



A Praying People: Massachusetts Acculturation and the Failure of the Puritan Mission, 1600-1690

Dane Morrison, Dane Morrison

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This is the first book-length history of the «remnants» of the Massachusetts and Wampanoag tribes, documenting their struggle to survive devastating epidemics and Puritan colonization. Morrison incorporates insights from anthropology and organization studies to show how the adoption of Puritan beliefs and practices by bands of «praying Indians» constituted a viable, if defensive, strategy of acculturation. The emergent institution of Praying Town became both the organization and the process through which these groups of Native Americans hoped to achieve cultural revitalization. Tragically, as the remnant peoples looked to Puritan ways for guidance in redefining their identity, profound changes within colonial society were leading a new generation of colonists to subsume their own spiritual mission under more commercial concerns. In linking their destiny to weakening elements in Puritan culture, the Praying Indians were left unprotected when King Philip's War recast the framework of relations between colonists and Native Americans.

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