

Natic, the chief of these, and covering six thousand acres, was settled in 1651, and into it were gathered the Indians near Dedham and some from Concord. It was laid out with three principal streets; and upon these, parcels of land were set apart for a dwelling, garden and orchard, "one to be assigned to each native head of a family." The town contained a bridge 80x9 feet in length and height, with stone abutments, a palisaded fort, and a "common house" for worship, school and other purposes, all made by the Indians. There was manifested a strong desire for improvement among the natives. They began to dress like the English, to give up their savage customs, to till the ground; the women learned to spin, so there was a great demand for farming implements and spinning-wheels. They began to put away their immoralities, to keep the Sabbath, to catechise their children, and to pray in their families. Schools were established, and the brightest pupils from them were put under competent masters and instructed in Latin, Greek and English.

In 1654, at Natic, was formed the first Indian church of those who had been most carefully examined and re-examined by the ministers, and who gave good evidence by their "confessions" and lives of being true Christians.

That the "Scriptures might not in an unknown tongue be locked" from the natives, Eliot, in 1649, began his translation, the first from the English into a heathen language. This work of vast labor, because of the strangeness of the language and the "interminable" words, was carried on at intervals, for beside the Indian work he had the care of an important church. In 1661 the New Testament was completed, printed at Cambridge, and a handsomely bound copy was sent to Charles II., to enlist his interest in the good work. In 1664 the whole Bible was printed at Cambridge, and two hundred copies were at once put into circulation. If no living man can read that translation, who shall say it was made in vain?

Eliot was anxious to have a trained native ministry, and for this purpose provision was made at Cambridge. Not far from 1661, a brick building for about twenty students, and called Indian College, was built there. Two Indians completed the course, one was drowned just before taking his degree, and the other died soon after his graduation. Others died who had been instructed there, so "many friends began to doubt the success of the enterprise," and after a time the building was used for other purposes.

Meanwhile the work had been carried on in Plymouth by the "godly and gracious Richard Bourn," and in 1666 he was able to gather a church at Marshpee. John Eliot and his son, the governor, several magistrates and ministers of Plymouth helped in organizing it; and all the churches of the colony, having read the "confessions" of the Indians, gave their approval.