an 1810 storm.[82] The most fascinating aspect of this response is the recourse to Delaware memories, as represented by Heckewelder, and as supposedly embodied by the Treaty Belt, a wampum belt passed down through the Penn family until Granville John Penn donated it to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1857.

Missing records figure prominently in this book: the etched cedar sticks of the *Walam Olum*; a colonial document corroborating the tradition about the bullock's hide; the parchment containing the articles of the Great Treaty; and the 1686 deed in which Delaware sachems (leaders) agree to transfer to William Penn a tract of land to be measured by a day and a half's walk. This missing deed, represented by a doubtful

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copy, was the basis for the 1737 Walking Purchase, an act of optimization in which the Pennsylvania Proprietors stuck closely to the letter of the purported agreement, but interpreted it unilaterally, hiring athletic men as the walkers and pushing them beyond their physical limits (only one was able to complete it). Through the so-called Indian Walk, the Proprietors took in approximately five hundred thousand acres, including the Forks of Delaware region they coveted.[83]

While the historiography on the Walking Purchase has focused on the questions of whether and how the Proprietors cheated the Delawares, I examine the controversy as a clash of mnemonic communities. The 1737 Indian Walk and the negotiations that preceded it pitted the erudite provincial secretary James Logan, with his equivocal written record, against the Forks sachem Nutimus, and the "Indian Way" of communicating and remembering land transactions.[84] After the Walking Purchase, the Forks Indians attempted to intervene in the written record and to get redress for their grievances. During the period of the French and Indian War, following Nutimus's nephew Teedyuscung's allegation of fraud in 1756, the Proprietors, their Quaker political opponents, and the Delawares contended over what had happened during the 1730s. To an extraordinary extent the dispute became embroiled in matters of communicative protocol, over who should have access to the existing documentary record and control over the production of the ongoing one. Afterward, the debate among historians depended largely on whose archives of represented memories they consulted, and on their approaches to reading them; the Walking Purchase was either a legitimate grievance or a retroactive "casus belli" for Delaware raids and a scandal engineered by the Quakers to deflect the blame for their pacifist refusal to fund the defense of the frontier onto the Proprietors for their handling of Indian affairs.[85]

The Walking Purchase archives provide evidence of the other side of the methodological problem facing colonialist scholars who listen for the "voices" of Native Americans through written records. The Indians were unequal participants in "literacy events," a term used by the

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sociolinguist Shirley Brice Heath to signify "any event in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions or their interpretive processes," or "any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role."[86] In these scenes of translation and transcription, of reading aloud, brandishing documents, and composing depositions and affidavits, the challenge facing the Indians was to make their voices heard. They found themselves trapped in the same orality-literacy dialectic that has since preoccupied literary critics.[87] On the one hand, an oral utterance might be authentic, but as Walter Ong wrote, it "exists only when it is going out of existence."[88] It might be unheeded or misconstrued; it cannot simply pass into the written record, but it must be represented. In the process of translation and transcription, the spoken word is unavoidably, and perhaps deliberately and egregiously, distorted. There is no necessary relationship between speech and represented speech; colonial scribes can put words in the mouths of Indian orators almost as novelists can attribute speech to their characters. On the other hand, when the Indians attempted to communicate through writing, their statements were subject to critique: their words were inappropriate; the words in writing could not possibly *be* their own words; someone has misrepresented their intentions in putting their words to paper. Part of what makes Nutimus and Teedyuscung such compelling figures is that they sought more control over the destiny of their words than the British were willing to allow.

I have arranged the chapters that follow in a straightforward chronological sequence, roughly from the period before colonization to the mid-eighteenth century. The contrived nature of this organization becomes apparent in view of the various "moments" in the life of a history or memory. Here I am borrowing Brook Thomas's schema for the analysis of a historical novel. He examines "three historical moments: its moment of representation, its moment of production, and its many moments of reception, from the time it was produced until today."[89] With *The Scarlet Letter*, for instance, these moments are the mid-seventeenth century, the mid-nineteenth century, and the period from 1850 to the

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present. (A complication with memories is that reception and production overlap, although the same might be said of the "construction" of texts.[90]) Thus the moments of representation for the stories I discuss line up sequentially, but the other moments do not. The media of memory become the central issue when the memory becomes exposed to doubt: with the treaty tradition, this moment occurred in the early nineteenth century, especially after the fall of the Great Elm in 1810; with the Walking Purchase, it was almost immediate. Thus the temporal emphases of my chapters vary. Another way to conceptualize the order of the chapters is that the spans between the moment of representation and the moments of reception become progressively narrower: the stories of origin in chapter 1 look back as far as Creation, while the Walking Purchase controversy during the French and Indian War was over events from the 1680s and the 1730s, as well as ones unfolding in that past present.

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