The Eliot Memorial

This site on Farlow Hill in Newton Corner commemorates the spot where Reverend John Eliot's preached the Gospel to Chief Waban and his people, natives to the area belonging to the Massachuset tribe, on October 28, 1646. Between 1617 and 1619 more than 80 percent of the Massachuset people succumbed to illnesses like smallpox and measles transmitted by Europeans, and with very few left in the area by the time Puritans arrived in 1630. John Eliot learned the Algonquian language so that he could preach to the remaining Massachuset, often accompanied by Edward Jackson and Daniel Gookin. Once Waban's people accepted Christianity, the Massachusetts General Court granted them a settlement called "Nonantum," and they became referred to as "Praying Indians." The group moved to Natick in 1651.

More "Praying Indian" villages were soon established in other locations in Eastern Massachusetts until the outbreak of King Philip's War between Massachusetts Bay Colony and the Wampanoag in 1675. During that time, many "Praying Indians" were interred on Deer Island regardless of whether they were Wampanoag, including those converted by John Eliot. The Eliot Memorial Association was formed in 1876, and the land was given by the Kenrick family along with $300 for the "Eliot Fund" for annual prizes encouraging the study of Eliot in Newton Public Schools. A statue of Waban was planned for the monument, but was never made.


HERE AT NONANTUM. OCTOBER 28. 1646. IN WABAN'S WIGWAM
NEAR THIS SPOT JOHN ELIOT BEGAN TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO
THE INDIANS. HERE RE ED THE
COMMUNITY OF INDIANS IN THE ENGLISH COLONIES.


ON THIS SITE
JOHN ELIOT
PREACHED TO THE INDIANS
OCTOBER 28, 1646


ELLIOT, THE FIRST MISSIONARY AMONG THE INDIANS.


YABAN