

Harvard University Native American Program
Brown Bag Seminar Series

Presents:

*The Common Pot: Indigenous Writing and the
Reconstruction of Native Space in the Northeast*

by

Lisa Brooks

Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Wednesday, November 9, 2005

12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Suite 100 Conference Room, 124 Mt. Auburn, KSG

Lisa Brooks (Abenaki) is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, with a joint appointment in History and Literature and Folklore and Mythology. Professor Brooks received her B.A. in Anthropology and Native American Studies from Goddard College, her M.A. in English Literature from Boston College, and her Ph.D. in English Language and Literature (with a minor in American Indian Studies) from Cornell University. At Harvard, she teaches courses in Native American literature, with attention to historical and contemporary political contexts, and a special focus on the role of writing in the Native northeast.

About her research: While literary critics have often portrayed early native writers either as individuals “caught between two worlds,” or as “subjects” whom, even as they resisted the colonial world, struggled to exist within it, this study demonstrates the ways in which native leaders adopted writing as a tool to reconstruct and reclaim “native rights” and “native land.” In particular, it explores the operation of writing within the network of waterways and relations that constitutes the “native space” of the northeast. Far from being “corrupted” by writing, native people frequently resisted the role designed for them by their missionary teachers, and used the skills they acquired to compose petitions, political tracts, and speeches; to record community councils and histories; and, most importantly, to imagine collectively the routes through which the Common Pot could survive.