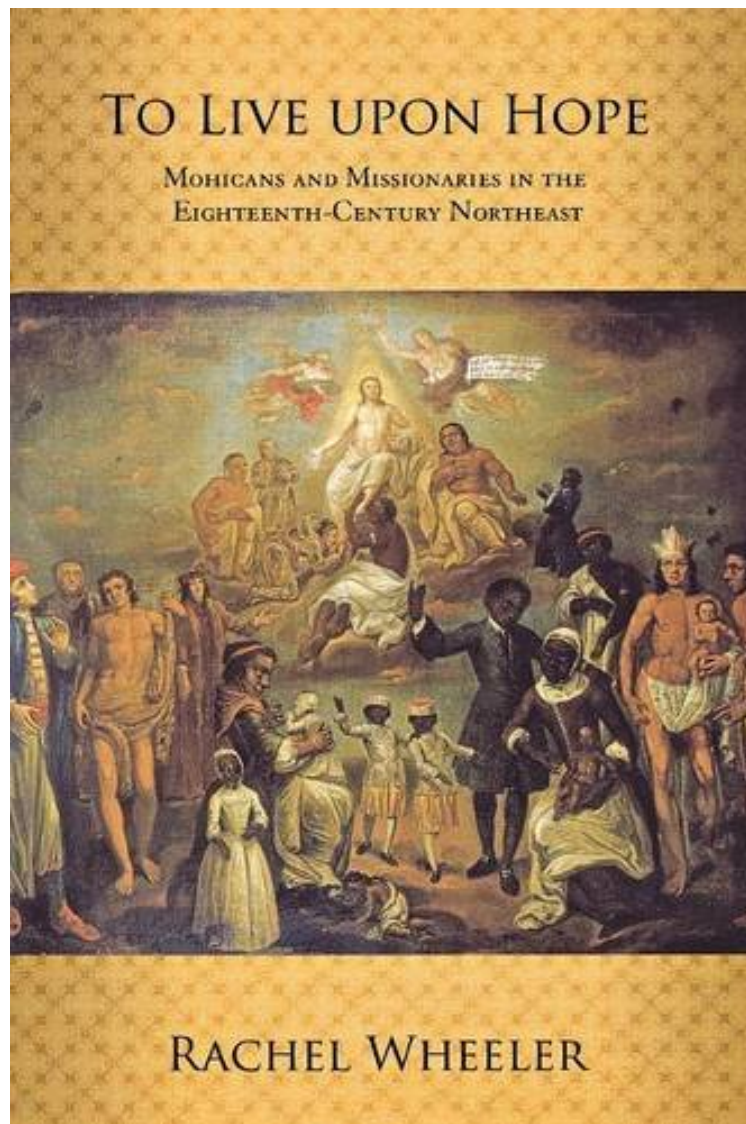


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## To Live upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast

*Rachel Wheeler*

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**Rachel Wheeler : To Live upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised To Live upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Book!By MHThis book is a book that I'm glad is in my bookcase so I can read and enjoy it again and again. Most books treat Christian missionaries with disdain and their

converts as simpletons or tools but not this book! The Native American converts are so human and real and seeking a way to deal with the hardships of life and seeking the ultimate fellowship that one can only find with God. If you are interested in Eastern Native Americans and 18th century Great Awakening Christianity and how both of them clashed and blended and interacted with each other this is the book for you. This book shows the evils of the human heart and the goodness of God. Since there is not many books on this subject I will write that this book is worth the money for the style the author uses and the many facts and information that the author put in this book.

Two Northeast Indian communities with similar histories of colonization accepted Congregational and Moravian missionaries, respectively, within five years of one another: the Mohicans of Stockbridge, Massachusetts (1735), and Shekomeko, in Dutchess County, New York (1740). In *To Live upon Hope*, Rachel Wheeler explores the question of what "missionary Christianity" became in the hands of these two native communities. The Mohicans of Stockbridge and Shekomeko drew different conclusions from their experiences with colonial powers. Both tried to preserve what they deemed core elements of Mohican culture. The Indians of Stockbridge believed education in English cultural ways was essential to their survival and cast their acceptance of the mission project as a means of preserving their historic roles as cultural intermediaries. The Mohicans of Shekomeko, by contrast, sought new sources of spiritual power that might be accessed in order to combat the ills that came with colonization, such as alcohol and disease. Through extensive research, especially in the Moravian records of day-to-day life, Wheeler offers an understanding of the lived experience of Mohican communities under colonialism. She complicates the understanding of eighteenth-century American Christianity by demonstrating that mission programs were not always driven by the destruction of indigenous culture and the advancement of imperial projects. *To Live upon Hope* challenges the prevailing view of accommodation or resistance as the two poles of Indian responses to European colonization. Colonialism placed severe strains on native peoples, Wheeler finds, yet Indians also exercised a level of agency and creativity that aided in their survival.

"Behind the mythology of *The Last of the Mohicans* and recent revisionist accounts, Native and otherwise, that regard the Christian mission to the Indians as an unmitigated disaster, there lies a tangled and often deeply moving tale, well told by Rachel Wheeler. . . . We should read it to better understand a crucial episode in the national story, and also to shine a comparative light on the working out of our own faith." *Christianity Today* "To Live Upon Hope is a monumental study of the Mohican Indian mission experience in the eighteenth century. . . . Using her tenacious skill at uncovering countless obscure manuscript sources, Rachel Wheeler has re-created the little-known story of these Indian missions and, in comparing the two, placed her emphasis on the 'reconfiguration of peoples and the formation of racial identity.' . . . To Live Upon Hope outlines the careers of many fascinating characters, including Umpachene and Hendrick at Stockbridge and Shabash, Tschoop, and Joshua at Shekomeko. Wheeler's use of the sources is thorough and unmatched; indeed, her study serves as a sourcebook for the period. . . . Wheeler's history is a major work and should remain as the definitive study of the Mohican mission experience for many years to come. Demonstrating clearly and eloquently that the Mohicans did not rely on hope alone to survive in a changing world, she shows that they acted and they adapted." *Lion Miles, The New England Quarterly, March 2009* "In this meticulously researched and well-written book, Rachel Wheeler adds to the growing scholarship exploring how Native American communities adapted 'missionary Christianity' to suit their own needs. . . . Wheeler successfully examines some of the complex responses native peoples developed in a rapidly changing colonial world." *Shawn G. Wiemann, History: s of New Books* "Wheeler is particularly strong on Moravian Mohican spirituality, including its gendered dimensions, and her thorough and compelling reading of Edwards's relationship with the Stockbridge Mohicans must now stand as the authoritative discussion of that subject. The comparative dimension only adds to the book's richness, particularly by highlighting perhaps inadvertently the relatively limited role played by piety and religious practice, as opposed to political and material benefits, in motivating eastern Indians to work with Anglo-Protestant missionaries. *To Live upon Hope* is sure to become required reading for anyone interested in Indians and/or religion, particularly in eighteenth-century North America." *Neal Salisbury, William and Mary Quarterly* "This is a wonderful book for what it does for the field of mission history. Comparing two communities influenced by two different denominations brings into sharp relief the competition for native souls in colonial British America; Wheeler never loses sight of the ferocious power dynamics of colonialism. Wheeler has also accomplished a tough task, showing how Mohicans made two types of Protestantism their own. *To Live upon Hope* is a reminder that Christianity was not always a shock-troop weapon against native peoples; it could become a source of Indian pride and strength. Wheeler's dual approach is also a tragic statement on the bar of civility and racial superiority with some mission efforts that always set limits on native acceptance into Anglo-American society. There is much left to ponder with this work." *Journal of American History, June 2009* "To Live upon Hope contributes significantly to underattended topics through careful study of local archives. Rachel Wheeler applies appropriately adapted theory to develop fresh arguments about the relations of power between imperial and indigenous agency in a book that should make useful reading for scholars in Native American Studies and Colonial/Postcolonial Studies. . . . Chapter six ("Mohican Men and Jesus as Manitou") and chapter eight

("Mohican Women and the Community of the Blood") best exemplify her central arguments about Mohican Christianity. They are worth the purchasing price of the whole book for anyone interested in discussing the gendered dimensions of Indian religious conversion in eighteenth century America as part of an advanced undergraduate or graduate seminar."James O'Neil Spady, *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Fall 2009"Rachel Wheeler provides an impressive amount of texture, detail, and contingency as she traces the outline of two very different and intriguing mission towns. Throughout, Wheeler's emphasis is on how Indians 'adapted Christianity to preserve and construct community.' Wheeler is a deft storyteller. *To Live Upon Hope* is perhaps the most sophisticated analysis of northeastern Indian lifeworlds and religious interiority that we have to date, in part because of Wheeler's mastery of the difficult eighteenth-century Moravian manuscript archives a feat claimed only by a few contemporary American historians. And for this and many other reasons, this excellent volume is sure to be enjoyed by students and historians interested in Native American studies and/or the religious history of early America."Journal of Social History "Rachel Wheeler's *To Live upon Hope* is simply superb. It is an informed ethnographic report on Native American religion, a sophisticated comparative study of Congregationalist and Moravian missionary practices, a major contribution to the pluralization of colonial American studies, a thoughtful reflection on the failures of the Revolution to reach Indian communities, and a rich source of intensely poignant biographical narratives. It should satisfy readers with a wide variety of historical interests."Mark Noll, Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History, University of Notre Dame, author of *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* "To Live upon Hope will affect the way American religious history is taught. Rachel Wheeler shows how Christianity provided a language for coping with the suffering brought about by colonization. Christianity also offered ritual practices that preserved aspects of an indigenous worldview while accounting for new kinds of violence and destruction. Readers will appreciate this book's analysis of religious emotion and its far-reaching implications."Amanda Porterfield, Robert A. Spivey Professor of Religion, Florida State University, author of *Healing in the History of Christianity* "This is a book we have long been waiting for. Smashing easy generalizations about colonizer and colonized, Christianity and Native tradition, and culture and acculturation, *To Live upon Hope* reveals real people struggling to make sense of their lives in times of tremendous upheaval. Rachel Wheeler presents the stories of two Mohican communities' different experiences with various ways of responding to European imperialism and seeking spiritual meaning while making hard political choices. In so doing, she recovers textures of eighteenth-century Native experience that until now seemed inaccessible."Daniel K. Richter, the Richard S. Dunn Director, McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania, author of *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* "In a book that fulfills its rare ambition to treat both Indians and colonists with an even hand, Rachel Wheeler systematically employs the rich German-language Moravian archive to study New England Indian history. This pathbreaking use of sources and Wheeler's fine-grained analysis of the differing Moravian and Congregationalist priorities are major achievements. What makes *To Live upon Hope* even more important is Wheeler's sophisticated exploration of the Moravians' appeal to the Mohicans at emotional, spiritual, social, and political levels. She uses that understanding to better explain what drew Mohicans to and what repelled them from the Congregationalist mission at Stockbridge."David J. Silverman, The George Washington University, author of *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha's Vineyard, 1600-1871* From the Back Cover "To Live upon Hope will affect the way American religious history is taught. Rachel Wheeler shows how Christianity provided a language for coping with the suffering brought about by colonization and offered ritual practices that preserved aspects of an indigenous worldview while accounting for new kinds of violence and destruction. She also takes a giant step forward in understanding eighteenth-century American evangelicalism by showing the difference between German and English approaches: the Moravian records reveal much about the religious lives of individual Mohicans, while those kept by English missionaries are concerned with governing, disciplining, and civilizing Mohicans. Readers will appreciate the fine-grained analysis of religious emotion this book provides as well as its far-reaching implications."--Amanda Porterfield, Robert A. Spivey Professor of Religion, Florida State University "To Live upon Hope is that rare work that fulfills its ambition to treat both Indians and colonists with an even hand. Rachel Wheeler is the only scholar of whom I'm aware to systematically employ the rich German-language Moravian archive to study New England Indian history. This pathbreaking use of sources, and Wheeler's fine-grained analysis of the differing Moravian and Congregationalist priorities, is a major achievement. What makes *To Live upon Hope* even more important is Wheeler's sophisticated exploration of the Moravians' appeal to the Mohicans at emotional, spiritual, social, and political levels and her use of that understanding to better explain what drew Mohicans to--and what repelled them from--the Congregationalist mission at Stockbridge."--David J. Silverman, The George Washington University About the Author Rachel Wheeler is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis.