



DECOLONIZING THE DIET
Nutrition, Immunity and the
Warning from Early America



Gideon A. Mailer and Nicola E. Hale

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By Gideon Mailer and Nicola Hale

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A bold re-assessment of the role of food and nutrition in the history of human immunity and in the destruction of native American life.

"Mailer and Hale challenge us to consider how colonization's multiple consequences—dietary changes, diseases, and settler invasions—resulted in long-term problems for Indigenous Peoples. Based on cutting-edge research on nutrition, immunity and ethnohistory, *Decolonizing the Diet* offers a fascinating analysis that both illuminates the past and informs the present."

—Paul Kelton, Professor of History and Robert David Lion Gardiner Chair, Department of History, Stony Brook University, USA

"Mailer and Hale provide a powerful critique of Virgin Soil theory and its claim that epidemics were the inevitable consequence of European colonization. Drawing on cutting-edge nutrition science, immunology, and archeology, they conclusively demonstrate how the chaos of encounter disrupted American Indian agriculture, triggered widespread malnutrition and left Indians susceptible to dire mortality."

—David S. Jones, A. Bernard Ackerman Professor of the Culture of Medicine, Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine, Harvard University, USA

Synthesizing the science of nutrition, immunity and evolutionary genetics with a controversial new history of indigenous North America, "*Decolonizing the Diet*" shows how populations fail to recover from epidemics when their ability to hunt, gather and farm nutritionally dense plants and animals is diminished by war, colonization and cultural destruction.

Contents

Acknowledgments; Introduction; Nutrition and Immunity in Native America: A Historical and Biological Controversy; Chapter 1: The Evolution of Nutrition and Immunity: From the Paleolithic Era to the Medieval European Black Death; Chapter 2: More Than Maize: Native American Subsistence Strategies from the Bering Migration to the Eve of Contact; Chapter 3: Micronutrients and Immunity in Native America, 1492– 1750; Chapter 4: Metabolic Health and Immunity in Native America, 1750– 1950; Epilogue: *Decolonizing the Diet*: Food Sovereignty and Biodiversity; Notes; Index.

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Gideon A. Mailer is associate professor in early American history at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, USA.

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