

Edited by

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Susan Sleeper-Smith, Juliana Barr, Jean M. O'Brien,
Nancy Shoemaker, and Scott Manning Stevens



Why You Can't Teach
United States History
without
American Indians

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These papers emerged from the symposium “Why You Can’t Teach U.S. History Without American Indians,” held at the Newberry Library on May 3 and 4, 2013. The editors hope that this volume will encourage other university programs to join with the McNickle Center in developing seminars and publications that help change the teaching of U.S. history and benefit American Indian and indigenous people. This symposium was fully funded by Karen Klomparens, the dean of graduate studies at Michigan State University. Dean Klomparens has actively supported Native scholars and scholarship, and she has made it possible for faculty to reach out to a broader audience through her public support and financial endorsement of NCAIS and this symposium with the Newberry Library.

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The Newberry Library has long been a forerunner and vital clearinghouse of ideas and resources in Native American studies due to its innovative programs and rich archival collections. Many of the images in this book come from the 130,000 volumes, over 1 million manuscript pages, 2,000 maps, 500 atlases, 11,000 photographs, and 3,500 drawings and paintings in the Newberry’s Edward E. Ayer Collection. Since Ayer donated his collection in 1911, the Ayer endowment fund enables this collection to grow. Newberry programs supporting scholarship, education, and public history depend on outside funding. The royalties from the sale of this book will be donated to the McNickle Center to secure funding so that more Native scholars can work at the Newberry. It is our hope that scholars and students who benefit from this volume will lend their financial support

to the McNickle Center. If you wish to donate to the Newberry, please see <http://www.newberry.org/donate>.

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We are grateful to all the contributors who made this an outstanding symposium and whose hard work, innovative scholarship, and strong commitment to deadlines had allowed the timely publication of this volume.

Why You Can't Teach United States History without American Indians

Introduction

The mission of this book is to change how historians teach U.S. history. Repeatedly, we hear faculty proclaim that they would include Indians if they were more central to mainstream history. This book is a resource that should help college teachers see the connections between American Indian history and the entirety of American history and enable them to recast their survey history classes from this vantage point. We hope that readers will find strategies in this book for incorporating Indian experiences and perspectives more fully in how we teach and study U.S. history and that it will serve as a touchstone for more public debate about the purpose and content of American history courses as they are currently taught.

Until recently, historians commonly wrote about and taught U.S. history as if Indians did not exist, or, at best, they marginalized Indian people as unimportant actors in the national drama of revolution and democratic state formation. In the past few decades, scholarship in Native American and indigenous studies has witnessed remarkable growth, and works in Native history now reach a broader audience and have greater influence than ever before. Courses in Native American history have become common offerings in college curriculums, and most U.S. history survey textbooks include at least some discussion of Native history. Thus, most college-level students who enroll in survey courses in U.S. history today do learn more about North America's Native people than they would have twenty or thirty years ago. And yet college instruction in American history still tends to treat Indian history as a sidebar to Euro-American expansion. Indian material is most substantial early in the course, during the initial stages of European exploration. Students then follow European settlement across the continent, learning about how Native Americans succumbed to epidemic disease and were pushed off their lands by white settlers. Students rush through centuries, listening to lectures and reading textbooks, with little time to digest the significance and implications of these events and few opportunities to comprehend how this narrative of Native marginalization and disappearance relates to the present day.

In May 2013, the Newberry Library hosted a symposium to respond to the marginal effect Native American studies has had on the teaching of American history, and this volume is the result. The two-day symposium convened in Chicago in 2013 was not the first occasion scholars came together to discuss this issue. From 1984 to 1986, the Newberry Library's D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian (now the D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies) sponsored a series of conferences on "The Impact of Indian History on the Teaching of American History."¹ At gatherings in Chicago, Washington, and Los Angeles, participants presented papers that remarked upon Indian invisibility in U.S. history survey textbooks, Indian history as a narrative of declension, myths of extinction, the exclusion of Indians from modernity, and how metanarratives of a righteous nation built upon the principles of freedom, liberty, and justice left little room for Indian history, which by its very nature must report on and critique genocide, dispossession, and other colonizing practices that helped make the United States what it is today.

The 2013 Newberry symposium thus revisited a long-standing dilemma but with a more purposeful objective to offer college teachers a toolbox of articles to help them transform their approach to the U.S. history survey course. It was a productive and exciting conference to attend with leading scholars in Native American studies offering their expertise and insights as presenters, commentators, and audience members. Participants recognized that a complete overhaul of the U.S. history survey course would be a huge undertaking. Some members of the audience wanted American history as taught in K–12 classrooms to be considered as well. Others envisioned development of a website where syllabi or lesson plans could be posted. All these proposals seemed worthy and perhaps someday will see fruition, but our immediate goal was to propel the conversation forward with a handbook designed explicitly for teachers of U.S. history surveys at the college level. We selected papers from the conference that seemed best suited to help teachers reenvision or augment the survey as it is commonly taught.

We anticipate that this book could be used in a variety of ways. Teachers could read the book from beginning to end as they plan their courses and put together syllabi, or they might pull the book off the shelf the week or night before a class meets and read for ideas and inspiration the chapter on Bacon's Rebellion, the American Revolution, the New Deal, or whichever

essay coincides with that particular moment in the course. Incidentally, we do expect that this book will also be of interest to readers who do not teach the U.S. history survey. They will find much here that is thought provoking and germane to teaching and scholarship in American history and Native American studies.

The first sixteen essays in this volume are organized chronologically and divided, like the survey course often is, into two parts, before and after 1877. The book concludes with three conceptual essays that give teachers avenues for recasting their courses' central themes: essays by Mikal Brotnov Eckstrom and Margaret D. Jacobs on settler colonialism, K. Tsianina Lomawaima on federalism, and Chris Andersen on global indigeneity. The other sixteen chapters offer ideas for how to build Indian history into a particular segment within the larger narrative of American history. Juliana Barr's discussion of borders and borderlands in the precontact and postcontact eras, Susan Sleeper-Smith's essay on how Native involvement in the fur trade integrated Native North Americans in the expanding global economy and its attendant consumer revolutions, and Jeffrey Ostler's chapter on Plains Indian warfare approach from new directions events for which survey courses typically do include Indian history as an important element. Other essayists take a topic familiar to those of us in Native American studies and reveal its relevance to American history: Robert J. Miller on the Doctrine of Discovery and its linchpin role in justifying manifest destiny, John Laukaitis on the relationship between the civil rights movement and Indian self-determination as rights activism manifested in different ways, and David R. M. Beck and Rosalyn R. LaPier on the substantial post-World War II migrations of American Indians to cities and how they transformed those places with new institutions and initiatives.

The remaining essays focus on an iconic moment in American history and reveal how Indians were central to that event. For the pre-1877 period, James D. Rice points out the important factor Indians presented in Bacon's Rebellion, which historians too often explain as a class conflict between English colonists; Sarah M. S. Pearsall suggests ways to bring Native women into accounts of the American Revolution; Adam Jortner examines the distortions and prejudices perpetuated in maps produced for educational purposes, with an emphasis on Indian wars in the Midwest in the early national period; Jean M. O'Brien turns around the familiar tale of

adventurous California gold seekers by recounting their routine slaughter of the region's Native inhabitants and the survival of California Indians despite the gold rush's devastating impact; Paul T. Conrad enlarges upon standard treatments of slavery as a phenomenon confined to the South and African Americans to include Indian slavery; and Scott Manning Stevens revises the classic sectionalism of the Civil War as a conflict between the North and the South by drawing attention to how the United States was concurrently fighting the Dakotas, Navajos, and other Native peoples in the West to acquire territory and resources. For the post-1877 period, Mindy J. Morgan details how the New Deal era integrated Native Americans into the American workforce, and Andrew Needham takes us underneath the post-World War II explosion of consumption and suburbia to document the extent to which Native American lands, resources, and people powered this leap in American living standards. Jacob Betz and Phillip H. Round examine religion and the reading revolution as important shifts in American culture that Indians participated in and helped shape.

The distinctive history of Native Americans as colonized people should not result in their marginalization in narratives of American history. When teachers embed Native American history more fully in the American story, students are challenged to think in new ways about larger themes in American history such as nation building, economic empowerment, citizenship, and multiculturalism. The uniqueness of the Native experience—that indigenous people have a prior claim to the lands that became the United States because they were here long before Europeans, Africans, and Asians migrated to the North American continent—can help students think more profoundly about what it has meant to be an American. The U.S. history textbooks critiqued in some of the essays that follow often evoke a nationalist, progressive narrative of the American past in their titles, as in *The American Promise* and *Give Me Liberty!* “Promise,” “liberty,” even the word “nation” attempt to bring coherence to the diverse cultural origins of the American populace by presuming a similitude in outlooks and values that transcends differences in cultural origins and historical experiences. The implication is that even though bad things happened in the American past—wars of conquest, slavery, racism—Americans have demonstrated the capacity to overcome their differences through shared aspirations for civil rights, equal opportunity, and democratic political participation. The ways in which Indian history has intersected with yet often run counter to

histories of other Americans instead allow students to realize that U.S. citizenship, political equality, and individual rights are not natural virtues coveted by all but have a long history of contestation.

Note

1. Frederick E. Hoxie, *The Indians versus the Textbooks: Is There Any Way Out?* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1984), and “The Indians Versus the Textbooks: Is There Any Way Out?,” *AHA Perspectives* 23, no. 4 (April 1985): 18–22; D’Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian, *The Impact of Indian History on the Teaching of United States History, Chicago Conference, 1984*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1985), *The Impact of Indian History on the Teaching of United States History, Washington Conference, 1985* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1986), and *The Impact of Indian History on the Teaching of United States History, Washington Conference, 1986* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1987).

Part I: U.S. History to 1877

Chapter 1: Borders and Borderlands

JULIANA BARR

This essay collection rests on the straightforward premise that American Indians are crucial to the teaching of U.S. history. Yet some might ask, “Why Indians?” The clearest response is that North America was not a “new world” in 1492 but a very old one with a history far lengthier than what has come since. More specifically, at the time of European invasion, there was no part of North America that was not claimed and ruled by sovereign Indian regimes. The Europeans whose descendants would create the United States did not come to an unsettled wilderness; they grafted their colonies and settlements onto long-existent Indian homelands that constituted the entire continent. We cannot understand European and Anglo-American colonial worlds unless we understand the Native worlds from which they took their shape.

It seems an odd realization that in teaching American history we discuss Indian sovereignty and bordered domains primarily in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when they were most under assault by U.S. policies that sought to dispossess Indian nations of land and disenfranchise them of their power. Thus we tend to talk about Indian sovereignty in negative terms—as something they were always in the process of losing over the course of U.S. history. Yet we need to address sovereignty in positive terms because we cannot begin to understand how Euro-American colonialism wore away at it unless we first know how Indians exercised power over the land and vis-à-vis their Native and European neighbors.

Thus we must begin by acknowledging the fundamental essence of Indian sovereignty—“the power a nation exerts within unambiguous borders.”¹ More specifically, we must recognize “how Indians understood territory and boundaries, how they extended power over geographic space, and how their practices of claiming, marking, and understanding territory differed not only from Europeans’ but also from each other’s.” In my own research, if one compares the border marking of hunter-gatherers, sedentary agriculturalists, and mounted hunters and raiders in the region that would become Texas and the southern plains, one finds that residency, economy, trade, politics,

raiding, horticulture, hunting, ethnicity, kinship, alliance, and enmity all played a part in shaping different Indian nations' geographic dominion. Yet, no matter the political economy, all of them governed and defended bounded, sovereign domains.

Let us look briefly at those three case studies in Texas and the southern plains in order to get the conversation about Native borders going. It is often assumed that hunter-gatherers may be better understood for what they lacked as opposed to what they had, but they maintained clearly delineated ethnic domains defined by kinship and marriage. For hunter-gatherers such as Coahuilteco and Karankawa speakers, territories were often shared spaces of control within which certain groups maintained exclusive rights to collective ranges and resources. The allegiances among the groups meant that they joined together to hunt and to defend the lands they held in common. The boundaries of their territory were well established, known to all, and marked by natural sites such as rivers or bays and manmade phenomena such as watering holes, petroglyphs/pictographs, or painted trees. Trespass was a legal concept, and once Europeans arrived in the region they were subject to that charge.

Sedentary agriculturalists such as Caddos exercised control over a more expansive bordered domain made up of rings of settlement. Hunting territories manned and defended by small family groups in hunting lodges made up the outermost ring. Moving inward, the next ring was a space made up of farming homesteads surrounded by cultivated fields and small hamlets, each represented by a subchief. At the core, one found the ceremonial complex and primary township of the head political and religious Caddo leadership. To secure their domain Caddos had border control as well as passport and surveillance systems, and within their territory were internal boundaries between member nations.

For mobile groups such as Comanches and Apaches, raiding served geopolitical as well as economic purpose in aiding territorial expansion. Both groups evinced clear growth strategies by extending control over greater and greater subsistence zones. Their boundaries might move regularly, but that did not diminish the security of their borders; indeed, mobility was the key to border defense and resource management within extensive territories. Apaches and Comanches too marked their borders with landmarks, cairns, and trees made to grow in particular forms or directions.

Thus when Europeans arrived, all set to colonize the region, they found their border-making aspirations ran smack up against the border defense and border expansion of Indian nations. Spaniards and Frenchmen found no empty spaces into which to expand their empires; they had to seek Native acceptance and permission to build settlements, trading posts, and missions within recognized Indian domains. “Indian homelands brushed up against one another, their edges and peripheries creating zones of shared and contested indigenous dominion. The lines drawn between Indian polities more often than not took precedence over newer boundaries drawn between themselves and Europeans, even long after Spanish, French, and English arrival.”²

As it turns out, my scholarly concern with Indians’ borders, as outlined above, grew out of frustrations in the classroom teaching American history—frustration with two things particularly. One is the conceptual notion that as soon as Europeans put their first big toes on the American coast, all the Americas became a “borderland” up for grabs to the first European taker—a notion that denies Indian sovereignty, control of the land, and basic home field advantage. The second thing that set me off was the way in which our textbooks encourage this cockeyed vision of America with their maps.

Taking these two issues in turn, the concept of *borderlands* sometimes appears to be used alongside or in place of *frontiers*, but either way, when we map it out on the ground it remains essentially a European-defined space. In American history, borderlands, frontiers, hinterlands, and backcountry customarily refer to the edges and peripheries of European and Euro-American occupation and the limits of their invasion, expansion, conquest, and settlement, where Europeans and Euro-Americans confront Indians or rival European powers. Like frontiers, borderlands appear just beyond the reach or sphere of centralized power associated with imperial European governance. Like frontiers, borderlands are zones “in front” of the hinterlands of Euro-American settlement, or “in between” rival European settlements—think of the “Spanish borderlands” that are caught between the core of Latin America and the expansionary Anglo-American world. Either way, they are supposed to be untamed, unbounded wildernesses waiting to be taken in hand by civilized Euro-Americans.

Frontiers and borderlands are far from the imperial cores of France, Spain, Britain, and, later, the United States and by definition are absent of a monopoly of power or violence. So, on the one hand, these are spaces into

which Euro-Americans go without the force of the state or military near at hand. Such conditions, by implication, are what make it possible for Indians to stand on equal ground, to negotiate, and to struggle for advantage. But, critically, Indians' ability to stand their ground and to struggle for advantage has nothing to do with capabilities of their own; implicit to the idea of borderlands and frontiers is the assumption that Euro-Americans simply have not yet moved in or taken over, but, inevitably, they will. It is all part of a process, the first stage if you will, of inexorable conquest.

Borderlands are therefore spaces created by Europeans and Euro-Americans as they seek, explore, or expand into lands without borders. Borderlands appear where independent explorers, frontiersmen, and *coureurs de bois* launch themselves into the woods, in the process forging new paths for others—surveyors, settlers, and armies—to follow eventually. Or they develop where missionaries, licensed traders, and presidial soldiers move as representatives of church, state, or mercantile institutions at the forefront of official colonial projects. As Jeremy Adelman and Steve Aron outline, borderlands exist prior to European or Euro-American ability to claim, draw, and defend “real” imperial or national borders. The meeting of peoples creates frontiers, and the meeting of empires creates borderlands in their model. Most important, the only empires are European, and borders come into being only with European and Euro-American sovereignty.³ The problem here is that such an equation not only denies the existence of Indian borders but also credits the boundaries claimed by European empires and the United States with undue clarity.

Meanwhile, whether intentionally or not, the maps in our textbooks contribute to an image of the Americas as a big blank, with no political divisions until Europeans and rival imperial colonizers arrive and begin to draw lines, divvying up the continent. When textbooks start with the obligatory section on pre-Columbian America, they feature maps that detail geographical divisions—Eastern Woodlands, Northwest Coast, Great Plains, Great Basin, Southwest, Subarctic, Arctic—or subsistence zones—agriculture, hunting, hunting-gathering, and fishing. Or, the maps detail the zones of different language families—Iroquoian, Muskogean, Siouan, Uto-Aztecan, Athabaskan, Salishan, Eskimo-Aleut, Algic. If and when the names of Indian peoples—never nations—appear in textbook maps, they float free of borders, hovering above the landscape with no defined boundaries to recognize the divisions of their territories. Thus, textbooks implicitly and

explicitly tell our students that Indians had cultural, economic, and language zones of variation, but they had no named settlements or towns, no charted roads or highways, no territorial markers and, most important, no sovereign borders. We end up with a vision of North America ca. 1492 sparsely occupied by Indians living in tiny landless groups that were constantly on the move to hunt and gather.



FIGURE 1.1 “Culture Divisions among the Native Americans.” From Paul S. Boyer et al., vol. 1 of *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People*, 8th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2014), 1E. © 1990 Wadsworth, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc. Reproduced by permission, www.cengage.com/permissions.

Then, with European arrival, the map is wiped clean of wandering Indians or Native language culture zones, and in their places are Spanish, French, English, and Dutch “explorers” who tramp across a blank canvas, cutting through wilderness, discovering “unexplored” lands, with the only potential stumbling blocks along their paths being rivers, mountains, valleys, deserts and, for Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, the Grand Canyon. At this point, colored lines begin to appear marking the different routes of intrepid Europeans, with Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Hernando de Soto, Jacques Cartier, Samuel Champlain, Giovanni da Verrazzano, and later John Smith competing to cover greater distances and claim more territory for their rulers.

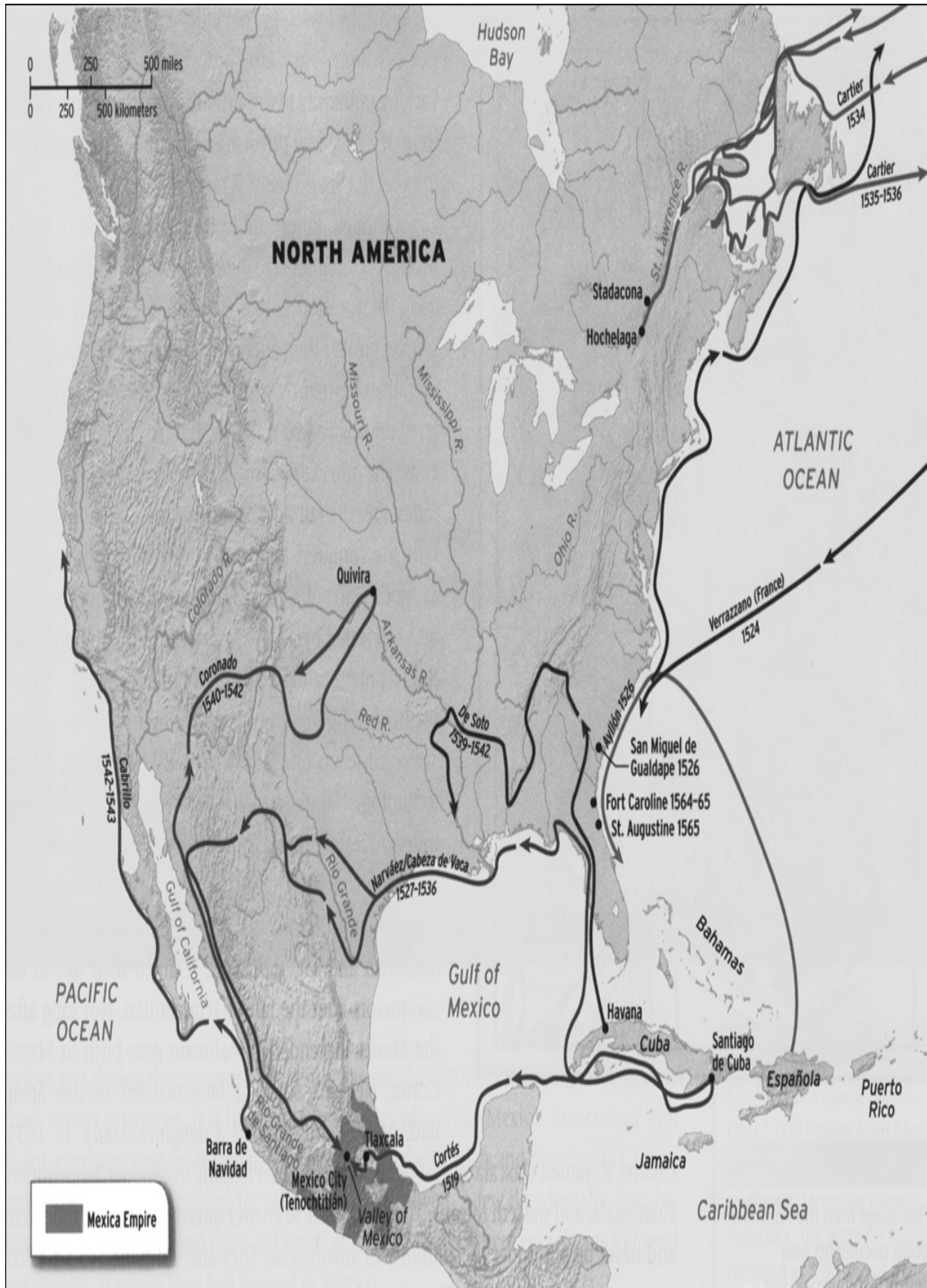


FIGURE 1.2 “The Spanish and French Invade North America, 1519–1565.” From Michael Schaller et al., vol. 1 of *American Horizons: U.S. History in a Global Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 29. By permission of Oxford University Press, U.S.A.

Political borders first make an appearance in textbook maps of America only with the establishment of the British colonies, New France, New Netherlands, and New Spain—all of them “new” creations that rewrite historical spaces as European and, in so doing, deny the past of America’s indigenous populations. According to this cartographic vision, there are no “old” worlds in the Americas. Only then does America have towns for the first time—Quebec, Montreal, Boston, Jamestown, New Orleans, Santa Fe.

The most ubiquitous map design for this period of American history divides the continent into Spanish, English, and French territories—drawing borders for European claims far beyond the geographical reach of any imperial presence much less imperial control. If European rulers did indeed engage in a paper war of different colored spaces and imaginary borders during this period, our textbooks reprint the imperial fantasy. In stark contrast, Indian names may remain on the map, but they float free, with no moorings and no borders, subsumed under the authority of their presumptive new European overlords.

Taking this “anticipatory geography” to the extreme are the textbook maps that preordain the creation of the United States by backgrounding maps of early America with the borders of all forty-eight mainland states drawn in gray scale.⁴ Consider figure 1.1. Pre-Columbian America already bears the imprimatur of a United States that will not exist even as a twinkle in Thomas Jefferson’s eye for another 300 years, thus the map tells our students, implicitly and explicitly, that the conquest of North America was a forgone conclusion even in 1491. Or examine map 1.1, charting the route of the Lewis and Clark expedition in the first decade of the nineteenth century, and look for any sign of Indians. The only hint comes from the location of the winter quarters of 1804–5, identified as “Fort Mandan,” but if a student did not know Mandans were Indians, he or she would have no idea that the expedition’s survival that winter depended upon the hospitality and generosity of the Mandans and Hidatsas with whom its members traded for supplies.

More important, the student would have no idea from the map that the expedition was at every point along the way transgressing the borders of Indian nations. Rather, the entire continent appears to be fully in the hands of

the British, Spanish, and U.S. governments, with U.S. appropriation of territory an ongoing and inexorable process. Students are again left believing that the greatest obstacles along Lewis and Clark's overland route were the rivers, mountain ranges, and distances traveled rather than the Native people who controlled the lands and thoroughfares through which they moved. Adam Jortner's essay in this collection offers a compelling examination of how textbooks undermine if not erase Indian territorial legitimacy in the maps that accompany chapters on the nineteenth-century United States.

If you scan through an entire U.S. history textbook, looking at the maps from the colonial period through the present, all in all, you will find that they depict North America as a space preeminently defined by Europeans and then Euro-Americans in motion. First, Europeans transformed oceans that had once been barriers into freeways of passage that brought them to the Americas. Then they charted routes and passageways across the continent, relentlessly claiming and confining the landscape within borders of their own imaginations as they pushed from east to west. The regions of North America still awaiting European or Euro-American arrival always appear as blank spaces, thus there can be no sense of trespass, or invasion.



MAP 1.1 The Route of Lewis and Clark. (From H. W. Brands, T. H. Breen, R. Hal Williams, and Ariela J. Gross, *American Stories: A History of the United States*, vol. 1 [Boston: Pearson, 2011]).

Textbook maps, just like scholarly spatial models, whether unintentionally or not, therefore deny Indian borders and territorial sovereignty. And this is critical. Because if Indians had no borders then they had no claim to land, and Europeans were not transgressing Native nations' domains. They were not taking what was someone else's; they were taking something that was up for grabs, there for the taking. The border contests that do warrant attention in our textbooks are between Europeans as they vie

for territory with one another, not with Indians. Indians have no borders in U.S. textbooks until we reach the reservation era, as if the United States gave them their first borders when it confined and imprisoned them. Yet through the visual power of their maps, textbooks deny Indian sovereignty long before their readers reach the chapters detailing how the United States denied it on the ground through military and political coercion.

What is so striking, however, when we look at actual European documents and maps from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries is that Europeans themselves tell a completely different story from that found in our textbooks. They tell of American worlds defined by Indian sovereignty and power, power that they darn well recognized and before which they often had to bow. When Europeans struck out into what they believed to be uncharted wildernesses, they found instead networks of Indian roads and thoroughfares; they crossed borders marking passage from one Indian nation to another; and, most important of all, they met border control. One Frenchman compared a highway running through the Hasinai Caddo confederacy to one that ran between Paris and Orleans, and found the Native road to be as wide, level, and well beaten. To travel that road, moreover, the Frenchman and his companions had to carry passports given them by one group of Hasinai to ensure their safe passage into and out of other Caddo territories.⁵

The key for our purposes here is that, though our textbook maps refuse to document these Indian worlds, European maps document them quite clearly. Why?, one might ask. For Spaniards and Frenchmen, their colonial ventures were inclusive of Indians; they needed to know where to find Indian allies, trading partners, and potential converts if their imperial endeavors were to succeed. But, more important for all Europeans, no matter their colonial aspirations, they had to know whose land they were in, whose land they entered when they followed a route or crossed a river, because their survival might rest on that knowledge. They had to know where they were safe and where they were endangered. Europeans did not merely travel through Native homelands; they had to negotiate constantly with the Indian polities that were the owners and stewards of the territory. Indian nations controlled access to their land and its resources and the roads by which one crossed them. Europeans were subject to the rules of Indian jurisdiction. What we find then is that European maps charted Indian boundaries and territory—

and, in doing so, acknowledged the power that Indian nations exerted within identifiable borders.

This may surprise us, because we have been taught that European maps were often “tools of imperialism as much as guns and warships.”⁶ Here it is important to distinguish between those maps made by and for Europeans who were on the ground, seeking to get around, to make contact, to establish ties and, fundamentally, to stay alive. It is the maps used and promoted by rulers and diplomats back in Europe that reduced swaths of the Americas to vying land claims painted in different tints of imperial color.

Early maps do have blank spaces, but more often than not, they indicate lack of knowledge, not the erasure of Indians. Once those landscapes became better known, Europeans did not fill them with imagined colonies but rather with Indian villages, towns, and trading centers with the routes of how to get to and from them charted with precision. And the power wielded by the Indian nations who controlled those spaces is clear. Early maps showcased Indian “giants” as a means of conveying power and threat—consider the Patagonian giants who tower over Spaniards in South American maps or the Powhatan men who dominate John Smith’s maps of Virginia. As well, it should be said, such images might convey the often-better diets and sources of protein available to Indians who grew to heights that did indeed sometimes make them tower over their European counterparts.

Beginning with charts of coastlines and bays, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century maps marked Indian settlements thick on the ground, guarding the shoreline and offering witness if not challenge to any European landing. Native cities appear in the earliest maps of the sixteenth century—and not just in Meso and South America. Dutch and French cartographers documented the palisaded towns of northeastern Mahicans and Iroquoians. Think of the Italian rendering of the Iroquoian town of Hochelaga, later the site of Montreal, with its detailed chart of the city gate, home of the king, inner walls, and outer fortifications. It has been argued that cartographers were simply translating Indian sites into visual terms that Europeans back home could better understand, but the reality is that Indian towns did have gates, rulers, and palisades—all characteristics that rang true to those familiar with European fortified cities.

Or, consider the Caddo city described and mapped by multiple Frenchmen and Spaniards in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century in figure 1.3. Combining the estimates of various European observers, the city

was fifty miles long and eighteen miles across. It contained temple mounds, multistructured homes, and a ceremonial complex used by rulers for political, diplomatic, and religious functions. Surrounding the town were smaller hamlets, lavish gardens, miles of agricultural fields, and beyond that, more extensive hunting grounds, all of which were enclosed in marked and policed borders. One Frenchman concluded simply that Caddos were a people “that had nothing barbarous but the name.”⁷ Perhaps temple mounds and ceremonial complexes appeared new and foreign to European observers, but Europeans had no difficulty recognizing the economic and political power behind such structures.

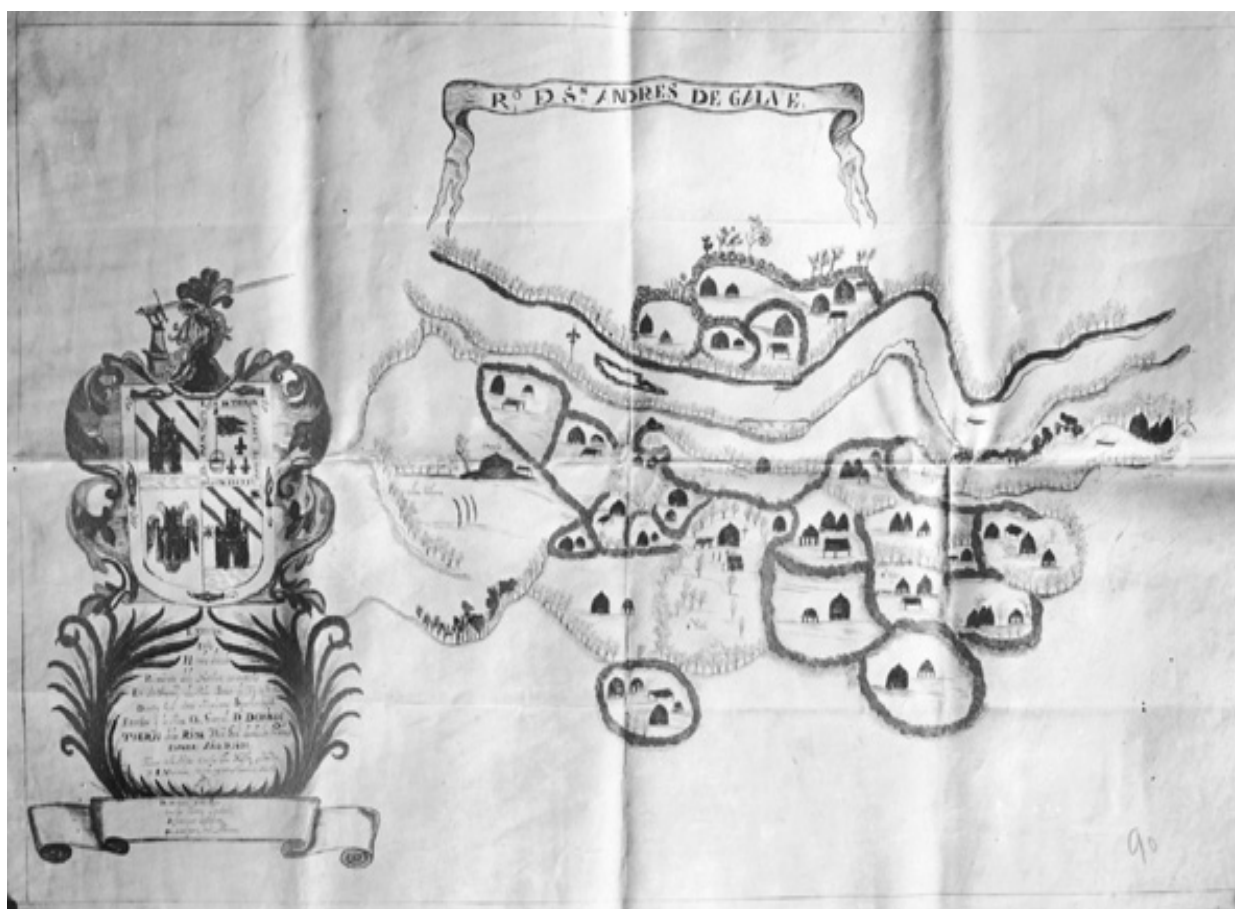


FIGURE 1.3 1691 map of a Caddo settlement along the Red River drawn by an unknown member of the Domingo Terán de los Ríos expedition of 1691–92. Hand-drawn copy of the original located in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Map AG1 61-6-2, Newberry Library, Chicago.

European maps show us landscapes in which Europeans learned quickly and mapped carefully the Indian nations with whom they would have to negotiate for trade, missions, and settlement. See for instance Samuel

Champlain's excruciatingly detailed map of Canada (figure 1.4), where there is not an inch of space devoid of Indian possession and internal improvements. Such maps depict a world of foreign diplomacy (and enmity) among Indians and between Indians and Europeans across national borders. Why else did Europeans write of Indian *naciones*, kingdoms, confederacies, lords, and rulers? More often as not, these maps reflected information gained from Indian knowledge, not European exploration. We now well know the Chickasaw and Catawba maps that chart not the location of Indian nations connected by roads but the social and political ties that bound them in alliance. The earliest surviving Indian map, preserved in a Spanish transcript drawn in 1602 in Mexico City, showcases the information taken from an Indian known only as Miguel, who was captured by Juan de Oñate and taken back to the Spanish capital for his knowledge of the southern plains. The map shows the rivers, highways, and Indian towns of the region in relation to the upper Rio Grande, with distances and days of travel provided, along with an insert of Mexican towns and outposts to the south. From Miguel, Spaniards did not merely seek aid in navigating the land but information about the political relationships among Indian nations and the sources of Indian trade in precious metals.⁸ Much the same is found in Dutch and French maps as they sought to win over allies and partners who might allow them access to the profitable Indian fur trade far to the north.



FIGURE 1.4 Detail from Samuel Champlain's *Carte de la Nouvelle-France*, 1632. Accession # 02851 in Newberry Library Cartographic Collection, Map Vault, Graff Drawer 642, Newberry Library, Chicago.

Most crucially, many European maps testify to Indian territorial sovereignty directly. For example one 1728 Spanish map by Francisco Álvarez Barreiro charts the region far north of Mexico that will later become the North American Southwest, but it is covered with labels that recognize all the known regions controlled by different Indian nations—*tierra de los Pampopas*, *tierra de los Cujanes*, *tierra de los Carrizos*, and so on (figure 1.5) The land of Pampopas, Cujanes, and Carrizos—their land, not that of Spaniards. Indeed, these mapmakers acknowledged that European settlements existed as mere islands in a sea of Indian domains. Thus Miguel

This is a detailed historical map of the Rio Grande region, showing the border between Mexico and the United States. The map is oriented with North at the top. The Rio Grande (Río del Norte) flows from the top center towards the bottom right, eventually emptying into the Gulf of Mexico (Mar del Sur). The map is divided into several provinces and territories, including Coahuila de Zaragoza, Texas, Nuevo Mexico, and California. Key settlements and locations are marked with dots and labeled, such as San Antonio, El Paso, and various smaller towns. The map also shows the Gulf of Mexico (Mar del Sur) and the Pacific Ocean (Mar del Norte). A scale bar is located in the bottom left corner, and a compass rose is in the bottom right corner. The map is titled 'PLANO topográfico e hidrográfico de la provincia de Coahuila de Zaragoza, y de las provincias de Texas, Nuevo Mexico, y California, y de la parte de la Nueva España que se encuentra al norte del Rio del Norte'.

FIGURE 1.5 Detail from 1770 copy of Francisco Álvarez Barreiro's 1728 map of northern New Spain. © The British Library Board.

All of this is critical for our students' understanding not only of Indian power and sovereign territory but also of the patterns and limits of European colonialism. We tend to imagine European colonizers put down roots, built towns, established colonies whenever and wherever they wished, according to resource location and imperial design. But what these maps tell us is that, in fact, Europeans often located themselves only where the whim and direction of their Indian neighbors allowed. Or, later, they took over Native sites abandoned or destroyed in the wake of epidemics and war. When we look then at the charts of European settlements, roads, and towns we must always be aware of the Indian sites that rest below them and defined the landscape first.

Significantly, it is in the maps of the British and Anglo-Americans where we most see the erasure of Indians from North American landscapes. And this may be what most trips up our textbooks, as they continue to define the European heritage of North America as primarily British. In contrast to Spaniards and Frenchmen, Anglo imperial goals rarely involved Indians, and their exclusionary colonial policies aimed at the dispossession and removal of Indians from the land. It seems little coincidence that it is in the historiography of French and Spanish colonial zones that we find spatial models for understanding early America that make Indians intrinsic to them. For the British colonies, Atlantic world models orient our students across the ocean to Europe and Africa; it is only to the north and west of the British colonies along the Atlantic Coast that we find a "middle ground," a "Native ground," and a "divided ground."¹⁰

More recently Pekka Hämäläinen has argued for a Comanche empire in the middle of the continent that rivaled the Atlantic world, as it too was "a historical phenomenon so complex and abstract in nature and so vast in scope that contemporaries were able to grasp, at best, only fragments of it." In the Great Lakes region, Michael Witgen maps a "Native New World" of indigenous social, economic, and political space that emerged in the interior simultaneously to—but separate from—the Atlantic world of settler colonies along the eastern coastline. Natale Zappia's "Interior World" envisions another geographic model for emergent systems of Native economic and political power, independent of European influence, located in the vast region of southern California and western Arizona. All of these spatial

models take as their core Native political economies and Native sovereign territories and recognize them as existing concurrent with but neither reliant upon, extensions of, nor subsumed by European colonial spaces. Imagine the cartographic redrawing that such models require of our textbooks.¹¹

Nor were these Native worlds mere survivals of a pre-Columbian past; rather they were dynamic, evolving, indigenous worlds that responded actively and creatively to the presence of European newcomers. They not only productively transitioned in response to European invasion but also often made European colonialism bend to them. European colonies thus took their shape from that of Native nations as they implanted themselves within indigenous landscapes.

Moreover, the scholars of the middle ground, Native ground, interior West, Native New World, and Comanche empire track these Native spaces to a peak of power in the early to mid-nineteenth century, defying traditional declension narratives of American historiography. Thus, looking across the entire continent, stories of Native demise become exceptions to a continuum of Indian political narratives that found the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries to be periods of economic and political expansion. As transformations of both the human and natural landscape took place, the broad scope of Indian autonomy outside the worlds of European colonies meant that the demise of French and Spanish colonial projects at the end of the eighteenth century saw Native nations (think of Lakotas and Comanches) *expanding* in their place, side by side with that of the early American Republic.



- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Klallam | 19. Chinook | 37. Yuki | 55. Halchidhoma | 73. Houma |
| 2. Cowichan | 20. Tlatskanai | 38. Pomo | 56. Mohave | 74. Chitimacha |
| 3. Quileute | 21. Tillamook | 39. Wappo | 57. Walapai | 75. Acolapissa |
| 4. Quinault | 22. Alsea | 40. Coast Miwok | 58. Havasupai | 76. Biloxi |
| 5. Twana | 23. Siuslaw | 41. Costano | 59. Hopi | 77. Mobile |
| 6. Sanpoil | 24. Coos Bay | 42. Salina | 60. Zuni | 78. Alabama |
| 7. Kalispel | 25. Chastacosta | 43. Chumash | 61. Hidatsa | 79. Apalachee |
| 8. Klikitat | 26. Takelma | 44. Wintun | 62. Mandan | 80. Hitchiti |
| 9. Spokane | 27. Klamath | 45. Washoe | 63. Arikara | 81. Yuchi |
| 10. Coeur D'Alene | 28. Karok | 46. Miwok | 64. Menominee | 82. Cusabo |
| 11. Walla Walla | 29. Shasta | 47. Tubatulabal | 65. Winnebago | 83. Tuscarora |
| 12. Wishram | 30. Tolowa | 48. Kawaiisu | 66. Omaha | 84. Pamlico |
| 13. Tenino | 31. Hepa | 49. Gabrielino | 67. Missouri | 85. Powhatan |
| 14. Umatilla | 32. Yurok | 50. Luiseno | 68. Kiowa-Apache | 86. Nanticoke |
| 15. Cayuse | 33. Wiyot | 51. Cahuilla | 69. Karankawa | 87. Metoac |
| 16. Molala | 34. Wailaki | 52. Kamia | 70. Chakchiuma | 88. Mohegan |
| 17. Chehalis | 35. Achomawi | 53. Yuma (Quachan) | 71. Tunica | 89. Massachusset |
| 18. Kwalhioqua | 36. Yana | 54. Maricopa | 72. Natchez | 90. Pennacook |

MAP 1.2 American Indian Tribes, ca. 1600. (From C. Matthew Snipp, *American Indians: The First of This Land* [Russell Sage Foundation, 1989.] Courtesy of the British Library Board.)

Such evidence should encourage our students to see that the North American continent constituted not just homelands of Indians, but a landscape divided into bordered domains of indigenous nations, confederacies, and empires. Long before and long after the arrival of Europeans, North America was a political and economic landscape mapped with well-known national and imperial boundary lines, circumscribing the geographic areas within which Indian nations asserted control over resources, people, relationships, culture, ritual, and historical memory.

So what is the solution for our classrooms? We can hope that textbooks will eventually begin revising their maps under the weight of new and ongoing scholarship. But in the meantime, we must encourage our students to take the maps in their textbooks with a grain of salt. They must consider, analyze, challenge, and question the explanatory power of the maps and the assumptions built into them. I am struck by the idea that mapmakers, no matter the time, culture, or society, draw maps with their own location at the center—it speaks to the enormous importance of perspective. What a different picture of North American history we get if we take in the broad scope of the continent and include the vantage points seen from within and without Indian borders.

Notes

1. Juliana Barr, “Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the ‘Borderlands’ of the Early Southwest,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (January 2011): 5–46. See page 9 for following quotes. The next three paragraphs summarize material from that essay. A digital teaching supplement with interactive maps accompanied the article and can be found at <http://oieahc.wm.edu/wmq/Jan11/Barr/index.html>.

2. Barr, “Geographies of Power,” 43.

3. Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History,” *American Historical Review* 104 (June 1999): 818–41. For the most recent discussion of borderlands, see the special issue of the *Journal of American History*, “Margins to Mainstream: The Brave New World of

Borderlands History,” especially the essay by the two editors of the issue, Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, “On Borderlands,” *Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (September 2011): 338–61.

4. J. Brian Harley, “Rereading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82, no. 3 (September 1992): 532.

5. Barr, “Geographies of Power,” 11.

6. J. B. Harley, *Maps and the Columbian Encounter* (Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 97.

7. Isaac Joslin Cox, ed., “Narrative of La Salle’s Attempt to Ascend the Mississippi in 1687, by Father Anastasius [Anastase] Douay, Recollect,” in *The Journeys of Rene Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle*, vol. 1 (1905; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1973), 231.

8. G. Malcolm Lewis, “Indian Maps: Their Place in the History of Plains Cartography,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 4 (Spring 1984): 91–108.

9. Jack Jackson, *Shooting the Sun: Cartographic Result of Military Activities in Texas, 1689–1829*, vol. 1 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 100.

10. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 2006).

11. Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 353; Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Natale A. Zappia, *Traders and Raiders: The Indigenous World of the Colorado Basin, 1540–1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

Suggested Readings

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Indians, edited by Thomas E. Ross and Tyrel G. Moore, 47–91. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987.

Basso, Keith H. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

Deloria, Philip J. “From Nation to Neighborhood: Land, Policy, Culture, Colonialism, and Empire in U.S.-Indian Relations.” In *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History*, edited by James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, and Michael O’Malley, 343–82. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Harley, J. Brian. “Rereading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82 (1992): 522–42.

Lewis, G. Malcolm, ed. *Cartographic Encounters: Perspectives on Native American Mapmaking and Map Use*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Chapter 2: Encounter and Trade in the Early Atlantic World

SUSAN SLEEPER-SMITH

Around 1500, European fishermen began crossing the Atlantic to spend the summer months fishing the codfish-rich Grand Banks of the North Atlantic. In 1583, when England's Sir Humphrey Gilbert dropped anchor at St. John's harbor at Newfoundland he discovered sailors from thirty-six ships fishing together—French, Spanish, English, and Portuguese, all blissfully ignoring the maritime rivalry of their nation-states. Most fishermen spent the entire summer here, living on dry land, processing fish, and securing fresh vegetables and meat from Indians they encountered along the coastline. During these same summer months thousands of Indians gathered to trade at nearby Tadoussac in St. Lawrence Bay, where the metal goods that Indians received from fishermen entered the extensive indigenous trading network that stretched across North America. Archaeologists have gathered extensive evidence of that exchange process, primarily in the form of metal goods, from Indian village sites along the eastern seaboard and far west into the Great Lakes basin and the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys. Neither Europeans nor Indians left written records of these encounters, but the trade that occurred in this region of the Atlantic shaped future encounter. Trade framed these initial interactions, and colonies such as Jamestown and Plymouth endured because of their encounter with Indians. After the Pilgrims landed they survived because of stores of Indian corn. In the spring, when the colonists' barley, oats, and wheat did not germinate, Indians shared their knowledge about crops that could be successfully harvested.

Encounter with Indians first took place in the sixteenth-century North Atlantic, a century and a place we know little about and one that is generally glossed over in standard U.S. textbooks. Trade with Indians had broad and profound global implications, influencing the direction of European colonization, shaping transatlantic empires, and changing the consumer worlds of both Indians and Europeans.

Trade with North American Indians was an extension of Europe's competitive maritime world. The Columbian Encounter was quickly followed by a swarm of rival explorers. Henry Hudson explored for the Dutch, Giovanni da Verrazzano and Jacques Cartier for the French, John Cabot for the English, Ponce de Leon and Cabeza de Vaca for Spain, and Corte-Real for Portugal, and amid this sea of early competitors, it was John Cabot's voyage that drew the greatest attention. In a public audience with the king, Cabot was faced with the dire prospect of explaining his failure to find a passage to the Far East, and he defended himself by describing a wondrous land with abundant old-growth forests, fertile soils, and mineral resources. What captured the attention of his audience was his description of fishing along the Grand Banks. So bountiful were these grounds that a basket lowered into the ocean's waters immediately filled with fish. Word about these fishing grounds quickly spread throughout Europe. Fish were a valuable cargo and a resource Europeans were rapidly depleting. In this Roman Catholic world there were as many as 166 fast days when people could not eat meat. The preferred food in Portugal, Provence, Spain, Italy, the Levant, and the continental interior of Europe was salted cod. It did not spoil during prolonged transport, was easily stored, and remained edible for up to three years. In 1502, a ship bearing the first recorded cargo of North American cod arrived in Bristol, England. That vessel held thirty-six tons of salted fish, a highly valuable cargo worth 180 pounds.

In the mid-sixteenth century England estimated that 350 European ships were involved in the fishing trade. Records from French port cities suggest that the English underestimated the fishing trade: the French alone sent 500 vessels across the Atlantic to fish. France had the largest fishing fleet, and, along with the Bretons, Basques, and Portuguese, they dominated the Grand Banks. Fishing boats arrived in April or May, and the shore-based crews lived on land until the end of August or early September. Before fishing even began, it took the crew an entire month to retrieve wood from adjacent forests, build or repair the boats, construct stages for landing fish, prepare the wooden drying flakes, and build the cook rooms and cabins where the men lived when they were not sleeping. Once the initial construction was completed, the hard work began (figure 2.1). Fishermen slept little during fishing season. They were expected to catch and cure ten traditional long tons of cod, well in excess of 20,000 fish. Fishing required an enormous amount of time and labor, men rowed back and forth to the fishing grounds,

caught the fish, processed it, carried it back and forth to the drying flakes, and spread and stacked it every night. Whenever bad weather threatened the drying fish was retrieved and safely stored. Finally, fishermen salted their catch, packed it in barrels, transported it to the ships moored at sea, and then lowered the heavy barrels into the cargo holds.¹



FIGURE 2.1 *A View of a Stage and also of the manner of Fishing for, Curing and Drying Cod at New Found Land*, ca. 1698. Library and Archives of Canada/Bibliothèque et Archives Canada. Reference number: C-003686.

Fishermen and Indians lived amicably during the summer months along the coast of *terre neuve* or *terra do bacalhau*, which Englishmen referred to as the “land of the cod.” Indians shared fishing resources with Europeans, but their interaction went beyond trade and resources. Indian healers provided the remedies that saved the lives of many visiting Europeans, but fishermen often lived at sea past the storage life of fresh fruits and vegetables, subsisting on cured and salted fish, meats, and dried grains. Most men were afflicted with scurvy, which, when not fatal, caused anemia, debility, exhaustion, tooth loss, and edema (swelling) in some parts of the body. Fishermen who secured fresh meat, corn, and vegetables from Indians halted the progress of the disease. But Indians also provided the cures that healed and warded off scurvy. Such cures were common indigenous knowledge in subarctic and arctic regions, where scurvy also threatened Indian health. Fishermen were eager and anxious to encounter Indians, especially when the tempestuous waters of the North Atlantic extended their days at sea. During the sixteenth century scurvy was so prevalent that it limited the distance a ship could travel, killing numerous crewmembers on long-distance voyages.

France, England, Spain, and Portugal initially dominated the North Atlantic fishing trade, until warfare dramatically changed the competitive nature of fishing. When Elizabeth I’s privateering seadogs attacked Spanish fishing vessels in 1685, Philip of Spain pressured the Basque and Portuguese fishing fleet into joining the Armada in 1588. The defeat of the Spanish Armada signaled the end of Portugal’s and Spain’s presence in the North Atlantic fishing grounds. Only the British and French fleets remained. As France expanded the size of its fleet to double that of the English, the French came to dominate the transatlantic fishing trade. France controlled all the coastal lands and islands from Cape Canso to the Bay of Islands. They controlled Newfoundland’s interior shoreline, and their fishing stations lined the Bay of St. Lawrence. The largest precontact trading village along the North American coast was Tadoussac, located at the confluence of the Saint Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers, where as many as 20,000 Indians gathered to fish and trade during the summer months. The Montagnais called this place Totouskak (plural for *totouswk* or *totochak*), meaning “bosom,” which

perhaps referred to the two round and sandy hills located on the west side of the village. The village was also known as the “place of lobsters” or the “place where the ice is broken.” Although in Montagnais territory, the village was also frequented by the Mi’kmaq people, who referred to it as Gtatosag or “among the rocks.”

The Indians that journeyed to Tadoussac were drawn by the multitude of whales and seals that fed on the rich krill beds. The cold, fresh waters of the Saguenay and the warmer, salty water of the St. Lawrence created a rich marine environment where krill grew in abundance. When Jacques Cartier came to Tadoussac in 1535 he encountered numerous Montagnais hunting seals. The extensive fish and marine life of St. Lawrence Bay, with its deep waters, drew both northern and southern Indians to the region. Tadoussac linked Indians south of this coastal bay to the Montagnais and Cree of the Arctic north. Northern indigenous communities were located along the southern edge of the Canadian Shield, where the poor, thin soils were interspersed with exposed bedrock. Geography limited agricultural self-sufficiency in this sparsely populated region. Its natural resource base was the watershed of the Saguenay River, where there was exceptional fishing as well as hunting for beaver, moose, and deer. A mutually beneficial trade was established at Tadoussac, where corn, tobacco, hemp, woven fishing nets, and even clay went north in exchange for dried meat and fish, skins, and furs.

The island closest to Tadoussac was Newfoundland, and the European fishermen who lived here during the summer months triggered a slowly evolving interest in the fur trade. European fishermen secured food and then, gradually, prime coat beaver from Indians. Overhunting had led to the extinction of European beaver, and only the very wealthy could afford to import Russian furs. Prime-quality furs came from arctic regions, and furs from North America far surpassed Europe’s best peltry. This preponderance of peltry being traded at Tadoussac eventually reached the hands of fishermen, who transported small amounts of this highly valued commodity. In 1600, when the French king Henry IV granted the first fur-trade monopoly to François Gravé Du Pont, a French merchant, and Pierre de Chauvin de Tonnetuit, a captain of the French Royal Navy, they built an early French settlement at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. The French were one of the first nations interested in the early trade in furs because they occupied most of the prime fishing sites around the Bay of St. Lawrence.

They imported specialized goods to meet Indian demand, establishing a mutually negotiated exchange of furs for trade goods. The fishing and fur trades coexisted, but furs proved highly transportable, required no capital investment in either people or land, and possessed a global receptivity as both a raw material and a finished product. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, European competitors were threatening the French fur trade at Tadoussac. To escape competition, the French purposefully moved north, up the St. Lawrence River, founding Montreal and Quebec, which guaranteed their access to Great Lakes furs through a trading alliance with the Huron. The desire to secure direct access to prime winter peltry motivated the French to extend their reach into Canadian North America and the western Great Lakes. While the French claimed highly prized northern pieces of transatlantic real estate, the English were forced to move south to claim less desirable lands, setting up colonies on unclaimed coastal lands.

The fur trade developed at a time when no one European market could process the quantity of furs being imported from North America, and consequently, peltry had a multiplier effect on the economies of Europe's port cities. For instance, many of the furs shipped to La Rochelle in France were reserved for immediate reexport to other ports such as Amsterdam. The Dutch reexported these beaver pelts to Narva, where they were processed and then returned to Amsterdam and La Rochelle. North American beaver was transformed into hats to meet the growing demand of Europe's expanding merchant class. Beaver hats also circulated throughout the Atlantic world. After being well worn they were refashioned and shipped to the Caribbean and the Americas. Beaver hats were repaired by the French, then traded to the Spanish and Portuguese and exchanged for slaves in Africa.

Furs from North America became enmeshed in a global spider web of exchange processes. Beaver became a highly desirable product in a flourishing global commerce that incorporated products from around the world, including spices, silk, cotton, and porcelain. Despite the growing importance of furs, North Atlantic commerce remained multidimensional, involving a multiplicity of other commodities such as timber, fish, and whale oil.² By the late sixteenth century, the volume and value of economic activity in the Canadian North Atlantic proved so valuable that it exceeded the value of commodities exported from the lands surrounding the Gulf of Mexico, long considered the most profitable arena of early transatlantic commerce.³

Indians controlled the landscape where the richest peltry was harvested, and their demand for specific goods determined what Europeans produced for the North American trade. For the next two centuries, from the mid-sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, indigenous demand for finished goods, especially cloth, influenced the goods that Europeans manufactured for the North American Indian trade. The fur trade created a consumer revolution on both sides of the Atlantic, radically changing both European and Indian dress. Beaver hats signified upper-class status in Europe, and manufactured cloth revolutionized Indian dress. Throughout Europe beaver hats became the social marker of the wealthy, especially the emerging merchant class. In the 1624 portrait of the *Laughing Cavalier* (figure 2.2), Frans Hals accentuates and frames the subject's head with his wide-brimmed beaver hat.

The Dutch reaped tremendous profits from the trading posts they established at New Amsterdam and Fort Orange at the mouth and northern reaches of the Hudson River. This new merchant class transformed Holland into a global empire from 1500 to 1700. Beaver hats became their status symbol. In his painting *The Sampling Officials* (1662), Rembrandt captures a roomful of merchants midmeeting, each clad in black velvet dress, white collar, and high-pitched beaver hat (figure 2.3).



FIGURE 2.2 Frans Hals, *Laughing Cavalier*, 1624. By kind permission of the Wallace Collection. Hertford House, Manchester Square, London, England.

By the eighteenth century England dominated the fur trade, after securing the formerly Dutch New Amsterdam and Fort Orange as well as France's North American lands following the Seven Years' War. Hat makers transformed beaver pelts into a variety of styles that allowed men to convey both their status and profession by their head wear. England's upper class, often clad in the military uniforms of the expanding empire, routinely donned beaver hats (figure 2.4) to have their portraits painted.



FIGURE 2.3 Rembrandt *The Sampling Officials* (Dutch: *De Staalmeesters*), also called *Syndics of the Drapers' Guild*, 1662. Currently owned by the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

The fur trade also significantly changed the appearance of Indians in North America, as their prosperity became evident in their dress.⁴ The physical appearance of Indians offers dramatic proof of their successful adaptation to a changing economic and social world. In the early years of the trade, Europeans looked on in astonishment as Indians cut up metal kettles to make tinkling bells or hair ornaments, hung crucifixes from their necks, and transformed house keys into earrings. As items such as copper kettles and iron tools reached a saturation point cloth became the most desirable item of exchange. Beyond consuming goods within their villages, Indians used them to give as gifts, seal alliances, affirm marital relationships, and dry the eyes of grieving families.

Historian Richard White contends that the number of trade goods coming into the Great Lakes increased after 1720 with the intensification of British and French competition and the introduction of large transport trade canoes, called *canots de maître*.⁵ Cloth was both highly transportable and desirable and was carefully produced to meet Indian demand. Colonial merchants transmitted instructions across the Atlantic that detailed the color, style, and even weave of the cloth meant for Indian consumption. As competition between the French and the British intensified, their merchants were continually cautioned by fur traders about the quality of the goods they shipped west for the Indian trade. Traders frequently returned goods refused by the Indians, who were highly selective consumers.⁶ As historian Gail MacLeitch has remarked, “Rather than marking a disruptive intrusion of foreign objects, the fur trade in reality involved Europeans producing ‘Indian goods’ for an Indian clientele.”



"CONTINENTAL,"
COCKED HAT.
(1776)



"NAVY"
COCKED HAT.
(1800)



ARMY. (1837)

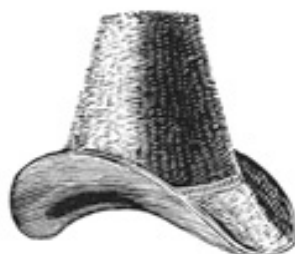


CLERICAL.
(Eighteenth Century)

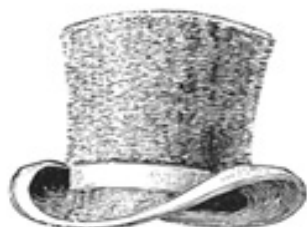


(THE WELLINGTON.)
(1812)

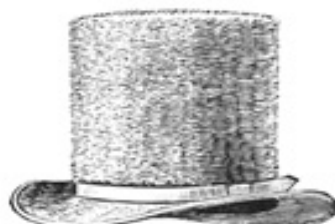
CIVIL.



(THE PARIS BEAU.)
(1815)



(THE D'ORSAY.)
(1820)



(THE REGENT.)
(1825)

MODIFICATIONS OF THE BEAVER HAT.

FIGURE 2.4 Styles of beaver hats. Library and Archives of Canada/Bibliothèque et Archives Canada. Reference number: 5347687.

Indian women probably exerted more influence than men on the types of cloth that became the staple of the fur trade. Women scraped hides and stretched and dried the furs, and their skill in processing peltry determined the amount and type of cloth available to households. Poorly processed peltry fetched far fewer yards of cloth. Indian women also cut, and sewed, and embellished the cloth they received in trade, transforming it into dramatically decorated and embroidered clothing. These skills transformed Indian women into increasingly important members of their households and villages. Clothing became the everyday display of women's handiwork, secured the status of a household, and even reflected on the well-being of an entire village.

Historians often suggest that the fur trade should be known as the cloth trade. Anthropologist Dean Anderson has thoroughly analyzed the exchange process using the Montreal Merchant Records to determine both the total amount and types of goods brought into the Great Lakes from 1715 to 1760. He identified the specific goods shipped to each post and the goods exchanged there, describing pieces of cloth by type, size, color, material, and place of manufacture. Anderson has shown that the strongest functional category was cloth as well as the scissors, thread, and needles that transformed cloth into clothing. More than 60 percent of trader expenditures went to purchase cloth. At posts such as Michilimackinac and Detroit the percentages were even higher, with cloth expenditures accounting for 72.04 percent of a trader's outfit at the former and 75.58 percent at the latter. Traders at Detroit spent so little on weapons there that firearms were not even ranked as a category of trader expenditure. Alcohol played only a minimal part in the exchange process, and firearms constituted less than 5 percent of all items shipped West (table 2.1).⁷

Trade cloth so dramatically transformed Indian dress that missionary observers such as John Heckewelder were awed by the elaborate and fashionable nature of the Indian appearance. Heckewelder described how "the wealthy adorn themselves besides with ribands or gartering of various colors, beads, and silver brooches. These ornaments are arranged by the women, who, as well as the men, know how to dress themselves in style."⁸ The Reverend David Zeisberger, whose mission home was along the Muskingum River in 1799 and 1780, also described Indians as "lovers of

finery and dress, the women more than the men. ... The dress which particularly distinguishes the women is a petticoat or strowd, blue, red or black. ... Many women wear a white shirt over the strowd, decorated with silver buckles [with] red or blue leggings ... made of fine cloth joined by a broad band of silk bordered with coral.”⁹ Manufactured clothing became an increasingly important part of the trade. Indian men favored long hunting shirts and nightshirts that reached down to their knees. They wore them as outer garments, with ties draped around their waists. Many shirts were skillfully dyed by Indian women, who used plant dyes to produce a new range of pastel colors for Indian dress.

TABLE 2.1 European Trade Goods in the Western Great Lakes, 1715–1760, Compiled from Invoice Data in the Montreal Merchants’ Records (Ranked by Trader Expenditure)

DETROIT		
<i>Ranking</i>		<i>% All Invoices</i>
1. Clothing	75.58	
2. Hunting	11.91	
3. Alcohol use	4.83	
4. Cooking & eating	4.28	
5. Adornment	1.73	
6. Grooming	.54	
7. Tobacco use	.50	
8. Woodworking	.46	
9. Digging/cultivation	.09	
10. Maintenance	.07	
11. Amusements	.02	
12. Weapons	—	
13. Fishing	—	

OUIATENON

1. Clothing	55.04
2. Hunting	20.28
3. Cooking & eating	7.22
4. Alcohol	6.95
5. Adornment	5.62
6. Woodworking	2.25
7. Grooming	1.24
8. Tobacco use	1.20
9. Digging/cultivation	.10
10. Amusements	.08
11. Weapons	.02
12. Fishing	.01
13. Maintenance	—

GREEN BAY

1. Clothing	65.08
2. Hunting	18.09
3. Cooking & eating	4.59
4. Alcohol	4.37
5. Adornment	2.95
6. Woodworking	2.39
7. Tobacco use	1.61
8. Grooming	.87
9. Weapons	.19
10. Digging/cultivation	.07
11. Maintenance	.06
12. Fishing	.03

Source: Dean L. Anderson, "The Flow of European Trade Goods into the Western Great Lakes Region, 1715–1760," in *The Fur Trade Revisited*, ed. Jennifer S. H. Brown, W. J. Eccles, and Donald P. Heldman (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 107.



FIGURE 2.5 George Winter, *Bouriette*, ca. 1837. From *The Journals and Indian Paintings of George Winter, 1837–1839* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1948). Courtesy of Tippecanoe County Historical Association, Lafayette, Indiana.

By the late eighteenth century the Ohio River valley became an important locus of the fur trade. English artist George Winter, who moved to this region, was fascinated by Indian dress. After moving to Indiana, he frequently sketched Indians engaged in conversation, in village settings, and along the pathways. We see in his sketches the dramatic dress styles that were commonplace among these various villages. Both men and women favored long shawls, and men wound fancy trade cloth into turbans to cover their heads. Many of these stylistic innovations were incorporated into Indian dress throughout the northern Great Lakes, especially among the Menominee. Artist Samuel M. Brookes sketched and painted Menominee clothing that was remarkably similar to the Miami and Potawatomi dress recorded thirty years earlier by Winter (figures 2.5–2.7).



FIGURE 2.6 George Winter, *Indian Women*, ca. 1837. From *The Journals and Indian Paintings of George Winter, 1837–1839*, plate XXIX. Courtesy of Tippecanoe County Historical Association, Lafayette, Indiana.

These portraits demonstrate that, contrary to stereotype, Indians did not just sling a trade blanket over their shoulders and consider themselves dressed. To obtain large quantities of furs Europeans needed to go beyond

their initial offerings of beads and iron trinkets, and cloth became the most desirable object of exchange. Indians were not easily satisfied with the cloth produced in European mills. They were difficult and demanding customers who refused to trade when cloth was poorly made or an undesirable color. Indians also played traders off against each other, and Europeans were forced to compete in an Indian buyer's market. Traders who attempted to match trade goods with Indian demand led the English to manufacture goods modeled directly on those produced by the French. Often, Britain and France surreptitiously imported goods from each other to meet the demands of their Indian customers. As early as 1682, the governor and board of Hudson's Bay Company obtained French blankets and had English manufacturers use these as models for the Indian trade. Indians demanded cloth in specific colors and designs: "un drap bleu, une raye blanche large comme le petit doigt del la liziere, et a l'ecarlantine rouge." Very quickly, English manufacturers supplied those products by producing the goods themselves. British makers also copied a wide variety of other French goods, including awls, vermilion, ice chisels, and firearms.¹⁰



FIGURE 2.7 Samuel M. Brookes, *A Group of Menominee Women*, 1858. From David W. Penney, *Art of the American Indian Frontier: The Chandler-Pohert Collection* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 39. Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The French responded to similar pressures from their Indian customers. A 1707 French report claimed that Indians preferred English cloth, and in 1714 English cloth was sent to French merchants to copy. The next year Indians rejected the substitute French cloth. By the late 1750s, the French still encountered problems obtaining the types of cloth that Indians demanded. During the Seven Years' War, New France officials reported, "Escarlatines

from England are an indispensable necessity for the beaver trade in Canada. To get these *escarlatines*, which they have up to the present tried in vain to imitate in France, the Company is obliged to bring them from England to Holland and from Holland to France on neutral boats.”¹¹

Indians dressed in one way in their communities and villages but donned different types of clothing for transnational audiences that often included Americans, Englishmen, or Europeans. Historian Timothy Shannon has argued that “the goods that passed between Europeans and Indians, like the rituals involved in their exchange, created a language of speech, deportment, and appearance that crossed cultural barriers.”¹² When Indian leader Joseph Brant visited London he dressed for the occasion, clad in his finest European-style clothing. A loyalist Mohawk, Brant had moved his village and Iroquois followers to southern Ontario, transformed himself into a loyal British subject, and secured a privileged voice at the English court. When he arrived back in his home village, however, he donned Indian dress and painted his face. The visual language of Indian dress became increasingly apparent during the late eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century. American Indian delegations traveled to the nation’s capital to meet with members of Congress and the president as well as with religious supporters such as the Quakers. Clothing helped bridge the cultural and languages differences at such meetings.¹³

Stereotypes have dominated the history of the fur trade, which is frequently mythologized as a masculine landscape where hardy Europeans transported trade goods, disease, and alcohol to Indian villages. Indians are rarely considered participants in the emerging transatlantic economy, other than being its victims. In reality, Indians as well as Europeans profited from trade, and Indians were active participants in both the fishing and fur trades. Throughout the Great Lakes the fur trade enhanced the material quality of daily life in Indian villages and led to strategies of adaptive survival and persistence. During French tenure in the Great Lakes, fur traders and Indians met on a common ground of exchange and shared intimate relationships. Many traders gained access to peltry through the furs produced by the kin networks of the Indian women whom they married. Those kin also fed and protected fur traders as they traveled through the river ways and villages of the Great Lakes. The fur trade was hardly a warm, fuzzy world, but it is far different from the typical portrait offered in textbooks. Encounter was an extended process during which Indians and Europeans lived and traded

together for well over a hundred years, before Jamestown was founded, and well before Pocahontas met John Smith.

Notes

1. Frederick W. Rowe, *A History of Newfoundland and Labrador* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1980), 101; Peter E. Pope, *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 22–23.

2. Pope, *Fish into Wine*, 13.

3. Ibid., 13–14.

4. Much of the initial New Indian History, published in the 1960s and 1970s, viewed the fur trade as a systematic dependency for Indians. Francis Jennings, in *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism and the Cant of Conquest*, condemned the fur trade because “in the long run it helped to make Europeans dominant and Indians dependent, it stimulated European industry and enriched English merchants while destroying Indian crafts and impoverishing the tribes.” (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 102. James Axtell viewed the consequences of the fur trade for Indians as being “dragged into dependence and debt. In their initial rush to acquire the material marvels of Europe, they gave no thought to the future and hunted out the game that gave them access to foreign markets. When the beaver and whitetail deer disappeared, the Natives were left with nothing to sell but their land.” James Axtell, “The First Consumer Revolution,” in *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 147–49.

5. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 137.

6. Arthur J. Ray, “Indians as Consumers,” in *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference*, ed. Carol M. Judd and Arthur J. Ray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Inc., 1980), 255–71; Gail D. MacLeitch, *Imperial Entanglements: Iroquois Change and Persistence on the Frontiers of Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 34–37; Axtell, “First Consumer Revolution,” 125–51.

7. Dean L. Anderson, "The Flow of European Trade Goods into the Western Great Lakes Region, 1715–1760," in *The Fur Trade Revisited: Selected Papers of the Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1991*, ed. Jennifer S. H. Brown, W. J. Eccles, and Donald P. Heldman (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 93–117.
8. John Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States ...* (Philadelphia: Lippincott's Press, 1876), 203.
9. Archer B. Hulbert and William N. Schwarze, eds., "David Zeisberger's History of the North American Indians," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* 19 (1910): 86.
10. Arthur J. Ray, "Indians as Consumers in the Eighteenth Century," in *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference*, ed. Carol M. Judd and Arthur J. Ray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 257.
11. Harold A. Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, rev. ed. (1930; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), 86.
12. Timothy J. Shannon, "Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson, and the Indian Frontier," *William and Mary Quarterly* 53 (January 1996): 42.
13. Many of these Indian visitors had their portraits commissioned by Thomas Loraine McKenney, who was then the superintendent of Indian trade under presidents Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, and Jackson. *Ibid.*, 13–42.

Suggested Readings

- Gilman, Carolyn. *Where Two Worlds Meet: The Great Lakes Fur Trade*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1982.
- Pope, Peter E. *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

- Sleeper-Smith, Susan, ed. *Rethinking the Fur Trade: Cultures of Exchange in an Atlantic World*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009.
- Turgeon, Laurier. "French Fisheries, Fur Traders, and Amerindians during the Sixteenth Century: History and Archaeology." *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 55 (1998): 585–610.
- Van Kirk, Sylvia. *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670–1870*. 1980; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Chapter 3: Rethinking the “American Paradox”

Bacon’s Rebellion, Indians, and the U.S. History Survey

JAMES D. RICE

Historians have long considered Bacon’s Rebellion, a civil war that convulsed Virginia in 1676, one of the most important events in all of American history. A staple of textbooks and survey courses, it enjoys an unusually high level of name recognition for a prerevolutionary event that was not a “founding,” so much so that an online search turns up appropriations of the name for contemporary political uses. Not coincidentally, its causes, consequences, and meaning have been much contested. Did its youthful leader Nathaniel Bacon, the “Torchbearer of the Revolution,” launch a democratic struggle against the tyranny of Virginia’s colonial governor William Berkeley, the embodiment of royal absolutism in America? Or was Bacon the anti-torchbearer, leading the way to a long, dark American tradition of slavery and racism?¹

The story of Bacon’s Rebellion usually goes something like this: In the summer of 1675 a trading dispute between a Virginia planter and some Indians along the Potomac River turned violent. Differences soon arose among Virginians over how best to prosecute the resulting “Susquehannock War.” Governor Berkeley’s strategy was essentially defensive and focused on the Susquehannocks alone. Many Virginians, however, saw in the war an opportunity to go on the offensive, not only against the Susquehannocks but against all Indians in the region. In the spring of 1676 Bacon, a wealthy young newcomer to Virginia, emerged as the leader of this latter group. After Berkeley refused Bacon’s repeated requests for a commission “to go out against the Indians,” Bacon led an unauthorized attack against the Occaneechees, who were allies of Virginia. This made him a rebel. Baconites and Berkeley loyalists first aimed guns at one another in late June, and throughout the summer of 1676 they alternated possession of Virginia’s capital at Jamestown. The rebels generally prevailed, forcing Berkeley and other leading loyalists to take refuge on Virginia’s Eastern Shore. In mid-

September the rebels burned Jamestown to the ground. When Bacon died of disease in October, however, the rebellion fell apart. It was all over by late January 1677. A regiment of regular troops, accompanied by royal commissioners sent to investigate the matter, arrived from England shortly after the final suppression of the uprising. They placed much of the blame on Berkeley. Berkeley was recalled to England but died in London before he could defend his handling of the rebellion to the king.

The most influential explanation of these events today is Edmund S. Morgan's 1975 *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*. Bacon's Rebellion, Morgan argues, was an "instinctive attempt to subdue class conflict by racism." The result was a new settlement in which planters replaced white indentured servants with enslaved Africans, and whites of all ranks bonded together as members of a single race. Having learned from the rebellion that "resentment of an alien race might be more powerful than resentment of an upper class," Virginia's ruling class began to offer their (white) social inferiors better opportunities, more political power, and more respect. Bacon's Rebellion was therefore a pivotal moment in the creation of what Morgan calls "the central paradox of American history": that is, the intimate marriage between freedom and slavery in which the emerging rhetoric of American liberty was completely intertwined with the rise of racial slavery.²

Morgan's thesis features prominently in many survey courses and textbooks, and with good reason. *American Slavery, American Freedom*, after all, connects the colonial period (foreign territory to many instructors and virtually all students) to some of the most important themes in U.S. history: the centrality of slavery, the rise of an aggressively democratic society, and the vexed relationships between (and legacies of) slavery and democracy down to the present. It helps to account for the closely interrelated phenomena of white populism, African American slavery, and the pervasive rhetoric of liberty and freedom among slaveholders in revolutionary-era Virginia and in the United States thereafter.³

Yet a survey course featuring Morgan's interpretation of Bacon's Rebellion misses out on the opportunity to tell a still-larger story. This is because it glosses over the experiences and motivations of Native Americans, who were far more central to the rebellion—and to American history as a whole—than Morgan and other scholars have acknowledged. Indeed, a Native-centered account of Bacon's Rebellion actually meshes

better with the major themes and interpretations commonly offered in U.S. history surveys than does an Indian-free version of the rebellion. It better explains the origins of slavery and the “central paradox of American history” by connecting these developments to the rise of the Indian slave trade. It also fits with the well-established theme of the contest of European empires for North America, particularly between the French and the English. Because the rebellion became entangled with a resurgent English “antipopery” during the 1670s, it ties in nicely with existing survey-course treatments of religion and politics. Finally, it comports well with today’s emphasis on the broader contexts—both “continental” and “Atlantic”—of American history.

The nearly two centuries between the founding of the first English colonies and the events leading up to the American Revolution often fit uneasily into survey courses. The period features a confusingly varied cast of characters with unfamiliar names in strange languages, representing people who do not normally figure in popular or K–12 history: Dutch and French colonists, African peoples, and, above all, hundreds of Indian nations. It is not easy to piece together a coherent story from these scattered accounts about unfamiliar peoples, places, and events, either in the sense of weaving a compelling tale that will hold students’ attention, or in the sense of situating colonial events in a broader narrative in a survey course that is really about U.S. national history.

Bacon’s Rebellion is a rare exception to this rule. More than most events in early American history, it generated colorful, compelling narratives that read well even today. Take, for example, Thomas Mathew’s account of how local militiamen in northern Virginia, in attacking a group of Doeg Indians who had just murdered an Englishman named Robert Hen, accidentally set off a war with the Susquehannock Nation. After Hen’s murder two militia units tracked the Doegs through the night, following the south bank of the Potomac River until they found the Doegs’ crossing point not far below modern-day Washington, D.C. Landing on the north bank of the river at dawn, the militiamen found two paths leading into the woods. Each led to a small cabin. At the first cabin Captain George Brent called out in “the Indian tongue,” asking for a *matchacomicha*—a council. When the Doegs’ leader emerged, however, Brent seized him by his hair and demanded “the murderer of Robert Hen.” The Doeg tried to escape, but Brent shot him dead. His men opened fire, killing ten more Doegs.

Colonel George Mason and his men were already positioned around the second cabin when the gunfire startled the inhabitants awake. Alarmed and disoriented, the Indians rushed directly into a volley that killed fourteen men. In the confusion one of the survivors was able to seize Mason by the arm and cry out “Susquehanoughs netoughs” (“Susquehannock friends”) before disappearing into the woods. Susquehannocks? Mason panicked. The Doegs, not the Susquehannocks, had killed Robert Hen. In fact, the Susquehannocks had been close allies of Virginia for nearly fifty years. Mason “ran amongst his Men, Crying out ‘For the Lords sake Shoot no more, these are our friends the Susquehanoughs.’” It was too late, though. The Susquehannocks could hardly let these unprovoked killings go, and the resulting cycle of revenge soon spiraled into a war between Virginia and the Susquehannocks.⁴

Students perk up when such stories are told. But to what purpose can the tale of Bacon’s Rebellion be put, beyond entertainment? How can instructors channel the spark of interest generated by weird tales from the distant past into a deeper understanding of American history? The trick, of course, is to connect these small stories to bigger stories: specifically, the midlevel stories that occupy the space between and connect colorful vignettes with the major points and overarching themes of American history. By “midlevel” I mean stories within a dramatic, but not epic, scale. Such tales begin by establishing a source of narrative tension—a problem faced by a limited number of identifiable and relatable characters—and end shortly after that source of narrative tension has been resolved.

Bacon’s Rebellion is easily adapted to this standard dramatic narrative structure. Almost too easily, in fact: the beginning of personal struggle between “the Governor and the Rebel” (they first clashed in 1675) and the end of that struggle with their twin deaths (in October 1676 and July 1677) exert such a strong narrative pull that many writers take these to be the natural beginning and ending to the story. Yet this chronology is fundamentally flawed, because the only dramatic tension it resolves is the mano a mano contest between Berkeley and Bacon. The real-life issues at play during Bacon’s Rebellion did not begin with the face-off between Bacon and Berkeley, and they were in no way resolved by Bacon’s and Berkeley’s deaths.

What, then, were those deeper sources of tension, not only for the rebels but for *everyone* who was caught up in the rebellion? Some surprising

answers emerge when the question is posed in such an open-ended fashion, and also some surprising actors—most notably, a variety of Indian nations along an arc of territory from Iroquoia in the north to Florida in the south. When Indians are integrated into the story as distinct nations, each with its own strengths, vulnerabilities, and strategies for dealing with each other and with the colonies, it becomes clear that Bacon's Rebellion cannot be understood purely by reference to the inner workings of Virginia's colonial society.

In fact, it turns out that the major issues being contested *predated* Bacon's Rebellion, were *accentuated* rather than resolved by the conflict, and *took another generation to work out*. For "neighbor Indians" living within Virginia, the problem was how to survive in an era of increasingly aggressive colonial encroachment; for the nations to the south of Virginia, how to survive a brutal cycle of intra-Indian wars, slaving, migrations, and consolidations, which were intensifying with the rapid expansion of the European economy into Indian country; and for Indians to the north (especially the Five Nations Iroquois and the Susquehannock Nation) how to hold their own against other northern nations without becoming enmeshed in a destructive and self-defeating war with the English or the French. For Governor Berkeley the challenge was to address Virginians' frustrations with the economic and political state of the colony, which many blamed on "the Indians" and their government's Indian policy, without giving in to their demands for indiscriminate (and prohibitively expensive) war against the Indians.

One basic point about Indians that students ought to take away from a survey course is that it is just as important to distinguish between different First Nations as it is to distinguish between European nations. It is an elementary point, but it is nevertheless news to most students that the desires, goals, and actions of specific Native people and groups actually shaped the course of events. Treating encounters as two-sided meetings between "Indians" and "colonists" eliminates most of the story, thus clearing the way for discredited tropes and clichés to fill the void left by the lack of meaningful analysis.

This was very much the case with Bacon's Rebellion, which began as the Susquehannock War. Contrary to the impression that one gets from Anglocentric accounts of Bacon's Rebellion, this war did not merely pit Virginians against Susquehannocks. Rather, Virginians in 1675 were making

a very late entry into a century-long conflict between the Susquehannocks and the peoples immediately to their north and south: the Five Nations Iroquois of what is now New York State, and the Piscataways and other Algonquian groups in the northern Chesapeake Bay region. The Piscataways and Five Nations regarded the Virginians' (and neighboring Marylanders) Susquehannock War as an opportunity to gain the upper hand in their more long-running struggle against the Susquehannocks, so much so that they carried on that war even after the colonists' attention shifted to their own internecine war in 1676–77. Throughout Bacon's Rebellion the Susquehannocks were repeatedly attacked by the Occaneechees, Piscataways, and other groups. By 1677 most Susquehannocks had capitulated to the Five Nations and gone to live among them; thus the Iroquois were among the winners of Bacon's Rebellion.

What, then, would a Susquehannock have to say about the causes of Bacon's Rebellion? From this perspective differences among Virginians do not appear to be at the heart of the matter. Instead the Susquehannocks' long-term struggle against the Five Nations and the Piscataways comes to the fore, and Virginians, whether they lined up under the governor's standard or that of the rebel, come across as a people united in their determination to betray their longtime Susquehannock friends. In short, Bacon's Rebellion marked a new phase in an old struggle, the framework of which had been established well before there was a "Virginia."

This is not to say that Bacon's Rebellion was merely a sideshow to a conflict among Indians. It does, however, point to the centrality of Indians to Bacon's Rebellion. It is a common misconception that the rebellion pitted poor "frontiersmen" against the wealthy residents of older English settlements nearer to the coast. In fact, the rebellion's leaders lived in the heart of Jamestown as well as on the western reaches of the colony, and its opponents could be found in the places that were the most vulnerable to Indian attacks as well as in the least. There was no shortage of wealthy Baconites, or of poor loyalists. There was, however, a great deal of frustration and fear among Virginians in 1676, a widespread belief that Indians were at the root of many of the colonists' problems, and considerable disagreement over how best to deal with Virginia's numerous "neighbor Indians" and allies.

The sources of frustration were varied: high taxes levied to pay down the colony's debt from the Anglo-Dutch War of 1672–74; slender profit margins

on tobacco; a severe shortage of unfree laborers (the keys to building real wealth in the tobacco economy); and a growing shortage of land suitable for growing and shipping tobacco. Many Virginians believed that Indians were inherently treacherous and warlike. They imagined themselves to be threatened by a massive, coordinated conspiracy, one in which *all* Indians were combining against the English. Wildly inflated death tolls were taken as gospel; rumored Indian attacks that never materialized were remembered as if they had; and Virginia's enemies were reputed to have thousands of fighting men at their disposal (inflating the real number by one or two zeros). In addition, Virginians commonly thought that Indians did not make proper use of their lands. Thus, they believed, untold acres of prime farmland went to waste, even as a growing number of freemen languished for want of land to cultivate. It followed, then, that Virginia would be far safer and more prosperous if Indians were ejected from the colony (or put to work for the English).⁵

Not coincidentally, the argument between Bacon and Berkeley focused almost entirely on the question of how best to conduct the Susquehannock War. Berkeley, governor since 1641, had presided over a steady increase in the extent of colonial territory and had overseen the dispossession of numerous Native peoples. His usual strategy was to avoid full-scale warfare but to opportunistically seize upon local disputes between Indians and colonists as pretexts to scatter or reduce Indian nations to tiny reservations. His preference in 1676 was to continue these successful (and inexpensive) policies; thus his strategy was to isolate the Susquehannocks, enlist Virginia's "neighbor Indians" in the effort (not difficult, since they had their own long histories with the Susquehannocks), and avoid major campaigns that would necessitate higher taxes.⁶

The rebels, in contrast, saw in the Susquehannock War the opportunity to launch a more general war that would resolve all of their problems with Indians (and indeed, all of their problems, period) at a stroke. Thus Bacon directed most of his energy against Indians rather than against other Virginians. His "rebellion" was a rearguard action, waged mainly when Berkeley loyalists went on the offensive. Granted, Bacon was not particularly talented at fighting Indians. After his surprise attack against the Occaneechees he scored only one other victory, over the Pamunks, and even that came largely by accident. The fact remains, however, that the rebels' words and deeds were clear and consistent: their fight was against

Indians. Fittingly, Bacon died while campaigning against Indians, not Berkeley's men.

Bacon's death in October 1676 and Berkeley's death the following summer put an end to their personal problems, but did nothing to resolve the issues that were in play during the rebellion itself. There could be no real resolution to the conflict that did not, for better or for worse, resolve the Indians' problems and the colonists' problem with Indians. It remained to be seen how the Indians, from the Five Nations in the North to the numerous Carolina nations in the South, would withstand the combined onslaught of land-hungry planters, English slavers, and genocidal militias. Nor did the end of the rebellion put an end to Virginians' troubles. Colonists, no closer to solving their political and economic problems than before, still believed that Indians were being coddled and allowed to threaten the colony.



MAP 3.1 Eastern North America, 1672–1705 (From James Rice, “Bacon’s Rebellion in Indian Country,” *Journal of American History* [December 2014]. Map drawn by Rebecca Wrenn.)

The resolutions to these conflicts, which gradually unfolded during the quarter-century following the deaths of Bacon and Berkeley, came mostly at Indians’ expense. The three main forces driving this late seventeenth-century transition fell into place during and immediately after the rebellion: first, an expanding Indian slave trade in the Southeast; second, an unspoken compromise among Virginians over Indian policy; and third, the first stirrings of a sense among colonists that they were being confronted by a vast conspiracy involving the neighbor Indians, the Iroquois, and international Catholicism. The pressure from these developments built steadily from 1675 through the 1680s, until at last the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89 resolved many of the tensions underlying Bacon’s Rebellion and cleared the way for a more lasting post-Baconite settlement.

Virginia’s Indian slave trade accelerated because of Bacon’s Rebellion. Virginia’s Assembly had placed certain restrictions on the enslavement of Indians in the 1650s and 1660s, but during the rebellion numerous Occaneechees, Pamunkeys, and other Indians were seized and sold into servitude. Provincial officials took advantage of these wartime circumstances to actively promote the expansion of Indian slavery in a 1676 statute that was periodically revised and strengthened over the next several decades. In a stroke of good luck for Virginia’s planters and Indian traders, this came at a moment when an accelerating cycle of warfare between Indian nations in the Southeast, together with epidemics and the disruptive effects of rivalries between European powers, was producing a sharp increase in the number of Indian captives available to be sold into slavery within Virginia or the West Indies. Between 30,000 and 50,000 southern Indians were enslaved by the British between 1670 and 1715. Entire peoples scattered and were integrated into more successful nations and confederacies, such as the Catawbas, Creeks, and Yamasees. Blank spaces appeared on the map, becoming buffer zones between a more limited number of larger Indian polities.⁷

Not coincidentally, this expansion in the Indian slave trade came *after* the supply of indentured servants from England had sharply contracted (in the 1660s), and *before* large numbers of enslaved Africans became available to Virginia planters (around 1700). Indian slavery ensured that planters would not be pressed to find a free-labor alternative to servitude or slavery, and

thus served as a vital bridge between the old system of white indentured servitude and the slave society that would emerge in Virginia at the beginning of the eighteenth century. From 1670 and 1700, for instance, 40 percent of all slaves on the upper James River (where Bacon lived) were Indians, not Africans. Enslaved children in particular were disproportionately Indians: in most counties between one-third and one-half of young slaves were Indians.⁸

What about the neighbor Indians, the nations within Virginia whose fate had been such a point of contention between rebels and loyalists? Postrebellion governors compromised with those who had supported Bacon's call for a general Indian war. They allowed colonists to stir up as much trouble as they liked among distant southern nations and to profit from the increased flow of Indian slaves, but they also returned to the prerebellion strategy of treating the neighbor Indians as allies—a less costly way of proceeding that still effectively pressured and reduced Native populations by means of tools as varied as free-ranging colonial livestock in their fields, epidemics, surveyors' instruments, small-scale but endemic personal violence, and the legal system.⁹

Former rebels and sympathizers only reluctantly acquiesced in this compromise. Although they refrained from directly confronting their royal governors over the issue, postrebellion neo-Baconites indirectly worked to rid the colony of neighbor Indians by linking their campaign to the concurrent crisis in English religious and dynastic affairs. Bacon's Rebellion coincided with a popular and parliamentary movement to prevent Charles II's brother James, a Catholic, from succeeding him as king. Widespread antipopery led many people to hope that one of Charles II's illegitimate sons, the dashing Duke of Monmouth, would claim the throne when Charles died. Thus Bacon's men took comfort during the rebellion in rumors that they "need not fear the king," whom Berkeley represented, "for the king was dead" and Monmouth was on the march. Monmouth, presumably, would regard his fellow rebels in Virginia as allies.¹⁰

Late in 1676, while loyalist forces were finally gaining the upper hand over the rebels, an anonymous colonist penned a "Complaint from Heaven ... out of Virginia and Maryland." The planters whose sentiments found expression in this document believed that Bacon's death marked only the end of the first act of "the late tragedy." Berkeley (it was said) was not the real enemy, but rather the dupe of a far more sinister figure: Lord Baltimore,

the proprietor of Maryland and a powerful Catholic with strong connections to Charles II and his brother James. Baltimore, they charged, had arranged a deadly alliance between the Indians, powerful English Catholics, the French (especially the Jesuit missionaries of New France), and the Pope himself, all joined together in a great conspiracy to destroy English Protestantism. *That* was what Bacon had been trying to prevent.¹¹

Persistent rumors of this far-flung plot gained momentum throughout the late 1670s and the 1680s, in no small part because the Susquehannock War, far from having been settled during Bacon's Rebellion, was actually intensifying. Guided by the Susquehannocks who now lived within the Five Nations, Iroquois warriors regularly attacked the Piscataways and other "neighbor Indians" in Virginia and Maryland, and some colonists as well. Each raid, multiplied tenfold through the power of rumor, seemed to confirm the existence of the French-Catholic-Indian conspiracy.¹²

These mounting tensions finally broke in early 1689, when colonists first learned of the "Glorious Revolution" in which James II's son-in-law William of Orange invaded England and James himself fled to France. Supported and encouraged by powerful county elites in northern Virginia, Protestant Marylanders rebelled in the name of the new Protestant monarchs, William and Mary, and overthrew Lord Baltimore's proprietary government. Quick-thinking members of the Governor's Council averted a similar coup in Virginia. With James II, the Calverts, and other Catholics barred from political life, conspiracy theories and religious politics lost their traction. Henceforth anti-Catholicism unified rather than divided colonists. Crucially, it united colonists more than ever against the Indians and their presumed French allies.¹³

Baconite Indian policies prevailed after the Glorious Revolution. The central figure in implementing these policies was Francis Nicholson, the postrevolution lieutenant governor of Virginia (1690–92 and 1698–1704) and Maryland (1694–98). Under Nicholson the neighbor Indians lost much—in some cases, all—of their land. Many simply gave up on Virginia and Maryland, moving to Pennsylvania or New York and allying themselves with the Five Nations.¹⁴

By 1700 the deeper tensions underlying Bacon's Rebellion, in Indian Country as well as within colonial society, had greatly subsided. Neighbor Indians were reduced to tiny reservations, driven underground into unrecognized communities, or moved away, one way or another entering

into new (and enduring) ways of being Indians within a society increasingly defined in terms of black and white. The Susquehannock War faded away in the late 1690s. Two major treaties in 1701, at Albany and at Montreal, created a more stable diplomatic system in the North, centered on the Five Nations and New York, which greatly lessened tensions on the frontiers. As a consequence colonists began to patent lands above the fall line, significantly expanding the western limits of Virginia's territory for the first time since the 1650s. To Virginia's south, the cycle of war, captivity, and migrations among Indian nations continued to work in favor of Virginia's Indian traders, though increasingly their trade was in deerskins rather than people: Virginians had less use for Indian slaves after about 1700, when major changes in the Atlantic slave trade brought large numbers of enslaved Africans—previously rather scarce—to Virginia.¹⁵

The story of Bacon's Rebellion presents instructors with a valuable pedagogical opportunity. Neither Native American history nor the colonial period is much emphasized in K–12 curriculums, so students often have little exposure to these areas before entering university. These subjects also lack the convenient (and comforting) signposts of a national political history, so students find it difficult to develop any sense of chronology. Captives of a nationalist popular historiography, most students also tend to regard colonists as part of the future United States rather than as English, Dutch, or French people. Indians, of course, are considered a single group, rich in essentialized traits but lacking histories of their own.

Instructors can tackle these problems head-on by presenting Bacon's Rebellion as a dramatic event that opens up new insights into this little-known era of American history. It offers an important "turning point" other than a founding; it points students toward a broader conception of what history is all about; and it can be used as a vehicle for achieving a more fully historicized understanding of early American and Native American history while still connecting with the great "American paradox" that instructors of U.S. history survey courses have to reckon with: the inescapable relationships between slavery and freedom, between Indian removal and "settler's" liberty, and between white populism and democracy.

Notes

1. Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, *Torchbearer of the Revolution: The Story of Bacon's Rebellion and Its Leader* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1940). Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), exemplifies the “anti-torchbearer” tradition. For historiographical summaries, see Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), chap. 1; Brent Tarter, “Bacon's Rebellion, the Grievances of the People, and the Political Culture of Seventeenth-Century Virginia,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 119, no. 1 (2011): 6–9; and James D. Rice, *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 203–6.

2. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom* (quotations on 4, 269–70, 328).

3. For examples of Morgan's influence in textbooks and synthetic works, see Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Viking, 2001), 243; and the current market-leading textbook, Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, 3rd Seagull ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012) 102–4.

4. [T. M.], “The Beginning, Progress, and Conclusion of Bacon's Rebellion, 1675–1676,” in *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675–1690*, ed. Charles M. Andrews (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 8–9. Spelling and punctuation have been modernized.

5. Rice, *Tales*, 13–16.

6. The following account is summarized from Rice, *Tales*, chaps. 1–7.

7. C. S. Everett, “‘They Shalbe Slaves for their lives’: Indian Slavery in Colonial Virginia,” in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, ed. Alan Galloway (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 67–107; Rice, *Tales*, 146–48, 163–64, 192–96, 199–201, 211–15.

8. John Coombs, “Beyond the Origins Debate: Rethinking the Rise of Virginia Slavery,” in *Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old Dominion*, ed. Douglas Bradburn and John C. Coombs (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 240–78; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 330.

9. For detailed analyses of these processes, see Helen Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia Through Four Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), chaps. 5–6; and James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), chaps. 6–7.

10. Herbert Paschal, ed., “George Bancroft’s ‘Lost Notes’ on the General Court Records of Seventeenth-Century Virginia,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 91, no. 3 (1983): 356 (quotation).

11. “Complaint from Heaven with a Huy and crye and a petition out of Virginia and Maryland,” C.O. 1/36, 213–18, Virginia Colonial Records Project (Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia), Reel 92. An error-ridden transcription is published in William Hand Browne et al., eds., *Archives of Maryland*, 72 vols. (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883–1972), 5:134–52.

12. Daniel Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 145; Rice, *Nature and History*, chaps. 8–11.

13. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 1–54; Owen Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed: English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Rice, *Tales*, chaps. 8–10.

14. Stephen Saunders Webb, “The Strange Career of Francis Nicholson,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (1966): 513–48; Rountree, *Pocahontas's People*, 105–27; Rice, *Nature and History*, chap. 9.

15. Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, chap. 9; Warren Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Paul Kelton, *Epidemics and Enslavement: Biological Catastrophe in the Native Southeast, 1492–1715* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), chap. 4; Robbie Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540–1715* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), chap. 5; Coombs, “Beyond the Origins Debate.”

Suggested Readings

- Andrews, Charles, ed. *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675–1690*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915.
- Brown, Kathleen. *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Morgan, Edmund S. *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1975.
- Rice, James D. *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Washburn, Wilcomb. *The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1957.

Chapter 4: Recentering Indian Women in the American Revolution

SARAH M. S. PEARSALL

In U.S. history textbooks, if Indians generally fare badly, Indian *women* fare even worse. For the most part, for textbooks surveyed for the periods up to the Civil War, only two Native women even appear to have names: Pocahontas and Sacajawea.¹ Both are known for their alliances with white men. Pocahontas was the daughter of a Native leader, Powhatan. She may or may not have helped to save John Smith, an early English governor in Virginia; she was later a captive herself. She was baptized, married John Rolfe, and returned with him to England, where she died of smallpox. Sacajawea was a Shoshone interpreter and the wife of a French trader. She accompanied Lewis and Clark on their westward journey and helped to make it possible and successful. Other typical points of discussion about Native women include brief surveys of the precolonial social life of Indians, in which gendered divisions of labor figure. Native American women tend not to have a great deal of agency in these textbook accounts. Mostly, they are acted upon or remain in the background of the main narrative, which typically centers on white men. They do not appear to have really any role at all in pivotal moments in American history such as the American Revolution.

Almost uniformly, for a given major event such as the revolution these textbooks contain a section on Indians, which generally means Indian men. Then there is a section on women, which typically means white women. This situation is changing, but only slowly. In part, this orientation in textbooks reflects some limitations in the treatment of indigenous women in the historiography, especially in specific key eras such as the American Revolution. Indigenous women appear largely as marginal figures, in a late chapter or a concluding section, in histories of the American Revolution, even in histories of *women* in the American Revolution.² Both classic and recent work on the revolution that includes a great deal on women fails to discuss indigenous women.³ There are understandable reasons for this

compartmentalization, but it does make it possible to continue to marginalize indigenous women in these histories. At the same time, most historians of Native Americans and the war, with a few notable exceptions, have had comparatively little to say about women.⁴ Work in which Native women have been at the center tends not to focus on the traditional turning points of U.S. history such as the American Revolution.

However, Indian women were vital to the shape of developments in early North American history. It is possible to tell stories about key events in American history in which Native women figure more prominently as actors and agents of history. Scholars are increasingly doing so, but their work has yet to be fully integrated into more general treatments. In part, widening the geography of American history to include what is now the United States is essential to telling these tales. Many points of focus in a standard class in American history might include more on Native American women. Attention might be given to war, for instance; Indian women played prominent roles—as leaders, as captives, and as mediators—in just about every war fought in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century North America, as well as many later ones.⁵ Other themes, from religion to cultural encounters to politics to economics, might usefully and reasonably highlight the ongoing contributions and experiences of Native women. To give a few brief examples, we might hear more about the spiritual and economic authority of women such as Kateri Tekakwitha, the seventeenth-century “Mohawk Saint,” or cultural and economic mediators such as Marie Rouensa, a Native woman in New France who converted to Catholicism and lived at the center of a complex network of trade, religion, and community.⁶ We might consider the vital role Native women played in systems of labor and captivity, considering how enslaved Native women such as María Paula or Marie-Marguerite-Caroline navigated and at times surmounted complicated, bitter worlds of enslavement and exploitation.⁷ We would benefit from more attention to the actions of political leaders such as Doña María, a *cacica* (or chief) among the Guale of Spanish Florida in the late sixteenth century, and Nancy Ward, the War Woman of Chota, who addressed U.S. treaty commissioners on behalf of Cherokee women in 1781.⁸ We might hear more about the complicated intersections of domesticity, deviance, and religion in the stories of Native women such as Sarah Ahhontan in seventeenth-century New England or Tschanxehs in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania.⁹ In part, we might also be more attentive

to the ways in which gender and ideas about gender were critical to cultural encounters and alterations across a range of times and places, not simply at “first contact.”¹⁰

This chapter provides an account of a critical event in U.S. and Haudenosaunee (or Iroquois) history in which Native women are at the center. It offers a case study of another little-known Native woman, called Madam Sacho, who was important in the American Revolution. It concentrates on the period in which U.S. Major General John Sullivan led a campaign of devastation in the Country of the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee in 1779. Recentring our revolutionary accounts so that such narratives are at the core is important for a variety of reasons. At a most basic level, it is good to pay attention to people who have been largely forgotten in mainstream historical narratives because it fills a gap; indigenous women have been too often ignored. Certainly, too, such women at the time were far from marginal; following the lead of contemporaries brings the power of such women into finer focus. There is also symbolic importance in the stories of such women.

More than one textbook devotes attention to Sullivan’s campaign. It was a significant event in the war itself, especially in the frontier war between patriots and Native Americans allied to the British. It was also relevant to the breaking up of the long-standing Haudenosaunee Confederacy, as the Oneida and Tuscarora supported the Americans, the Onondaga split, and the Mohawk, Seneca, and Cayuga remained loyal to the British. Here is how the story of the campaign appears in a very recent textbook: “When patriot General John Sullivan’s regular army was badly defeated by Mohawk chief Thayendanegea, known to the Americans as Joseph Brant, and local loyalists, Sullivan took revenge by burning forty Indian villages. It was an act of violence and cruelty that deeply shocked and shamed George Washington.”¹¹ In this characterization, women are absent, as in all of the accounts of this campaign in textbooks. Here, Sullivan is a revenge-driven maverick, while honorable George Washington grieves for the Indians. This depiction bleeds drama and sorrow, yet it also offers comfort. George Washington remains sympathetic, a founding father of whom to be nothing but proud. Alas, as this chapter will show, this depiction is fundamentally incorrect.

Looking more carefully at women helps to correct this sort of flawed account. Taking indigenous women seriously and returning them to the

center of these stories, where they rightly belong, reveals critical aspects about both Native American women and their communities, important in itself, but it also recasts our understandings of the founding of the new American nation as well as its leadership. The essay delves deeply into the story of one elderly woman in part to show *how* historians excavate the tales of people whose true names have been lost. Such work is challenging, but not impossible. There are considerable gaps and omissions in terms of sources, to be sure, but the sources on Indian women are not as limited as many suppose. Using traditional accounts, including letters from generals and diaries of soldiers, it is possible to discern the importance of Native American women. This chapter demonstrates, I hope, that it is possible to highlight the agency of such women in key turning points of American history, even where a lack of sources makes it difficult. In its insistent focus on the tale of one obscure Indian woman, it demonstrates that such women, while heretofore treated as marginal figures, could in fact be quite important.

Soldiers called her many things: “a very old Squaw,” “helpless impotent wretch,” “antediluvian hag.” Only one recorded anything like a name: “Madam Sacho.”¹² Her full name has been lost. Yet we would not even know that much about her had not Major General Sullivan and his men not stumbled across her in the desolate country of the Six Nations in September 1779. This land seemed eerily abandoned: “Kittels” left in a hurry by the hearth, books thrown aside, and tall corn stalks rustling, ready for harvest, in the field.¹³ The Haudenosaunee people imagined they would be returning to their homes soon. It was not to be. Sullivan and his men burned houses and fields to the ground. Madam Sacho must have emerged from the smoke like a ghost herself: startling, uncanny, and with a tale to tell.

Contemporaries, Iroquois and otherwise, were well aware of the importance of women to the war. The Haudenosaunee, or people of the Great League of Peace and Power, had long been united diplomatically, centered in lands in what is now upstate New York. They were indeed powerful, though their enemies would not have described them as peaceful. They fought hard, especially against Algonquian enemies, in a series of “mourning wars” in the seventeenth century. In part, Iroquois people were seeking captives, mainly women and children, and their own matrons had an important role in deciding on war and peace, captivity and death. Women in these communities had long had the power to select chiefs, participate in

councils, and wage war.¹⁴ They were also central to the agricultural labor that provided resources, stability, and power. In 1763, Mohawks explained to an Indian agent that women were “the Truest Owners, being the persons who labour on the Lands.”¹⁵ As one historian has it, “an Iroquois town was largely a female world.”¹⁶

The Haudenosaunee people initially followed a policy of neutrality in the American Revolution. Most of the Iroquois Confederacy, long allied to the British, had little interest in joining in the patriot cause. However, a series of incidents led to a declaration of loyalty to the British side, by all but the Oneida and the Tuscarora. When this fateful resolution passed the council of warriors, records noted that “the mothers also consent,” indicating the continued political standing of Iroquois matrons. One of the best-known of these women, central to the revolution, is Konwatsitsiaienni, or Molly Brant, recognized in Iroquois communities as the widow of Sir William Johnson, the prerevolutionary British agent to the Indians. Her arguments were critical in persuading Mohawks and others to support the British, since “one word from her goes farther with them than a thous[an]d. from any White Man.”¹⁷ Thanks to the efforts of Konwatsitsiaienni, her brother, and others, Mohawks and others began fighting with the British. There was a series of raids and attacks in 1778, most notably at Wyoming Valley and Cherry Valley.

By 1779, the majority of the Haudenosaunee League, then, was proving deeply vexing to patriot leaders. Generals George Washington and Philip Schuyler therefore determined on a campaign of systematic violence against Native American women and children; Sullivan was no maverick going against orders from on high. Both Washington and Schuyler had served in the Seven Years’ War and participated in fierce fighting against Native Americans. This background shaped their thinking. The lands of the Six Nations did not have tactical significance in the war between the United States and Britain. Instead, it was to be a campaign of terror. As Washington agonized over how to “carry ... the War into the Indian Country,” he asked for Schuyler’s guidance on numbers of troops and methods required.¹⁸ Schuyler suggested: “Should we be so fortunate as to take a considerable number of the women and children of the Indians I conceive that we should then have the means of preventing them hereafter from acting hostilely against us.”¹⁹ Washington gave his assent, hoping that their “attacks will distract and terrify the Indians.” He added, “It is also to be hoped in their

confusion, they may neglect in some places to remove the old men women and Children and that these will fall into our hands.” Listen carefully to Washington’s dehumanizing language before any finger or tinder has been lifted: “*these* will fall into our hands,” not “they.” Washington argued that either American troops would be able to defeat Indian warriors, or at the very least they would “distress ... them as much as possible, by destroying their villages, and this year’s crop.”²⁰

So, Washington gave Major General John Sullivan explicit instructions for the 1779 campaign: “The immediate objects are the total distruction and devastation of their settlements and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible,” since “hostages are the only kind of security to be depended on.” Washington also directed the destruction of crops and houses: “parties should be detached to lay waste [to] all the settlements around, with instructions to do it in the most effectual manner; that the country may not be merely *overrun* but *destroyed*.” He stressed the need to achieve “the total ruin of their settlements,” since “our future security will be in their inability to injure us; the distance to w[hi]ch they are driven and in the terror with which the severity of the chastizement they receive will inspire them.”²¹ Under the command of Major General Sullivan, several regiments marched. Almost all the inhabitants of the Native settlements fled before soldiers arrived, but the corn was ripening in the field. Under orders, troops plundered houses and burned homes, fields, and orchards. They destroyed forty towns and 160,000 bushels of corn.²² In a typical entry, one lieutenant wrote on August 30 that “Our Brigade Destroyed about 150 Acres of the best corn that Ever I saw (some of the Stalks grew 16 feet high) besides great Quantities of Beans, Potatoes, Pumpkins, Cucumbers, Squashes & Watermellons.”²³ This destruction particularly affected women, for it was Haudenosaunee women who planted, tended, and harvested these crops and trees. To destroy the fields and orchards so carefully cultivated by these women was to inflict a visceral blow on many of the people of the Six Nations, who were evidently only just emerging from two years of poor harvests.

In the midst of this carefully orchestrated rampage, in early September soldiers stumbled across Madam Sacho. Soldiers’ diaries recount the surprise they felt on finding her, detailing how, through an Oneida interpreter, she conversed with General Sullivan himself. Some soldiers wanted to kill her immediately, but, as one soldier recorded, “the common

dictates of humanity, a veneration for old age, and a regard for the female world of any age or denomination induced our General to spare her.”²⁴ Sullivan gave her some food and left her in a hut. According to one soldier, Sacho claimed she was of the Tuscarora tribe. Sullivan claimed she was Cayuga. It is difficult to ascertain with certainty. In any case, if she was as old as soldiers thought she was, it means that she had likely lived through the evacuation of the Tuscarora in the Carolinas to the Five Nations League of the Iroquois following their defeat in the Tuscarora War in 1713.²⁵ She would have been a girl or a young woman when some 2,000 Tuscarora left the Carolinas to make the long trek to the country of what then became the *Six Nations*.²⁶ Whether she was Tuscarora or Cayuga, this evacuation, which reconfigured the Confederacy, would have been part of her experience. Her long life, then, was bookended by two major wartime evacuations.

In any case, Sacho recounted a tale in which there had been a council in her village, during which, as one soldier recorded, “there was a great debate between their warriors their squaws and children. The squaws had a mind to stay at home with their children.”²⁷ Other soldiers, including Sullivan, reported that the women wanted the men to stay and fight, but the warriors did not think they stood a chance against the American troops—a somewhat self-serving claim by American soldiers. Either way, there seems to have been a debate about whether to stay and fight or to flee, and it is clear that Haudenosaunee matrons were critical to this decision. Indeed, when some leading members of the Iroquois Confederacy later argued for a resumption of neutrality, one of them, Agorondajats (Good Peter), did so by making a speech in the name of the women, asking that the matrons use their influence to persuade the warriors to agree to peace.²⁸ There were concerns for human life, but there were also fears about leaving their homes and crops open to depredations. One escaped former captive woman, “almost starved,” in fact later told the soldiers that “the Indians have been in great want all last spring—that they subsisted entirely on green corn this summer—that their squaws were fretting prodigiously, and continually teasing their warriors to make peace.”²⁹

Sullivan evidently disregarded Washington’s orders to take hostages “of every age and sex.” Sullivan not only left Sacho alone but also provided her with food and shelter. The diarists, and most subsequent historians, emphasized the gift of food Sullivan made her when his own soldiers did

not have much to eat. They do so even after recognizing that Sullivan and his men were destroying all of the food the Iroquois had planted, cultivated, and saved. Contemporary and historical accounts assume Sacho's helplessness and victimization, as well as Sullivan's personal kindness. Some soldiers condemned their leader's actions. One soldier, having already complained bitterly of "Hungry bellies and hard Duty," observed caustically after the second gift of food: "I suppose she will live in splendour."³⁰ Other soldiers celebrated the gallantry of their leader: "General Sullivan gave her a considerable supply of flour and meat, for which, with tears in her savage eyes, she expressed a great deal of thanks."³¹ Here the general was a protector of a powerless old woman. Indeed, stressing Sullivan's personal generosity about food (one soldier claimed that she saw him as "her good angel") suggests a kind of uneasy recognition of the "uncivility" of the troops' actions.³² The emphasis on the great plenty being destroyed also resonates with this horror. Numerous soldiers stressed the bounty and beauty of the towns and crops they were demolishing.³³ One diarist described Sacho's town: "it contained nearly fifty houses, in general, very good. ... We found several very fine corn-fields, which afforded the greatest plenty of corn, beans, &c."³⁴ One soldier wrote home: "I really feel guilty as I applied the torch to huts that were Homes of Content until we ravagers came spreading desolation everywhere."³⁵

Sacho was able to exploit the uneasiness that men felt about their need to show gallantry to women and children, even amid the terrible imperatives of war and the need to inflict suffering on an enemy. After all, Sacho's testimony tantalizes with other questions, ones not addressed in the detailed and well-sourced treatments of this campaign: why was she left, and why did she tell this tale? It seems unlikely that even if she were old and infirm that her clan and kin, maybe even her own children and grandchildren, would have just left a venerable matron behind to be killed by U.S. soldiers. As one historian has observed, these matrons, "the women of the lineage's eldest living generation," were "dominant figures morally, economically, and to some degree politically."³⁶ Also, why would she reveal this much detail about internal disagreements to what was without a doubt the enemy? Some historians have claimed she was threatened physically, but this point is not clear. It also seems somewhat unlikely. Is it possible that in fact this

woman volunteered to take the risk of staying behind, to plant information about the intentions of her people?³⁷

The soldiers saw a “poor old creature” reliant on Sullivan’s “humanity.”³⁸ Most historians have followed suit. But what if we refuse to accept these characterizations? It is possible that she chose to stay, to sacrifice herself to plant and gather information that may have helped her countrymen and -women. After all, she “likewise told us that a great deal many Squaws & Children was over a hill somewhere near Seneca lake ... in consequence of which ... a Detachment of 3 or 400 Men” went in pursuit but returned without “seeing anything of them.”³⁹ Maybe her story of the council also served to emphasize that if women were captured they should be treated with “humanity,” because, after all, they had wanted peace and did not agree with the warriors. Although soldiers emphasized Sacho’s lonely impotence, she was not alone. When soldiers came back a few weeks later, they found the body of a younger woman who had evidently been helping her. She had been shot, “supposed to be done by some of the soldiers.”⁴⁰ The murder of this much younger woman, a violation of that “regard for the female world” that even several soldiers denounced as the actions of “some inhuman villain,” indicates the justified fears of the Haudenosaunee, and why they also might have chosen to leave a very old woman who served as a pitiful figure for the American soldiers.⁴¹ An Onondaga chief later contended that when U.S. soldiers attacked his village, “they put to death all the Women and Children, excepting some of the Young Women, whom they carried away for the use of their Soldiers & were afterwards put to death in a more shamefull manner.”⁴² One scholar has posited that this younger woman may have been killed resisting rape.⁴³ In any case, it suggests that she provoked lethal violence in a way the older woman did not.

The haunting trajectory of the murdered younger woman, whose name is lost, reminds us that violence against all kinds of women did occur in this war, even as Americans congratulated themselves that it was only the “merciless Indian Savages” who killed people “of all ages, sexes and conditions.”⁴⁴ Putting Indian women at the center of our accounts demonstrates how Anglo-Americans in the American Revolutionary War adopted new forms of systematic violence against indigenous people, specifically women and children, ones they would continue to exploit in the early national era.⁴⁵ Such is a theme that could easily be incorporated into

the stories we tell about the founding of a new nation. This use of campaigns of terror and hostage taking, engineered by George Washington himself, should be part of how we understand the creation of the United States. Despite much casual violence against Anglo-American women in the Revolutionary War, at no point did they provoke the systematic violence that Indian women did. There is of course a long history of violence against Native peoples. But this decision to use systematic violence against Native women and children was at least one of many critical political moments in shaping the course of relations between Anglo-Americans and Native Americans in the new republic. Yet we also need to recall that Native women resisted this violence in myriad ways. These tales are worth telling.

When the people of the Six Nations fled their homes, they cast aside books, including some volumes of the early eighteenth-century English periodical the *Spectator*. Was one the volume in which the editors lamented that civil war “fills a Nation with Spleen and Rancour, and extinguishes all the Seeds of Good nature, Compassion and Humanity?”⁴⁶ After all, the destruction of the orchards, crops, and homes of the Six Nations resonated long after the autumn of 1779. There was a terrible way in which the evacuation of Haudenosaunee from these lands, seemingly leaving behind only an old woman, allowed Americans to imagine a fuller “disappearance” all too easily. Indeed, even a preacher of a celebratory sermon at the conclusion of Sullivan’s campaign declared: “Led by the consideration of our just and complete conquest, of so fertile a part of the western world, I will venture to look a few years into futurity ... Methinks I see all these lands inhabited by the independent Citizens of America. I congratulate posterity on this addition of immense wealth and extensive territory to the United States.”⁴⁷ Sacho, an old woman, became a symbol of the weakness of the actually quite-powerful Confederacy of the Six Nations. The image of the disappearing Indian is one that has filled many American narratives. There was power in emphasizing that someone was the *last* Indian left. The land of the Six Nations was not in fact a ghost land, but, as the Iroquois had little to which to return, many did indeed flee to Fort Niagara. Rehearsing an American takeover of the land, with the easily vanquished Sacho the only Indian left, allowed Anglo-Americans actually to take it over.⁴⁸ Yet the people of this great league did not disappear. Modern Iroquois people live on a range of reservations in the United States and Canada, as well as in many other places, and still have treaties with the United States. Even in the

face of systematic violence, the Haudenosaunee people have survived. Narratives about both the systematic violence, and the ability to resist it, can and should be part of our accounts of American history.

Soldiers patronizingly dismissed Sacho as “an old squaw.” Too often historians have accepted this kind of characterization. Yet this mother of her people, survivor of two devastating wartime evacuations, still has power, if only we care to see it. Telling *her* story recasts other, older narratives. The image of George Washington as simply a compassionate father of the nation has already come under pressure since he was also a slaveholder, albeit one with abolitionist tendencies.⁴⁹ His treatment of Indian women suggests other roles, as at least some contemporaries recognized. After all, because of the experiences and stories of women, he received other names. In 1790, a Seneca chief informed him: “When your army entered the country of the Six Nations, we called you Town Destroyer and to this day when your name is heard our women look behind them and turn pale, and our children cling close to the necks of their mothers.”⁵⁰ Here were some of the real and painful costs of what participants called “this late unhappy war.” Recentring Indian women in the American Revolution helps us to see their prominence, to resist easy triumphalism, and to witness one nation’s savage core. After all, the father of a nation also became a town destroyer. Names matter. There are women whose names we will never know. This obliteration continues to darken our histories. Yet even where indigenous women’s names have been lost, their presence should still be felt.

Notes

1. I have consulted the following, the most recent editions I could find at Oxford University: Carol Berkin et al., *Making America: A History of the United States*, vol. 1, *To 1877*, brief 6th ed. (international), (Canada: Cengage, 2014); Jennifer D. Keene, Saul Cornell, and Edward T. O'Donnell, *Visions of America: A History of the United States*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, 2013); John Mack Faragher et al., *Out of Many: A History of the American People*, brief 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, 2012); David Goldfield et al., *The American Journey: A History of the United States*, 6th combined ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, 2011); Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, 2nd ed.

(New York: W. W. Norton, 2008); Mary Beth Norton et al., *A People and a Nation: Vol. I: To 1877*, brief 6th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003).

2. There is very little on Indian women in the classic accounts of women in the American Revolution: Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750–1800* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980); or Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America* (New York: Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980). There are very few mentions of Indian women in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Women in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989). Indian women appear in chap. 7 of Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (New York: Vintage, 2005). There is some discussion of Molly Brant in Joan R. Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740–1790*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 35–39. The most obvious exceptions to this general trend are Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700–1835* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); and Barbara Alice Mann, *George Washington's War on Native America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

3. Of recent work that covers women and the American Revolution in some way and includes little or nothing on Indian women, see, for instance, Nicole Eustace, *Passion Is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Kate Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); and, I am sorry to say, my own, Sarah M. S. Pearsall, *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

4. There are scattered references to women in the excellent Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995). There are fewer references in Gregory Evans Dowd, *Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

5. On these issues, see Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

6. See, for instance, Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

7. James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 135–36; and Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 263–64.

8. On these two leaders, see Sarah M. S. Pearsall, “‘Having Many Wives’ in Two American Rebellions: The Politics of Households and the Radically Conservative,” *American Historical Review* 118, no. 4 (2013): 1013; and Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 61, 101.

9. Ann Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), especially chap. 3; and Gunlög Fur, *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), especially chap. 3.

10. See, for instance, Plane, *Colonial Intimacies*; and James F. Brooks, “AHR Forum: Women, Men, and Cycles of Evangelism in Southwest Borderlands, A.D. 750 to 1750,” *American Historical Review* 118, no. 3 (2013): 738–64.

11. This quotation comes from the most recent U.S. history textbook I could find when writing this piece: Berkin et al., *Making America*, 136. The campaign is discussed, though not named, in Faragher et al., *Out of Many*, 156. It also receives attention in Goldfield et al., *The American Journey*, 163; Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 228–29; Norton et al., *A People and A Nation*, 103.

12. See, among others, Journal of Lieutenant Samuel Shute and Journal of Major Jeremiah Fogg in Frederick Cook, ed., *Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan against the Six Nations of*

Indians in 1779 (Auburn, N.Y.: Knapp, Peck, and Thomson, 1887) 267–74, here 271; 92–101, here 97, 100. It is Fogg who provides her name of “Madam Sacho,” 97.

13. Journal of Lt. Rudolphus Van Hovenburgh recorded that the Iroquois had “left the town in Great Haste for they left Kittels on the fire.” Cook, *Journals*, 279. Lt. Daniel Clapp noted in his diary that “we find houses here with all their furniture in them which is but trifling we find Some Volumes of the Spectator and other Valuable Books.” “Diary and accounts [manuscript] 1779 June 9–Sept. 16” for Lt. Daniel Clapp, VAULT Ayer N.A. 162, Newberry Library, Chicago. Numerous soldiers mentioned the corn (see below).

14. The classic account of the league is Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992). See also Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage, 1970), 29, 131–32.

15. Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 2006), 18.

16. Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 22.

17. Claus to Haldimand, “Montreal 30 Aug 1779,” in Maryly B. Penrose, ed., *Indian Affairs Papers: American Revolution* (Franklin Park, N.J.: Liberty Bell Association, 1981), 233. Her Indian name is in Taylor, *The Divided Ground*.

18. George Washington to Philip Schuyler, “Head Quarters, Philadelphia, January 25, 1779,” in George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources*, vol. 14, online at <http://etext.virginia.edu/washington/fitzpatrick/> (accessed March 27, 2013).

19. Philip Schuyler to George Washington, “Saratoga Feby, 4th. 1779,” as quoted in Penrose, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 183.

20. George Washington to Philip Schuyler, “Head Quarters, Middle Brooks, March 21, 1779,” in Washington, *The Writings of George Washington*. See also the discussions in Max M. Mintz, *Seeds of Empire: The American Revolutionary Conquest of the Iroquois* (New York: New

York University Press, 1999); and Calloway, *American Revolution in Indian Country*, 51.

21. George Washington, "Instructions to Major General John Sullivan," "Head Quarters, Middle Brook, May 31, 1779," in Washington, *The Writings of George Washington*.

22. Major General John Sullivan's official report, reprinted from *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, October 19, 1779, in Cook, *Journals*, 303.

23. Journal of Lt. Erkuries Beatty in Cook, *Journals*, 15–37: 27.

24. Fogg, in Cook, *Journals*, 92–101: 100.

25. "The League expanded to include the Tuscarora, following the loss of their lands in the Carolinas at the conclusion of the Tuscarora War of 1711–13." Joseph R. Fischer, *A Well-Executed Failure: The Sullivan Campaign against the Iroquois, July-September 1779* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 15.

26. Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 239.

27. Journal of Major John Burrowes, in Cook, *Journals*, 42–51: 45. Mann is the only historian who has (rightly, in my view) identified this as a political council, rather than simply something like a personal squabble. Mann, *George Washington's War*, 90–91.

28. Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 227.

29. Journal of Lt. Col. Adam Hubley, in Cook, *Journals*, 145–67: 163.

30. Journal of Lt. Erkuries Beatty in Cook, *Journals*, 15–37: 33, 35.

31. Journal of Lt. Col. Adam Hubley in Cook, *Journals*, 145–67: 164.

32. Journal of Lt. Samuel Shute in Cook, *Journals*, 267–74: 271.

33. Mann also follows this emphasis, to point out the horror of this campaign. But she does not consider why the soldiers would have recorded so much about these issues. "I have taken the space to detail some—but by no means all—of the recorded devastation wrought by Sullivan during his rampage through Iroquoia because I wanted to bring home to the reader the magnitude of the food supplies taken from the mouths of starving civilians between 9 August and 28 September 1779." Mann, *George Washington's War*, 75.

34. Journal of Lt. Col. Adam Hubley, in Cook, *Journals*, 145–67: 158.
35. As quoted in Mintz, *Seeds of Empire*, 186.
36. Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 20.
37. It is possible she was left behind in the confusion. It is also possible she revealed intentions for other reasons: because she was a Tuscarora, and was against the British alliance, or because she was naïve, or senile. I cannot know with certainty, but the context suggests otherwise to me.
38. Journal of Major Jeremiah Fogg, in Cook, *Journals*, 92–101: 96, 100. Also Journal of Major John Burrowes, in Cook, *Journals*, 45.
39. Journal of Lt. Erkuries Beatty, in Cook, *Journals*, 15–37, 28.
40. Journal of Major John Burrowes, in Cook, *Journals*, 42–51: 49.
41. Journal of Lt. Col. Adam Hubley, in Cook, *Journals*, 145–67: 164.
42. Calloway, *American Revolution in Indian Country*, 53.
43. Mann, *George Washington's War*, 92. Her nakedness points to this interpretation.
44. Declaration of Independence, American Memory, Library of Congress. Online at <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/DeclarInd.html> (accessed May 31, 2012).
45. See Susan Sleeper-Smith's forthcoming work on campaigns in the Ohio Valley in the 1790s.
46. *Spectator*, July 24, 1711.
47. Israel Evans, *A Discourse Delivered at Easton, on the 17th of October 1779, to the Officers and Soldiers of the Western Army. After their Return from an Expedition against the Five Nations of Hostile Indians* (Philadelphia: Thomas Bradford, 1779), 22.
48. See Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); and Colleen E. Boyd and Coll Thrush, eds., *Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).
49. See François Furstenberg, "Atlantic Slavery, Atlantic Freedom: George Washington, Slavery, and Transatlantic Abolitionist Networks,"

William and Mary Quarterly 68, no. 2 (2011): 247–86.

50. Fischer, *A Well-Executed Failure*, 7.

Suggested Readings

Calloway, Colin G. *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Lee, Wayne. *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500–1865*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Mann, Barbara Alice. *George Washington's War on Native America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008.

Perdue, Theda. *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700–1835*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

Shoemaker, Nancy, ed. *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Chapter 5: The Empty Continent

Cartography, Pedagogy, and Native American History

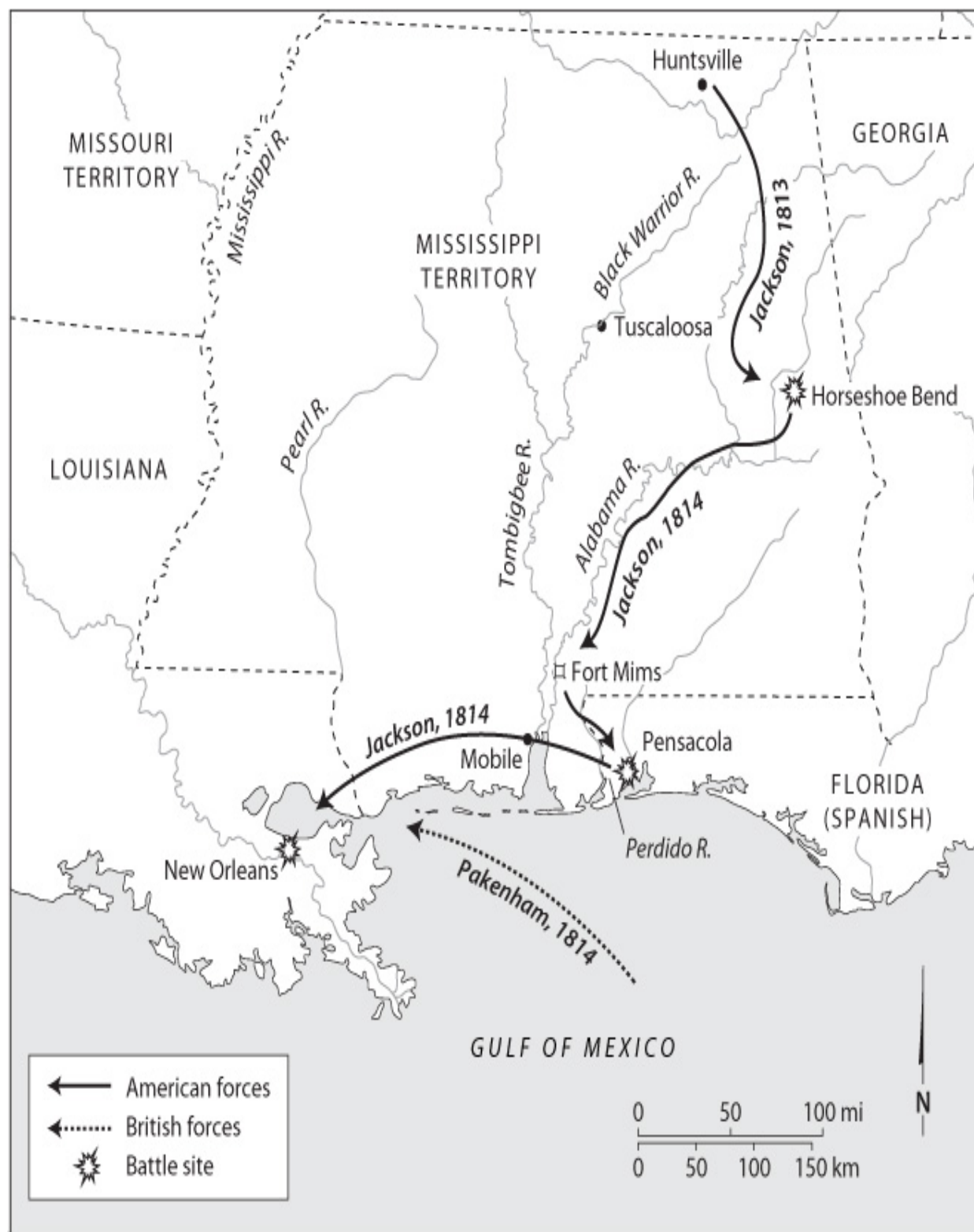
ADAM JORTNER

On March 27, 1814, American forces marched south to Horseshoe Bend, where they fought a battle with no one. At least, that is the story as told by a map of the “Southern Campaigns of the War of 1812” found in the 2010 edition of *America: A Narrative History* (map 5.1). The map shows arrows indicating troop movements—blue for Americans, red for British. But the Americans did not fight the British at Horseshoe Bend; they battled sectarians from the Creek Nation dubbed “Red Sticks” who sought political autonomy and religious renewal. The map has no arrows denoting the movement of Red Stick forces; the U.S. troops do all the moving and all the fighting. Students studying this map would have no clue whom the Americans met at that battle—and would probably conclude that it did not matter. The U.S. intervention in the Creek civil war, 1813–14, has been remapped as a battle between Americans and Britons.¹

The missing Creek armies of 1814 exemplify the cartographic approach to Native American political units and territory in American college textbooks. In general, the maps in college textbooks portray Indian *absence* in the colonial period (1492–1776) and early American republic (1776–1861). These maps delegitimize Indian land claims, providing post hoc justification for white aggression and needlessly complicating pedagogy. Maps that show Indian *presence* and possession of land would be more accurate as well as a superior teaching tool. The missing Creeks are a case in point; including Creek armies at Horseshoe Bend demonstrates the extent to which the War of 1812 was a war about Indian territory. Maps with Native American presence can better explain to students how the conflicts over land shaped the United States, particularly in the early republic.²

In search of a better pedagogy, this essay examines five textbooks—*America: A Concise History* (Bedford/St. Martin’s), *Created Equal* (Longman), *American Horizons* (Oxford), *America: A Narrative History*,

and *Give Me Liberty!* (both from Norton). These volumes represent a window into modern U.S. history textbooks, not a comprehensive study. Each textbook was written or revised in the last decade, and all of them have had expensive promotional campaigns intended to sway college history teachers to adopt them. Most important, these books all come from publishers who do not specialize in textbooks, which in theory would provide less institutional pressure to conform to standard textbook norms. Moreover, this selection of textbooks features similar—sometimes identical—maps. Where possible, I examined the “concise” edition of the textbooks, on the theory that few professors would assign a full textbook when the concise edition runs to 700 pages.³



MAP 5.1 The Americans Fight No One at Horseshoe Bend. (Re-created from a map in George Brown Tindall and David Emory Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 8th ed. [New York: W. W. Norton, 2010]).

American history textbooks in general have trouble presenting contributions and history of nonwhite populations, in part because textbooks present the past as a settled state of affairs, where “every problem has already been solved or is about to be solved,” as James Loewen put it. Loewen dissected twelve high school American history textbooks in his popular bestseller, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. Several studies in academic journals have replicated his results: namely, that history textbooks cover “facts, events, and people, and not the kinds of questions, decisions, and heuristics historians employ” professionally. At best, this approach is boring. At worst, it produces a system of heroification that teaches students “that Western civilization was supremely important, dominant, and powerful in shaping the histories of all people.”⁴

Presenting North American history as a settled state of affairs has distressing consequences for Native American history. Even among professional historians, there can be a tendency, as Pekka Hämäläinen warns, to “read Indian dispossession back” into the historical record. The military defeat of most Indian groups by U.S. forces by the beginning of the twentieth century does not mean that Indian history is an inevitable story of white advance and Indian collapse from 1607 to the present; Native American history is not a story of mere retreat and survival. Hämäläinen has shown that the Comanche of the eighteenth and nineteenth century dominated what is today Texas and New Mexico; Joseph B. Herring has shown that the diplomacy of Kenekuk, the Kickapoo Prophet, reversed U.S. efforts at Kickapoo removal in the 1830s. A recent volume has redefined the extended resistance of the Seminole and confederated groups in Florida as “America’s Hundred Years’ War,” from the 1760s to the 1850s. The military and political history of Native Americans includes periods of victory and détente that the broader historical profession is only beginning to reclaim.⁵

Nevertheless, Loewen’s settled state of affairs persists in collegiate history textbooks—as in the case of the missing Creek armies of 1814. Virtually all studies of textbooks focus on the *text* of textbooks, rather than on images or maps. Such hypertextual details, however, are critical parts of pedagogy. The student who only skims the text will probably stop to check the maps. Maps can also present diverse sets of data in innovative ways; they are also usually colorful and fun, as opposed to the dreaded “textbookese.” Maps provide easy-to-digest lessons about history—and about other things.

Scholars have devoted considerable space to the connection between maps and political power. Maps define territory, most often in terms of nation-states. Indeed, even weather and railway maps become a way of telling about the nation; as Jeremy Black points out, a weather map of England will show *England*, so that a resident of Hastings will know the weather in Liverpool but not Calais, even though the latter is closer and more relevant in terms of the daily forecast. Thus, all maps become “an educational process with a clear message about the natural way in which to order space.” Rather than mere compilations of statistics or information, maps order the world and legitimize that reordering; as such, maps and mapmakers become a means of manipulating perceptions of the world—and of the past. As Mark Monmonier writes, “Maps are both a tool and an emblem of government and their content implies official endorsement.”⁶

Maps have played a particularly insidious role in Native American history. As W. Dirk Raat writes, postcontact European maps “dispossessed the Indians by engulfing them with blank space,” suggesting an empty continent that could therefore be (unproblematically) occupied by Europeans. The colonization of North America and the displacement of its original inhabitants involved continual mapmaking; treaties with Europeans and Americans invariably involved the creation of new borders. (Often, these treaties and borders were taken more seriously by Native American groups than by their European and American counterparts.) Dividing space on a map was a legal and imperial piece of legerdemain that worked to destroy and diminish Indian land rights.⁷

As Black and others have pointed out, every map reflects choices made about what to include, and most maps show political power and sovereignty claims rather than population distribution, economic power, or environmental impact. The sovereignty claims in most textbook maps are those of the European powers and of the United States; publishing protocol still maps European and American political units (the nation-states and their colonies) with solid colors and thick borders to denote their territory. Native American political power almost never gets such treatment. Indian territory is typically marked only by a tribal name crisscrossing a geographic area, often in a lighter scale of gray. Native American territorial claims are literally harder to see than white claims.

This style of mapmaking incorrectly associates legitimacy and land rights with the nation-state. Such maps also ignore the legal and diplomatic reality

of Indian territory in the postrevolutionary period. Textbooks rarely show recognized tribal borders as outlined in the numerous land treaties signed between the federal government and Indian tribes between 1785 and 1871. It is fairly clear that textbook maps reflect the decision that “modern” political structures (or white political structures) are “real,” while Native American claims are presumably ephemeral. Even rebellious whites get colorful maps of their territory, even when the U.S. nation-state does not recognize their self-proclaimed borders (see the Confederacy in 1861 or the Mormon state of Deseret in 1851).⁸

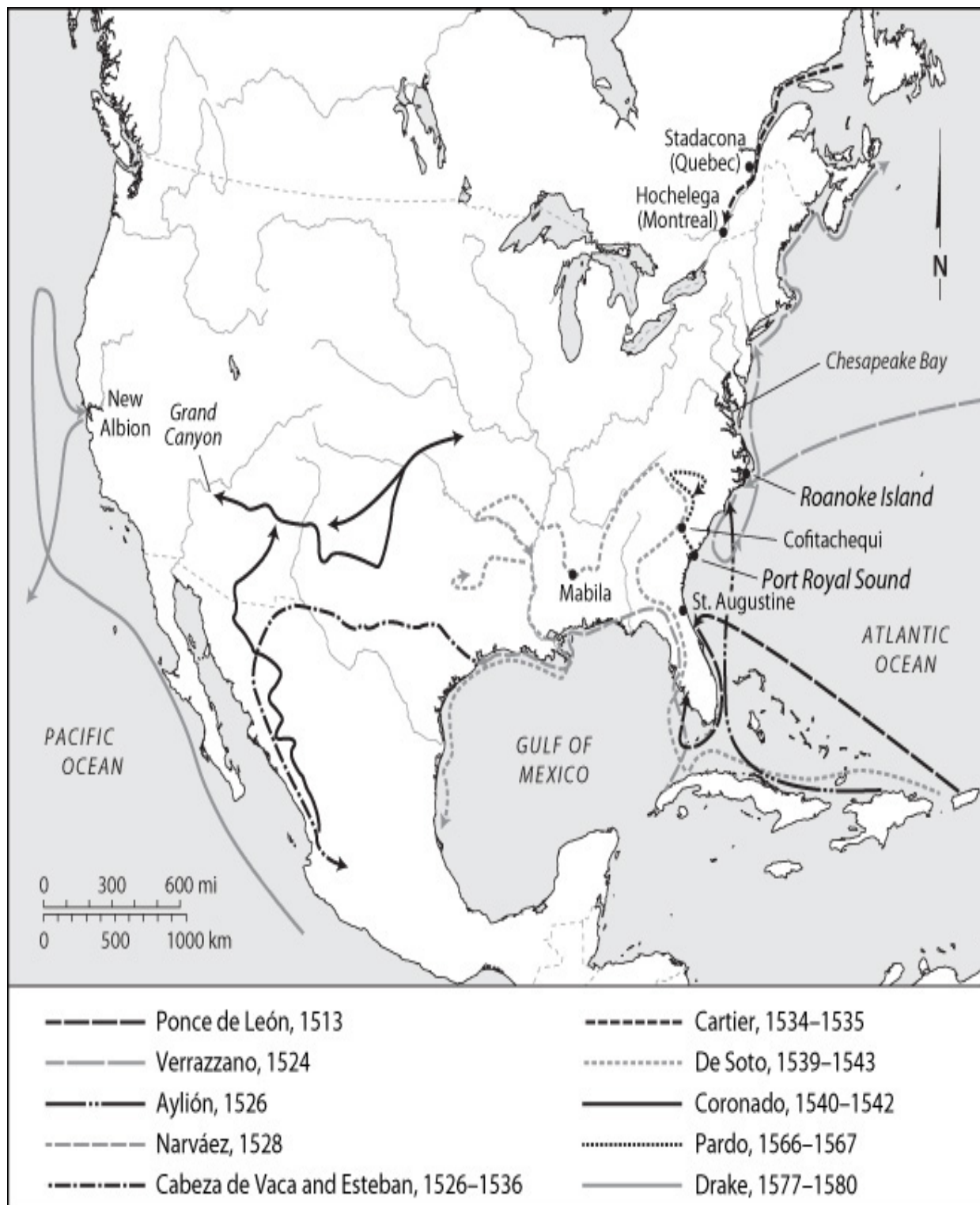
This delegitimization is not immediately apparent; after all, Native America rules the opening pages of the textbooks. Each of the five textbooks opens with some version of a map showing either ancient North American cultural groups or the Beringian migrations. The requisite maps of the Aztec and Inca empires are provided (usually with arrows indicating Spanish invasion), but some books go further: *Horizons* shows a map of English settlements in 1610 embedded in Tsenacommacah, the homeland of the Powhatan Confederacy, suggesting the relative powerlessness of English settlements at Jamestown.⁹

Yet the dominant cartographic model is the empty continent. In *Horizons*, only the map of Tsenacommacah suggests that Native Americans actually controlled their lands. More typical is a map in *Created Equal* entitled “The Spanish and French Invade North America, 1519–1565” (map 5.2). Colored lines denote the movement of Coronado, de Soto, and Verrazzano, but the continent is a uniform beige, undifferentiated by borders or nations. The conquistadors are wandering around in a land with no political units, armies, or leaders. North America is effectively empty. (Essentially the same map occurs in all five textbooks.)¹⁰

Similarly, when *Horizons* maps the area under nominal Spanish control from 1565 to 1610, the vast swaths of non-Spanish areas (most of North America) are empty. The *Horizons* map marks a few “Indian towns” near the Colorado River, but there are no other settlements elsewhere in the continent—even though the map goes east to Roanoke Island. *Liberty* has a map of New England, with different English colonies denoted by color; no Indian tribes or claims appear. *Narrative* shows tracts of land assigned to the Virginia Company superimposed over the Atlantic coast; there are no Indian claims in all of eastern North America. *Narrative* does the same thing with maps of colonial Maryland, New Jersey, and New England. All of this is

even stranger given *Narrative*'s text: "The English settlers who poured into New England found not a 'virgin land' of uninhabited wilderness but a developed region populated by over 100,000 Indians"—who are not on the map.¹¹

Such maps go much further than simply misrepresenting history; they actually reproduce and validate European thinking of the 1600s. North America in these maps is empty and free, and whatever imperial decree is made concerning that territory is valid. Early modern European concepts of America as a *vacuum domicilium* made possible assumptions about "discovery" that in turn provided legal justification for the possession and exploitation of American lands by European powers. As Robert J. Miller has extensively demonstrated, the Doctrine of Discovery encouraged and justified both European colonization and U.S. expansion across the continent. That justification is repeated, in cartographic form, throughout these textbooks.¹²



MAP 5.2 European Exploration in an Empty Continent. (Re-created from a map in Jacqueline Jones et al., *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States* [New York: Longman, 2003], 48.)

As the textbooks recount the colonial road to revolution, the Native American presence recedes. One map of the imperial conflict of 1754 shows Canadian cities and English colonies, but not a single Native American political unit or military movement. There were no Indians, apparently, in the French and Indian War.¹³ Maps of “Ethnic Diversity in the British Colonies, c. 1770” identify various European nationalities and a presumed “African” ethnicity, but no Native American groups. Once again, the region west of the Appalachians is uniform beige, compared to the multiple colors given to ethnic settlement in the East.¹⁴

Textbook maps of North America in 1763 make no pretense as to the legitimacy of imperial claims; French areas are shaded one color, and British areas get another. No Indian nation is recognized as having political control or power in the contest. There are only, as in *Narrative*, “French possessions,” “English possessions,” and “disputed territory.” By the logic of the map, no Indian group rightfully possessed territory. *Horizons* does distinguish between “French influence” and “French settlement” (the latter is a more intense shade of orange); a few names of Indian tribes appear on the maps as names without towns or boundaries. Thus, this “Political Map of Eastern North America” assumes that political power (and hence legitimacy) was European. Most egregiously, the Iroquois Confederacy—whose trade empire held the balance of power in the Seven Years’ War—is omitted entirely. The caption text (“Most Indians in the Ohio Valley who chose to take sides ... preferred the French”) justifies the assumptions of the map itself: Indians “chose sides,” rather than defending their own autonomous governments and territorial claims (which do not exist in the maps).¹⁵

Ironically, the map in *Horizons* occurs in the middle of several pages of text describing the rise of new Indian empires—Sioux expansion in the 1740s, Osage dominance of the east-central plains, the 1750s Comanche Empire. But the publishers do not give maps or acknowledge territorial claims for these shifts in geopolitics. Indeed, all these changes are filed under the milquetoast title “Indians in Motion,” a tag that suggests change and movement but not power or legitimacy.¹⁶

The years between the American Revolution and the Civil War—what historians refer to as the “early republic”—feature virtually no maps of Native America at all. Only one textbook provides any maps devoted to Native American land claims in the early republic, despite the fact that all books devote considerable space (and maps) to white “westward migration”

from 1783 to 1877. The new arrivals, and not the displaced, are the people who matter. Only *Created Equal* shows a map of Cherokee Territory in 1820 and of “Native American Ohio Before 1785.” The latter illustrates townships, economic exchange, and relative geographic distribution of Native American groups. The map is contrasted on the facing page by a map of the grid system imposed on Ohio by the Americans, including the U.S. military district of 1796. Other textbook maps avoid offering evidence that American military power was imposed upon Native Americans, despite the fact that textbooks have no problem showing students occupation maps for the defeated Confederacy in 1865 and the defeated Axis in 1945.¹⁷

As noted, maps of the War of 1812 show neither Indian military movement nor political control. The cartographic absence accompanies a textual indifference. In explaining the causes of the war, Indian grievances go unmentioned. The nature of U.S. treaties—both their perfidious origins and the failure of the white government to honor them—are not discussed, nor is the resulting steady reduction of Indian lands. In *Horizons*, readers only learn that Tecumseh “urged other leaders to repudiate past American treaties.” A similar indifference marks the discussion of the Northwest Confederacy, whose victories from 1789 to 1794 (in *Narrative*) get half a sentence. *Narrative* also describes the allied Indians as the aggressors in the battle with Anthony Wayne (even though Wayne was deep in Indian Country when the battle broke out). The Indians are described as “frustrated by their inability to stop the relentless waves of white settlers encroaching upon their tribal land,” even though Indians *had* stopped the encroachment from 1785 to 1795.¹⁸

Similar processes of Indian political transformation go unmapped elsewhere in the books. The political organization and settlement of the Five Civilized Tribes in the U.S. South is neither shown nor discussed, nor is the slow extinguishment of the lands of the Iroquois Confederacy. Because the story of *how* Indians lost their land is not explained, students might assume the changes were natural—the inevitable result of white people showing up—rather than a political and military process. The maps err on the side of inevitability: a vast picture of the Louisiana Purchase, all colored in purple, with the caption “The Public Domain in 1810,” suggests a bright and uncomplicated future for white settlers moving west. A map with circles indicating the number of western land sales from 1830 to 1839 tells a story of American-dream promise without worrying about where all that land

came from. A map of the “Trans-Mississippi West, 1830s–1840s” has only green for Mexico (and Texas) and beige for the United States; other peoples and their political forms do not exist. The continent essentially remains empty in these maps; it is the rightful property of the U.S. government. Such maps not only deny legitimacy to Native American groups, they make the story of white westward migration impossible to explain: if Indians do not exist on the landscape *until* whites show up to settle, Indian complaints about white behavior, perfidy, or settlement are incomprehensible. Yet such is the approach of most of the textbook maps until they reach a point where they can no longer ignore Native America: Indian removal.¹⁹

All textbooks provide virtually the same map to explain Indian removal in the Age of Jackson. In almost every case, the map indicates Creek, Cherokee, Seminole, Choctaw, Sauk and Fox, and Chickasaw removals, with arrows originating in their 1820s territory and pointing toward Kansas and Oklahoma. Some of the maps mark the violent struggle of the Black Hawk War and the Seminole Revolt of the same period; some do not. In general, violence—and the ultimate use of the military in the expulsion—is not memorialized here. Not a single map marks out the path of the Trail of Tears; none of the maps suggest the size or extent of the forced migration. Only *Concise* bothers to show the forced relocation of other tribes from the Northwest. In the other volumes, these northern removals—of the Wea, Potawatomi, Miami, and others—simply do not exist. Secondary and tertiary removals from the lands in Kansas are not mentioned.

For once, however, the cartography is more explicit than the text. The discussion of Indian removal—with the exception of *Created Equal*—invariably focuses on its effects on *whites*. The topic receives five paragraphs in *Horizons*, mostly focused on the political tussle between Andrew Jackson and John Marshall. No Indian is quoted. *Liberty* too quotes no Indians, but it does provide a paragraph on how the removal of Indians east of the Mississippi affected white conceptions of liberty. In *Concise*, the section on Indian removal is immediately followed with this sentence: “Jackson’s legacy, like that of every great president, was complex and rich.” Jackson is never associated in *Concise* with Indian removal; it is “American diplomatic pressure and military power”—not the policy choices of the chief executive—that “forced seventy Indian peoples to sign treaties.” *Narrative* describes the Trail of Tears and its 4,000 victims in one paragraph; it gives the 1846 Donner Party and its 34 (white) casualties three paragraphs.²⁰

With Indian removal, the mapmakers' dealings with Indians are complete. The text is also finished with them; Trans-Mississippi Indians receive mention in the second half of the survey, but the Shawnee, Tuscarora, Cherokee, and others who originated east of the Mississippi do not. "Indian removal" literally takes Native Americans out of the national narrative.

No survey textbook examined provides any other map detailing Indian lands, struggles, movements, or history through 1877. The Dakota Uprising in Minnesota in 1862, the formalization of U.S.-Lakota relations at the Black Hills in 1868, Kit Carson's concentration camps in the American Southwest following the Mexican War—none of these receive treatment in their chronological order. Indian wars through 1877 are universally dealt with (and mapped) in the second half of the U.S. survey. For these second-half textbooks, *Horizon's* treatment is typical. Although these wars and conflicts occurred before 1877, the map (and the text that it illustrates) is found in the chapter on "Forging a Transcontinental Nation, 1877–1900." No Indian territory is recognized on the map, which marks only "battles," "massacres," and "forts." The section on Indian wars (entitled "Clearing the Land and Cleansing the Wilderness") begins with Chief Joseph's famed "fight no more forever" quote, which is apparently how the authors want their Indians to act.²¹

The point is not to quibble over what should or should not be included in any particular map; rather, it is to consider the collective understanding of Native Americans and Native American history as presented in textbook maps. It is a picture of absence—Native Americans are simply not there. Even when they are shown, it is simply *as* names on a map; they do not have borders, they do not have cities, they do not participate in migrations or troop movements. They are always acted upon, never the actors. Occasionally, maps show Native Americans involved in "battles," but not as the victors. But as in the case of the Americans fighting no one at Horseshoe Bend, too often even military cartography leaves Indians off the map. Maps of the Mexican War and Mexican Cession, for example, do not show the subsequent military campaigns against Apaches, Navajos, and Utes. Only one map in all five books even acknowledges the 1847 Pueblo-Mexican Taos Revolt.²²

Not every map in these textbooks carries these implications, but the collective portrait of the maps continues to tell a story of white possession and European and American legitimacy. Indians are to be pitied, but their

story—even their military and political story—is not really considered. As exemplified by the Chief Joseph quote, Indians are to be remembered for their surrender. The question of the legitimacy of Indian claims—the source of so much conflict—is denied in the very maps the texts employs.

It does not have to be this way. If maps are intended to explain historical processes and movements as well as teach geography, Indian sovereignty and politics must be represented. Maps of Indian sovereignty would also illustrate the means by which the United States extended its political empire across North America; at the moment, those processes are largely obscured. Developing and including maps that show both Indian presence and political and territorial claims would not be difficult; many such maps already exist.



FIGURE 5.1 “Indian Land Areas Judicially Established.” From Francis Paul Prucha, *Atlas of Native American Affairs* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990). Image courtesy of Wisconsin Jesuit Province.

An obvious starting place would be a set of maps that simply show territory legally recognized by the U.S. government in diplomatic treaties with Native American nations. Showing those borders would demonstrate Indian claims and present a distinctly different kind of map than twenty-first century students commonly see; the past looks different, rather than being portrayed as an inevitable preview of the present. Just such a map was developed by the United States Indian Claims Commission in 1979; the map shows all lands judicially established by the U.S. government since 1789 (figure 5.1). It shows territory held by “use and occupancy” as well as those lands recognized by treaties or agreements with the United States. The map presents a dense maze of claimed territory—a much fuller West than is presented in most maps. The commission map certainly has problems—the map shows Indian Country as recognized by the United States, not by Native Americans themselves, and it shows multiple decades simultaneously—but it much better captures the extent of Indian territory in the nineteenth century.²³

Another approach would be to attempt to capture the effective extent of any particular Native American nation’s power and influence at a given moment or over the course of decades. Since many nations did not leave detailed records about their land use and ownership, particularly prior to the eighteenth century, the process of reconstruction can be difficult. Nevertheless, Bill Nelson, cartographer for Hämäläinen’s *Comanche Empire*, presented Comanchería of the 1830s as an oval of alliances; his map probably does not show the true extent of Comanche economic and military power, but it better approximates the early nineteenth-century western country, especially when compared with an empty beige continent. Moreover, an oval territory could open up useful discussions of formal and informal authority among students—especially if mapmakers also bothered to show French power in the Ohio Valleys as ovals instead of as color-coded colonies.²⁴

Finally, maps could hypothesize and reimagine Indian nations or movements using western-style maps with thick borders and stars for capital cities. Cartographer Rick Britton did exactly that for my own volume, *The Gods of Prophetstown* (figure 5.2). Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh—the

Shawnee leaders of the pan-Indian alliance at Prophetstown—denied the legitimacy of the 1809 Treaty of Fort Wayne and announced they would defend the treaty lands by force. For two years, their threats kept the surveyors at bay. William Henry Harrison led an ill-fated expedition against Prophetstown in 1811 and again in 1812. Given the political and military standoff in Indiana, we might profitably imagine Prophetstown not as the word “Shawnee” draped across northern Indiana but as an independent state, graced with its own capital. There are potential pitfalls here as well; why show students an imaginary map? Yet all maps are imaginary. This one simply switches the politics of an empty continent (where “westward migration” is easy and inevitable) with the politics of Indian presence (where “westward migration” is complex, contingent, and violent).²⁵

At stake is the very nature of North American history: a cartographer (or narrative) that keys Indians as “prerevolutionary” cannot explain the U.S. takeover of the Trans-Appalachian West, nor the cultural and political complexities of the twenty-first century West. Employing empty continents and armyless battles is not only foolish (and insulting), it perpetuates the myth that European nations and the United States ruled through discovery rather than by diplomacy and conquest. In these maps, history is not the working out of contested political systems, but a simple matter of “heading west.” Teaching the wrenching and violent history of American expansion begins by acknowledging and mapping those political systems and their change over the centuries. The Creek armies were there in 1814. Maps just have to show it.



FIGURE 5.2 Prophetstown reimagined, 1809–1813. Property of Adam Jortner.

Notes

1. George Brown Tindall and David Emory Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, vol. 1, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 370. Virtually the same map occurs in three of the other textbooks: Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, brief 3rd ed., vol. 1 (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), 245; James A. Henretta, David Brody, and Lynn Dumenil, *America: A Concise History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's,

2006), 243; and Michael Schaller et al., *American Horizons: U.S. History in a Global Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 315.

2. This essay does not discuss the history of Native American cartography. The meaning of maps and representation of space in indigenous American culture and politics (and their relationship to history textbooks) represents an important question beyond the scope of this essay, which concerns the current representation of Native American territory in U.S. textbooks. On the historiography of Native American cartography, see (among many) G. Malcolm Lewis, ed., *Cartographic Encounters: Perspectives on Native American Mapmaking and Map Use* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); and James P. Ronda, "'A Chart in His Way': Indian Cartography and the Lewis and Clark Expedition," *Great Plains Quarterly* 4 (Winter 1984): 43–53.

3. Jacqueline Jones et al., *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: Longman, 2003); bibliographic entries for the other books can be found in note 1. The replication of maps follows the replication of narrative; as James Loewen writes, "History textbooks are clones of each other. The first thing editors do when recruiting new authors is to send them a half-dozen samples of the competition." James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Book Got Wrong* (1995; reprint, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 7.

4. Loewen, *Lies*, 5; Richard J. Paxton, "A Deafening Silence: History Textbooks and the Students Who Read Them," *Review of Educational Research* 69 (September 1999): 315–39, 317, 321; Michelle Commeyras and Donna E. Alvermann, "Messages that High School World History Textbooks Convey: Challenges of Multicultural Literacy," *Social Studies* 85 (November-December 1994): 268, 273. Professional academic analysis of history textbooks goes back at least to 1892, but the modern studies began with Frances Fitzgerald, *America Revised: History Textbooks in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Little, Brown, 1979).

5. Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 7; Joseph P. Herring, *Kenekuk, the Kickapoo Prophet* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988); William S. Belko, ed., *America's Hundred Years' War: U.S. Expansion to the Gulf Coast and the Fate of the Seminole, 1763–1858* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011).

6. Jeremy Black, *Maps and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 17; Mark Monmonier, *From Squaw Tit to Whorehouse Meadow* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 71. Monmonier also notes that the government in question need not be a national government—a trenchant consideration, given that many textbooks are in thrall to state textbook-adoption boards, particularly those of California, New York, and Texas. Monmonier also discusses purely local efforts to change maps—as when residents of Swastika, Ontario, resisted a name change to “Churchill” in 1940. Numerous other works have delved into the connection between maps, political power, and imperial ambitions. See (among many) J. B. Harley, “Maps, Knowledge, and Power,” in *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments*, ed. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Martin Brückner, *The Cartographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, and National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Mark Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Matthew H. Edney, “The Irony of Imperial Mapping,” in *The Imperial Map*, ed. James R. Akerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 11–46. Edney explores the differences and connections between imperial and national maps. For the sake of conciseness I have largely passed over this important distinction and will treat the terms as roughly identical.

7. W. Dirk Raat, “Innovative Ways to Look at New World Geography,” *History Teacher* 37 (May 2004): 289. On the connections between maps, treaties, and land acquisition by the American state, see Robert M. Owens, *Mr. Jefferson’s Hammer: William Henry Harrison and the Origins of American Indian Policy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 78–91; and Adam Jortner, *The Gods of Prophetstown: The Battle of Tippecanoe and the Holy War for the American Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 88–93.

8. *American Horizons* is so certain of the American future that it imposes twentieth-century U.S. borders over a map of North America of the *eighth* century (Schaller et al., *American Horizons*, 11). Henretta, Brody, and Dumenil, *America: A Concise History*, 364; and Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 503, include a map of Deseret drawn with shading and borders usually reserved for nation-states.

9. Schaller et al., *American Horizons*, 59. This early dominance of Native America in the textbooks is a marked change from textbooks of twenty years ago; Loewen found that treatment of the period of contact and the Columbian exchange was significantly better in 2006 textbooks than in 1995 textbooks, though much of the rest was “worse or unchanged.” Loewen, *Lies*, xv. I leave aside here questions as to whether it is appropriate to show maps of Beringian migrations, the case for which conflicts with some Native American religious teachings of autochthonous creation in the Americas. The dominance of the Beringian model in textbooks raises important questions about the place of religious belief in textbooks (especially when those beliefs come from religions other than Christianity), and the question of for whom the textbooks are written.

10. Schaller et al., *American Horizons* 32; Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 26; Jones et al., *Created Equal*, 38; Henretta, Brody, and Dumenil, *America: A Concise History*, 39; Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 35.

11. Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 60, 67, 71, 97.

12. Robert J. Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008). See also Lindsay G. Robertson, *Conquest by Law: How the Discovery of America Disposessed Indigenous Peoples of Their Lands* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); and for the notion of *vacuum domicilium*, Christopher L. Tomlins and Bruce H. Mann, *The Many Legalities of Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 41–43.

13. Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 179.

14. Schaller et al., *American Horizons*, 225.

15. Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 175; Schaller et al., *American Horizons*, 186.

16. Schaller et al., *American Horizons*, 185.

17. Jones et al., *Created Equal*, 270–71.

18. See Schaller et al., *American Horizons*, 298–99, 311, 312; Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 322. Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 216, offers a similar treatment of the Northwest Confederacy.

19. Jones et al., *Created Equal*, 335; Henretta, Brody, and Dumenil, *America: A Concise History*, 303; Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 368.

20. Schaller et al., *American Horizons* 401–3; Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 303; Henretta, Brody, and Dumenil, *America: A Concise History*, 340, 337; Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, 428, 432, 543–44.
21. Schaller et al., *American Horizons*, 623–25.
22. Schaller et al., *American Horizons*, 486.
23. Francis Paul Prucha, *Atlas of Native American Affairs* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 6, 141–42.
24. Hämäläinen, *Comanche*, 176.
25. Jortner, *Gods*, 146.

Suggested Readings

- Black, Jeremy. *Maps and Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Miller, Robert J. *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, and Manifest Destiny*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008.
- Prucha, Francis Paul. *Atlas of Native American Affairs*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990.
- Raat, W. Dirk. “Innovative Ways to Look at New World Geography.” *History Teacher* 37, no. 3 (May 2004): 281–306.

Chapter 6: The Doctrine of Discovery, Manifest Destiny, and American Indians

ROBERT J. MILLER

The United States and most of the non-European world were colonized under an international legal principle known as the Doctrine of Discovery, which was used to justify European claims over the indigenous peoples and their territories. The doctrine provides that “civilized” and “Christian” Euro-Americans automatically acquired property rights over the lands of Native peoples and gained governmental, political, and commercial rights over the indigenous inhabitants just by showing up. This legal principle was shaped by religious and ethnocentric ideas of European and Christian superiority over other races and religions of the world. When Euro-Americans planted their flags and religious symbols in lands they claimed to have discovered, they were undertaking well-recognized legal procedures and rituals of discovery that were designed to establish their claim to the lands and peoples.

The European colonists in North America, and later American colonial, state, and national governments, utilized the doctrine and its religious, cultural, and racial ideas of superiority over American Indians to make legal claims to the lands and property rights of Indians. For example, President Thomas Jefferson expressly ordered the Lewis and Clark expedition to use the principles of the Doctrine of Discovery to make American claims over Native peoples and lands across the continent.¹ Later, the idea of American Manifest Destiny incorporated the Doctrine of Discovery to justify U.S. western expansion, and it continues to be used today to limit the governmental, sovereign, and property rights of American Indians and Indian nations.

Ten elements constitute the doctrine as defined by the United States Supreme Court:

1. **FIRST DISCOVERY.** The first European country to discover land unknown to Europeans claimed that it automatically acquired property and

sovereign rights over the lands and inhabitants. First discovery alone, however, only created an incomplete claim of title.

2. ACTUAL OCCUPANCY AND CURRENT POSSESSION. To turn first discovery into a complete title, a Euro-American country had to actually occupy and possess the newly found lands. This was usually done by building forts or settlements within a reasonable amount of time after a first discovery.

3. PREEMPTION/EUROPEAN TITLE. The discoverer acquired the right of preemption, that is, the exclusive right to buy the land from the indigenous owners.

4. INDIAN TITLE. Indian nations were considered to have lost the full ownership of their lands after first discovery. They only retained the right to occupy and use their lands, although those rights could last forever if they never consented to sell.

5. LIMITED TRIBAL SOVEREIGN AND COMMERCIAL RIGHTS. Indian nations were also considered to have lost some of their inherent sovereign powers such as the rights of free trade and international diplomatic relations. Thereafter, they were only supposed to trade and interact with their Euro-American discoverer.

6. CONTIGUITY. Europeans claimed significant amounts of land contiguous to their actual settlements in the New World. In fact, this element provided that the discovery of the mouth of a river created a claim over all the lands drained by that river, even if that was thousands of miles of territory.

7. *TERRA NULLIUS*. *Terra nullius* is land that is null, void, or empty. This element provides that if land was not occupied by anyone, or if it was occupied but was not being used or governed in a fashion that European legal systems recognized, then the land was considered empty.

8. CHRISTIANITY. Religion was a major aspect of justifying and applying the Doctrine of Discovery. Non-Christians were not deemed to have the same rights to land, sovereignty, and self-determination as Christians.

9. CIVILIZATION. Euro-Americans' belief that God had directed them to bring "civilized" ways to indigenous peoples was an important part of the doctrine.

10. CONQUEST. First, the United States Supreme Court stated in *Johnson v. M'Intosh* that the United States and European countries could legally acquire Indian titles in just and necessary wars. But the court also defined a first discovery as a form of "conquest" because it automatically transferred some sovereign and property rights to Euro-Americans.

All European countries that engaged in overseas exploration and colonization utilized the Doctrine of Discovery to justify their claims. As Patricia Seed shows in *Ceremonies of Possession*, official rituals were developed to try to prove first discoveries and to establish which country could legally claim the rights of discovery. Many people misunderstand the rituals European explorers performed when encountering new lands and think they were just thanking providence for a safe voyage. In reality, the explorers were primarily engaging in the legal rituals required by discovery to establish their country's claims.

In the 1400s, for example, Portuguese explorers erected stone and wooden crosses on the coasts of Africa and Brazil to assert their Crown's sovereignty and rights to the lands they claimed to have discovered. In April 1500, Pedro Cabral landed in Brazil and conducted an official ceremony to take possession of the land. He named the country, proclaimed that the land belonged to Portugal, had priests conduct mass, unfurled the banner of Christ, and erected an enormous wooden cross to establish Portuguese sovereignty. All of these acts of possession, or rituals of discovery, were designed to legally establish Portugal's claim.

The Spanish government and its explorers also developed ritualized ceremonies to claim new lands and establish Spain's legal rights. Thus, Columbus, who traveled under a contract with the Spanish king and queen, was designated the admiral of any lands he would "discover and acquire"² and engaged in discovery rituals and official ceremonies on the islands he encountered in the Caribbean. He always planted the Spanish flag and the cross to establish Spain's ownership. In fact, Spain appealed to the pope in 1493 to validate Spain's rights over the lands Columbus discovered and claimed through the discovery rituals.

Furthermore, in 1513, when Balboa crossed Panama and found the Pacific Ocean, he claimed the entire ocean and all its adjoining lands for Spain. He also engaged in discovery rituals and acts of symbolic possession by having a priest sing the *Te Deum* (a Christian hymn), and by having his men erect a stone monument, cut a tree into a cross, and mark other trees

with crosses.³ In 1536, Cortez made Spain's first claim to the Pacific in North America on the west coast of Mexico. He also claimed the lands by engaging in the rituals of discovery. Thereafter, Spain occupied several locations on the west coast of Mexico and engaged in other ritual acts of possession on the coasts of Mexico, Baja, and modern-day California in 1539–1602.

Subsequently, Spanish naval and land-based explorers engaged in discovery rituals and symbolic and actual occupation of lands in the American Southwest, modern-day California, and as far north as Alaska to claim Spain's title. In 1774, a captain was ordered to leave written proof of his discovery and to "take possession, using the standard form attached to his instructions, and erect a large wooden cross supported by a cairn of stones hiding a glass bottle ... containing a copy of the act of possession."⁴ Numerous other expeditions were sent north to counter the growing Russian presence in North America and to prove Spain's ownership and discovery rights by conducting the rituals of erecting crosses, conducting masses, planting flags, cutting cross designs on rocks, and taking "possession of these lands with all the required formalities."⁵ Spain was certain that its claim to the North Pacific was secure "by virtue of previous discovery and symbolic acts of possession."⁶

Russia also used the elements and rituals of discovery in North America. In 1786, Catherine II ordered an expedition "to affirm the right of Russia to all lands discovered by Russian seafarers ... in the Pacific Ocean" and to engage in the ritual acts of "placing or fastening of crests and burying of metals inscribed in Russian and Latin in suitable places."⁷ She expressly claimed her rights "on the basis of prior discovery by Russia."⁸ For decades thereafter, Russian fur traders were ordered to perform acts of possession and rituals of discovery and were given metal plaques and royal crests to mark the areas Russia claimed by first discovery and possession. Ultimately, Russians buried up to thirty separately numbered metal plates from 1787 to 1811 in Alaska and as far south as San Francisco Bay to establish their claims of "discovery and possession."⁹

French ventures in North America also included discovery rituals. In 1749, for example, a French expedition traveled throughout the Ohio Valley burying lead plates to reassert France's claim to own the area due to first discovery in 1643. A French expedition also claimed land in Alaska in 1786

by “taking possession of the land with the usual formalities” by burying a bottle with a written inscription describing the act of possession.¹⁰

In addition, England used discovery rituals to claim new lands under international law. In 1579, Francis Drake allegedly landed on the California coast north of San Francisco Bay and “proclaimed the territory part of his Queen’s realm ... [and] lay claim to the territory on the basis of prior discovery.”¹¹ Drake engaged in a symbolic act of possession by setting “on a large post his famous plates of brass.”¹² England claimed for centuries that Drake’s first discovery and discovery ritual gave it ownership of the west coast of North America.

Centuries later, Captain James Cook continued the English use of the rituals of discovery. Cook was even ordered by the British Admiralty on all three of his round-the-world voyages to engage in these rituals:

You are also with the consent of the Natives to take possession, in the Name of the King of Great Britain, of convenient Situations in such Countries as you may discover, that have not already been discovered or visited by any other European Power, and to distribute among the Inhabitants such Things as will remain as Traces and Testimonies of your having been there; But if you find the Countries so discovered are uninhabited, you are to take possession of them for His Majesty by setting up proper Marks and Inscriptions as first Discoverers and Possessors.¹³

In 1770, Cook claimed eastern Australia for England when he planted a flag and carved a tree near present-day Sydney, and then he conducted another ritual at what is called Possession Island in northeast Australia. On his third voyage in 1778, Cook engaged in discovery rituals on three occasions in modern-day Alaska to claim the lands for England. Cook personally performed the first ritual on Keyes (Kayak) Island by depositing a bottle containing an inscription with his ship’s name and the date and two English coins.¹⁴ Cook later had officers perform the rituals. On June 1, 1778, Lt. King undertook an act of possession in modern-day Cook’s Inlet. Cook called the location Point Possession, which is its present-day name. Lt. King and his men hoisted the English flag, drank a toast to the king’s health, and claimed to take possession of the country in the king’s name by burying a bottle containing English coins and a paper containing the ship’s

name and the date.¹⁵ On July 16, 1778, Lt. Williamson conducted another ritual when he “climed the highest hill [and] took possession of the Country in His Majestys name, left on the hill a bottle in which was in[s]cribed on a piece of paper, the Ships names date &c and name[d] the Promontory *Cape Newenham*.”¹⁶

Incredibly, even as late as the 1930s, the United States, England, and Germany were still engaging in discovery rituals to claim islands in the Pacific by posting signs and raising flags. On some occasions in the 1920s, English and American representatives flew over remote islands and dropped flags from their planes, claiming that this act established their countries’ ownership.

The United States and Discovery

The establishment and expansion of the United States relied heavily on the elements of the Doctrine of Discovery. English claims to eastern North America were based on John Cabot’s first discoveries of the coast in 1496–98 and the subsequent occupation of these areas by English colonies. The American Founding Fathers were well aware of these discovery claims and utilized them while they were part of the English colonial system. Understandably, they continued to use the doctrine in the creation and operation of the United States. From George Washington and Benjamin Franklin onward, American leaders utilized this legal principle to justify claims of property rights and political dominance over the Indian nations. The elements of discovery and their legal impact on Indian nations and Indian peoples are evident, for example, in the United States Constitution of 1787, federal laws from 1781 onward, and federal judicial decisions, most notably when the U.S. Supreme Court adopted the Doctrine of Discovery in *Johnson v. M’Intosh* in 1823,¹⁷ as well as in numerous state constitutions, laws, and court decisions.

Thomas Jefferson, in particular, applied discovery against Indians during his political career. In addition, Jefferson’s launch of the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1803 was purposely targeted at the mouth of the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest to strengthen the United States’ discovery claim to that area.¹⁸ Thereafter, the United States negotiated with Russia, Spain, and England for four decades over who owned the Pacific Northwest under international law. The United States argued in diplomatic negotiations

that it owned the region due to its first discovery and naming of the Columbia River by Robert Gray in 1792, the first exploration and occupation of the region by Lewis and Clark in 1805–6, and then by John Jacob Astor's construction of the permanent settlement of Astoria in 1811 at the mouth of the river.

Not surprisingly, the Lewis and Clark expedition engaged in discovery rituals and used several of the elements of discovery to establish the American claim to the Northwest. Meriwether Lewis, for example, carried a branding iron ("US Capt. M. Lewis") that was apparently not utilized while the expedition was in the Louisiana Territory. But once the expedition crossed the Rocky Mountains the branding iron was used multiple times to mark the landscape to prove the expedition had traversed the Oregon country. Furthermore, William Clark and other men carved their names on trees and sandstone cliffs in the Oregon country. On November 19, 1805, Clark traveled several miles up the coast of present-day Washington and carved on a tree, "William Clark November 19, 1805. By land from the U. States in 1804 & 1805."¹⁹ These actions were clearly attempts to emulate European rituals of first discovery. Furthermore, the construction and occupation of Fort Clatsop at the mouth of the Columbia River from December to March 1805–6 was an obvious attempt to fulfill the second element of discovery and to claim that Americans occupied the territory.

Finally, when the expedition departed Fort Clatsop on March 23, 1806, Lewis and Clark drafted the Fort Clatsop memorial, leaving a copy at the fort and providing copies to Indian chiefs to convey to visiting sea captains. The memorial listed the expedition members, marked their route, and explained that the "object of this list" was that "through the medium of some civilized person ... it may be made known to the informed world" that the U.S. expedition had crossed the continent and stayed at the mouth of the Columbia River.²⁰ The memorial was designed to strengthen the U.S. discovery claim to the Oregon country.

The doctrine is also plainly visible in American law and politics in 1817–18, when Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and President James Monroe used discovery principles to reacquire the port of Astoria on the Oregon coast. England had captured the post in the War of 1812 but was required to return it to the United States by the treaty that ended the war. After much delay, Monroe and Adams dispatched American representatives to retake symbolic possession of Astoria under the elements of discovery to

reassert America's claim to the Pacific Northwest. They described this as asserting the American "claim of territorial possession at the mouth of [the] Columbia river."²¹ Adams wrote that the purpose was "to resume possession of that post [Astoria], and in some appropriate manner to reassert the title of the United States."²²

In 1817, the president and secretary of state dispatched John Prevost and Captain James Biddle to take symbolic possession of Astoria using actions that relied on discovery rituals. In fact, Monroe and Adams ordered Biddle and Prevost to sail to the Columbia and to "assert there the claim of sovereignty in the name of ... the United States, *by some symbolical or other appropriate mode of setting up a claim of national authority and dominion.*"²³

Biddle and Prevost arrived at separate times. Biddle raised the U.S. flag on the north side of the mouth of the Columbia River, and in the presence of Chinook Indians, turned over some dirt with a shovel and erected a lead plate which read, "Taken possession of, in the name and on the behalf of the United States by Captain James Biddle, commanding the United States ship Ontario, Columbia River, August, 1818."²⁴ He then moved upriver and repeated the rituals on the south side, by using the exact rituals that European explorers had utilized for centuries.

In October 1818, when John Prevost arrived at Astoria a joint ritual was staged. The English flag was lowered and the United States flag was raised in its place. The English troops fired a salute, and an English captain and Prevost signed papers of transfer. The American claim to the Pacific Northwest was again legally in place.

Manifest Destiny

Manifest Destiny, the phrase coined in 1845 to describe the predestined and divinely inspired expansion of the United States across North America, relies on the same rationales and justifications that created the Doctrine of Discovery.

Historians generally define Manifest Destiny as exemplifying three distinct aspects that justified American continental empire. First, the United States possesses unique moral virtues other countries do not possess. Second, the United States has a mission to redeem the world by spreading republican government and the American way of life around the globe. And,

third, the United States was divinely ordained to accomplish these tasks.²⁵ But these ideas were not new in 1845 and had pervaded American political thought long before they were given the name Manifest Destiny. This kind of thinking, which replicates fifteenth-century ideas, arises from an ethnocentric view that one's own culture, government, race, religion, and country are superior to all others.

The term Manifest Destiny was not applied to American expansion until 1845. But the idea that it was the destiny of the United States to control North America was manifest long before then. Manifest Destiny became even more certain after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1803–6. In fact, Thomas Jefferson had this very goal in mind when he ordered Meriwether Lewis to travel to the mouth of the Columbia River to strengthen the United States' 1792 first discovery claim to Oregon.

It is worth noting that it is difficult to even understand the statements made by presidents, secretaries of state, congressmen, newspapers, and citizens about Manifest Destiny if one does not also understand the Doctrine of Discovery. The advocates of Manifest Destiny used the elements of discovery to bolster their arguments that it was America's destiny and right to expand to the Pacific. The Doctrine of Discovery became, in essence, Manifest Destiny.

The journalist John O'Sullivan first used the phrase "Manifest Destiny" in a July 1845 editorial about the annexation of Texas.²⁶ He used the term again on December 27, 1845, in a very influential editorial in the *New York Morning News* about the Oregon country entitled "The True Title." This editorial and the term Manifest Destiny justified the idea of American expansion.

O'Sullivan used the Doctrine of Discovery in formulating his argument that the United States already owned the title to Oregon:

Our *legal title* to Oregon, so far as law exists for such rights, is perfect. Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Buchanan [U.S. secretaries of state] have settled that question, once and for all. Flaw or break in the triple chain of that title, there is none. Not a foot of ground is left for England ... unanswerable as is the demonstration of our legal title to Oregon ... we have a still better title than any that can ever be constructed out of all these antiquated materials of *old black-*

letter international law. Away, away with all these cobweb tissues of *right of discovery, exploration, settlement, continuity, &c.* ... were the respective cases and arguments of the two parties, as to all these points of history and law, reversed—had England all ours, and we nothing but hers—our claim to Oregon would still be best and strongest. And that claim is by the right of our *manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent* which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us. ... [In England's hands, Oregon] must always remain wholly useless and worthless for any purpose of human *civilization* or society. ... The God of nature and of nations has marked it for our own; and with His blessing we will firmly maintain the incontestable rights He has given, and fearlessly perform the high duties He has imposed.²⁷

O'Sullivan's use of discovery, that "black-letter international law," and such elements as civilization, religion, the right of discovery, exploration, settlement, and continuity demonstrate that he was fully conversant with the elements of the international law of discovery, and that he used the doctrine to justify America's legal title to the Oregon country.

American expansion across the continent was alive long before the use of the phrase Manifest Destiny. In fact, Thomas Jefferson's push for a continental American empire prompted U.S. expansion toward the Pacific. He was the primary architect of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, the 1803–6 Lewis and Clark expedition, and economic and political activity that targeted Louisiana and Oregon. One of Jefferson's prime objectives for the Lewis and Clark expedition was unquestionably the expansion of the United States.

It is not surprising that the United States worked to bring the Oregon country under American control basing its legal claim on first discovery due to the American Robert Gray's discovery and naming of the Columbia River in 1792, Lewis and Clark's exploration of that river and their occupation of Fort Clatsop in 1805–6, and John Jacob Astor's construction in 1811 of the trading post Astoria, the first permanent settlement at the mouth of the river. The United States relied on these factors and the

elements of international law to argue that it owned the Oregon country in negotiations with England, Spain, and Russia.

Secretary of State John Quincy Adams used the Doctrine of Discovery in treaty negotiations with Spain and Russia and extinguished these nations' competing claims to Oregon in treaties in 1821 and 1824. In treaties from 1818 and 1827, England and the United States agreed to jointly occupy the Northwest, but they could not reach a conclusion on which country had the strongest legal claim. Adams believed that the 1821 treaty with Spain guaranteed American Manifest Destiny and wrote that "the remainder of the continent should ultimately be ours."²⁸ These negotiations between the United States, England, Spain, and Russia reflect just how commonly understood the elements of discovery were and their common acceptance as part of international law.

Congress also used the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny to claim Oregon. In December 1820, a House committee studied the possibility of the United States occupying the Columbia River. The committee issued a report in January 1821 and proposed a bill that the United States occupy the Northwest and "extinguish the Indian title."²⁹ This report, filled with lengthy discussions of the elements of discovery, justified American control of the Pacific Northwest.

Members of Congress demonstrated how widespread the understanding of discovery was and how it related to Manifest Destiny and American expansion. In 1838, Senator Lewis Linn told the Senate that the United States needed to occupy Oregon because "discovery accompanied with subsequent and efficient acts of sovereignty or settlement are necessary to give title."³⁰ Linn also believed that Robert Gray's 1792 discovery of the Columbia and Lewis and Clark's expedition were "an important circumstance in our title ... that was notice to the world of claim," and that Lewis and Clark's "solemn act of possession was followed up by a settlement and occupation, made by ... John Jacob Astor."³¹ Linn believed that the U.S. right was based on the "certain ground of *prior discovery*."³²

Also in 1838, Congressman Caleb Cushing stated that the "priority of discovery, therefore, is clearly with the United States ... the United States claim the Oregon Territory by right of discovery."³³ Cushing argued that the contiguity element of discovery and the proximity of Oregon to the Louisiana Territory gave the United States rights in the Pacific Northwest and "a claim of title superior to that of any other nation."³⁴ He also argued

that Lewis and Clark's occupation of Oregon was significant because they "erected the works called Fort Clatsop, and in the most formal and authentic manner asserted the rights of the United States in and to the whole country."³⁵ For Cushing, John Jacob Astor's building of Astoria "extended the bounds of empire [and he believed that] we have the original title of the United States by discovery, fortified by the rights of France, continued by the exploration of Lewis and Clark, by the formal taking of possession, and by regular occupation, and completed by the recognition of Great Britain."³⁶

By 1844, the United States was gripped by an expansionist fever that led the country to finally settle the Oregon and Texas questions. The annexation of Texas was a boiling point in American politics for over two decades, and desires to occupy Oregon had fermented even longer. The Democratic Party presidential platform of 1844 confirmed that "our title to the whole of the Territory of Oregon is clear and unquestionable; that no portion of the same ought to be ceded to England or any other power; and that the re-occupation of Oregon and the reannexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period are great American measures."³⁷

James K. Polk campaigned vigorously on this platform, and his slogan "54-40 or fight" claimed the entire Pacific Northwest, including much of present-day British Columbia, Canada. When Polk won, he claimed a mandate for expansion.

Polk's inaugural address in 1845 discussed Oregon, discovery, and Manifest Destiny. He called Oregon "our territory" and stated that the U.S. "title to the country of the Oregon is 'clear and unquestionable,' and already are our people preparing to perfect that title by occupying it."³⁸ He believed that the opening of the Pacific Northwest for American settlement and the "extinguish[ment] [of the] title of numerous Indian tribes to vast tracts of country"³⁹ was a beneficial development because expansion strengthened the Union.

In December 1845, Polk delivered his annual message to Congress, discussing the Oregon question at length. He stated that "our title to the whole Oregon Territory ... [is] maintained by [irrefutable] facts and arguments," and he asked Congress to maintain "our just title to that Territory."⁴⁰ Polk suggested Congress grant land to the "patriotic pioneers who ... lead the way through savage tribes inhabiting the vast wilderness."⁴¹ He was confident that "the title of the United States is the

best now in existence” and that under applicable international law England did not have a valid claim “to any portion of the Oregon Territory upon any principle of public law recognized by nations.”⁴²

Many American politicians wholeheartedly agreed. Senator Stephen Douglass, for example, stated in 1846 that “we do hold the valley of the Columbia in our own right by virtue of discovery, exploration, and occupation, and that we have a treaty-right in addition through the Louisiana and Florida treaty.”⁴³ He also expressly relied on the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny ideals of converting and civilizing the Indians in the Oregon country, and he utilized the principle of *terra nullius* when he claimed that the United States had rights to “the vacant and unoccupied part of North America.”⁴⁴ Secretary of State James Buchanan foresaw America’s “glorious mission ... [of] extending the blessings of Christianity and of civil and religious liberty over the whole of the North American continent.”⁴⁵

The Doctrine of Discovery had truly become Manifest Destiny.

For forty years or more, American politicians, citizens, and newspapers used the Doctrine of Discovery to justify Manifest Destiny and the expansion of the United States to the Pacific Ocean. Under these ethnocentric justifications of discovery, Americans believed they possessed the only “valid” religions, civilizations, governments, laws, and cultures, and that Divine Providence allegedly intended Americans and their institutions to own North America. As a result, the human, governmental, and property rights of indigenous peoples and the Indian nations were almost totally disregarded.

Notes

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25. See, e.g., Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 86; Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 21–27, 46–47, 55–60.

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Chapter 7: Indians and the California Gold Rush

JEAN M. O'BRIEN

The California gold rush is stock-in-trade of U.S. history textbooks. And no wonder: It is a story packed with drama. It is also a story that fits into any number of common framing devices or narrative themes that authors of survey texts need to identify in order to sift through the vast available material and find coherence. It is easily leashed to the ongoing sectional struggle over abolition and slavery; to Manifest Destiny, westward expansion, and the Mexican War; to the outward reach of the United States to the Pacific and to the globe; to immigration history, especially Chinese immigration, and the production of a multicultural nation; to labor history, the history of business/capitalism, environmental history, and more. How do Indians, or, more broadly, indigenous peoples, fit into these themes? If the textbooks are to be taken as proof, then, it turns out, not very well, and in the case of California, almost not at all. (I would like to note that it need not be so for *any* of these themes/narrative strategies.) Indians are never a structural framing device in any U.S. history textbook, despite the many efforts many historians have made over the past several decades to incorporate Indians into their narratives, and perhaps they never can be given the inherently nationalistic project in which textbooks partake.¹ I still think we should “call the question.” To truly center indigenous peoples in the U.S. history survey poses substantial threats to the ultimately celebratory nationalism inherent in the genre in multifaceted ways. The result is the continuing and virtually complete marginalization of Indian peoples in U.S. history (manifested in the textbook problem) despite the utter impossibility of the *making of the United States* without Indians.

California Indian history has been the subject of a vast literature, including a great many monographs that have taken up the history, culture, and demography of California Indians in the pre-Hispanic, mission, and Mexican periods up to the present. As Albert Hurtado lays out in the introduction to his important book *Indian Survival on the California Frontier*, much of the literature on California Indians has focused on the “grisly statistics of population reduction” that followed the incursions of the

Spanish, building on the important work of Sherburne F. Cook.² Other important topics of consideration in this formidable body of work include the rich and path-breaking cultural anthropology of Alfred L. Kroeber and his students that reconstructed the complex cultural and linguistic terrain of indigenous California. Scholars have probed the intricate histories of California missions, the long history of indigenous labor, the complex workings of Indian policy, non-Indian attitudes about California Indians, and much more.

Hurtado's book is carefully situated in this much-larger historiography and provides a way of thinking about how the large body of scholarly literature on Indians has—and dramatically has not—influenced the presence of this complex story in the teaching of U.S. history. His signal contribution (in addition to synthesizing much of this important work) is to point out in no uncertain terms the ways in which California Indians *survived* this history despite what seem like insurmountable odds. Hurtado brings this story together in such a way that it ought to be able to influence the larger narrative about California Indians.

How might Hurtado (and the larger scholarly literature on which he builds) provide a narrative of the California gold rush that places Indians at the center? Let's start by how *he* narrates the triggering event:

Development of the central district [of the mines] began when Indian and white workers discovered gold while building Sutter's sawmill in Koloma Nisenan [i.e., Native] country. To start this project Sutter, who had recently been appointed federal subagent, drafted an indenture with the Yalisumni Nisenan that ostensibly granted him and his partner, James Marshall, a twenty year lease to the Nisenan property with the exclusive right to cultivate land, cut timber, and build a sawmill and "other necessary machinery for the purpose." Since the Yalisumnis lived twenty miles downstream from the Kolomas, it appears that Sutter was using his reliable Yalisumni workers to colonize the mountain country for New Helvetia. After gold was found, Sutter sent the indenture to Governor Mason for approval. Without mentioning gold, he claimed that the new settlement would teach the Yalisumni habits of industry and protect them from wild mountain Indians. Chiefs Pupule and Gesu, along with alcaldes Cahule and Sule, endorsed the document, which bound

Sutter and Marshall to annually give the four Indian signatories \$150 worth of clothing and farming utensils for the benefit of the tribe; but it did not explain how the four Indians would distribute the goods. This agreement, had it been honored, would not have benefitted the Kolomas at all.

[Governor Richard B.] Mason refused to sanction the indenture, which in any case could not have kept other gold seekers from overwhelming the foothill Nisenan country that embraced the heart of the Mother Lode. Sutter, rebuffed in his attempt to control mineral land, decided then to mobilize Indian labor for the mines. Capitalizing on his experience in Native labor procurement, he formed a partnership with Marshall and two others to whom he furnished “Indians, teams, and provisions” and scoured northern California for Indian miners. When this venture, like so many of Sutter’s schemes, failed to gain a profit, he left the partnership. Indeed, his demand for Indian labor was so great that he was unable to harvest his own crops. As the gold rush spread, Native laborers left New Helvetia because they were “impatient to run to the mines, [since] other Indians had informed them of gold and its value,” Sutter recalled bitterly. New Helvetia lived by Indian labor, and, when Indians caught gold fever and went to the mines, died for lack of it.³

Hurtado’s narration of the typical jumping-off point of the California gold rush comes not quite halfway into the book. His is an intricate story that entails deep plot development: It builds on a long history of Spanish colonialism that partially remade indigenous California, beginning with the incursion of the Spanish presidio mission system that clung to the coastline roughly between San Diego in the south and San Francisco to the north but that had minimal effect on the thousands of square miles north of San Francisco and east of the presidio mission complexes that remained firmly in the control of the estimated 300,000 Indians before Mexican Independence redirected the history of Alta California.⁴ His narrative takes seriously the intricate cultural, social, political, and economic world of indigenous California by invoking that world as painstakingly reconstructed by anthropologists, demographers, historians, and other scholars. Most immediately in terms of providing the larger cultural, environmental, and geopolitical context of “Sutter’s Mill,” Hurtado reconstructs what he calls

“California’s International Frontier, 1819–1846” and *explains* what John Sutter was *doing* in the American and Feather River regions of north central California in the first place. Sutter, a German-born Swiss adventurer, received permission from California governor Juan Alvarado for permission to build a colony there in 1838 during a time of turbulence following Mexican Independence in 1821 when the governor sought to stem political unrest and halt Indian raiding.⁵ With a company of “a few trappers, ten Hawaiians, and an Indian boy from the Rockies,” Sutter headed into the interior and gained a foothold among the Nisenan after having been rebuffed by a party of 200 Gualacomne Miwok men. After tense negotiations and with threats of violence, Sutter gained a foothold there, creating a system of labor, trade, and allegiance that fed his vision of creating a feudal kingdom in the interior of California while exploiting Indian lands and labor to the hilt.⁶ Indian labor built and did virtually all the work on Sutter’s rancho, which included expansive wheat crops as well as “a distillery, hat factory, blanket works, and a tannery.” He incorporated Indian hunting, fishing, and trapping into New Helvetia’s economy and defended the whole operation with a fort manned by Indian soldiers (figure 7.1).⁷ Building on and transforming a Hispanic model of Indian labor integration that included “a complex combination of slavery, peonage, and free labor,” Sutter’s presence disrupted Native families, communities, social systems, and economies—though nothing like the changes that were to come. But what is without question is that Sutter found himself inside an overwhelmingly indigenous world, albeit a world he helped integrate into an international fur-trading system; and while Indians in this context faced a whole new set of dangers, the new labor arrangements provided new possibilities for Indian survival as well.⁸

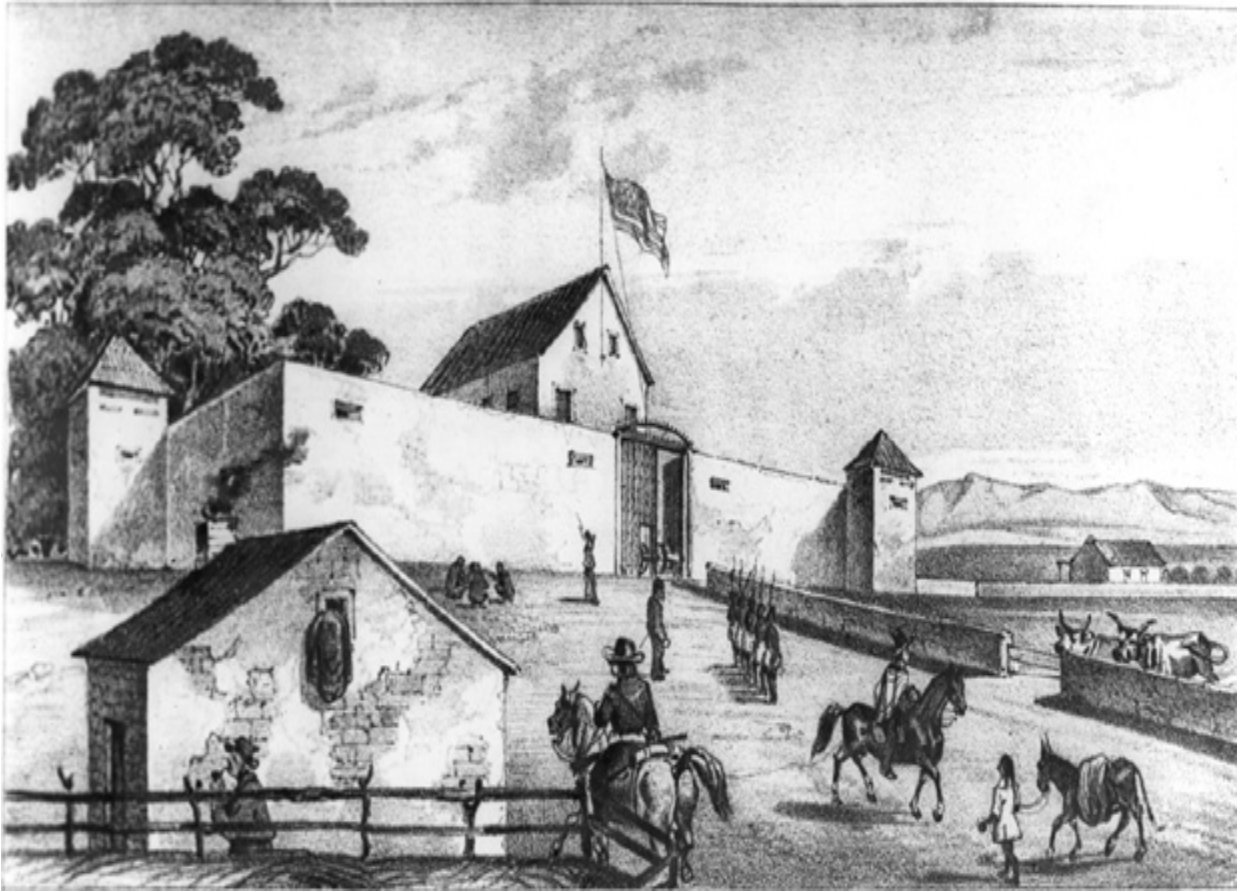


FIGURE 7.1 Sutter's Fort, New Helvetia, renamed Fort Sacramento, manned by armed Indians. California State Library, Sacramento.



FIGURE 7.2 Sam Pit, Indian miner, with pick and gold pan. From Albert Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 109. California State Library, Sacramento.

The swirl of events surrounding the Mexican War left the regulation of Indian affairs in total chaos just prior to the events that triggered the gold rush, and California governor Mason stepped in with the twin goals of regulating Indian labor and defending the interests of ranchers protecting their livestock from Indian raiding.⁹ This helps explain how John Sutter came to be appointed the first subagent of Indian affairs despite what seems the obvious impossibility of that arrangement in safeguarding Native interests. This larger context of allowing indigenous rights and interests to be

swept to the side is a vital legacy in California Indian history (and textbooks as well). The United States responded pathetically and utterly ineffectually to the impact of the gold rush on California's indigenous people, doing virtually nothing to halt the horrific exploitation of Indian bodies, resources, land, and labor as the world rushed in. Brutal wars and violent rounds of retaliation racked the central and northern mining regions of California (Mariposa War, 1850–51; Yuma and Mojave War, 1851; Rogue River War, 1855–56, Modoc War, 1872–73). Meanwhile, the 1850 Act for the Government and Protection of Indians purported to bring order to the chaos, but this act, in place for ten years and affecting an estimated 10,000 Indian individuals who were indentured under its provisions, effectively legalized Indian slavery and the theft of Indian orphans and lands in the guise of benevolence until it was repealed in 1860 as a violation of federal emancipation procedures.¹⁰ Belatedly, federal negotiators hastily concluded eighteen grossly imperfect treaties that did not come close to accurately representing the dozens of separate tribal peoples in California.¹¹ But all was for naught in any event, since even these barebones arrangements, which would have set aside a meager portion of the lands of California for its indigenous peoples, were never ratified due to California interests who opposed them as too generous to Indians.¹² California created temporary state reservations instead, located in areas they thought devoid of gold or in nearby fertile ranch lands in need of Indian labor.¹³

Hurtado's narrative of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill tells us why there is a Sutter's Mill in the first place, and it narrates with a fair amount of precision who was involved in this complicated, messy history of encounter, coercion, and cooperation. It also locates the "discovery of gold" not with a single non-Indian adventurer but as the collective product of Indian and non-Indian labor, a narrative that is much more plausible than the standard tale of a heroic feat by the enterprising James Wilson Marshall. It positions Sutter as a manipulative operator who tried to further exploit Indians to monopolize the discovery, and who, when he failed to secure legal indenture over the land, turned to a practice he knew well—exploitation of Indian labor in the mines. In the end he failed in this as in all of his ventures: Indians themselves caught gold fever and pursued their own interests. Sutter died impoverished in Pennsylvania in 1880, a bitter man reliant on the kindness of charity.¹⁴

Narratives in textbooks by definition cannot include this sort of depth or richness. But by not striving to at least gesture toward the larger indigenous context, they instead cast James Wilson Marshall, Sutter's Mill, and the discovery of gold as the central figure/location to spark the drama of the California gold rush. Marshall and Sutter are depicted as lone wolves casting for their fortunes in a distant and vacant land, solitary white men living in isolation rather than in a central node of a social world made through Sutter's complex coercions. In reality, they were embroiled in an *indigenous* world, though Sutter was authorized as a "settler" by the Mexican government, and he was deeply implicated in those politics. They are memorialized as the spark that fuels the dramatic history that follows, a history that "makes" San Francisco and California, without any meaningful inclusion of Indians in the story. Such narratives do not ask or answer the questions of who Sutter and Marshall were and what they were doing there: Instead the long, complex—and inherently indigenous—history of this moment is almost entirely elided.



AN INDIAN WOMAN PANNING OUT GOLD.

FIGURE 7.3 Indian woman panning for gold. California State Library, Sacramento.

For the purposes of this paper, I looked at the portrayal of Indians and the California gold rush in seven major, commonly adopted textbooks published between 2009 and 2014. These are two-volume or single-volume, multiauthored textbooks intended for college classrooms: *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People*;¹⁵ *Exploring American Histories: A Brief Survey with Sources*;¹⁶ *Experience History: Interpreting America's Past*;¹⁷ *The American Promise: A Compact History*;¹⁸ *The American Pageant*;¹⁹ *A People and A Nation: A History of the United States*;²⁰ and *Created Equal: A History of the United States*.²¹ How did they fare in incorporating Indians into their accounts of the California gold rush?

Let's start by returning to the story of James Wilson Marshall and Sutter's Mill as they appear in some of these textbooks:

In 1848, while constructing a sawmill along the American River, James Marshall noticed gold flecks in the millrace. More discoveries followed, and when the news reached the East, it spread like wildfire. The following spring the Overland Trail was jammed with eager "forty-niners." Some 80,000 emigrants journeyed to California that year, about 55,000 of whom took the overland route. (*Experience History*, 372)

Nine days before the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, however, an American carpenter discovered gold in the foothills of California's Sierra Nevada range. The *California gold rush* began within a few months. (*The Enduring Vision*, 398)

However, the Anglo American presence in California changed dramatically after 1848 when gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in northeastern California. News of the discovery brought tens of thousands of new settlers from the eastern United States, South America, Europe, and Asia. In the *gold rush*, "forty-niners" raced to claim riches in the California mountains, and men vastly outnumbered women. Single men came with brothers, neighbors, or friends. Married men left wives and children behind, promising to send for them once they struck gold. Some 80,000 arrived in 1849 alone. (*Exploring American Histories*, 469)

Another consequence of the Mexican defeat was that California gold poured into American, not Mexican, pockets. In January 1848, just weeks before the formal transfer of territory, James Marshall discovered gold in the American River in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Marshall's discovery set off the *California Gold Rush*, one of the wildest mining stampedes in the world's history. Between 1849 and 1852, more than 250,000 "forty-niners," as they would be known, descended on the Golden State. In less than two years, Marshall's discovery transformed California from foreign territory to statehood. (*The American Promise*, 297)

When James Marshall discovered gold in Sutter's Mill, California, in January 1848, word spread quickly worldwide. Within a year, tens of thousands of adventurers from other countries rushed to California, making it one of the most cosmopolitan places in North America. (*A People and a Nation*, 327)

In January 1848, John [sic] Wilson Marshall discovered gold in a shallow tributary to the American River near present-day Sacramento, California. During the next year, tens of thousands of forty-niners rushed to California, where they practiced placer mining, panning and dredging for gold in the hopes of instant riches. (*A People and a Nation*, 338)

On January 24, 1848, Henry William Bigler took a break from building a sawmill for John Sutter in California's Sacramento Valley and penned in his pocket diary, "This day some kind of mettle was found ... that looks like goald."

GOLD! News of the discovery at Sutter's Mill spread like wildfire. By late 1848, immigrants from all over the world and migrants from all over the United States had begun to pour into the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Dubbed "the Forty Niners," they had journeyed westward across the mountains, from the tenements of New York City and the great plantations of Mississippi, north from Mexico, and over the oceans, from western Europe, China, and South America. Equipping themselves with simple mining tools, the Forty Niners began to dig for buried treasure, determined to stake a claim and make a fortune. (*Created Equal*, 394)

Tobacco chewing President Taylor—with his stumpy legs, rough features, heavy jaw, black hair, ruddy complexion, and squinty grayeyes—was a military square peg in a round hole. He would have been spared much turmoil if he could have continued to sit on the slavery lid. But the discovery of gold on the American River near Sutter's Mill, California, early in 1848, blew the cover off.

A horde of adventurers poured into the valleys of California. Singing "O Susannah!" and shouting "Gold! Gold! Gold!" they began tearing frantically at the yellow graveled streams and hills. A

fortunate few of the bearded miners “struck it rich” at the “diggings.” (*The American Pageant*, 418)

Here are all seven versions of the James Wilson Marshall/Sutter’s Mill story about the discovery of gold that set off the California gold rush in the textbooks I sampled. Dramatic tension and interpretive stance set aside, notice that not a single one of them gave any indication in this story of even the possibility of any Indian involvement in the sequence of events that set this story in motion, although in later paragraphs three of the seven mentioned the presence of ranchos as a legacy of the Mexican era and two of those discussed Indian labor on the ranchos. Overall, four of the seven included some mention of Indian labor as part of the story of this era. Five textbooks discuss Indian demography, specifically the dramatic decline unleashed by the gold rush—but none pause to point to the remarkable fact of Indian survival despite the horrific consequences of the gold rush. Two textbooks discuss the 1850 Act for the Government and Protection of Indians within the context of California’s admission as a free state and as an example of the violation of the prohibition on slavery that came with statehood. Two textbooks include mention of Indians as part of the polyglot population produced by the gold rush, and an additional two point to the presence of Kanaka Maolis (Native Hawaiians). Other points of inclusion are Indians pushed out of the goldfields (one), Indian tensions with other people (one), and violations of Indian women (two).

Some of these textbooks include trace elements of familiarity with the larger story Hurtado’s book so powerfully presents. There is acknowledgment that “white prospectors loathed the thought of competing with ... [free blacks and slaves] and wanted to drive all blacks, along with California’s Indians, out of the gold fields.”²² One textbook notes, “Indian and Mexican women were especially vulnerable to sexual harassment and rape, while Chinese women were imported specifically to provide sexual services for male miners.”²³ Another points out, “miners ruthlessly exterminated the Indians in the area, sometimes hunting them for sport.”²⁴ On pre-gold rush California: “It was inhabited mostly by Indians, with a small number of Mexican *rancheros*, who raised cattle and sheep on enormous landholdings worked by coerced Indians. With the arrival of the forty-niners came the great California agricultural boom ... Unlike the family farms of the Midwest and Oregon, California’s large scale wheat farming relied largely on bonded Indian laborers.”²⁵ As previously noted,

two textbooks point out the astounding 1850 Act for the Government and Protection of Indians

that essentially legalized the enslavement of Indians. The practice of using enslaved Indians in the California mines between 1849 and 1851 ended only when newly arrived miners brutally attacked Indian workers, believing they degraded white labor and gave an unfair advantage to established miners. Those slaves who survived the violence became field workers and house servants. Between 1821 and 1860, the Indian population of California fell from 200,000 to 30,000, as Indians died from disease, starvation, and violence. Because masters separated male and female workers, Indians failed to reproduce in large numbers.²⁶



FIGURE 7.4 Commemorative stamp, sesquicentennial of the California gold rush. U.S. Post Office.

The other points out the misleading nature of the legislation's title, outlining its provisions for "indenture or apprenticeship of Indian children to whites for indeterminate periods of time" and the fact that it allowed "for the hiring out, to the highest bidder, of adults deemed guilty of vagrancy," and made a connection to the state's 1852 Fugitive Slave Law.

This is the collective story of Indians in the California gold rush these seven present-day commercial college textbooks present. I want to explore two more themes explicitly taken up by some of these texts that all of the others implicitly participate in to one degree or another: the problem of

demography, and the erasure of indigenous Californians through the creation of the category *Californios*.

Some of these textbooks provide population figures in the context of the gold rush that include Indians and leash these figures to an important analytical point:

For Native Americans, the gold rush was a catastrophe. Numbering about 150,000 in 1848, the Indian population of California fell to 25,000 in 1848. The Californios had exploited the Native peoples, but the forty-niners wanted to eradicate them. Starvation, disease, and a declining birthrate took a heavy toll. Indians also fell victim to wholesale murder. "That a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the two races until the Indian race becomes extinct must be expected," declared California governor Peter W. Burnett in 1851. The nineteenth century historian Hubert Howe Bancroft described white behavior towards Indians during the gold rush as "one of the last human hunts of civilization, and the basest and most brutal of all of them." To survive, Indians moved to the most remote areas of the state and tried to stay out of their way. (*The American Promise*, 299)

Devastated by disease, the Indians, who had numbered approximately 300,000 when the Spanish arrived in 1769, had declined to half that number by 1846.

Despite the efforts of the Mexican government, California in 1840 had a population of only 7,000 Mexican settlers. Non-Mexican settlers numbered only 380, but among them were Americans who championed manifest destiny. (*The American Promise*, 293)

The population of California in 1845 was curiously mixed. It consisted of perhaps thirteen thousand sun-blessed Spanish Mexicans and as many as seventy-five thousand dispirited Indians. There were fewer than a thousand "foreigners," mostly Americans, some of whom had "left their consciences" behind them as they rounded Cape Horn. (*The American Pageant*, 406)

In addition to the land, the nation [after the Mexican Cession] added to its population large numbers of men, women, and children already

living in the area—13,000 Spanish speakers and 100,000 Indians (all former Mexican citizens) in California alone. After 1848, many migrants streamed into California and then pressed for statehood, granted in 1850. By that year 90,000 non-Indian settlers lived in the state. Prominent among the Forty Niners were Chinese immigrants—20,000 had arrived in California by 1852. Within two decades, their numbers would swell to 50,000. From the American South came both free and enslaved African Americans; between 1850 and 1852, the California black population more than tripled from almost 7,000 to over 2,200. (*Created Equal*, 395)

While these passages at least attempt to point out the large indigenous population of gold rush-era California, each of them is to one degree or another a “declension” narrative: Indians are overwhelmed and ultimately replaced in the wake of the gold rush. It is clear from the tone that Indians are not destined to be the future of California but rather the pathetic backdrop to be left behind as the gold rush ushers in a complexly multicultural world. Note that the second narrative from *The American Promise* does not include Indians *at all*. By claiming that in 1840, California’s population included “only 7,000 Mexicans” and 380 non-Mexican settlers without enumerating Indians for that year, it is implicitly asserting that Indians literally did not count.

This sort of narrative erasure is consolidated in another analytical theme that stretches across many of the textbooks in depictions of California that make note of the story of “Californios”: heirs of the Spanish colonial regime between Mexican Independence (1821) and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) just prior to the gold rush.

Tensions also intensified between the gold rushers and the *Californios*, whose extensive (if often vaguely worded) land holdings were protected by the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. (*The Enduring Vision*, 398)

Soon, a stream of men of various races and nationalities, all bent on getting rich, arrived in California, where they remade the quiet world of Mexican ranches into a raucous, roaring mining and town economy. Only a few struck it rich, and life in the goldfields was nasty, brutish, and often short. (*The American Promise*, 297)

There, at the conclusion of the Mexican War, dwelled some thirteen thousand Californios—descendants of the Spanish and Mexican conquerors who had once ruled California. (*The American Pageant*, 412)

But during the 1830s, the power of the missions weakened, and much of their land and their assets were confiscated by the Californios. Vast *ranchos* (ranches) formed, and from those citadels the Californios ruled in their turn until the Mexican War. (*The American Pageant*, 413)

By 1870 the Californios' brief ascendancy had utterly vanished—a short and sad tale of riches to rags in the face of the Anglo onslaught. Half a century later, beginning in 1910, hundreds of thousands of young Mexicans would flock into California and the Southwest. They would enter a region liberally endowed with Spanish architecture and artifacts, bearing the names of Spanish missions and Californio *ranchos*. But they would find it a land dominated by Anglos, a place far different from that which their Californio ancestors had settled so hopefully in earlier days. (*The American Pageant*, 413)

Under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Indians, made citizens in the wake of Mexican Independence, were also to be citizens with land rights at the end of the Mexican War. These narratives engage in one of two kinds of erasure: They either leave Indians entirely out of the picture, or they *collapse* Indians into the category “Californios.” The message here is that Indians are displaced or transformed into Californios after Mexican Independence in 1821. Californios, then, become the subject of the narrative, a declension narrative to be sure, and—voilà—Indians are gone. At best, Indians are an astounding, layered absence, not even included as an afterthought. The very language of the latter passage in this group is richly evocative of any number of what I have called elsewhere “replacement narratives” for Indian peoples.²⁷

Without a single doubt, the gold rush *was* a catastrophe for California's indigenous peoples. And the acknowledgment of this fact is an important element in getting that history right. The problem is with “leaving it at that.” The collective narrative presented here and consolidated with the messages

of unmitigated population decline and outright, multilayered erasures of Indian peoples is that it leaves its consumers with a grossly distorted and erroneous “knowledge” of California Indian peoples. These narrative structures cannot possibly account for what comes later: for the ongoing, determined, and frequently successful battles tribal peoples in California made to insist on the recognition of their existence and rights. They do not make room for stories of *survival*, but only for “authorized” stories of decline and (presumably) defeat.

What else do these textbooks leave out that Hurtado and others working in Indian history might expect—or hope—to be included? Not a single one of them makes any mention of Indian rights and ownership of their lands and resources as properly recognized rights, even when they do point out that Indians were pushed out of the gold fields (which would not necessarily entail ownership given the assumptions at work here). None of them makes any mention of the fact that the official policy of the United States placed Indian treaty making and diplomacy at the center of interactions with Indian nations. None of them takes up Indian policy as a fact or a problem, despite the vociferous debates over the way “westward expansion” turned ideas underpinning “Indian removal” upside down, with events in California serving as ample reason to embark on a major rethinking of that policy. None of them makes mention of the brutal wars in the central and northern mines stemming directly from the events of the gold rush that devastated Indian peoples. And, crucially, none of them leaves even the remotest possibility that Indians had any legitimate place in their homelands to begin with, let alone that they survived this brutal experience.

How is it possible that there is no place in the narrative of the California gold rush for these fundamental facts? These constructions of California in the wake of the gold rush are to be sure stories of possession, but they are only so by virtually casting aside indigenous California completely. They are “virgin land” stories, and they grossly distort California Indian history.

I want to conclude by touching back explicitly to the theme of this book: Why you can’t teach U.S. history without Indians. The fundamental truth is that, of course, you *can* teach U.S. history without Indians—it happens all the time. That is the primary mode of instruction for U.S. history. The more insistent claim is that you *shouldn’t* teach U.S. history without Indians, at least if you want to truly get to the bottom of the story of the United States as a settler colonial nation, and, even more fundamentally, if you want to get

the story right. That version and these textbooks fail to tell the history of Indian homelands, of Indian dispossession, of the nonratified treaties, of the subsequent history of a broken policy that still must acknowledge and grapple with the ongoing existence of California tribal nations. They ignore the intricate legal claims process that embroiled the United States and California Indians in the courts following the illegality of the U.S. invasion of California. They cannot explain the subsequent and inadequate history of federal acknowledgement and re-recognition of California's tribal nations and their claims. And they cannot account for the remarkable fact that California tribal nations influenced the California gubernatorial recall of 2003.²⁸ It seems to me that *these kinds of failures* are why you can't teach a (responsible) U.S. history without Indians.

Notes

1. The problem of Indian history and U.S. history textbooks was the focus of a series of three high-profile conferences sponsored by the D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian History at the Newberry Library in the 1980s: D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian, *The Impact of Indian History on the Teaching of United States History, Chicago Conference, 1984*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1985); *The Impact of Indian History on the Teaching of United States History, Washington Conference, 1985* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1986); and *The Impact of Indian History on the Teaching of United States History, Washington Conference, 1986* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1987). See Frederick E. Hoxie, *The Indians versus the Textbooks: Is There Any Way Out?* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1984); and "The Indians versus the Textbooks: Is There Any Way Out?," *AHA Perspectives* 23, no. 4 (April 1985): 18–22. It is not clear to me that we have made much progress.

2. Albert Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), Introduction.

3. Ibid., 102–3.

4. Ibid., 33.

5. Ibid., 47.

6. Ibid., 48–49.

7. Ibid., 49–50.

8. Ibid., 55, 71, 53–54.
9. Ibid., 86, 95.
10. Robert F. Heizer, *The Destruction of California Indians* (1974; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).
11. Hurtado, *Indian Survival*, 127–48.
12. Ibid., 138–40.
13. Ibid., 137–38.
14. Ibid., 217.
15. Paul S. Boyer et al., *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People*, 8th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2014).
16. Nancy A. Hewitt and Steven F. Lawson, *Exploring American Histories: A Brief Survey with Sources* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013).
17. James West Davidson, Brian deLay, Christine Leigh Heyrman, Mark H. Lytle, and Michael B. Stoff, *Experience History: Interpreting America's Past* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2011).
18. James L. Roark et al., *The American Promise: A Compact History*, vol. 1, *To 1877*, 4th ed. (New York: Bedford St. Martin's, 2010).
19. David M. Kennedy, Elizabeth Cohen, and Thomas A. Bailey, *The American Pageant*, vol. 1, *To 1877*, 14th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010).
20. Mary Beth Norton et al., *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States*, vol. 1, *To 1877*, brief 8th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010).
21. Jacqueline Jones et al., *Created Equal: A History of the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2009).
22. Boyer et al., *Enduring Vision*, 398.
23. Hewitt and Lawson, *Exploring American Histories*, 469.
24. Davidson et al., *Experience History*, 373.
25. Norton et al., *A People and a Nation*, 338.
26. Ibid., 339–40.
27. Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

28. Kevin Bruyneel points out that Arnold Schwarzenegger drew on deep antitribal discourse and successfully portrayed his opponents as influenced by campaign financing from California gaming tribes to prevail in the 2003 California gubernatorial. Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S. Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 185–95.

Suggested Readings

Bauer, William J., Jr. *We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here: Work, Community, and Memory on California's Round Valley Reservation, 1850–1941*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Bruyneel, Kevin. “Indigenous Sovereignty versus Colonial Time at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century.” In *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of U.S.-Indigenous Relations*, 171–216. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Gunther, Vanessa Ann. *Ambiguous Justice: Native Americans and the Law in Southern California, 1848–1890*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2006.

Heizer, Robert F. *The Destruction of California Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.

Hurtado, Albert. *Indian Survival on the California Frontier*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

Riffe, Jed (producer/director), and Jack Kohler (coproducer). *California's “Lost” Tribes*. Episode 1, *California and the American Dream* (DVD, 55 minutes).

Chapter 8: Why You Can't Teach the History of U.S. Slavery without American Indians

PAUL T. CONRAD

“Aren’t you guys sick of slavery?” I recall the president of the history club at my university asking club members at a meeting a few years ago. As their new faculty advisor and as a historian interested in slavery, my ears perked up for elaboration. “What white people did to black people was horrible and all,” she noted, as murmurs of assent echoed around the room, “but then the slaves got their freedom, so what’s there to keep talking about?” Other club members seconded her sentiment: the history of slavery was officially stale.

Student comments are often as uninformed or provocative as they are instructive. This candid moment at a history club meeting, for example, raised questions for me about what students are actually learning about slavery in U.S. history classrooms. Like a movie they had seen one too many times, the narrative of slavery that bored these students—a black and white tragedy with a happy ending—struck me as both oversimplified and incomplete. Given my own interests, I wondered particularly about the absence of Native peoples from the story and how including them might change student understandings of slavery in U.S. history. After all, Native groups played a central role in shaping and contesting forms of servitude and slavery that emerged across North America from the precolonial era to the present, as captors and captives, slaveholders and slaves, and sovereign nations.¹

Including American Indians as part of the story of slavery serves not simply to reflect a Native point of view or to be more historically accurate—though this is certainly the case—but also to fuel student interest in slavery and history more generally. American Indian history provides stories that break from what students think they already know about slavery while also sparking fruitful discussions of what slavery was (and is) in the first place. Exposing students to the range of experiences of captivity, servitude, and slavery evident historically in North America serves to better contextualize U.S. history within a global framework and clarifies the distinctiveness of

chattel slavery as it developed in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century U.S. South. I advance this argument in two parts. I begin by briefly surveying the current state of instruction regarding the history of slavery and the role of American Indians in it. I then consider in greater depth why instructors should include indigenous peoples in their courses and lectures on slavery and provide specific examples of how they might do so.²

To begin, it is useful to survey current trends in the teaching of slavery in U.S. history classrooms. Anecdotes of students “sick of slavery” or reflecting on slavery through the binary of “white” versus “black” are suggestive, and conversations with colleagues lead me to believe that such sentiment among students is not isolated. At the same time, however, a more systematic survey of U.S. history syllabi available online provides broader perspective on how slavery is currently being taught in college classrooms.³

Among more than a hundred U.S. history syllabi I reviewed from major institutions across the country, only a few focused attention on American Indians in the context of slavery. A number of instructors introduce slavery to their students in units titled “Slavery Comes to America” or “The Beginnings of Slavery in America,” where they link discussion of these themes to readings on African enslavement. This approach suggests that these instructors may not be discussing with students the fact that the first slaves in many European colonial societies in the Americas were American Indians, and that Native peoples continued to labor as slaves within the boundaries of the United States through at least the late nineteenth century. Subsequent coverage of slave trades, plantation slavery, and the expansion of slavery in the antebellum South also appear to focus little on American Indians. A lack of attention to the fact that Euro-American farms, workshops, and plantations encroached into the homelands of Native nations may unwittingly reinforce pernicious stereotypes still common among students, including the idea that American Indians disappeared from history relatively soon after encountering Europeans.⁴

There are of course exceptions. Some instructors assign textbooks that at least mention Indians in the context of slavery, such as Eric Foner’s *Give Me Liberty*. A few instructors assign captivity narratives that may allow for a comparison of Native and European practices of dependence and servitude, including slavery. Overall, however, a survey of dozens of syllabi at major institutions nationwide suggests that it is only in a minority of college

classrooms that American Indians are being included in discussions of slavery in any substantive way.⁵

If U.S. history classes are not adequately incorporating American Indians into the story of slavery, what is to be done? Why should professors include American Indians, and how? It is beyond the scope of this essay to provide a complete account of the historical links between American Indians and slavery. Instead, I aim to provide an overview of how specialists now view the issue and discuss a few specific moments in the U.S. history survey that American Indian history can be linked to discussion of slavery in fruitful ways.

Understandings of the significance of Native peoples to the history of slavery in North American, Atlantic, and U.S. history have evolved rapidly over the past twenty years. As interest in this subject has burgeoned, scholars have refuted previous assumptions made about the relative insignificance of American Indians to the story. It was not that long ago, for example, that specialists in early American history and the history of slavery could note that only a few thousand Indians had been enslaved, or contend that Native enslavement mattered little given that millions of Africans would subsequently be imported to the Americas.⁶ Now historians note that between 2 and 4 million Indians were enslaved and circulated in the Americas from the late fifteenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries. While the demographic significance of Indian slavery varied from region to region, Native slaves could be found in almost every corner of the hemisphere, from New England and New France to Brazil and Chile. Europeans' first slaves in the Americas were Native men and women, and Europeans' encounters with American Indians and indigenous practices of captivity and slavery subsequently shaped their understandings and rationalizations of African enslavement. Moreover, interactions with Europeans and European colonialism influenced Native understandings and practices of slavery over time. In the North American Southeast, for example, some Native elites adopted the plantation system and race-based slavery into their own political economies. In other regions, such as the North American West, Indian servitude and slavery remained more important than the enslavement of Africans, and lingered after the Civil War.⁷

While virtually all societies have circulated captives and practiced some forms of servitude and human exploitation, in very few contexts has slavery

looked as it did in the plantation societies of the U.S. South and Caribbean.⁸ Drawing from American Indian history to discuss examples that students are less familiar with helps them to better understand both slavery in general and the distinctiveness of the plantation model of slavery that developed in a particular time and place. In contrast to most textbooks and U.S. history surveys, I begin my discussion of slavery with students chronologically with precolonial North America and early encounters between Natives and Europeans. The difficulty of recognizing unambiguously the existence of slavery in the precolonial period and consideration of the varied fates of captives in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries both serve to illustrate to students that “slavery” has not been one fixed practice across space and time.



FIGURE 8.1 Kiva at ruins of Chetro Ketl, Chaco Canyon. National Park Service, Digital Image Archive, <http://www.nps.gov/storage/images/chcu/Webpages/gallery-01.html>.

While many U.S. history textbooks introduce students to Native societies such as Chaco Canyon and Cahokia, the issue of labor is not commonly an area of focus. A class session organized around a question such as “Who built Chaco Canyon?” might serve to highlight both the complexity and diversity of precolonial Native societies and to begin to explore the topic of servitude and exploitation, of which slavery represents one extreme. Instructors could easily construct a similar class around Cahokia, Tenochtitlan, or another context, or raise the larger question of whether forced labor or slavery even existed in precolonial North America at all. In the case of Chaco Canyon (figure 8.1), an instructor might facilitate a debate by presenting the class with summaries of distinct viewpoints on the issue available in recent articles regarding the extent of labor demands, evidence for social stratification, and evidence of female captivity and exploitation in the region.⁹ In groups, students could read and discuss these views and make a case to the class at large regarding which position they find most convincing and why. I do not design this debate over labor at Chaco Canyon to lead students to one conclusive endpoint—slavery existed or did not exist—but rather to get them thinking about what slavery is and how we can assess and define it based on evidence.

A debate over labor in precolonial North America can provide a useful starting point to brainstorm definitions and understandings of slavery with students and lay out a framework for further study over the course of the semester. While scholars have theorized slavery in various ways, I explore it with my students as one extreme on a spectrum of dependency and exploitation. I note that slavery has tended to be distinguished from other categories such as indentured servitude and serfdom by the following characteristics: natal alienation (separation from kin and homeland), the problem of social death, dishonor, and extreme inequality of power, and—at least in some contexts—permanence of status. I also lay out for students a framework for thinking about three basic types of slave systems: slavery as a means of incorporating outsiders, government or state-driven enslavement such as the Ottoman janissaries or New Mexican *genizaro* slave militias, and slavery for the economic profit of an individual, such as plantation slavery.¹⁰

If discussion of precolonial Native America provides a venue for students to begin to think about slavery in new ways, the early colonial period provides a richer source base for exploring in greater depth the various forms of servitude and exploitation, including slavery, that have existed historically

in North America. Consideration of early encounters between Europeans and Natives allows for an exploration of the first type of slave system noted above, which was perhaps the most common in world history: the capture and enslavement of outsiders, especially war captives, for eventual incorporation into the receiving community. While instructors might explore any number of examples with students, the narrative of the shipwrecked Spanish conquistador Álvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca—easily accessible online—stands out as an especially rich source for analysis.¹¹ On the one hand, Cabeza de Vaca's story is inherently compelling to students as they think about what it would be like to struggle for survival while lost in a foreign land. Cabeza de Vaca's narrative is useful for other reasons as well: it illustrates the relative powerlessness of many of the first European conqueror-explorers in North America, the distinctiveness of Native practices of dependency and servitude from the chattel slavery model, and European practices of enslaving Indians. The latter point is highlighted by the fact that Cabeza de Vaca was in the end "rescued" by a party of Spanish slave hunters who he feared might try and enslave his Native guides. Essay assignments asking students to examine Cabeza de Vaca's descriptions and experiences of slavery encourage students to recognize the wide range of practices of servitude historical actors described as "slavery," not simply chattel slavery on plantations.¹²

To all Christian People to whom these Presents shall come greeting: Be it known
 and manifest that whereas Phillip Sauton an heathen Prince inhabiting upon the Continent in
 New England within the Colony of New Plymouth hath formerly subjected himself and People to the
 Government and obedience of our Sovereign his Majesty the King of England Scotland France and Ireland
 and the Dominions and plantations thereto belonging and particularly hath subjected to the Laws and
 authority established in his Majesty's said Colony of New Plymouth But havinge Next of Late been
 only Rejected and Rebelled hath most Barrenly invited many noxious and execrable Quakers Villains
 and outlaws and by conspiracies with other heathen Princes endeavored to strengthen himself and to take
 destroy Exterminate & expose all his Majesty's subjects within the Colony & upon the Continent thereof
 and whereas many of the said heathen People have lately been taken & Captivated by the Armies
 of his said Majesty's subjects and committed for conspiring with and actually abetting and assisting the said
 Philip in his said Rebellion & have themselves been the authors of many inhumane Cruelties and
 injuries to the Persons and Estates of his said Majesty's subjects That therefore by Law & Legal pro-
 cedure the said heathen Challifastor men women & Children have been sentenced & condemned to
 Perpetual servitude & slavery: And with special License the said Captives are transported for sale
 in any of his said Majesty's Dominions or the Dominions of any other Christian Prince or State And
 to the end that this Statute may be an effectual & effectuall execution hereof we warrant to say That
 Command of the Ship Seaflower - - - - - for the transportation of one hundred
 and ten of the said Slaves of New-Beacons is to be affixed in Publick Goals of the said
 Colony Dated at New Plymouth in New England the ninth day of August in the year of our
 Lord 1676:

Josiah Winslow
 Govr

FIGURE 8.2 Certificate from Governor Josiah Winslow to Captain Thomas Smith, related to transporting Indians, August 9, 1676. Manuscripts Large, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

Concluding analysis of Cabeza de Vaca or a similar source with discussion of the wider range of Native practices of captivity and servitude evident across North America might then provide a point of transition toward analysis of the European enslavement of Indians.¹³ If forms of dependency and servitude, including slavery, existed in North America before European colonization, the arrival of Europeans sparked new commercial slave trading in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on an unprecedented scale. As recent scholarship has made clear, comparisons between Indians and Africans were central to the evolution of labor systems

in colonial societies, and in many regions Native servants or slaves outnumbered Africans, at least initially. The Spanish, British, French, and Dutch all engaged in the enslavement of Native peoples they encountered in the process of their colonizing and wealth-seeking ventures in North America.¹⁴

If many Europeans had few moral qualms with Indian slavery, the enslavement of Natives in their own homelands nonetheless posed logistical problems and generated debates that would shape the subsequent importation of Africans in some regions, particularly in coastal zones. The relationship between Indian and African slavery in early European colonies thus provides a context for instructors to consider with students the shift from incorporative models of dependency and servitude toward the profit-centered form of slavery that would become so important in certain region of the Americas, including the U.S. South, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁵

Colonial Carolina provides an especially rich case study to consider the relationship between African and Indian slavery and how European colonialism affected Native practices of captivity and slavery over time in a particular region. As in most European colonies in North America, among the first slaves in Carolina were American Indians, but by the eighteenth century enslaved African labor dominated. This shift in Carolina, as in other regions where it occurred, begs for interrogation with students—and of course makes little sense without including American Indians in the discussion.¹⁶

The Indian slave trade that developed between Carolina and adjacent regions in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries entangled virtually all of the inhabitants of the North American Southeast. As historian Alan Gallay notes, this slave trade defined interethnic relations in the South during this period, as it “forced every group that lived in the South to make decisions about themselves and their relations with their neighbors.” While in the past, slaves had been a byproduct of war and were usually incorporated over time into the receiving society, now warfare was initiated to supply slaves to the Carolina market.¹⁷

This shift provides an illustration to students of why European colonization helped spark a massive increase in the number of Native people enslaved. English and Native men alike had discovered that there was great wealth to be generated in human trafficking, even if this wealth came with

great risks. In addition to fur pelts, human beings represented one of the most valuable items that Native traders in the Southeast learned they could offer to the English, garnering as many as fifteen or sixteen trade muskets per slave. In response to these new market incentives, slave traders such as the Westo victimized the Apalachee and other neighbors as far south as the Florida Keys and as far west as the Mississippi, helping to enslave as many as 50,000 Indians in a few decades time.¹⁸

Carolínians, meanwhile, exported the majority of these Indian slaves to New England and the Caribbean in order to finance the purchase of enslaved African laborers to work on their plantations. In fact, Carolínians actually exported more Indians than the number of enslaved Africans they imported between 1670 and 1715. The key issue here was security, a concern that might be introduced to students through analysis of a primary source document such as “The 1701 Act for the Better Ordering of Slaves,” recently published as a “Sources and Interpretations” piece in the *William and Mary Quarterly*.¹⁹ Comparisons to the African slave trade are revealing as well. In the North American Southeast, as in West Africa, transporting captives (figure 8.2) away from home served to make escape more difficult and to make it easier to find willing buyers, as most people prefer to enslave foreign outsiders rather than their own (or even their neighbors). If Indian slave escapes were a concern in Carolina, they represented much less of a concern in the Caribbean. Caribbean planters proved willing buyers because they desired any laboring body they could get their hands on; whether “Indian” or “African,” they expected no slave to survive for long. Carolínians, meanwhile, could use the funds generated from the export of thousands of Natives slaves to import captive laborers who they believed would be more easily kept in slavery.²⁰

In sum, colonial Carolina cannot be understood without incorporating American Indians into discussions of the history of slavery there. A trade in Indian slaves was central to the development of the early colony as it helped fund the rise of English practices of plantation slavery centered on the use of enslaved African labor for commodity production. Ultimately, however, the Indian slave trade and the practice of exporting Native men and women from Carolina proved unsustainable. By illustrating that the violence of slaving and Native reprisals for it could not be easily contained outside Carolina, the deadly Yamassee War of the mid-1710s cast in sharp relief the difficulty of enslaving people in their own homelands and helped to bring an end to

Indian slavery in Carolina. Though the procurement of enslaved Africans was also fraught with violence and warfare, the region devastated by it was distant, and thus its effects comparatively masked for Euro-American buyers.²¹

Beyond Carolina, however, Indian slavery did not decline in the eighteenth century. In New France, officials sanctioned Indian slavery in part to facilitate alliances with powerful Native groups, and Pawnee and Apache slaves labored in Montreal as well as in Martinique and the Caribbean. In the North American West, Comanche Indians established a vast trading empire fueled in part by the sale of Native slaves to the French and Spanish. Indian slave trades crisscrossed the continent, driven by the shared interests of Native and European groups alike in trade, wealth, and labor, and the general acceptance of human trafficking as a practice to fulfill these aims. In some regions, such as New Mexico, an incorporative model of slavery remained dominant, as Native and Hispanic groups integrated captives to augment their communities for social or cultural imperatives. In other regions, such as the Pacific Northwest, the arrival of Europeans and European trade goods fueled ever more exploitative and profit-driven modes of servitude and slavery. The needs and interests of a group might also fuel shifts in practices over time, as in the case of the Comanche, who began to incorporate rather than sell the majority of their captives in the nineteenth century due to the labor demands of horse pastoralism and the hide trade.²²

The emergence of the United States and its expansion west did not signal an end to Native participation in the story of slavery. In fact, perhaps no period in American history better illustrates the trouble with leaving Native people out of the story of slavery than the antebellum South. Thus far I have highlighted Native and Euro-American practices and experiences of captivity and servitude, including slavery. Native dispossession amid the expansion of a political economy of slavery represents another important link between American Indians and the history of slavery throughout North American and U.S. history. My review of U.S. history survey syllabi suggests that virtually all instructors discuss the expansion of cotton and slavery in the early nineteenth-century South and many cover Indian dispossession and removal, but they usually discuss these topics separately. Indian removal, the cotton economy, and the domestic slave trade were inextricably interlinked, not separate phenomena, however. Land speculators, removal agents, and slaveholders all profited from these

interconnected processes. By linking rather than separating readings and discussions on Indian removal with those on the cotton economy and domestic slave trade, instructors can help students better grasp how and why Anglo-Americans removed between 46,000 and 52,000 American Indians west during the 1830s while at the same time trading more than 280,000 African Americans across state lines.²³

MAP SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SLAVE POPULATION OF THE SOUTHERN STATES OF THE UNITED STATES

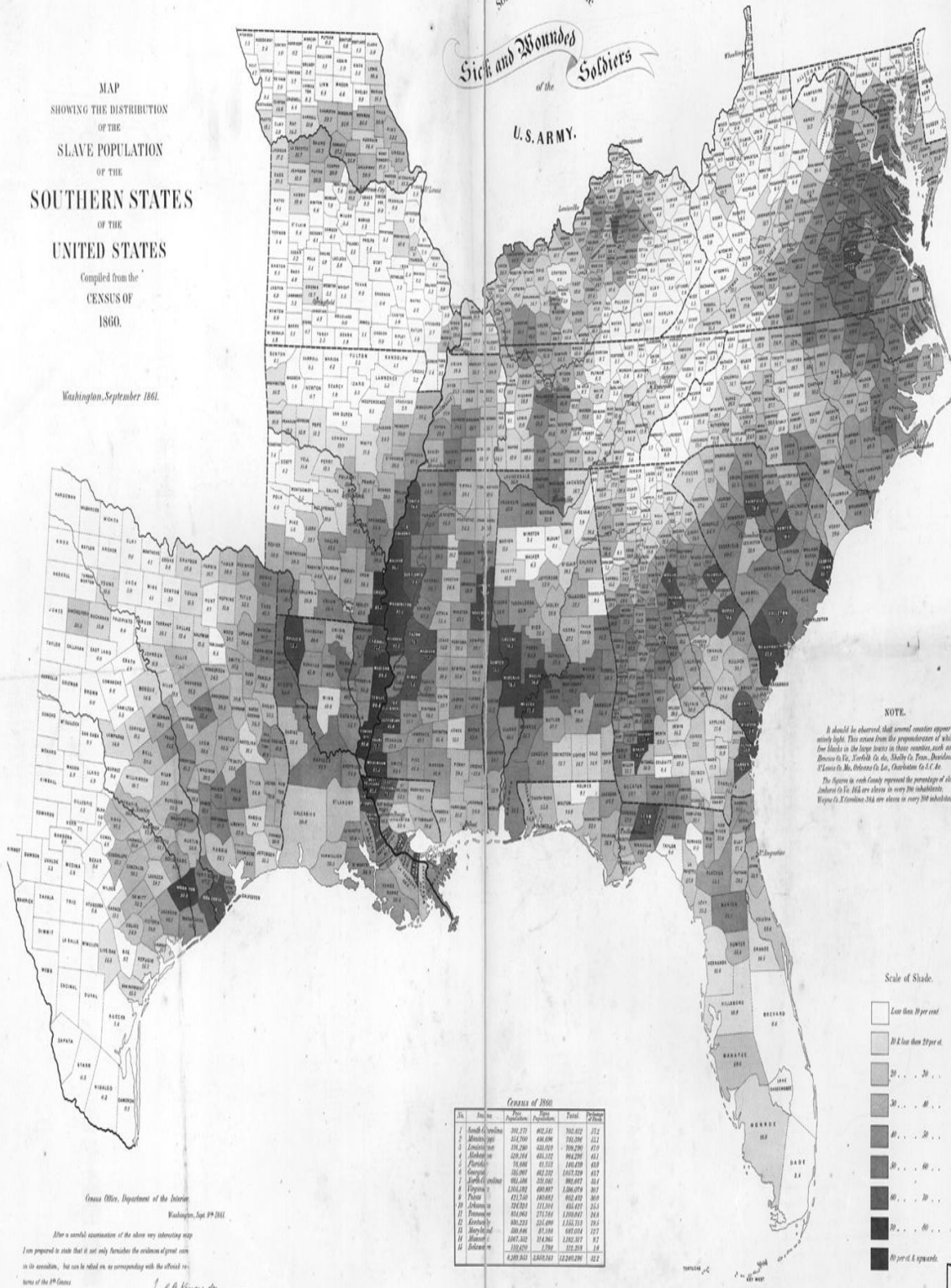
Compiled from the
CENSUS OF
1860.

Washington, September 1861.

Sold for the benefit of the

Sick and Wounded
of the

U.S. ARMY.



Census Office, Department of the Interior
Washington, Sept. 19, 1861.

After a careful examination of the above very interesting map
I am prepared to state that it not only furnishes the statistics of great value
in its execution, but can be relied on as corresponding with the official re-
turns of the 1860 Census.

John G. Thompson
Superintendent

Eng. by W. L. Lusk

May 1861
4 - AUG 1861
Office of the
Chief of the Army

Drawn by E. H. B. B. B.

FIGURE 8.3 1860 map showing density of African American slave population in the former territories of Native American nations. Courtesy of Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress (g3861 cw0013200).

There is another layer to this history as well, one that highlights again the influence of Euro-American colonialism over time on Native peoples and their understandings and practices of slavery. Members of Indian nations in the Southeast targeted for removal—the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles—had lived through a period in which the United States pursued a “civilization” program designed to acculturate them to Anglo-American ways, including reading and writing, numeracy, and Christianity. Through interactions with their neighbors and the influence of U.S. Indian policies, some Native elites had also learned the race-based plantation system. By the 1830s, hundreds of African American slaves labored on Indian-run plantations.²⁴

Even if the vast majority of Native individuals in the Southeast did not own slaves, addressing this history is important because it illustrates how pervasive race-based, profit-driven slavery became during the antebellum period, and how in the end no degree of “civilization” ensured that sovereign nations indigenous to the Southeast would be allowed to remain there. My aim in discussing this complex history with students is not for it to serve to justify Anglo-Americans’ actions—“see, Indians owned slaves too”—but rather to critically explore with students what it meant to live in a world in which race, slavery, and sovereignty became inextricably interlinked. As Cherokees, Choctaws, and others marched west to present-day Oklahoma under military guard, African American slaves set to work preparing lands that had been Indian lands for Anglo-American masters. If Indian removal entailed the dispossession of Native groups in order to pave the way for the further expansion of Anglo settlement and cotton cultivation, it also served to extend chattel slavery and debates over slavery and freedom further west when slaveholding Native nations reestablished themselves and legal systems buttressing slavery in Indian Territory. In sum, even antebellum slavery—the very archetype of what students think of when they think of slavery—makes little sense as a white and black story, but instead should be told as a story that included American Indians.²⁵

The story of American Indians and slavery did not end with Indian removal, the Emancipation Proclamation, or the Civil War. Since the Thirteenth

Amendment did not clearly apply to Native nations in Indian Territory, the status of black slaves there remained contested into 1866 (figure 8.3). The citizenship of freedmen would be debated within Indian nations in ensuing decades and remains a controversial issue. In the U.S. Southwest, meanwhile, reports of the persistence of Indian slavery sparked federal campaigns to locate and emancipate Indian slaves and “peons” still held in bondage in the late-1860s and generated debates in California over whether and how to eradicate forms of servitude that were supposed to have been ended by law following the Civil War. These efforts did not end the capture and trafficking of Native men, women, and children. Confinement to reservations, the removal of Indian children from Native communities to boarding schools, and forced relocation programs all evoked in particular ways Native peoples’ past experiences of servitude and exploitation, including slavery. Human trafficking remains a concern for indigenous communities in the present day.²⁶

As landholders and traders, slaves and slaveholders, American Indians played an often-unacknowledged role in a central drama of U.S. history—the story of slavery. In this essay, I introduced several of many possible examples that instructors might explore with students to illustrate the connection between Native peoples and the history of slavery and highlight the varied forms of servitude and slavery evident over time in North America, as in other world regions. In incorporating American Indian history into their discussions of slavery, U.S. history instructors need not minimize the historical significance of the African slave trade or the unusually rigid system of human bondage that subjugated so many African American slaves throughout U.S. history. Discussions of the history of slavery are in fact enriched and clarified when it is made apparent to students that American Indians were present all along as slaves and sometimes slaveholders, and also as people seeking to maintain their sovereignty in the face of the expansion of slavery and other exploitative colonial economies into their territories. With a cast drawn from all residents of North America, including Indians, the story of slavery in U.S. history no longer reads as a black and white tragedy with a happy ending, but rather as a drama with unexpected twists and turns that is still unfolding.

Notes

1. For an eloquent examination of the black/white binary that has structured the history of U.S. slavery, see Tiya Miles, “Uncle Tom Was an Indian: Tracing the Red in Black Slavery,” in *Confounding the Color Line: The Indian-Black Experience in North America*, ed. James F. Brooks (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 137–60. I would like to thank Dawn Peterson and Neil Salisbury for our conversations about how they have incorporated American Indian history into discussions of captivity and slavery in their classes at Smith College.

2. In viewing slavery as a uniquely exploitative form of dependency and servitude I draw from David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman, “Dependence, Servility, and Coerced Labor in Time and Space,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 3, *AD 1420–AD 1804*, ed. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and also Juliana Barr, “A Spectrum of Indian Bondage in Spanish Texas,” in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, ed. Alan Galloway (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 277–309.

3. I reviewed 107 recent (post-2008) U.S. history and upper-division syllabi at the following institutions: Kennesaw State University, Oberlin College, Ohio State University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of Georgia, Sacramento State University, and the University of Texas at Austin. I also supplemented these syllabi with 19 recent syllabi available online for courses at other institutions on “Race and Slavery,” “Comparative Slavery,” and similar topics. Databases for the above institutions were accessed and syllabi downloaded by the author on February 15, 2013, from the following sites:

<http://hp.hss.kennesaw.edu/courses/syllabi/>, <http://new.oberlin.edu/arts-and-sciences/departments/history/syllabi-archives.dot>,
<http://history.osu.edu/courses/syllabi-archive>,
<http://www.uncg.edu/his/syllabi.html>, <https://syllabus.uga.edu/>,
<http://www.csus.edu/hist/info/syllabus-accessibility.html#>,
<https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/student/coursedocs/nlogin/>.

4. My critique here draws from James H. Merrell, “Second Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (July 2012): 451–512. “Slavery comes to America” quote from Phyllis Hunter, “The History of the U.S. to 1865,” University of North Carolina at Greensboro (Fall 2012), <http://www.uncg.edu/his/syllabi.html> (accessed February 15, 2013); “Beginnings of slavery” quote from Jim Gigantino,

“HIST 4700 Course Schedule” (Spring 2010); http://jgiganti.myweb.uga.edu/hist_4700_interactive.htm (accessed February 15, 2013).

5. Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011). For use of captivity narratives, see Scott Lupo, “United States History, 1600–1900,” Sacramento State University (Spring 2013), <http://www.csus.edu/hist/info/syllabus-accessibility.html#> (accessed February 15, 2013). See note 3 and cited syllabi databases for examples of the more common approach that does not include American Indians.

6. For “several thousand” enslaved Indians, see Joyce E. Chaplin, “Enslavement of Indians in Early America: Captivity without the Narrative,” in *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, ed. Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 45–70. In their overviews of the history of slavery in the Americas, historians Robin Blackburn and Ira Berlin both largely discount the significance of Indian slavery: Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), especially 144–45; Robin Blackburn, *Making of New World Slavery* (London: Verso, 1998), especially 133–37.

7. For demographics of Indian slavery, see Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 9. On the significance of Indian slavery I draw from Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, prologue; Alan Gallay, “Introduction: Indian Slavery in Historical Context,” in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, ed. Alan Gallay (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 1–32; Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1–12. Also informing my analysis is Tiya Miles, “Uncle Tom Was an Indian,” though her focus is on Anglo-African-Native relations and does not address indigenous slavery west of the Mississippi. For the persistence of Indian slavery in the West, see James F. Brooks, *Captives & Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), especially 256–360; Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom’s Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Barbara Krauthamer, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters:*

Slavery, Emancipation, and Citizenship in the Native American South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

8. Eltis and Engerman, “Dependence, Servility, and Coerced Labor”; Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

9. Brian Fagan, *Chaco Canyon: Archaeologists Explore the Lives of an Ancient Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 142–44; Stephen Plog, *Ancient Peoples of the American Southwest*, 2nd ed. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2008), 102–10; Debra L. Martin, “Ripped Flesh and Torn Souls: Skeletal Evidence for Captivity and Slavery from the La Plata Valley, New Mexico, AD 1100–1300,” in *Invisible Citizens: Captives and their Consequences*, ed. Catherine M. Cameron (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008); Timothy A. Kohler and Kathryn Kanner Turner, “Raiding for Women in the Pre-Hispanic Northern Pueblo Southwest?,” in *Current Anthropology* 47, no. 6 (December 2006): 1035–45; Daniel K. Richter, *Before the Revolution: America’s Ancient Pasts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 19–20.

10. Eltis and Engerman, “Dependence, Servility, and Coerced Labor,” 7.

11. See for example, “Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca,” <http://www.therblig.com/cabeza/narrative.html> (accessed August 3, 2013).

12. For an annotated published account of Cabeza de Vaca’s narrative, see Álgar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*, ed. Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

13. See Pauline Turner Strong, “Transforming Outsiders: Captivity, Adoption, and Slavery Reconsidered,” in *A Companion to American Indian History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neil Salisbury (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 339–56.

14. Gallay, “Introduction: Indian Slavery in Historical Context.”

15. On enslaving Indians in their own homeland I draw from Tiya Mills, “Uncle Tom Was an Indian,” especially 142.

16. On Carolina, see Alan Gallay, “South Carolina’s Entrance into the Indian Slave Trade,” in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*; see also Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

17. Galloway, *Indian Slave Trade*, 9.

18. Ibid., 298–99, 311. For more on this trade, see Galloway, *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*. For commercial slave trading, see Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, especially 46–79; Eric Bowne, *The Westo Indians: Slave Traders of the Early Colonial South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005).

19. L. H. Roper, “The 1701 ‘Act for the Better Ordering of Slaves’: Reconsidering the History of Slavery in Proprietary South Carolina,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 64, no. 2 (2007): 395–418.

20. Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 314.

21. Ibid., 315–44; See also Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, 78–79.

22. For New France, see Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*. On the North American West, see Brooks, *Captives & Cousins*; Juliana Barr, “From Captives to Slaves: Commodifying Indian Women in the Borderlands,” *Journal of American History* 92, no. 1 (June 2005): 19–46; Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), especially 26–28; Leland Donald, “Slavery in Indigenous North America,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol. 3, 217–47; Joaquin Rivaya-Martínez, “Becoming Comanches: Patterns of Captive Incorporation into Comanche Kinship Networks, 1820–1875,” in *On the Borders of Love and Power: Families and Kinship in the Intercultural American Southwest*, ed. David Wallace Adams and Crista DeLuzio (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 47–65.

23. Calvin Schermerhorn, “Forced Migrations, Public, Private, and Political: The United States Domestic Slave Trade, Southeastern Indian Removal, and the Integration of a Continental Empire,” in *Uniting the Histories of Slavery in North America and Its Borderlands*, ed. James F. Brooks and Bonnie Martin (Santa Fe: SAR Press, forthcoming). I thank Schermerhorn for allowing me to read and cite his compelling essay. On the links between plantation slavery and Indian removal, see also Tiya Miles, *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), especially 149–61; Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the*

Cotton Kingdom (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), especially 1–16.

24. Miles, *Ties That Bind* and *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, especially 182–212. For teaching, see also Patrick Mingos, ed., *Black Indian Slave Narratives* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair Publishers, 2004).

25. This analysis draws from Dawn Peterson and Barbara Krauthamer's work on the plantation household and sovereignty in the Native South. See Krauthamer, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters*; Peterson, "Unusual Sympathies: Settler Imperialism, Slavery, and the Politics of Adoption in the Early U.S. Republic," (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2011); and Peterson, "Domestic Fronts in the Era of 1812: Slavery, Expansion, and Familial Struggles for Sovereignty in the Early Nineteenth-Century Choctaw South," in *Warring for America: 1808–1813*, ed. Nicole Eustace, Robert Parkinson, and Fredrika Teute (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming). See also Miles, "Uncle Tom Was an Indian"; and Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, especially 4–5.

26. Krauthamer, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters*, 101–18; Brooks, *Captives & Cousins*, 256–360; Smith, *Freedom's Frontier*, 1–14; Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880–1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Sarah Deer, "Relocation Revisited: Sex Trafficking of Native Women in the United States," *William Mitchell Law Review* 36, no. 2 (2010): 621–83.

Suggested Readings

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Chapter 9: American Indians and the Civil War

SCOTT MANNING STEVENS

We all know the Civil War as one of the bloodiest conflicts in American history and one of the first modern wars, but rarely are we asked to consider the effects of that war on the indigenous peoples of North America. Where are American Indians in the historiography of the Civil War? We might sometimes hear of the Union's Brevet Brigadier General Ely Parker, a member of the Seneca Nation, or the Confederacy's Brigadier General Stand Watie, a member of the Cherokee Nation, but very little attention is given to the estimated 20,000 Indians who served on both sides of the conflict and almost no attention to the Indian communities who experienced that conflict within their homelands.¹ In a recent exhibition titled "The Civil War and American Art," curated for the Smithsonian American Art Museum by Eleanor Jones Harvey, a landscape painting by the Hudson River school artist Sanford Gifford was displayed among the various paintings and photographs related to the war; *A Coming Storm* (figure 9.1) does not depict the nation's conflict but rather a dramatic and brooding mountain scene with a foreboding storm approaching. Harvey chose to include a number of landscape paintings from the period of the Civil War in order to demonstrate how they might reflect and comment on the nation's fears or its desire for escape. With Gifford's painting the curator notes that because the painting, created in 1863, was owned by Edwin Booth, brother to Lincoln's assassin, it could not be viewed upon its exhibition in New York City in 1865 without an elegiac interpretation.² The uncanny coincidence of its relationship to the Booth family forever changes how it might be viewed. What is curious to me is that Harvey makes no mention of the fact that the small figures visible on the lakeshore in the painting are American Indians; neither in the exhibition labels nor in the 316-page catalog. It is as though they were invisible or, worse, irrelevant when the painting is placed within the context of the war or Lincoln's death. Ignoring these figures in a critical reading of Gifford's paintings becomes a metaphor for the greater problem of the absence of American Indians from accounts of the Civil War.



FIGURE 9.1 Sanford Gifford, *A Coming Storm*, 1863; retouched and redated, 1880. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Attending to the lives of American Indians during the Civil War almost immediately disrupts the decidedly non-Indian narrative we associate with that epoch in American history. When we think back to our grade school educations and learning about the Civil War I suspect many of us would be hard-pressed to locate an American Indian element within that struggle. This conflict is taught in the North as largely a struggle between right and wrong; the North, with its opposition to slavery, against the South with its stubborn insistence on maintaining its “peculiar institution.” Even if we were to consider the war an act of northern aggression against the fundamental principle of states’ rights, the American Indian would be almost wholly absent from that discussion. For most of the northern states the battle lines were in places removed from their everyday lives. But for Native peoples from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Mexican border to the northern plains, dozens of communities experienced firsthand the cataclysm of the

American Civil War. Violence and displacement came to unforeseen regions and again and again drew Native lives into a war not of their making. Indian homelands were not spared the horrors of war, but those accounts have not found their way into the national narrative of the conflict between the Union and the Confederacy.

We should not imagine that American Indians were prominent in the minds of most Euro-Americans during the Civil War either. For many of the larger East Coast cities Indians were either consigned to America's past or to its frontier, and little attention was paid to those Indian communities still living among them. This was even truer after the Indian removal policies of the 1830s and 1840s had forced so many tribal nations to move west to Indian Territory in modern-day Oklahoma. So the newspaper reports of the violent attacks on the white settlers of Minnesota in late August of 1862 must have shocked northeastern readers used to following the events of the Civil War raging on the Virginia frontlines and elsewhere in the South. The state of Minnesota was about as far from the wartime violence as was possible in the North, and yet the news coming in was alarmingly dire. This was to be a separate war, an Indian war, one that would play on age-old fears from the colonial past. What historians have come to call the Dakota War of 1862 was an example of Indian outrage over government policies of dispossession, institutionalized graft, and neglect that had been going on since the colonial period and carried over to the early Republic. Beginning on August 17, with the murder of an American family on a remote Minnesota farmstead, the Dakota War would grow to take between 450 to 700 American settler lives, with an unknown number of Indian dead.³ But before examining the details of this conflict we should briefly consider several of the issues that led up to such conflicts and how these factors were compounded by the Civil War.

The myth of the "vanishing Red Man" had lulled the white population into a false sense of security. Violent conflicts with Indians in the decades before the Civil War were not unknown, but they were just as often dismissed as feeble attempts to preserve a way of life not worthy of keeping. Horace Greeley remarked on Indians' "paltry but interminable wars" in the same 1859 piece in which he wrote, "These people must die out—there is no help for them. God has given this earth to those who will subdue and cultivate it, and it is vain to struggle against His righteous decree."⁴ Such sentiments were as typical as those predicting the inevitable extinction of the

Natives, and more often than not they served to trivialize any efforts at resistance by Indian nations. In the treaties leading up to the Civil War American officials had secured vast tracts of land from the Plains nations and those in the northern Midwest, and immigrants continued to pour into the region from the East.

Ever since independence the question had loomed, what was to be the fate of American Indians in the expanding United States if it were not outright extermination? Many schemes were put forward in the name of humanitarian dealings with the Natives. The argument had been in place since the days of Thomas Jefferson that agriculture and not hunting was the future to which the Indians must assimilate. Sustaining agricultural communities would require less acreage than wide-ranging hunts necessitated, and this in turn would conform to a desire that Native peoples live in settled or fixed communities, thus freeing up their former territories for settlement by whites. For the most part such reallocations of land were accomplished by treaties—many of which were coerced or fraudulent. In most cases, vast quantities of land were exchanged for guaranteed annuities and specific rights guaranteed to those Indians living on what were to be called reservations. Once a region was organized into a territory by the federal government the apparatus was in place to create reservations in that territory, relegate the Indians to that area, and open the rest of the land up to settlement.⁵ The largest acquisitions of territory by the contiguous United States were the Louisiana Purchase (1803), the creation of Oregon Territory (1848), and the lands gained from Mexico by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). These treaties and purchases by which the United States laid claim to the entire Trans-Mississippi West and could claim a sea-to-sea nation were in some senses territories in name only. At the time the United States acquired those vast regions they were very sparsely settled by Europeans and even more loosely administered in their furthest reaches, and it is these lands that would come to constitute the American frontier.

What contemporary Americans may need reminding of is the fact that these lands were not the frontier to everyone; for the American Indians of the Great Plains and West, these were their homelands, and theirs was a home front and way of life perennially in danger. The advent of the Civil War would put new pressures on Indian Country; both the Union and the Confederacy laid claim to all, or portions of, the territory outside the established states. Indian nations closest to the border regions were in

immediate danger of being drawn into the conflict, but even those tribes further from the combatants found themselves in the sights of both armies as the gold and silver fields of Colorado and California became strategic objectives.⁶ Added to the pressures applied by the war was the opening of millions of acres of land that occurred when Lincoln signed the Homestead Act on May 20, 1862. Perhaps no single piece of legislation could draw into sharper relief the conflicting notions of the future of the Trans-Mississippi West. The federal government in Washington granted its citizens the right to claim up to 160 acres of land, free of charge, if they would build a home on it and occupy it for a minimum of five years. This was in gross violation of dozens of preexisting treaties made with Indian nations who had long called these lands home.

The outbreak of the Civil War was also a disaster for those nations that had been removed from their ancestral lands in the east of the Mississippi during the 1830s. Among those peoples most severely affected on the indigenous home front were the Creek and Seminole Union loyalists of Indian Territory. Whereas some slave-holding members of the Choctaw and Cherokee Nations had swayed large portions of their nations to side with the Confederacy, the Creek and Seminole Nations were deeply divided. In most cases the internal violence in Indian Territory followed along the lines of earlier divisions between those for and against removal within various communities. Eventually some 4,000 Union sympathizers would be driven from Indian Territory into Kansas, where they would spend the first two years of the war in miserable conditions in eastern Kansas near Fort Scott. Their leader, the Creek chief Opothle Yaholo, would plead with Union leaders repeatedly to organize a military campaign to help them return to their homelands, but without result.⁷ In late 1862 an Indian Home Guard was finally organized in Kansas as an Indian brigade that participated in the Union actions throughout Indian Territory against both Confederates and enemy Native troops. For those Native nations along the thousand-mile frontier, the Civil War, far from deflecting American pressures on their communities, brought new threats of starvation and devastating military interventions between 1861 and 1865.⁸ As Cherokee historian R. David Edmunds has pointed out, by the war's end one-third of all Cherokee wives were widows, and one-quarter of Cherokee children were orphaned. The war statistics for other tribes in Indian Territory were similar.⁹

One of the main factors affecting Indian Country, even in those areas seemingly removed from the immediate violence of war, was corruption within the government entities that controlled Indian affairs in Washington during the antebellum period. When the administrative and bureaucratic machinery that controlled Indian affairs was transferred from the War Department to the Department of the Interior in 1849, succeeding presidential administrations found it even easier to award positions within the Office of Indian Affairs as political rewards. This came to effectually be a spoils system by which political supporters were given control of funds allocated by Congress to be dispersed to various tribal nations in accord with treaty obligations.¹⁰ In a short space of time an entirely corrupt patronage system developed in which officials with no familiarity with Indian peoples or their needs were put in charge of the annuity funds on which they depended. These officials could reward their allies in turn. Many of those involved became tremendously wealthy speculating on Indian land or working with merchants to overcharge Indians for provisions or make them loans at usurious rates. Essentially, no one was held accountable and Indians had little or no course for redress in these matters. This system was firmly in place when Abraham Lincoln came into office, and he made no attempt to reform or end it.

In Minnesota this would prove to have catastrophic results. The 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux had guaranteed the surrender by the Dakota of almost 24 million acres of land in what was then Minnesota Territory. This they did in exchange for a reservation along the Minnesota River and a guaranteed annuity with which they could buy necessary goods. The treaty paved the way for the settlement of Minnesota by whites, especially recent immigrants from northern Europe, and for the territory to become a state in 1858. The Dakota people immediately began to experience the injustices of the Indian system as corrupt officials and merchants siphoned off the money from their promised annuity and new settlements ensured the loss of hunting grounds and a traditional means of survival. The harvests of 1861 had been poor, and by the summer of 1862 tribal leaders found their people in a desperate condition. This was exacerbated by the fact that one of the prominent traders with a virtual monopoly at the Lower Sioux Agency, Andrew Myrick, charged inflated prices and extended credit at exorbitant rates. The situation was often such that when annuity funds finally did arrive

they were withheld in payment for the loans brokered by local merchants such as Myrick.

With the outbreak of hostilities between the North and South the functioning of the Indian system was disrupted. The Dakota of Minnesota desperately needed their annuity to purchase food and other necessities in the summer of 1862, but the funds were late—with no assurance they would arrive at all. When tribal leaders took their complaints to the traders, Myrick famously said, “So far as I am concerned, if they are hungry, let them eat grass.”¹¹ When the war began in August of that same year, Myrick was one of the first men killed—his body discovered with its mouth stuffed with grass. The actual outbreak had occurred on a settler farm close to Acton Township, near the Lower Agency Reservation, when several Dakota youths killed a farmer, his wife, and two other adult males in a dispute over eggs. Leaders such as Little Crow believed that this act had thrown the Dakota inescapably into a state of war since whites would seek harsh justice and Indian grievances would continue to go unheard. To the Dakota the United States had failed to live up to its treaty commitments, and now the Dakota would reclaim the land they had earlier surrendered. The ensuing violence was swift and severe. In the second half of August hundreds of settlers were killed or taken prisoner. The news shocked the nation.

Somehow, after years of being told the Indians were on the verge of extinction, the United States found itself at war with an Indian nation determined to drive white settlers from its former lands. The news from St. Paul was reported in the *New York Times* on August 24 under the headline, “THE INDIAN MASSACRES: Terrible Scenes of Death and Misery in Minnesota. Five Hundred Whites Supposed to be Murdered. The Sioux Bands Unite Against the Whites. Ft. Ridgeley in Danger.” The reporter speculated on possible connections between this war and the Civil War, writing, “A private letter received in this city, to-day, from St. Paul, dated the 20th instant, says, it seems to the general opinion among the best informed of our citizens that these Indian troubles originated with the cursed Secessionists of Missouri.”¹² This was a typical reaction that ignored both the causes of the Dakota declaration of war and the Dakotas’ agency in organizing a campaign to reclaim their traditional homelands.

Governor Alexander Ramsey appointed Colonel Henry Hastings Sibley to head the campaign against the Dakota, but a portion of his troops under the command of Major Joseph Brown were defeated by Little Crow and his

army at the Battle of Birch Coulee on September 2, 1862. The popular press continued to assume the Confederacy was somehow involved, as is evident in a September 9, 1862, *Harper's Weekly* cartoon (figure 9.2) depicting the Indians massacring women and children while lying at their feet is a liquor jug labeled "Agent CSA"—implying that the Confederate States of America had been involved in instigating the violence. Below the image is a quotation, "'I am happy to inform you that, in spite of the blandishments and threats, used in profusion by the agents of the government of the United States, the Indian nations within the confederacy have remained firm in their loyalty and steadfast in the observance of their treaty engagements with this government.' (The above Extract from Jeff Davis's last Message will serve to explain news from Minnesota.)"¹³ Realizing the gravity of the situation, President Lincoln appointed General John Pope, fresh from his bitter defeat at the Second Battle of Bull Run, to end what was being called the "Sioux Uprising." Pope arrived in Minnesota in September and would engage and decisively defeat the Dakota at the Battle of Wood Lake on September 23. The U.S. army then took some 1,200 Dakota men, women, and children prisoner from the reservation, an act that prompted the surrender of 800 Dakota warriors.



FIGURE 9.2 Cartoon from *Harper's Weekly*, September 9, 1862. Newberry Library, Chicago. Folio A5.392 (1862).

The prisoners were held under extremely poor conditions at Fort Snelling while the state and military authorities planned for a mass trial of some 393 Dakota soldiers on charges of rape and murder. The trials were notoriously

brief, each case getting under ten minutes of hearing, and the accused not provided with council or, in many cases, interpreters. In the end, 303 of the accused were sentenced to death for their parts in the war. In contrast to captured Confederate soldiers, who were afforded prisoner of war status, the Dakota were treated simply as criminals guilty of capital crimes. The final decision fell to President Lincoln. The Episcopal bishop Henry Whipple of Minnesota had decried the trials and protested the sentences handed down, but state officials knew the citizens wanted blood. In the end Lincoln signed the order of execution condemning thirty-eight men to hang. Claiming that he had reduced the number dramatically because he “could not afford to hang men for votes,” Lincoln still made possible the largest mass execution in U.S. history. The thirty-eight men were hanged on a public scaffold especially designed for the occasion on December 26, 1862.¹⁴ Of course, the suffering of the Dakota was not at an end. After months of internment through a brutal Minnesota winter dozens of the almost 2,000 Dakota prisoners held at Fort Snelling died before the survivors were deported and their Minnesota reservation abolished.¹⁵ Most were forced into exile in Kansas Territory and would eventually be placed on reservations in what is now South Dakota. Conflicts between the United States and the Sioux (its name for the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota peoples) were far from over.

But the Sioux were not alone in their struggles for their homeland during the American Civil War; the Navajo were similarly involved in a struggle for their traditional way of life on their home territories in the face of U.S. intervention in the region. The complex relations that had developed over the centuries between Spanish colonists and the Indian nations of the Southwest were made even more difficult when the region was annexed in the wake of the Mexican War. The population of the territory was divided between Indians, Hispanic settlers, and a minority of recently arrived Euro-Americans. A long series of intertribal competitions for resources had created a cycle of raiding and guerilla attacks that went on intermittently for decades before the U.S. authorities had arrived.¹⁶ The Civil War had brought new demands that the Indians of the region be “pacified” and settled in permanent communities. Many groups—most famously the Navajo, the Comanche, and the Apache Nations—resisted this further disruption to their traditional cultures.

The threat of a Confederate capture of territory in the Southwest had become a reality when Texas militia established the Confederate Arizona

Territory with its capital in Mesilla shortly after the First Battle of Mesilla in late July 1861. Up until that point, the states we now know as New Mexico and Arizona constituted a single New Mexico Territory. The Confederates created their new territory out of the southern portion of the New Mexico Territory. The ultimate goal was of course the gold fields of Colorado and trails to California. Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley commanded the New Mexico Campaign launched in January 1862 until he was defeated at the Battle of Glorietta Pass on March 26 of that same year. In Washington, this activity on the western frontier called attention to the dangers of instability in the territories. Indian Territory had supplied the Confederacy with thousands of soldiers, both Indian and non-Indians, and an extremely tenacious leader in the person of Brigadier General Stand Watie—the Cherokee military leader would be one of the last Confederate generals to surrender at the end of the war.

Following the Battle of Pea Ridge in March 1862, in which 800 Indian troops fought for the Confederacy, the reports of scalping that began to appear in eastern newspapers demonstrated to northern officials the possible effect on morale such deep-seated fears could have.¹⁷ By the end of the summer of 1862, following the Dakota War, the Union's "Indian Problem" had resurfaced. Officials in Washington now approached the situation in the New Mexico Territory with renewed urgency. In August 1862 General James Carleton was put in command of the Department of New Mexico, where he set about realizing his plans to subdue the Navajo. It was Carleton who chose veteran army scout Kit Carson for his field campaign against the Navajo. Carson's longtime familiarity with the region's terrain and its Native inhabitants made him ideal for the job. His reputation as a larger-than-life frontiersman had been established in John Fremont's accounts of his travels, and he would go on to be a hero in dime novels—primarily as an Indian fighter. But to the Diné or Navajo people he was one of their history's greatest villains. His tireless scorched-earth campaign against them led to tremendous suffering and hardships during the so-called second Navajo Campaign from 1863 to 1864, when several leaders of the Navajo Nation surrendered after the Battle of Canyon de Chelly on January 8, 1864. Within a week Carson had ordered the removal of the Navajo from their homeland in the region of the Four Sacred Mountains of the northern New Mexico Territory to a government reservation some 400 miles away at Bosque Redondo near Fort Sumner.¹⁸

This was to be accomplished by forcing some 8,000 Navajo civilians to walk through the arid land for eighteen days. Along the way at least 200 people died of exhaustion and malnutrition. When they arrived at Fort Sumner the internment camp already held some 500 Mescalero Apache, a people who had often skirmished with the Navajo. At its height the population at Bosque Redondo would rise to more than 9,000 people. The camp was never meant to hold more than half that number. For the Diné, Bosque Redondo would come to be known as Hwéeldi or “the place of suffering.” The Navajos and Apaches confined at Bosque Redondo would remain there throughout the Civil War and would not be allowed to return to their respective homelands until 1868, at which point they had to make the long walk home.¹⁹

The same anxiety around Indian raiding and the desire for Indian land was at play in other western territories in 1864.²⁰ One of the heroes of the Battle of Glorietta Pass, John Chivington, a colonel in the U.S. Volunteer Forces, Colorado settler, and Methodist minister, would also perpetrate one on the most infamous massacres of the nineteenth century. The lead-up to this attack lies primarily in the fact that gold had been discovered in Colorado Territory in November 1858; as with California before it and the Black Hills subsequently, this discovery was disastrous for Native people. What whites had once disdained as remote wasteland was now almost universally coveted, while for Indians a gold rush had become the inevitable prelude to dispossession and extermination. The vast tracts of land that had been guaranteed the Cheyenne and Arapaho, among others, in the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851 were increasingly desirable to whites moving into the Great Plains or seeking gold and other mineral riches in the Rockies. By 1861, through the Treaty of Fort Wise, the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho had ceded most of the land from the Fort Laramie treaty under pressure from the commissioner of Indian Affairs. Internal divisions arose over the terms of the treaty, and various militarists refused to acknowledge the validity of the Treaty of Fort Wise.²¹

The Indian faction that refused to restrict its hunting to the new reservation boundaries was soon accused of destroying livestock and posing a threat to settlers moving into the region, and territorial governor John Evans took this as a pretext to launch a series of campaigns against the Cheyenne and Arapaho communities living in the region of the Arkansas River and Sand Creek. Raids on villages and hunts by territorial troops drew

reprisals, and soon Colonel Chivington and others were calling for a war against the Indians. These volunteers were not regular U.S. army and acted with even less restraint.

Part of what made this such a tragedy was the attempts of Indian leaders from the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa Nations to seek peace through official channels. In 1863 a delegation representing each of these nations went to Washington, D.C., in hopes of reaching an agreement that would secure their homelands for their respective peoples. Among these Indian leaders were the chiefs War Bonnet, Standing in the Water, and Lean Bear of the Cheyenne and Yellow Wolf of the Kiowa. Historian Herman Viola has noted that within eighteen months from the date of this visit, three of the four chiefs named above were dead. Both War Bonnet and Standing in the Water would be killed at Sand Creek, and Lean Bear was mistakenly killed by troops from Colorado Territory.²²

The tragedy of Sand Creek is well known: 700 members of the 1st and 3rd Colorado Regiments attacked a peaceful camp of Cheyenne and Arapaho on the morning of November 29, 1864. Black Kettle, who had long counseled peace and diplomacy, raised both the American flag and a white flag in hopes that promises of protection would be honored; they were not. The mutilated bodies of over 150 men, women, and children lay on the ground after the militia left, with many soldiers wearing Indian scalps and body parts on their hats as trophies. Initially, the massacre at Sand Creek was called anything but that; the *Daily Rocky Mountain News* heralded the attack as “the most effective expedition against the Indians ever planned and carried out.”²³ But the persistent and credible reports of atrocities were serious enough to warrant a congressional inquiry that was reported in the *New York Times* in July 1865.²⁴ Though Chivington was roundly condemned by the congressional committee, he was not in any way officially punished. The incident served as yet one more tragic reminder of the vulnerability of Indian homelands during the Civil War. The exigencies of war were used as a cover for a multitude of crimes against Indian communities, and most of these acts would be lost in the larger tale of the triumph of the federal cause, the emancipation of the slaves, and the restitution of the Union.

For Cheyenne leaders such as Black Kettle, Sand Creek was not an aberration or isolated moment of violence. He survived the massacre at Sand Creek, but that would not be the end of his story. Black Kettle joined with fellow survivors and regrouped with other Cheyenne, but now they were

restricted to Indian Territory by the 1867 Medicine Lodge Treaty. This treaty alienated the Southern Cheyenne from their traditional homelands and put them into conflict with competing Indian nations in the territory. When a loose intertribal alliance began attacking white settlements in western Kansas and southern Colorado, the same rhetoric that had preceded the attack on Sand Creek could be heard again. In November of 1868 at the Battle of Washita River, Black Kettle was killed by the troops of General George Armstrong Custer. The violence of the Civil War period bled unimpeded into the era of the Indian wars.

The frontier for the Native nations of North America was a place of frequent military conflicts and almost constant pressures from land-hungry settlers. More disturbing perhaps is the fact that most of these events, defining historical events to the Native nations involved, are all but forgotten by members of the majority culture. To be sure, the events of the Dakota War must have haunted the American imagination well into the end of the nineteenth century. The eruption of Indian violence into the settler home front was a traumatic event that surely colored Indian policy well beyond 1862. We cannot treat these events as microhistories or they will continue to be obscured and forgotten in the macronarrative of the U.S. Civil War. In a sense we must strive to reconnect these events to the two decades of the “Indian wars” that followed directly on the heels of the Civil War. Those conflicts of the 1870s and 1880s provided the recently re-United States with a common enemy, Indians, and a common prize, their lands. The Civil War takes our eyes off of Indian Country but it remains an ever-present backdrop—it was the opening of the contested lands that acted as a catalyst to the crisis regarding the extension of slavery, and it was the prize of land and resources that made its conquest after the war so enticing.

Notes

1. See Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian in the Civil War, 1862–1865*, Introduction by Theda Perdue and Michael Green (1919; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); and Laurence Hauptman, *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

2. See Eleanor Jones Harvey, *The Civil War and American Art* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian American Art Museum in association Yale

University Press, 2013), 62–65. We know that Gifford retouched the painting in 1880 but we have no definitive way of knowing how this changed it. Gifford occasionally placed American Indian figures in his landscape paintings to mark them as American scenes. See Ila Weis, *Poetic Landscape: The Art and Experience of Sanford R. Gifford* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1987), 86.

3. There remains no reliable final figure for the dead on the Minnesota frontier. No census was available at the time, and the area was undergoing a large influx of immigrants since the land cessions of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851. See Kenneth Carley, *The Dakota War of 1862: Minnesota's Other Civil War*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Society, 2001), 1.

4. Horace Greeley, Letter 13, in *An Overland Journey, from New York to San Francisco, in the Summer of 1859* (New York: C. M. Saxton, Barker and Co., 1860).

5. See Clyde A. Milner II, “National Initiatives,” in *The Oxford History of the American West*, ed. Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss, 155–95 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

6. Howard Lamar, *The Far Southwest, 1846–1912: A Territorial History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 109–35.

7. See David Nichols, *Lincoln and the Indians: Civil War Policy & Politics* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978), 54–64.

8. See Hauptman, *Between Two Fires*, 1–17.

9. See R. David Edmunds, Frederick Hoxie, and Neal Salisbury, “The Indian People in the Civil War Era,” in *The People: A History of Native America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2007), 272.

10. See Nichols, *Lincoln and the Indians*, 3–28.

11. See C. M. Oehler, *The Great Sioux Uprising* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 27. Carley, *The Dakota War of 1862*, 1–7. Gary Anderson, *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Society, 1988), 19–33.

12. *New York Times*, August 24, 1862, 1.

13. *Harper's Weekly*, September 13, 1862, 592.

14. Nichols, *Lincoln and the Indians*, 94–118; illustration from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, January 24, 1863, 285.
15. See Oehler, *The Great Sioux Uprising*, 211–13.
16. Lamar, *The Far Southwest*, 100–135.
17. See “Another Chapter Regarding Indian Barbarities at Pea Ridge,” *New York Times*, April 13, 1862. For an account of antebellum depictions of Indian savagery, see John Coward, *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press, 1820–1890* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 43–64.
18. See Clifford Trafzer, *The Kit Carson Campaign: The Last Great Navajo War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 169–97.
19. Lynn Bailey, *Bosque Redondo: The Navajo Internment at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, 1863–1868* (Tucson, Ariz.: Westernlore Press, 1998), 191–95.
20. For a typical story of fears of Indian raiding, see “From New Mexico: The Difficulties of a Trip to Santa Fe Dangers from the Indians,” *New York Times*, August 9, 1864.
21. See Stan Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 3–17.
22. Herman Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins: A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), 101.
23. *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, December 13, 1864, 2, cited by Coward, *The Newspaper Indian*, 98.
24. See “Our Indian Troubles: Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War on the Massacre of Cheyenne Indians,” *New York Times*, July 23, 1865.

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Part II: U.S. History since 1877

Chapter 10: Indian Warfare in the West, 1861–1890

JEFFREY OSTLER

At the University of Oregon, I regularly teach the second part of a three-term survey of U.S. history covering the “long nineteenth century”—1800 to 1914. In the textbook I assign, the brief edition of Eric Foner’s *Give Me Liberty!*, Indians appear in predictable places. Before the Civil War, there is mention of Sacajawea; a longer discussion of Tecumseh, Tenskwatawa, and the Red Sticks; and a section on Indian removal, the Marshall court decisions, and the Trail of Tears. Indians spend their lengthiest time on stage after the Civil War in a section titled “The Transformation of the West” that contains discussions of the “subjugation of Plains Indians,” the flight of the Nez Percés, assimilation, the Dawes Act, Indian citizenship, the Ghost Dance, and Wounded Knee. Here, as elsewhere, the text is sympathetic to Indians, seeing them as fighting to preserve their lands and ways of life and so akin to other “freedom fighters” in American history (a sidebar quotes Chief Joseph’s 1879 “let me be a free man” speech). The text also points out that Wounded Knee was not the end of Indian history, a point followed up on by some discussion of Indians and progressivism in a subsequent chapter.¹

Using Foner or a similar text, instructors will find it easier to “bring Indians in” to the U.S. survey when focusing on the West from 1861 to 1890 than for many other parts of the survey. Almost all standard college-level textbooks provide some information about Sand Creek, the Little Bighorn, Chief Joseph, and the Ghost Dance/Wounded Knee, with many mentioning the U.S.-Dakota War, the Navajos’ Long Walk, and Geronimo.

A fuller treatment of Indian warfare in the West might begin by observing that although some events and individuals are well known, other equally significant events and people remain obscure. Almost all students recognize Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Wounded Knee, but few have heard of events such as the 1863 Bear River Massacre (Shoshones), the 1868 Washita Battle/Massacre (Southern Cheyennes), the 1870 Marias Massacre (Blackfoot), the 1871 Camp Grant Massacre (Apaches), the Modoc War of

1872–73, the Red River War of 1874–75 (Kiowas, Cheyennes, Comanches, Arapahos), the killing of northern Cheyennes in 1879 as they tried to return to their homelands after having been exiled in Indian Territory and confined at Fort Robinson, Nebraska,² or the names of Native leaders associated with these events: Sagwitch, Heavy Runner, Hashkēē bá nz̄in (Angry, Men Stand in Line for Him), Kintpuash (Captain Jack), Satanta, and Dull Knife.³ It would be impossible to narrate all or even a few of these events in survey lectures, but listing them along with those better known would provide a better sense of the extent of U.S. violence against Indians in the West.

Most textbooks provide some useful context for U.S. wars against western Indians, explaining how capitalist development of the West entailed railroad construction, exploitation of minerals, the slaughter of bison for the national and world market, expanded agricultural production, and the explosion of cattle raising. These processes caused widespread material deprivation for all Indian people. Under these conditions, some Indians (though only a minority) decided to take up arms to defend their lands and undertake raids on settlers, livestock, and army posts. In some instances, as in the Lakota/Cheyenne campaign to close down the Bozeman Trail from 1865 to 1868, militant resistance entailed extensive planning and coordination and built on policies that had been developed a decade earlier. In other cases, such as the Modocs' refusal to continue living at the Klamath Reservation or the Nez Percés' opposition to relocating to a reservation, resistance erupted more suddenly. Situations of sustained raiding, involving, for example, Apaches attacking Arizona settlements or Kiowas raiding Texas cattle herds, were often motivated by immediate material needs and can be seen as a form of labor (similar to hunting).⁴ U.S. military operations against Indians were undertaken primarily to punish and subjugate those engaged in raiding and armed resistance or resisting confinement and relocation, although in some instances militias and armies, finding it difficult to strike resisting groups, acted against nonresisting communities. This is what happened at the Sand Creek Massacre when Colorado militia forces, unable to attack the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers who had undertaken raids against overland travelers and settlements, instead destroyed a peace-seeking and far more vulnerable community of Cheyennes under the leadership of Black Kettle. The Marias Massacre had a similar logic. The army intended to punish raiders in Mountain Chief's band of Piegan Blackfoot, but when this band eluded soldiers, army officers, well aware of what they were doing,

attacked another Piegan community led by Heavy Runner, a chief who had consistently sought peace. (To add to the horror of this massacre, smallpox had recently struck Heavy Runner's band). Such massacres reveal that military operations against resisting Indians carried an imperative to achieve results as well as a mentality among commanders and troops that all Indians were deserving of annihilation.

In an older, though hardly fully displaced, historiography, Native resistance was characterized as illegitimate, sometimes through crude portrayals of savages blocking the manifest destiny of a superior race, though in other cases through a more subtle process of a (limited) acknowledgment of Indians' grievances "balanced" by an assertion of equivalent settler grievances, supplemented, perhaps, by observations about the tragedy of a clash of cultures.⁵ Such historiographies, of course, reproduce ideological justifications for dispossession that continue to have a strong hold on mainstream historical memory. Pointing out that U.S. military forces sometimes attacked peaceful Indians or narrating particularly tragic stories such as that of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce flight to Canada often evokes a sympathetic response, though without necessarily challenging students to think more broadly about the underlying causes of conflict. It is therefore useful to step back from specific narratives and remind students of first principles: U.S. Americans thought they had the right to take all Native lands and justified this on grounds that assumed white supremacy; Indians who resisted the American invasion of their homelands acted reasonably and according to commonsense principles of justice; U.S. policymakers and local authorities regarded resistance as illegitimate and believed they had the right to destroy Indians engaging in it, while at times refusing to discriminate between resisting and nonresisting Indians.

These observations also provide a useful frame for a discussion of post-Civil War U.S. policy toward Indians. Treatments of policy in this and other periods conceive of policy narrowly. After the Civil War (consistent with basic orientations since 1783), civilian policymakers, under the banner of the "peace policy" (formally adopted under the Grant administration), declared a preference for ending violence in the West by negotiating treaties with Indians on the basis of principles articulated as just. Indians would be asked to recognize the illegitimacy of retaining all of their lands and continuing to hunt; in exchange for significant portions of their lands, Indians would be given temporary material aid to assist them to become economically self-

sufficient and advance toward “civilization” under the guidance of civilian agents appointed by Christian denominations. The fact that advocates of this approach presented themselves as humanitarians and criticized the army for an excessively punitive approach, and that army officials in turn regarded “friends of the Indian” as softheaded do-gooders and argued for transfer of authority over reservations from the Department of the Interior to the War Department, allows for an interpretation emphasizing policymakers’ benevolent intentions. Criticisms, when offered, are limited to policymakers’ naïveté and their ethnocentric failure to appreciate Native culture.⁶ What is missing from this analysis is a recognition that policy was not limited to statements of first preference. Designers of the peace policy recognized (or came to recognize from experience) that Indians frequently rejected the gift of civilization, instead asserting their right to retain their lands and their political and cultural autonomy. Under these circumstances, friends of the Indian agreed with military officials on the necessity of a “Plan B”: categorize Indians who refused to accept the terms of the policy as stubborn, ungrateful, arrogant savages and wage unrelenting war to force compliance. As Grant himself put it shortly before his inauguration, “Those who do not accept [the peace] policy will find the new administration ready for a sharp and severe war policy.”⁷ War against Indians, then, did not entail a rupture with the peace policy or a mark of some unanticipated failure; it was an essential, if sometimes unacknowledged, component of it. Though the peace policy is generally thought to have ended by 1877, policy toward Indians continued to have a similar structural logic. In the late nineteenth century policymakers declared, as they had since the 1790s, a preference for assimilation. Accordingly, they promoted the education of Indian children in off-reservation boarding schools such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the privatization of tribal lands through allotment under the Dawes Act, and the elimination of non-Christian religious practices. Should Indians reject the proffered path to civilization, however, policymakers sanctioned a range of coercive action, including the use of police and military force.⁸

The actual practice of U.S. warfare against Indians can be described as “total war,” though doing so requires making a distinction with other forms of warfare often described as total war, such as during the late phases of the Civil War when Union armies devastated the South’s economic infrastructure. On their “March to the Sea” Sherman’s troops destroyed railroads, mills, bridges, livestock, and grain, but they did not kill

noncombatants. By contrast, U.S. military forces operating against Indians during and after the Civil War (or, for that matter, beginning in the Revolutionary War) almost always carried the possibility for massive killing of noncombatants, a potential that was often realized. This potential for massive violence/massacre can be explained in part by the fact that U.S. warfare against Indians meant attacking communities rather than professional armies or militias and in part because U.S. military commanders and soldiers, though often officially forbidding and foreswearing the killing of women and children, permitted and in some cases actively pursued such killing, thus revealing racist views of Indians that were not present in the Union army's operations against the Confederacy during the Civil War.⁹

Recognizing that U.S. military operations generally had the potential to kill significant numbers of noncombatants raises questions about the term "massacre," defined as an event resulting in the widespread killing of noncombatants, and its relationship to the term "battle," still frequently used to describe many events that occurred under the label of Indian warfare in the West. Historians have made some progress challenging a once-common tendency to refer to almost all instances of violent conflict between U.S. Americans and Indians as battles. Wounded Knee, for example, was at one time routinely labeled this way, and though this still happens, it is now usually termed a massacre. Nonetheless, massacres continue to be seen as distinct from battles and are often juxtaposed to battles in a way that reinforces a sense of massacres as anomalous events occurring under irregular conditions, perhaps the result of "rogue" actions. Yet, although no single massacre was inevitable in the sense of being foreordained to occur precisely when and where it did, massacres were an inevitable consequence of U.S. empire building and the military operations that necessarily supported it. Furthermore, although many U.S. military operations did not result in the slaughter of noncombatants, this was due less to U.S. military forces exercising restraint than to Indians' capacity to prevent massacres. To take as an example the Little Bighorn, the most famous "battle" of the Indian wars, Custer's attack could have had a much different result. Had Custer been able to achieve greater surprise, perhaps by attacking before dawn, if Indians had been less successful in protecting noncombatants (Cheyennes and Lakotas devoted significant planning and personnel to massacre prevention and successfully protected noncombatants during Custer's attack),¹⁰ the Seventh Cavalry might well have slaughtered a large number

of women and children. Because of this, the Little Bighorn can be described as a “potential massacre,” an underappreciated and far from empty category. This does not mean that commanders and their soldiers intended to kill every single Indian they could at every opportunity, but it does mean that there was an inherent potential for indiscriminate slaughter when U.S. armies and militias moved against Indian communities.

Eventually, of course, western Indians abandoned raiding and armed resistance and lived on reservations under colonial rule. Obviously, U.S. warfare is an important factor in explaining Indians’ confinement to reservations, though a conventional story identifying war as the primary factor is simplistic. Militant Indians were often able to avoid taking large numbers of casualties while at the same time inflicting significant damage to U.S. forces. In the series of clashes between U.S. troops and Lakotas/Cheyennes (including the Little Bighorn) known as the Great Sioux War of 1876–77, U.S. casualties exceeded those of Indians by a ratio of two to one.¹¹ Militants eventually agreed to make peace with the United States, but not because they had been militarily defeated. Rather, their decision was guided by three considerations: first, the knowledge that the United States would continue to send armies against them and an awareness that, although they had avoided it so far, they would remain subject to catastrophic violence; second, the increasing difficulty of feeding themselves because of diminishing bison herds; third, promises they secured from U.S. officials through diplomacy. Pointing out these factors provides a more nuanced view of “surrender”: since they had not been militarily defeated, Indians agreeing to live on reservations did not think of themselves as a “conquered people.”

It also allows for a broader view of the Indian wars to include their economic and diplomatic dimensions. As noted above, textbooks provide some information about the decline of game and other threats to Indians’ economic self-sufficiency, though they do not treat the destruction of Native economies explicitly as a dimension of warfare, as they might in discussing the Union army’s policy of total war against the Confederacy. The government itself did not formally sponsor programs to eradicate the bison, though civilian and military officials, whether self-professed humanitarians or not, supported the general process of capitalist development of the West, recognized that it damaged resources crucial to Natives’ ability to maintain economic independence, and approved of material deprivation as a means to force Indians to cede lands and submit to the demands of civilization.¹² In

this sense, post–Civil War western economic development did not just form the context for warfare against Indians, it was a crucial dimension of war. The diplomacy involved in the Indian wars is seldom appreciated at all. The standard narrative of the flight of the Nez Perces, for example, concludes with the army closing in on the Nez Perces just short of freedom in Canada and Chief Joseph’s famous “I will fight no more forever” surrender speech. Besides pointing out its fictitiousness, it is also important to note that the illusion of unqualified consent in the speech obscures the fact that Joseph and other leaders were willing to lay down their arms only under certain conditions that they negotiated with General Nelson Miles, chief among these that they would be allowed to return to their homeland. Instead, however, U.S. officials sent most of the Nez Perces to Indian Territory, where many died.¹³ Diplomacy, the breaking of diplomatic agreements, and the consequences of such betrayals are also part of Indian warfare in the West.

The “end of the Indian wars” has generally been marked by the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre. It is true that Wounded Knee was the last time U.S. military forces employed massive violence against Indians, but the context for this event differed significantly from many other massacres/battles in the post–Civil War period. Rather than occurring as a consequence of a military operation to subjugate nonreservation Indians engaged in armed resistance, Wounded Knee resulted from the army’s campaign to suppress a nonviolent movement, the Ghost Dance, that emerged among Indians confined to reservations. Unlike those who engaged in many earlier forms of resistance, the Ghost Dancers rejected the use of force to achieve their aim of reversing the oppressive world European Americans had imposed on them and instead looked exclusively to spiritual power for a cataclysmic event that would remove or destroy U.S. Americans and restore the autonomy of Indian communities under conditions of pre-Columbian abundance. Despite its nonviolence, however, U.S. officials could not accept the Ghost Dance, since it challenged the legitimacy of the reservation system and government policies to replace Native religious and cultural practices with Christianity. On some reservations, civilian agents tried to defuse the movement by arresting a few leaders and otherwise allowing the movement to run its course, but on the Lakota reservations, the government authorized a massive military force to suppress the Ghost Dance. To justify intervention, army officials characterized the Lakota Ghost

Dancers as planning an uprising threatening settlers throughout much of the American West. In this way, the military campaign against the Lakota Ghost Dancers had a similar logic to previous actions against resisting Indians, including an escalating demonization of them as treacherous savages warranting destruction, the attitude that informed the military's tactically unnecessary decision to disarm a band of Ghost Dancers led by Big Foot, a decision that led to massacre.¹⁴

A discussion of massacres and potential massacres as events inherently resulting from the extension of the U.S. empire may allow an opportunity to explore the question of genocide, an issue seldom raised in survey textbooks. This, of course, is a contentious issue among scholars. Many are reluctant to consider U.S. actions as genocidal at least in any systematic way, while others are willing to consider U.S. actions toward Indians as frequently if not consistently genocidal. The issue can be a contentious one for students as well. My approach has been to raise the question of genocide not at the beginning of a discussion about violence toward Indians but after having provided substantial narrative information and analysis. At that point, I often show students the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention of Genocide's definition, ask for their thoughts, and then proceed with an open-ended discussion that does not have as its goal providing a single definitive answer but rather leading students to a reflective consideration of the issues.

As noted earlier, only a minority of western Indians engaged in militant resistance or sustained raiding. Instead, most pursued policies that involved avoiding confrontation making accommodations with the United States. This does not mean that those who rejected confrontational approaches somehow embraced the U.S. offer of civilization as such. Rather, those inclined against militancy either decided that they lacked sufficient military and economic resources to fight against the U.S. invasion or simply never considered the possibility. As a matter of survival, many Native nations in the West expressed willingness to cede land for material assistance and to make selective adaptations to new conditions, while actively shaping the terms of treaties for their future benefit. In some instances, such nations formed alliances with the United States, providing military personnel (scouts) to support army actions against other tribes or even their own people. The most powerful Indian nations, such as the Comanches, Cheyennes, Lakotas, Apaches, and Blackfoot, were divided among themselves, sometimes bitterly, about strategy. Less powerful nations such as the Crows, Pawnees,

Arikaras, Klamaths, and Paiutes, sensing their vulnerability to U.S. power, generally rejected militancy. The Crows, for example, judged that the Lakotas, with whom they had been at war for several decades, and not the United States, posed the most immediate threat and so provided scouts for the army, most famously at the Little Bighorn, where they warned Custer against attacking the Lakotas and Cheyennes assembled there.¹⁵

Pointing out these patterns provides students with a fuller, more accurate picture of the situation than a narrative focusing exclusively on the U.S. invasion and militant resistance to it. At the same time, I have found that some students will focus on the diversity of perspectives and strategies at the expense of broader contexts and develop insufficient or misleading takeaways along the lines of “in the end, it was all very complicated” or “since Indians fought against each other and many allied with the U.S., a critical perspective on U.S. policies and actions is so much political correctness.” (Historians of U.S. warfare against Indians can make similar moves.) Because of this tendency, it is important to situate divisions among Indians within the broader context of U.S. empire building. To do so does not mean creating a picture of a pre-Columbian harmony or seeing divisions within and between Indian nations as fundamentally reducible to differing responses to imperialism. Rather, it is to say that because of divergent positions and historical experiences, Indian communities decided to deal with the threat from the United States—a threat all perceived in one way or another—in different ways. It is also to say that the process of U.S. expansion aggravated divisions, sometimes in ways that were not overtly intentional (e.g., building a railroad through Indian lands), but often in ways that can be characterized as intentional “divide and conquer” strategies (e.g., offering material advantages to Indians agreeing to cede land and other rights and threatening dire consequences for those who refused).

For the most part, in the post-Civil War period, U.S. troops and state/territorial militias did not target communities within Indian nations that were uniformly pursuing peaceful relations with the United States.¹⁶ Strictly speaking, then, Indian nations that decided not to contest U.S. power were not subject to war. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to think that policies of selective cooperation adopted by such nations somehow shielded them from experiencing massively destructive impacts from U.S. empire building. The Poncas provide an example. A small nation living in the central Great Plains, the Poncas were caught between the more powerful Lakotas to the

west and expanding U.S. American settlement from the east and so sought to protect themselves by signing a treaty with the United States in 1858. The federal government, however, did little to prevent Lakota attacks on the Poncas. Then, in 1868, the United States mistakenly incorporated Ponca lands into a treaty with the Lakotas. Instead of rectifying this error, the United States forced the Poncas to move to Indian Territory, an event that has become known as the Poncas' Trail of Tears. After relocation, Poncas suffered further losses from starvation and disease.¹⁷ The United States had not waged war against the Poncas in any direct sense (other Indians were doing this), but the root cause of the Poncas' problems was the expansion of colonial settlement and economic development, which, by destroying economic resources, exacerbated intertribal conflict and ultimately pressured all tribes, no matter what their stance toward the United States, to cede substantial portions of their land and in many cases to relocate under dire conditions. Viewed from this perspective, the U.S. intention to extend its empire throughout the West was a declaration of war against Indians everywhere in the region. According to the U.S. ideology of Manifest Destiny, no Indian nation would be allowed to retain its political and economic independence.



FIGURE 10.1 Four generations: Sitting Bull with his mother (Her Holy Door), his oldest daughter (Many Horses), and a grandson, ca. 1883. SPC Plains Dakota BAE No # 00500700, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

An approach to Indian warfare in the West that emphasizes a structural analysis of violence and other forms of destruction inherent to U.S. empire building carries potential problems. One is that Indians will be portrayed primarily as victims; another is that Indian people will not be seen and heard. To some extent, the first problem can be addressed by underscoring Indians' military and diplomatic capacities, as suggested above. It is also important to stress the survival of Indian nations. The Northern Cheyennes provide one example. Determined to return to their homelands after having been exiled to Indian Territory in the late 1870s, the Northern Cheyennes defied

government authority and traveled north. Though intercepted and imprisoned at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, they were unwilling to submit to the demands of the government to return to Indian Territory and so decided to escape. The army killed several dozen, but the Northern Cheyennes' subsequent diplomatic efforts allowed them to gain a reservation in Montana in the 1880s, where many now live.



FIGURE 10.2 Plenty Coups, Crow chief, ca. 1880. Catalog P01490, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

There are several ways to ensure that Indian people are seen and their voices heard. I like to show a photograph of Sitting Bull with his family (figure 10.1), thus highlighting him as a family and community member, as well as one of Plenty Coups (figure 10.2), a Crow leader, who as a young man in the 1850s had a vision of the coming storm that suggested a distinctively Crow strategy for survival.¹⁸ Indian drawings of events such as Sand Creek, the Little Bighorn, or Wounded Knee (easily accessible online) can also reorient non-Indian students' perspectives. Several readings are also available. Though it might reinforce an already Plains-centered focus, a short collection of Plains Indians' perspectives from the late eighteenth century through the 1870s in the Bedford Series in History and Culture could be assigned in a survey or selections from it used. Unfortunately, there is not a similar collection for the West in general or for any of its subregions, though contemporary Native accounts and oral histories of events such as the Modoc War and the Long Walk can be found.¹⁹ Finally, excerpts from documentaries can usefully convey narrative and visual information about aspects of Indian warfare in the West. Ken Burns's eight-part documentary *The West* is limited to classic, well-known events but offers generally sound narratives that include Native voices and perspectives, and the accompanying PBS website is a useful resource. Another possibility would be to show an excerpt from Christopher McLeod's *In the Light of Reverence*, which tells of three Indian nations' relationships to sacred places: the Lakotas and Mato Tipila (Devils Tower), the Hopis and the Four Corners region, and the Wintus and Mt. Shasta. Although this documentary does not focus on warfare as such, in highlighting the importance of sacred lands in Native struggles against dispossession, it broadens discussions beyond violence in the usual sense, and in explaining the importance of recovering sacred lands in Indian Country today helps students to gain a broader perspective on the legacies of conquest.²⁰

Notes

1. Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, 3rd Seagull ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), 305, 309–11, 381–84, 601–9, 696.

2. The army's killing of approximately sixty-four Cheyennes attempting to escape imprisonment at Fort Robinson is sometimes known as the "Cheyenne outbreak" and sometimes as the "Fort Robinson tragedy," both

terms employing problematic categories, the first reproducing a colonial category from the time signifying U.S. American anxieties about incomplete conquest, as analyzed in Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 21; the second conveying an obfuscatory nonintentionality. Hence, my decision to describe it rather than name it.

3. A basic overview of these and other events can be found in Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846–1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984); Richard White, “*It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own*”: *A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 94–108. For Bear River, see Brigham D. Madsen, *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985); Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 226–66; for Washita, see Jerome A. Greene, *Washita: The U.S. Army and the Southern Cheyennes, 1867–1869* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004); for Camp Grant, Karl Jacoby, *Shadows at Dawn: A Borderlands Massacre and the Violence of History* (New York: Penguin, 2008); for the 1879 Cheyennes, John H. Monnett, *Tell Them We Are Going Home: The Odyssey of the Northern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001); for the Red River Wars, Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Conquest of Texas: Ethnic Cleansing in the Promised Land, 1820–1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 352–61. There is, unfortunately, no single study of the Marias Massacre, though it is the subject of James Welch’s compelling work of historical fiction *Fools Crow: A Novel* (New York: Viking, 1986).

4. Jacki Thompson Rand, *Kiowa Humanity and the Invasion of the State* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 58–92.

5. For the “clash of cultures” as a paradigm for interpreting the Little Big Horn, see Michael A. Elliott, *Custerology: The Enduring Legacy of the Indian Wars and George Armstrong Custer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 276.

6. Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, vol. 1. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 477–561. For a recent work arguing for alternative possibilities for greater tribal sovereignty under U.S. policy, see C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa,

Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight Over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

7. My use of “Plan B” is influenced by Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For Grant’s statement, see Robert W. Mardock, *The Reformers and the American Indian* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971), 50. In contrast to most scholars, Catherine D. Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869–1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 18–19, recognizes war as part of the peace policy, noting that the policy’s requirement of war against Indians who transgressed reservation borders “resulted in over 200 military actions against ‘hostile’ tribes during his administration.”

8. Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880–1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

9. Mark Grimsley, “‘Rebels’ and ‘Redskins’: U.S. Military Conduct Toward White Southerners and Native Americans in Comparative Perspective,” in *Civilians in the Path of War*, ed. Mark Grimsley and Clifford J. Rogers (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 137–62.

10. Suggestions of such efforts are found in most narratives of the Little Bighorn. See, e.g., Robert M. Utley, *The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), 150–54; Kingsley M. Bray, *Crazy Horse: A Lakota Life* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 221–22.

11. Jerome A. Greene, *Yellowstone Campaign: Colonel Nelson A. Miles and The Great Sioux War, 1876–1877* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 233, estimates the number of U.S. soldiers killed at 283, with the number of Indians killed at 150.

12. On the role of the army in the destruction of the bison, see Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 128–29.

13. Elliot West, *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 275–82, 292–96; J. Diane Pearson, *The Nez Percés in the Indian Territory: Nimiipuu Survival* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008).

14. Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

15. Mark Van de Logt, *War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010); Frederick E. Hoxie, *Parading Through History: The Making of the Crow Nation in America, 1805–1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

16. This observation does not apply to California before 1865 or Oregon before 1860, where local militias subjected Indians to indiscriminate mass slaughter.

17. Valerie Sherer Mathes and Richard Lowitt, *The Standing Bear Controversy: Prelude to Indian Reform* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 13–44.

18. An account of Plenty Coups's vision can be found in Frank B. Linderman, *Plenty-Coups: Chief of the Crows* (1930; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), 47–76.

19. Colin C. Calloway, ed., *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground: Plains Indian Views of How the West Was Lost* (New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996); a chapter from Jeff C. Riddle (the son of Wine-ma, a Modoc woman), *The Indian History of the Modoc War and the Causes That Led to It* (San Francisco: Marnell & Co., 1914), is printed in Stephen Dow Beckham, ed., *Oregon Indians: Voices from Two Centuries* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press), 282–89; for 1960s oral histories of the Long Walk, see Ruth Roessel and Broderick Johnson, eds., *Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period* (Tsaile, Ariz.: Navajo Community College Press, 1973).

20. *The West*, presented by Ken Burns and directed by Stephen Ives (Alexandria, Va.: PBS, 1996), VHS; <http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/>; *In the Light of Reverence: Protecting America's Sacred Lands*, produced and directed by Christopher McLeod (Oley, Penn.: Bullfrog Films, 2001), DVD; Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987).

Suggested Readings

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Chapter 11: America's Indigenous Reading Revolution

PHILLIP H. ROUND

The boy stood on the burning deck,
Whence all but he had fled.

—FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS, “Casabianca,” 1826

Sometime in the 1860s, at a Presbyterian mission school in northeastern Nebraska, Francis La Flesche (1857–1932), an eight-year-old student from the Omaha Nation, was “busy with [his] spelling lesson” while a “class of big boys and girls” were reciting the above lines of poetry “in concert.” “Again and again the teacher made them read the lines,” La Flesche later recalled, “but each time some one would either lag behind or read faster than others.”¹ The scene La Flesche witnessed would be performed repeatedly across America in the nineteenth century, as both Native and non-Native children dutifully waded their way through *McGuffey's Readers* (figure 11.1). This reading instruction manual, a work historians have long categorized as a “storehouse of fables, stories, mottoes, proverbs, adages, and aphorisms” for the everyday American, was also at the center of progressive efforts to standardize reading practices through prescriptive recitation and public performance for America's new common school system.² To McGuffey himself, his readers and spellers were no less than “book[s] of the youth's world in a pioneer land” (34). Yet for young Native children such as Edward Goodbird of the Hidatsa Nation, learning to read in English was not such a progressive, “pioneer” experience. Looking back at his time in a mission school, Goodbird recalled that he “found English a rather hard language to learn.” Even when he succeeded, all he received from many in his community when he came home from school was grief: “the older Indians would laugh at any who tried to learn to read.”³

Although historians of nineteenth-century America have long considered reading practices like those that appear in La Flesche's autobiography

pivotal to the period's significant cultural transformations, few, if any, American history survey courses or anthologies allow students to explore America's "reading revolution." Yet, aside from the Civil War, perhaps no other historical phenomenon has garnered as much recent historiographic attention as the era's rapid expansion of print and readers. It was a time characterized by "a revolutionary transition from 'intensive' to 'extensive' reading" in which reading from a small, largely religious canon of texts was replaced by reading in "a modern, secularized and individual way ... characterized by an eagerness to consume new and varied reading materials for information, and for private entertainment."⁴

LESSON II.*



Is it an ax?
 It is an ax.
 It is my ax.
 Is it by me?
 My ax is by me. So it is.



Is he in? It is I.
 He is in. It is he.
 Is he by me? We do it.
 Do we go in? Do as we do.

* Spell each word in the line; then read the line, as in Lesson I.



LESSON II.

Immeja tua iske opkowanaye?
 tua immetsa iske opkowanaye.
 tua immetsa sopkowanaye.
 Howeko stya sepsho hinome opkowanaye?
 Sopkowanaye imme howeko sepsho hinome.
 Ha imme teska.

Eikeia tyacho?		Imme to hinome.
Eikeia ka.		Wa immetsa.
Immeja howeko stya		Hinometitch enyech-
sepsho hinome?		ana.
Nutyepo tochosa hin-		Epech imme hinome-
ometitch keia?		titch esetchanatshe

FIGURE 11.1 McGuffey's First Eclectic Reader. Laguna Dialect (1882). Ayer 3A 593, Newberry Library, Chicago.

From William J. Gilmore's *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life* (1989) to Barbara Hochman's *Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution* (2011), scholars have argued that in the nineteenth-century United States "reading was a crucially important ... site of cultural enthusiasm, conflict, and anxiety."⁵ In particular, the "growth of a new communications environment" spawned an "increase in the significance of access to knowledge" and a "transformation of ... everyday life ... from one that was

continuous to one characterized by novelty and changing commercial and cultural relations.”⁶

I believe that La Flesche’s brief reminiscence of one of the reading revolution’s most exemplary practices—oral recitation of poetry and prose passages from the *McGuffey Reader*—would serve history teachers well as a unique and engaging vantage point from which to present their students with this historical phenomenon. By placing American Indian literacy experiences at the center of their own students’ explorations of the reading revolution, instructors will benefit from the vividness of the printed and written materials produced by and for Native learners as well as by their first-person accounts of how it felt to undergo this revolution in epistemological and material practices “on the ground.”

As people who were both subjects of and subject to this revolution in the production and consumption of printed matter, Native peoples in the United States were uniquely situated at the center of this cultural transformation, and their very visceral responses to these experiences provide some of the most vivid and detailed auto-ethnographic accounts of the reading revolution available. As an outgrowth of these changes in perceived literacy needs across all parts of the United States, educational reform movements blossomed, often first testing their pedagogical theories on Native students. From the introduction of the Lancasterian monitorial movement in American education during the first decade of the nineteenth century to the rise of the Sunday school movement in 1824, Native children were on the front lines of the reading revolution. These children and their teachers were, in turn, the focus of an expanding print trade in didactic and pedagogical books. Works such as Rev. G. C. Smith’s *The Dairyman’s Daughter* could be found in Sunday school classrooms around the United States in the 1830s. By 1847, the book had been published in a Cherokee syllabary translation at the Park Hill Mission Press in the Indian Territory. The same print marketplace that supported Smith’s book also encouraged literary productions by Native Christian converts, and books such as William Apess’s *Son of the Forest* (1831) and the *Memoir of Catharine Brown* (1831) were published by the American Sunday School Union Press in order to bring the message of Native literacy-as-conversion to non-Indian school readers as models of inspiration.

For most students, literacy education in the United States at the start of the nineteenth century was a somewhat hit-or-miss affair. With little

government sponsorship or direction, the teaching of reading was often done in private academies or missionary classrooms. In 1806, however, the establishment of the New York public school system ushered in a new era of reaching out to a broader student population by employing the pedagogical theories of Englishman Joseph Lancaster.⁷ As Ronald Rayman explains, “the fundamental premise of Lancaster’s system revolved around mass public education utilizing older or more advanced students, or ‘monitors,’ as instructors. The Lancasterian monitorial system of education ... was hailed as a milestone in public education.” Lancaster’s method demanded “strict discipline,” and the Lancasterian “curriculum consisted exclusively of reading, writing, arithmetic, morals or religion, and development of the memory. Talking was prohibited, and infractions of the rules met punishment of the most severe proportions.”⁸ In 1817, at the Brainerd Mission School near Lookout Mountain in Tennessee, Cherokee students were subjected to the Lancasterian system. Literary historian Hilary Wyss points out that students trained this way tended to have a difficult time adjusting to the system’s “complete obedience within a mechanized, impersonal structure.” “The Lancastrian model,” Wyss observes, sought primarily to indoctrinate Cherokees into “docility and obedience,” rendering those students deemed “‘successful’ anonymous and void of personhood.”⁹

By the 1840s, however, the “wholesale abandonment of the Lancasterian system by Indian and public schools alike” was underway, and by 1853, even “New York City, originally the bastion of Lancasterian education, discarded it ... thus signaling the system’s end as a viable educational model.”¹⁰ The common school system—with its “centralized supervision, tax support, teacher training, and consolidated school districts” and fresh classroom pedagogies—was slowly erected in its place.¹¹ The common schools took advantage of new technologies such as stereotype printing, with its ability to mass produce amply illustrated readers and spellers, and delivery systems such as slate chalkboards at the front of the class. Edward Goodbird recalled that such new common school approaches first attracted him to the Christian religion and its mission school. He recounted how the school’s minister and schoolmaster “often drew pictures on the blackboard” to illustrate his sermons or lessons.¹²

During this period, the trajectory of Native American mission schooling and that of non-Native students converged, largely as part of a nationwide response to “accelerating urbanization, industrialization, and immigration.”¹³

For Anglo-Americans, emerging technologies such as steam printing and the colporteur system of marketing books to the country's most rural areas were tied to larger economic trends in the society that simultaneously spurred public discussion of personal morality and social order, resulting in a "shift of educational responsibility from the family to the schools ... accelerating just before the Civil War."¹⁴ According to educational historian Carl Kaestle, the resulting push for a government-sponsored and more centralized public school system was focused on teaching "children a common English language and a common Protestant morality." In the July 1842 *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, a minister among the Ojibwe recommended "a system of common school education in which the bible will have precedence," much the same sort of system that was being put in place for Euro-American students.¹⁵ Following Kaestle's analysis, we could reasonably reenvision the whole common school movement as a nationwide effort to "civilize" all nonelite students—be they Anglo-American, immigrant, or indigenous—who had so far escaped the private school system. An examination of several readers printed in this period suggests that there was indeed a significant crossover between Indian missionary school practices and mainstream Anglo-American common school pedagogical innovations.

One fascinating example of this interchange in the period 1830–60 is the work of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (1787–1851), the Protestant reformer who championed the education of deaf children. In his *Sermon, on the Duty and Advantages of Affording Instruction to the Deaf and Dumb ...* (Concord [N.H.], 1824), Gallaudet pleads with his auditors to support deaf children's education by making an explicit link between them and America's Native population:

These children of misfortune, who look to you for the means of being delivered from a bondage more galling than that of the slave; from an ignorance more dreadful than that of the wild and untutored savage!! One tear of gratitude, I only crave a cup of consolation, for the Deaf and Dumb, from the same fountain at which the Hindoo, the African, and the Savage, is beginning to draw the water of eternal life. (8)

Nor was Gallaudet alone in drawing such comparisons. Writers across the century almost always thought of common school literacy practices within the framework of the "savage" other.¹⁶

Gallaudet put his theories into practice with *Gallaudet's Picture Defining and Reading Book ... in the Ojibwe Language* (Boston, 1835) (figure 11.2). Here both the book's layout and its woodcuts are borrowed directly from readers designed for Anglo-American students. Although the language is Ojibwe-mowin (the language of the Anishinaabeg peoples), it is rendered in a highly regularized orthography that is in turn "civilized" by being framed with illustrations and lessons taken from dominant-culture schoolbooks. As Ojibwe language instructor and linguist Meg Noodin observes, "despite [Gallaudet's reader] being mentioned by McNally in *Hymn Singers* as part of the varied orthography, dialect-rich tradition of missionary writing," the book actually employs "standard orthography and textbook use of the language," suggesting that "the person writing the book wanted to teach the nuances of the language efficiently and with an eye to comparison between English and Ojibwe."¹⁷ Efficiency and English-language models make the reader a "common school" technology whose main purpose is to standardize and assimilate.

ABINOJI
MUZINIBIIGUN GAIE UINDUMAGOUIN
MUZINAIIGUN.

Abidi Uindumi.



Mishimīnatik.
Unibishvn.
Pebamitakuīšjīn.
Uvtvbi-mvkvk.
Usīni-Mījikvnakobījigvn.

Uvdīkuvvn.
Kuāndauāgvn.
Nanvn Kuiuizeñsvg.
Mishimīnvg.

Ogo Kuiuizeñsvg omamoshvginauān mishimvn.
Bezhīk mītigō odonjimvmauān.
Bezhīk Kuiuizeñs omoshkīnaton omvshkimutekuāji-
gvvn.
Bezhīk omoshkīnaton uvtvbi-mvkvk.
Nizh Kuiuizeñsvg mishiminvn odvmauān.

FIGURE 11.2 Gallaudet's *Picture Defining and Reading Book ... in the Ojibwe Language* (1835). Ayer 3A 535, Newberry Library, Chicago.

Gallaudet's reading text for Ojibwe children was just one among several Native language literacy projects across Indian Country that directly adapted "model" readers used in Euro-American schools to the teaching of indigenous languages. This is the case of the Dakota reader produced by missionary educator Stephen Return Riggs, *Wayawa Tokaheya* (1873), which uses "as a template a reader published by a mainstream Chicago firm, J. Russell Webb's, *Model First Reader* (1873)." Riggs performed his "translation" of the common school reader quite simply. He merely placed "Dakota words into the space between English lines," thus suggesting to some literacy historians that such model readers have the capacity for cross-cultural manipulation and assimilative power precisely because they "offer little overt regional identity, no direct references to historical events, public figures or places, or to specific religious or political groups."¹⁸

Yet the blandly civilizing effects of such model readers (and the prospects for their implementation in the common schools of America) were tempered by deep-seated anxieties over how exactly to teach reading and what, exactly, students ought to be expected to read. The technological innovations that gave rise to the expansion of print culture also permitted a more widespread application of extensive reading practices that led some social critics, such as Thrace Talmon in *The National Era*, to lament its degenerative effects:

With due deference to Young America, it must be confessed that our people are deteriorating in stature. ... It behooves us to inquire into some of the causes of this degeneracy. We have paid dearly for many of the modern improvements called civilization. Household luxuries, school-room steam-press systems, and, above all, the mad spirit of the times.¹⁹

The anonymous author of "Reading is Not Thinking," an essay that appeared in the *Youth's Magazine* in 1837, tended to agree with this assessment: "In the desultory habits of reading, now prevalent, relaxation is sought for in an endless variety of pursuits. Few give their attention long enough to any single object, to obtain the commanding knowledge of it which will enable them to enlighten others."²⁰

Like Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, Talmon employed the American Indian as a point of comparison in his prescription for this ailment. Over and against the wan and degenerate Anglo-American reader, Talmon posed "a

picture of Red Jacket, the great Indian chief.” Finding his “mien ... truly awe-inspiring,” Talmon suggests that the Native leader’s resistance to literacy lead to “strength in every relief. His bone and sinews and nerve must have been wrought of the iron of life.” What is clear from the experiments of Gallaudet and Riggs, and from the comments made by culture critics such as Talmon, is that common school reading exercises were viewed as a profoundly *embodied* set of pedagogical practices that immediately brought to mind the bodies of “others,” especially those of Native Americans.

In fact, as the authors of *Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers, and Composition Books in the United States* (2005) have determined from their exhaustive examination of hundreds of reading instruction books from the period, such texts “frame an instructional project in terms of the body—and often of particular bodies, by focusing on the organs of pronunciation, gesture and stance, the regulation of the eye, and the modulation of the voice, and by developing distinctions about gender, class, educational level, and authority” (146). In nineteenth-century America, reading was a fundamentally oral practice, and its embodied performance was seen as enabling “the transactions and intercourse of civilized life.”²¹ Texts such as the *McGuffey Readers* were filled with poetry samples that students were expected to read aloud with clear enunciation and performative declamation. Such readings were thus designed, in part, “to allow less privileged students to taste some riches previously restricted to an elite[,] ... compress[ing] some of the values of a classical or clerical education into a secularized volume, translated into a modern idiom.”²² Much more than just books of words to be learned, these readers dramatized “the power of the upper class ... as a ‘manner’ or ‘grace’ of speaking.”²³

In fact, Native students experienced such explicit “civilizing” rhetoric (figure 11.3) throughout the common school curriculum. Oftentimes, it was far from benign. The title page of a geography textbook commonly used in nineteenth-century American schools, for example, explicitly depicted indigenous life as a “place” in the past, collapsing time and space into a progressive history of America in which Indians had no choice but to assimilate.

Despite the obvious racism of such school textbooks, and the prevalence in the historiography of American Indian education of discussions of the depredations of the federal Indian boarding school system after the 1880s, Francis La Flesche’s literacy experience provides an innovative way for

today's American history students to explore the effects of the reading revolution on young people in nineteenth-century America.²⁴ La Flesche's autobiographical account of his elementary school years, *The Middle Five* (1900), describes the actual experiences of Indian children with the common school literacy curriculum at the same time that it deftly thematizes its author's canny negotiation of these "civilizing practices" to the purpose of establishing a new kind of Omaha ethnicity, one that included English-language literacy as part of its own arsenal of cultural sovereignty.

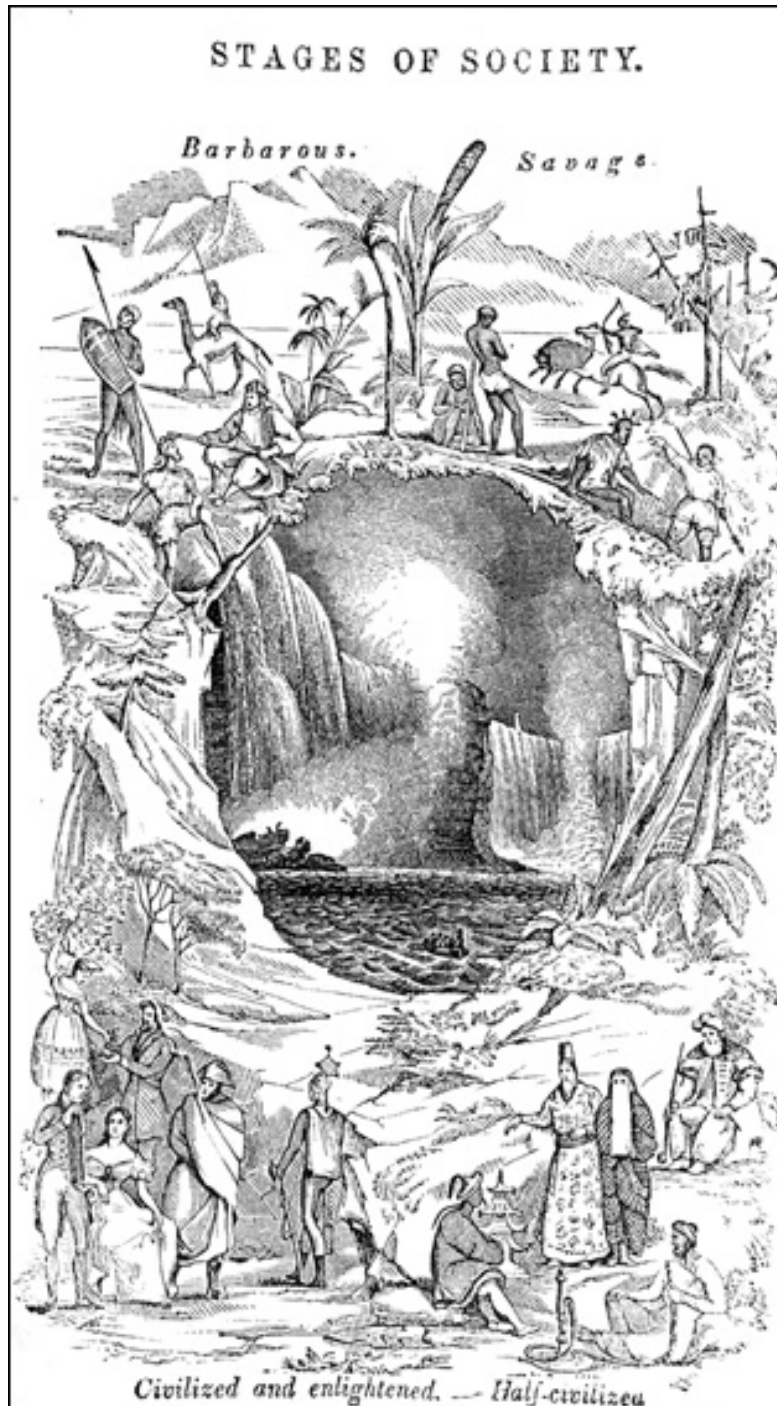


FIGURE 11.3 Frontispiece illustration, *Mitchell's School Geography* (1840).

The Middle Five is—significantly—dedicated “To Universal Boy,” and a close reading of La Flesche’s preface offers a clear indication of what this means. Despite having their hair cut and being forced to wear uniforms, La Flesche and his fellow Omaha students resisted wholesale assimilation by

putting a positive spin on these “civilizing” techniques: “while the school uniform did not change those who wore it, in this instance, it may help these little Indians to be judged, as are other boys, by what they say and do” (xv). In a similar way, La Flesche tells his readers that he will rarely use the students’ Omaha names, precisely “for the reason that Indian words are not only difficult to pronounce, but are apt to sound all alike to one not familiar with the language, and the boys who figure in these pages might lose their identity and fail to stand out clearly in the mind of the reader were he obliged to continually struggle with their Omaha names” (xviii).

Although many Euro-American autobiographies from this period tend to emphasize school learning as central to the birth of the bourgeois individual, La Flesche’s memoir resists this. He introduces his book not as “a continued story with a hero,” but rather “a series of sketches.” And, indeed, the book’s title points to the group dynamic of the Omaha boys’ identities in the school. The “middle five,” much like the Omaha clan and kinship systems the ministers and schoolmasters encouraged Native students to abandon, is a schoolyard clique that soon becomes a powerful guardian of both individual and group identity for La Flesche and his friends.

That is not to say that La Flesche sugarcoats the oppressiveness of his schooling, for in his preface he acknowledges, “When we entered the Mission School, we experienced a greater hardship, for there we encountered a rule that prohibited the use of our own language, which rule was rigidly enforced by the hickory rod, so that the newcomer, no matter how socially inclined, was obliged to go about like a little dummy until he had learned to express himself in English” (xvii). Still, La Flesche seems to prefer this system (with its potential for covert bilingualism within the gang of the “middle five”) to a romanticized “translation” of Native language experiences produced by “the average interpreter [who] has generally picked up his knowledge of English in a random fashion.” This sort of literacy practice spoils what La Flesche sees as his own language’s power, its “beauty and picturesqueness, and euphonious playfulness, ... the gravity of diction which I have heard among my own people, and other tribes as well, are all but impossible to be given literally in English” (xix). To be sure, he and his playmates are teased by tribal members who do not go to school and are called “make-believe white men” (xx) in these exchanges, but the narrative trajectory of the book attempts to forge a balance between Omaha

and English literacy in a way that is quite remarkable given the coercive pedagogies La Flesche had to navigate.

The leader of the “middle five,” and the Omaha boy La Flesche most looks up to, is a slightly older student named Brush, who La Flesche discovers was orphaned as a child and does not return home on weekends like his other Omaha friends. Brush is “a bright fellow and quite a student,” and in the early part of the autobiography tutors Francis (called “Frank” by his friends) in his lessons from *McGuffey’s Second Reader*. Yet the reason Brush works hard to help Frank move ahead in the scholastically ranked classroom has little to do with assimilation. He simply wants him to “catch up” so “we can be in the same classes.” Again, the impetus to learning is community and friendship. Most important, in the evening after classes Brush becomes a traditional storyteller, entertaining his “middle five” clique with folk tales. Having first tried to read bible stories to the boys at night, Brush gives up when Francis tells him that he likes a story better when Brush “told it in his own simple way” (14). Throughout the rest of the book, when Brush appears he is associated with nighttime storytelling in the Omaha language.

Brush’s other significant role in the narrative is to represent the unraveling of traditional Omaha social structures in the face of American colonialism. Brush is alone, without mother and father (who have mysteriously disappeared in his infancy). Even his grandfather dies soon after taking charge of the boy. La Flesche underscores this aspect of Brush’s character by recounting how he brought Brush home for a weekend, despite the older boy’s protests and fear of being unwanted in the La Flesche home. In this chapter, La Flesche’s father virtually adopts Brush, after having the boy recite his lineage:

“Who are you, little brother?” asked father. For a moment Brush looked embarrassed, then lifting his eyes to father’s face answered, “I am Tae-son’s grandson and Sas-su’s [Frank’s] friend.”

When Francis’s father hears the name of the old chief, he immediately embraces the boy, saying, “I am glad you like the company of my boy. You must always come with him on his visits home from the House of Teaching” (20).

Yet, as he promised in his preface, La Flesche resists making Brush the hero of the autobiography by employing an episodic, almost picaresque

narrative in which various Native children appear in central roles within each “sketch.” Thus it is when La Flesche recounts the book’s archetypal scene of literary education, he does so through an exchange between the schoolmaster (called “Gray-beard” throughout the text) and an Omaha boy named Bob:

“Third reader,” called Gray-beard, and some ten or twelve boys and girls marched to the place of recitation, and put their toes on a crack in the floor. The reading lesson had some verses on “Summer,” prettily illustrated with a picture of a boy and a dog, the lad racing over a meadow, and the dog frisking at his side.

“Now, Robert, begin!” said Gray-beard to little Bob, who in some unaccountable way had reached the head of the class.

The boy put his index finger on the first word, and slid it along as he read, in a low, sing-song tone, “Come, come, come, the Summer is now here.” (65)

After Gray-beard dismissively slams his hickory rod down on the student’s desk to show his displeasure, he explains to the stricken boy, “Read it loud, as though you were out of doors at play.” With this admonition to be himself, to be the Omaha boy he is outside the schoolroom doors, Bob declaims heartily, “Come, come, come, the Summer is now here” (66). Rather than being silenced by English language literacy education, the boy shouts, releasing his fellows into a summertime world where school is at recess.²⁵

In a continued reversal of assimilative tropes, the book ends with Brush’s death, but unlike the traditional missionary representations of the repenting dying Indian, La Flesche’s version of the trope gives voice and agency to a specifically Omaha identity. As La Flesche enters his friend’s room at the close of the narrative, he sees a deathbed scene familiar to all nineteenth-century American readers: “A candle stood burning in the midst of a number of bottles on the little table near the head of the bed. I knelt by the bedside, and Brush put his arm around my neck. We were silent for a while, finally he whispered in the Omaha tongue: ‘I’m glad you came’ I’ve been wanting to talk to you. They tell me I am better; but I know I am dying” (150–51). Not only is the boy’s switch into the Omaha language significant, but so too is the way that La Flesche translates the conversation, eschewing any “romantic” diction or “othering” epithets. Even though the scene includes the requisite attestation of the dying boy’s faith in God (“you mustn’t be

troubled; I'm all right; I know God will take care of me"), La Flesche does not end the scene here. Instead, the boy's death extends to include his repatriation to the Omaha culture: "A breath of wind came and moved the flickering flame of the candle round and round. The boy stared fixedly through the vacant doorway. There was something strange and unnatural in his look as, with one arm still around me, he stretched the other toward the door, and, in a loud whisper, said, 'My grandfather! He calls me. I'm coming, I'm coming!'" (151).

After the Civil War, reading education in the United States again took a turn, this time in the direction of increasing standardization and centralization, and again, Native American pupils were often at the center of this transformation. With stereotype printing well established by 1865, the newly reconstructed union of the states demanded new "model" readers that could figuratively bridge the sectional divides that had split the country in two. Publishers and educators pushed for "national standards, [as] mass markets made school readers of the last third of the century more uniform, more conservative about new methods."²⁶ Along with a new emphasis on "modern efficiency" and "practical education," the 1870s and 1880s witnessed the proliferation of cheap printed reading matter such as dime novels and illustrated weeklies.

In Indian Country, this standardization and centralization of educational practice was brought into even sharper focus with the recommendations of the Peace Commission of 1868, whose establishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) included the following recommendation: "Under the plan which we have suggested the chief duties of the bureau will be to educate and instruct in the peaceful arts—in other words, to civilize the Indians."²⁷ Between 1868 and 1900, the federal government did indeed increasingly oversee the literacy education of America's Native peoples. Focusing on English-only curricula and an "industrial" school model in which Indian children were often literally worked to death in fields and shops, the BIA system rapidly became the anathema of Native parents and children everywhere.²⁸

It was against this sort of education that Nez Perce writer James Reuben protested when he placed the following note into a time capsule set into the cornerstone of the new school being erected on his reservation in 1880:

For the last two years Joseph's people[,] though in strange land, yet have made some progress in civilization. But take it in the right light—Nez Perce have been wrongly treated by the Government and it cannot be denied, not Nez Perce only but all other Indian Nations in America. I wrote this about my own people. I am a member of Nez Perce tribe and Nephew of Chief Joseph at present I am employed by the Government Interpreter and Teacher for my People. as before stated there are 1650 Nez Perce living now in Idaho Territory of which I belong that's where I got my education. When this is opened and read may be understood how the Indians have been treated by the Whiteman.

Writer

James Reuben

“Nez Perce” Indian²⁹

Woven into James Reuben's withering critique of settler colonialism is a recognition of the centrality of reading to making the plight of Native peoples visible in the nineteenth century. When his note was “opened and read,” Reuben believed, it would reveal the role “civilizing practices” had in the dispossession of the indigenous homelands. Between the time that Francis La Flesche recited the poems of Felicia Hemans from the pages of the *McGuffey Reader* and the 1880s, when James Reuben penned his polemic, literacy education in the common school movement had lost its innocence. The federal government took over the education of Indian children and forbade educating them in their Native languages. In the next chapter, we will examine the federal boarding school system and the deleterious effects it had on Indian communities.

Notes

1. Francis La Flesche, *The Middle Five* (1900; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 27.

2. Harvey C. Minnich, *William Holmes McGuffey and His Readers* (New York: American Book Company, 1936), 82. As Carr, Carr, and Schultz, in *Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers and Compositions Books in the United States* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), observe, “Nineteenth-century readers provide an

anthology of important cultural texts, often eclectic in genre and style, drawn from English writers as well as from those writing in the United States. Many of these passages were the staples of public performance, declamation contests, and parlor gatherings and circulated as quotations in literary and literate culture of the day” (104). Between 1836 and 1920, over 122 million *McGuffey Readers* were sold.

3. Edward Goodbird, *Goodbird the Indian, His Story* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming R. Revell Co., 1914), 46.

4. Reinhard Wittmann, “Was there a Reading Revolution at the End of the Eighteenth Century?,” in *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 285.

5. Barbara Hochman, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Reading Revolution* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 1.

6. William J. Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780–1835* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 7.

7. Schools modeled on the plan soon opened in Philadelphia, New Haven, Pittsburgh, and Washington City (later Washington, D.C.), and the plan was employed from the founding of the New York City public school system in 1806.

8. Ronald Rayman, “Joseph Lancaster’s Monitorial System and American Indian Education, 1815–1838, *History of Education Society* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1981): 400.

9. See Hilary Wyss, *English Letters and Indian Literacies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 130 and 228 (n. 32).

10. Rayman, “Joseph Lancaster’s Monitorial System,” 404.

11. Carl Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780–1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 95.

12. Goodbird, *Goodbird the Indian*, 48.

13. Kaestle, *Pillars*, 64.

14. *Ibid.*, 69.

15. *Ibid.*, 71, 91–92.

16. Noah Porter, in *Books and Reading, or What Books Shall I Read, and How Shall I Read Them?* (1870), voiced a similar point of view concerning literacy and books when he opened his text with this attention-getting example: “Were a South Sea islander to be suddenly taken up from his savage home and set down in one of the great cities of Europe,—among the many strange objects which he would see, one of the most incomprehensible would be the *public library*” (1). Porter continued, “The mystery of the library to the savage would be the books in it” (18).

17. Meg Noodin, personal correspondence with the author, March 2013.

18. Carr, Carr, and Schultz, *Archives*, 129.

19. Thrace Talmon, “Degeneracy of Stature,” *The National Era*, December 18, 1856, 1.

20. “Reading is Not Thinking, *Youth’s Magazine*, May 26, 1837, 157.

21. Quoted in Carr, Carr, and Schultz, *Archives*, 81.

22. *Ibid.*, 122.

23. *Ibid.*, 143.

24. For a definition of the term “intellectual sovereignty,” see Robert Warrior, *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 114.

25. For an insightful discussion of how such poetry recitations served American social and cultural needs, see Angela Sorby, *Schoolroom Poets: Childhood, Performance, and the Place of American Poetry, 1865–1917* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005).

26. Carr, Carr, and Schultz, *Archives*, 92.

27. See a transcript of the 1868 Peace Commission online: <http://eweb.furman.edu/~benson/docs/peace.htm> (accessed September 13, 2014).

28. The secondary literature on the Indian boarding schools is enormous. See especially, Basil Johnson, *Indian School Days* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990); K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called it Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Hans Mauro, *The Art of Americanization at the Carlisle Indian School* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011). For BIA publications directing teachers in literacy instruction, see *Course of Study for*

Indian schools of U.S. (microform): Industrial and literary, Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1901; *Easy Reading Lessons for Indian Schools* (microform), Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1875; and *Teaching Indian Pupils to Speak English*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1904.

29. James Reuben, "The Nez Perce Indians," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 12, no. 3 (September 1934): 363.

Suggested Readings

Archuleta, Margaret, Brenda J. Child, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, eds. *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1879–2000*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

Carr, Jean, Stephen Carr, and Lucille Schultz. *Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers and Compositions Books in the United States* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005).

Coleman, Michael C. "The Responses of American Indian Children and Irish Children to the School, 1850s–1920s: A Comparative Study in Cross-Cultural Education." *American Indian Quarterly* 23, no. 3/4 (Summer–Autumn 1999): 83–112.

La Flesche, Francis. *The Middle Five*. 1900. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978.

Sorby, Angela. *Schoolroom Poets: Childhood, Performance, and the Place of American Poetry, 1865–1917*. Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005.

Chapter 12: “Working” from the Margins

Documenting American Indian Participation in the New Deal Era

MINDY J. MORGAN

There is perhaps no more iconic image of the United States in the 1930s than Dorothea Lange’s *Migrant Mother* (figure 12.1) Taken in 1936 in Nipomo, California, it portrays a seated woman with a worried expression cradling an infant, with two of her young children leaning against her for support. It captured the hard and sometimes desperate reality of migrant farm workers as well as the endurance of these families. Initially published in the *San Francisco News* a few days after it was taken, the photo has been reproduced widely and has been the subject of popular and scholarly analysis, including a recent fictionalized account.¹ Much of the scholarly attention has focused on Lange and her version of the events that produced the image, but much less has been given to Florence Owens Thompson, the woman who appears in the photo. While Lange provided a narrative sketch of the encounter, she never named the woman in the photo, and Thompson’s identity was unknown until she identified herself in a newspaper interview in the 1980s. Thompson’s own accounting of the exchange diverges in important ways from Lange’s depiction. For example, Lange claimed the family was living off of frozen vegetables at the site, whereas Thompson stated that they had merely stopped temporarily to fix their car. However, the difference most salient to this chapter is Thompson’s self-identification as being of Cherokee descent, a fact never mentioned in Lange’s account.²

While there are not many clues as to how Thompson regarded her relationship to the Cherokee community, there are some important facts: she was born Florence Leona Christie in 1903 outside of Tahlequah in what was then Indian Territory, Oklahoma, to Jackson Christie and Mary Jane Cobb; and she was raised by her mother and her stepfather, Charles Ackman, who was of Choctaw descent. While she cannot be located on the 1907 Dawes Rolls, her father’s name is listed as being “Cherokee by blood,” and her mother’s surname of Cobb appears frequently on the same list. Since the

Cherokee Nation does not impose a minimum blood quantum on its members, the inclusion of her father on this list would mean that Florence and her descendants would be eligible to become citizens of the Cherokee Nation, though there is no evidence that they ever sought this status. The fact that her identity is contested is not surprising given the complicated politics of blood and belonging within the Cherokee community during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³ It is remarkable, however, that this image is assumed to be a woman of Euro-American descent and is almost never read as indigenous. What is it that allows viewers to see Florence Owen Thompson as a migrant farmworker but not as a Native woman? The answer lies in part with the ways in which the story of the New Deal has been told, beginning with carefully shaped narratives from the time period itself that clearly distanced the experiences of Native communities from that of dominant U.S. society. But this separation suggests another question: is there a way the migrant mother can serve as a bridge between two currents of U.S. history that have been written in tandem but with little intersection?

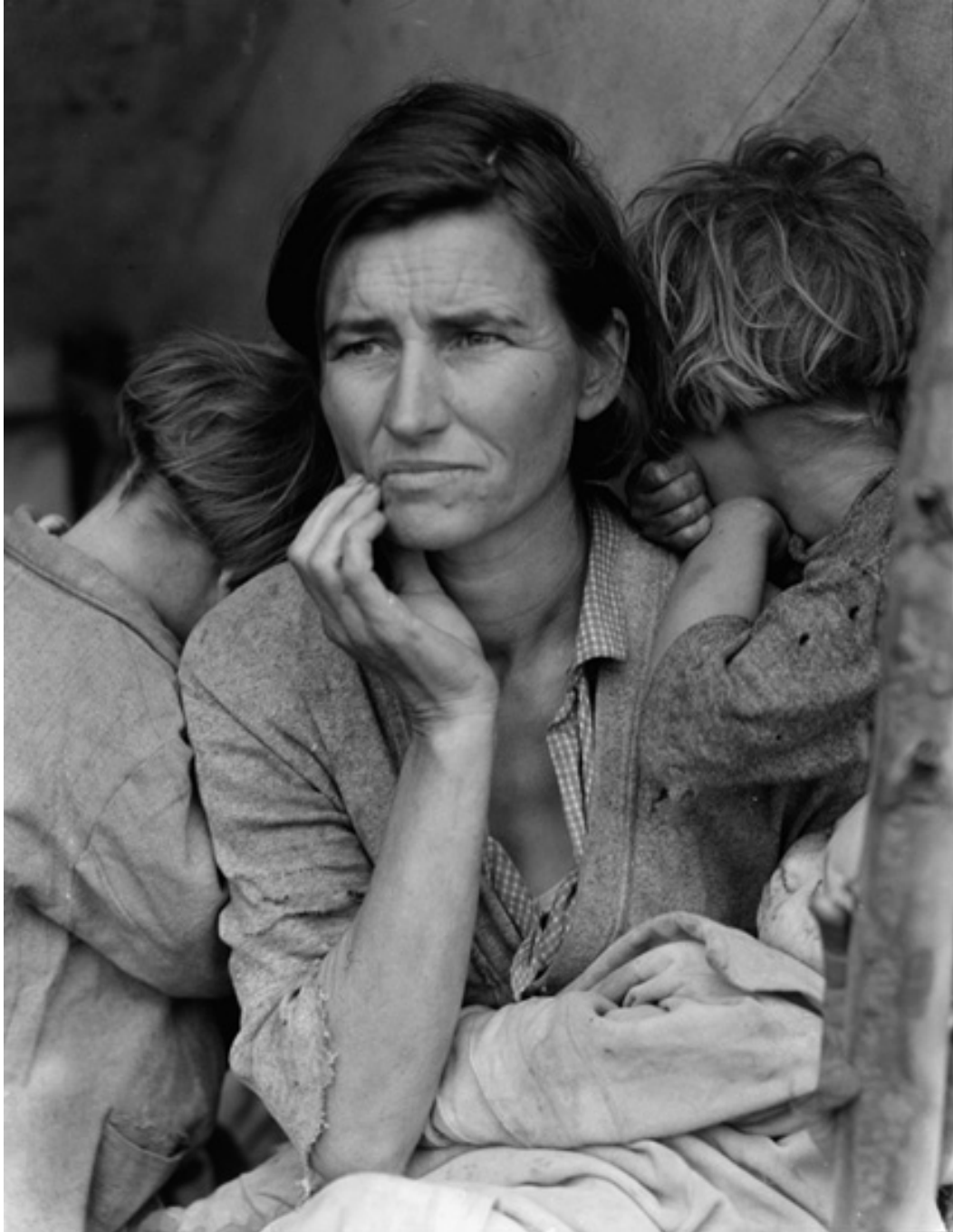


FIGURE 12.1 Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother*, 1936. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection (reproduction number, LC-USF34-9058-C).

The inability to read Thompson as representative of Native experiences during the 1930s and 1940s is attributable to two connected but distinct tendencies within U.S. historiography. The first is the relative invisibility of American Indian communities in dominant histories of the New Deal era.

Relegated to footnotes and asides, American Indians do not appear as central actors in comprehensive works discussing the political, cultural, and economic histories of this era.⁴ The second is the abundance of scholarship regarding the various federal acts often collectively referred to as the “Indian New Deal” that makes American Indians exceptional rather than part of the broader U.S. population.⁵ While legislative and political histories of federal Indian policy during this era are valuable, their focus has meant that the participation of tribal members in programs that benefitted other groups as well has not been systematically investigated, and connections between experiences have been left unexplored.

This chapter investigates the emergence of these separate New Deal histories and suggests some new ways to view their interaction by using the periodical *Indians at Work* (figure 12.2) as a primary source. The magazine chronicled the myriad ways in which Native communities participated in work programs over a twelve-year timespan, and it provides a critical view on the entire era. Further, the chapter focuses on the question of how labor histories can be improved by exploring the connections between dominant U.S. narratives and those of tribal communities through looking at contributions to the magazine. As will be demonstrated, contributions to the magazine do not just reveal ideas about work, but also about gender relations and racial configurations during this period. *Indians at Work* provides primary source material that links Native communities to larger New Deal narratives, and this inclusion enhances our understanding of the paradoxes and contradictions that characterized this period for the entire nation.

A Tale of Two New Deals

The Great Depression and the attempts at economic recovery through Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal reforms continue to garner popular as well as scholarly attention.⁶ The comprehensive government programs that strove to put Americans back to work and to create a federal safety net impacted almost every sector of society. In addition to the economic aspects, this period was a reimagining of political and cultural life within the United States, and it has been argued that it was a critical moment in which the relationship between the state and the citizen was changed in fundamental ways.⁷ The intense bureaucratic nature of the programs in Roosevelt’s “alphabet soup” means that there is an abundance of materials that exist in

the archival record. As a result, many scholarly works that concern this time are focused on one particular aspect of the relief programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps or the various federal arts, theater, and writers' projects. When treated comprehensively, the New Deal is most often discussed in terms of the political transformation it sparked and its legacies. While there are varying treatments of the experience of rural and urban communities, they are linked by shared concerns about the economic impact that the depression had on the multiple communities that constituted the U.S. population. But while many consider the impact of the New Deal on immigrant and African American communities, these works scarcely mention the impact on Native communities.

This is surprising given the abundance of scholarly literature on Native communities at this time. These works, however, largely focus on legislation specifically designed for tribal communities and do not overlap with the concerns of larger relief programs. Further, scholars have given an overwhelming amount of attention on the political restructuring of Native communities as a result of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), which advocated self-governance through the creation of tribal constitutions and corporate charters, and to appraisals and reappraisals of John Collier, the powerful commissioner of Indian affairs and his reforms of the Indian Office.⁸ As with comprehensive works regarding the New Deal, the focus on government action rather than community responses has narrowed the analyses of this time and obscured the large connections between the two.

The limited focus is partly the result of Collier's own attempt to control the narrative of his reforms and to position Native communities as alternatives to, rather than participants in, dominant U.S. society. Collier had a largely dystopic view of the United States, and he believed his attempts at reviving American Indian communitarian living would actually provide a model for the entire country. As such, he emphasized differences between traditional and modern practices and further enforced the idea that to be indigenous was to operate outside of the concerns of the modern world.⁹ His almost singular focus on a return to pre-European governing models and building a tribal land base emphasized the differences between American Indian communities and other groups within the United States. According to Collier's view, while the rest of the country was preoccupied with work and food security, American Indian communities' primary focus should be on reclaiming and enforcing their tribal separateness. While he certainly

recognized that these communities suffered from impoverishment and called for new opportunities in economic and social development, Collier placed the blame on the General Allotment Act and worked to dismantle it, largely ignoring the surrounding economic conditions resulting from the depression.

For Collier, to be indigenous was to remain on ancestral homes, participate in local governance, and practice traditional arts; communities that did not conform to this image were left out of many initiatives. In fact, many tribes were excluded under the provisions of the IRA, and others voted not to accept reorganization. Given the Indian Office's preoccupation with certain forms of indigeneity, the failure to see Florence Owens Thompson as representative of a Native experience becomes more understandable. However, this misrecognition suggests that many more tribal members whose experiences did not conform to Collier's vision have also been overlooked in scholarly literature, resulting in an erasure of particular indigenous experiences from the dominant U.S. narrative.

American Indian communities, even those who were not included or chose not to participate in reorganization, were eligible for economic relief and development through a number of federal programs established for the rest of the American population throughout the 1930s and early 1940s; however, these efforts have received scant scholarly attention. For example, Collier did help to establish a separate branch of the Civilian Conservation Corps for tribal communities initially called the Indian Emergency Conservation Work (IECW) and later renamed the Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division (CCC-ID) that concentrated on projects to help maintain reservation lands such as erosion control, forestation, and range management. There were critical differences between the CCC and the CCC-ID: the programs were run out of separate departments, enrollment requirements varied, and the members of the CCC-ID were not required to live in the camps that were the heart of the CCC. The work, however, was the same, and the impact on the surrounding environment was comparable. Despite the fact that over 85,000 tribal members took part in the program, their participation has hardly registered in secondary material related to the CCC.¹⁰ This is surprising, especially considering that in addition to the work itself, the CCC-ID also produced a periodical, *Indians at Work*, which documented the efforts of that program as well as others.

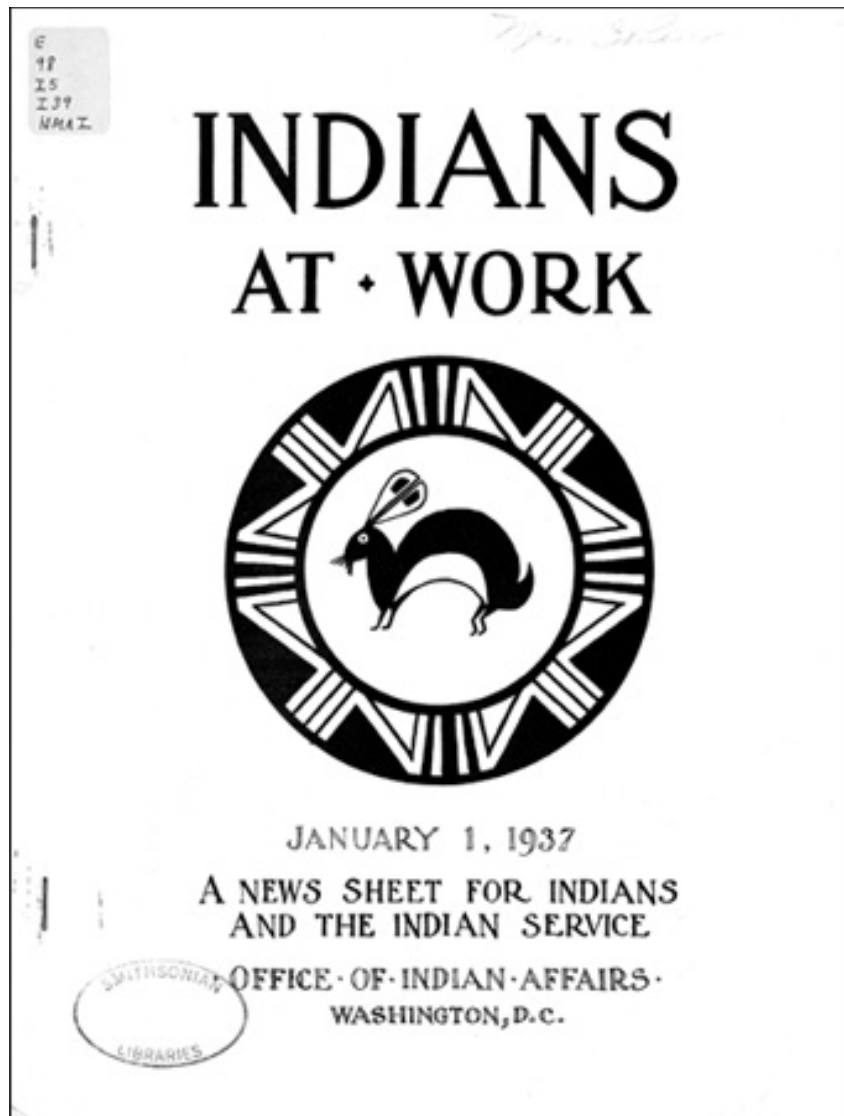


FIGURE 12.2 *Indians at Work* cover, January 1, 1937. OCLC 2657944, Catalog 88105. Office of Indian Affairs, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

During its twelve-year run, *Indians at Work* surveyed relief programs, chronicled new developments in Indian affairs, and served as an important conduit between various reservations.¹¹ First published in late 1933 as a biweekly publication, it became a monthly publication in November 1937. Tribal members were the primary audience for the periodical, which served as a way of informing and linking tribal communities together; however, government officials, employees of the Indian service, and non-Native readers also subscribed. Issues always began with an editorial by Collier himself that commented on either current issues in the Indian Office or a reflection on the topics included in the rest of the periodical.¹² Throughout

these texts, Collier maintained tight editorial control, choosing to highlight issues he was invested in such as educational reform and a focus on Indian arts. Debates over subjects that were contentious at the time, such as irrigation and livestock reduction, were defused by Collier's ability to set the terms of the discussion. It is undoubtedly limited since it largely reflects the vision of the Office of Indian Affairs, but the periodical as a whole provides a thorough account of the issues confronting Native communities at the time.

Despite its constraints, *Indians at Work* is a valuable source for tracking American Indian participation in the various relief programs and monitoring activities within reservation communities. First, it was the only comprehensive source that was national in its scope, and its run coincided with the span of the relief projects. Its long duration also provides a means of tracing the development of ideas and concerns over time. For example, it details the shift in attention as U.S. policy shifted from domestic work programs to war preparations in the early 1940s. Further, while the periodical promoted and sustained the ideology of the state, it also provided a venue for individual tribal members to submit contributions and to report on their own experiences. These local submissions covered a wide array of topics from work to social issues to cultural practices. Often, these contributions addressed historical and contemporary grievances. For example, in 1930 Peter Numvasa, chairman of the Hopi Tribal Council, submitted a statement regarding ceremonial etiquette that also took issue with unauthorized tourist performances.¹³ These submissions provide valuable counternarratives to the ones emanating from the Indian Office. Ultimately it is in the mundane submissions concerning the daily routine of the projects themselves that overlaps with dominant New Deal history become visible. The example that follows traces the theme of work; but one could just as easily trace themes including social reform, education, arts, and environmental transformation through various issues of the periodical.

Transforming Labor

Not surprisingly, *Indians at Work* gives a comprehensive account of the types of labor that American Indian communities engaged in during the New Deal era. Articles that range from brief reports to lengthy discussions detail projects from forest and pest management to building and erosion control. While the first part of each issue is dedicated to Collier's interests, the

magazine often ends with a section entitled “IECW Reports,” authored by local project supervisors who catalog the types of conservation projects and note the progress made. But the periodical offers more than a listing of types of employment, it offers a glimpse into how labor was conceived of and transformed during this time. The various contributions illuminate how communities were participating in projects (figure 12.3) that transformed the environment and, with that, altered ideas of what it meant to work on the land. It also details the ways in which wage labor was expanded during this time and demonstrates how the projects helped transform tribal members from rural agricultural workers to industrial wage laborers.

PICTURES FROM INDIAN EMERGENCY CONSERVATION CAMPS AND PROJECTS



An Indian Family Lives In Traditional Style At IECW Camp, Flathead



Building Range Fence. An Indian Crew,
Ft. Belknap



Fire Trail Work. Pima Indians At Ft.
Apache



Destroying Pests. Indian Crew Spraying
Mormon Crickets, Ft. Hall



Making Road. Mission Indians
An All-Indian Crew

FIGURE 12.3 Pictures from Indian Emergency Conservation Camps and Projects, *Indians at Work*, January 15, 1934, 22. OCLC 2657944. Catalog 88105. Office of Indian Affairs, Government Printing

As the official publication of the IECW, *Indians at Work* contains much discussion on how works projects were also transforming the natural environment of reservations. Many of the projects were about making land that had been ravaged by drought usable, and stories regarding erosion control, forestry, and irrigation have themes of regeneration. Projects such as fencing and rodent control were intended to be improvements in work in which community members were already engaged; however, other projects that focused on the transformation of the physical environment, such as building dams and grading roads, would ultimately alter the landscape and people's relationship to it.¹⁴ Similar to the experiences in the CCC, many of these projects were aimed at creating new tourist destinations and expanding markets for local communities.¹⁵ Mark Burns, the superintendent from the Consolidated Chippewa Agency, suggested that in addition to fire suppression, road projects in northern Minnesota "will open up hundred of lakes and make them accessible to tourists, fishermen, hunters and lovers of wild life. The Indians will have added opportunities as guides, as well as an added market for their garden products, their handiwork, their maple sugar, wild rice, and berries. They will be able to sell directly to the consumer in many instances without being dependent on the Indian trader."¹⁶ The projects were not just about improving established industries, but also about creating new ones.

As the example above suggests, the projects were about the expansion of wage labor within Native communities as well as engagement with other aspects of the market economy. American Indian participation in various forms of wage labor existed long before the creation of the Works Progress Administration and had become a critical part of community life for many tribes in the immediate decades proceeding the New Deal era.¹⁷ Relief work brought attention to these engagements as well as provided individuals with additional opportunities to make decisions about their own labor. In the December 15, 1934, issue of *Indians at Work* there is a lengthy discussion about hop picking in Washington authored by a local extension agent. The article highlights the long tradition of picking within the northwest coast communities and describes the ancillary trade and bartering that attend the migratory practice.¹⁸ These types of descriptions not only enforced the idea of tribal members as "good" workers, but also emphasize the ways in which

communities engaged with varying forms of wage labor and market exchanges.

Following this established pattern, the projects intersected with other facets of the relief program, creating additional opportunities for communities to earn money in exchange for their labor. For example, community garden projects raised crops for consumption, but surpluses were often sold to local camps.¹⁹ Native women found additional opportunities within camp life to create goods for bartering or sale. In one article describing the family camps in San Carlos, former field matron and member of the Apache community Myron Sippi describes the quilting work of the women. She writes, “We have the women to do this work at home in the morning, cleaning their home such as any washing to be done. In [the] afternoon about 2 o’clock we have our sewing class. ... I wish you could see them at work.”²⁰ In addition to extolling the productivity and drive of the women, she takes the opportunity to also criticize the management of the camps and the lack of dedicated space for the women’s work. While she attributes this to the camps’ frequent movement, she still asserts, “They never fix a place for me [or] for women to work. ... Maybe when they move to [a] new place, they might fix up a place for women.”²¹ Native women’s contributions to relief efforts furthered their own economic productivity and independence even if this contribution was often overlooked by project managers.

Indians at Work also gives a glimpse of the various ways that people both sought and found work. In one issue, Eli Tate, from the Metlakatla community in Alaska, discusses how he came to be a carver of totem poles for the tourist market after being crippled by rheumatism earlier in his life. He writes, “When I could not work like a strong man I decided to learn how to carve totems and I got it. This is the job I am doing now. I support myself and my two children.”²² Workers—men and women, young and old—had some control over the ways in which they spent their labors, thus revealing a much more dynamic economic field than often allowed in descriptions of relief work among Native communities. Relief programs also gave people some opportunity to select the type of work with which they wanted to engage. For example, Mark “Rex” Flying, an Assiniboine resident of Fort Belknap Reservation, had been approved for relief work and was initially assigned to a building project. When an opportunity came to transfer to the

state-sponsored writers' project, Flying eagerly agreed to the change and went on to author and collect stories from tribal elders.²³

Despite these examples of individual agency and movement, the larger narrative of both the CCC-ID and the CCC was the shaping of the individual worker and the skills that could be gained through the various types of labor. As with the focus on environmental transformation, there was an emphasis in both the CCC and the CCC-ID on the benefits of work for the individual laborer, albeit in different ways. In the CCC, there was an emphasis on transforming urban youth perceived as weak into healthy men through their outdoor labor.²⁴ Interestingly, this process was also a way of “nativizing” immigrant youth and transforming them into Americans.²⁵ For indigenous community members whose work was transforming their homelands, the relief projects were seen as providing what had been an “idle” group with the skills necessary to be successful in contemporary U.S. society. But as with urban youths, the work was intended to “Americanize” Native people in terms of learning the value of labor and becoming responsible for their own economic futures. Continual references to the industriousness of Native workers suggest attempts to counter the common stereotype of the time that held that tribal members were not productive citizens. Work on the projects was physically arduous and repetitive; however, this was seen in both the CCC and CCC-ID as a way of building the character and stamina that was needed in industrial work. As much as the projects were about transforming rural landscapes, they were ultimately about training a workforce that was adaptable to either rural or urban settings.

While it was initially conceived that young men participating in the CCC would return to the cities that were their homes and bring their acquired skills and training with them, this was not supposed to be the trajectory for participants in the CCC-ID. Tribal members were supposed to stay in the communities that they had helped shaped; however, *Indians at Work* traces the movement of many tribal members into the urban workforce in the early 1940s, thus disclosing the contradictory aims of the Office of Indian Affairs. While the stated objectives of the Collier administration were to strengthen tribal communities and their land base, this belies the ways in which they imagined the future of Native workers. As early as 1936, the Office of Indian Affairs began to track the records of participants for future job placements in either private industry or government service. Enrollees were evaluated on their supervisors' opinions on their “(1) Industriousness (2) Cooperativeness

(3) Initiative (4) Trade Ability (5) Supervisory Ability (6) Use of Leisure Time.” According to the office, “Each of these items has a bearing upon the possibility of placing the man in some other position and will help show the type of work for which he is fitted.”²⁶ While some of these jobs would likely remain on the reservation, the continued loss of workable tribal land through leasing and divided allotments as well as limited rural industries meant that many workers would have to find work elsewhere.

Ironically, through its emphasis on transforming rural participants into urban, industrial workers, *Indians at Work* foreshadows termination and relocation policies experienced by communities at the end of the war as well as an increase in racialization. Beginning in late 1940 and building throughout 1941, *Indians at Work* began to regularly feature stories of individuals leaving their communities to enlist in the military or take jobs in the war industry. Importantly, these articles focus on individuals and their personal stories as representatives of a generalized “American Indian” population, rather than as members of particular tribes. Therefore, the narrative arc of *Indians at Work* is as follows: community members experience a new, resurgent tribalism; they participate in work programs to gain experiences and skills; and, finally, they assume roles as “productive” members of the dominant society who retain an “American Indian” racial identity but without an easily recognizable tribal affiliation. This representative process, which came to rely on phenotype and other overt markers to identify tribal members, ultimately erased people such as Florence Owens Thompson from narratives of American Indians in the New Deal era.

Producing Historical Subjects and New Workers

Viewed from one perspective, *Indians at Work* is a jumble of competing voices that fails to provide a coherent narrative to the work of the IECW and the Indian Office. But this chaotic assemblage allowed for new discussions about what it meant to be indigenous in the mid-twentieth century to emerge. The publication not only foreshadowed changes in federal Indian policy as the government changed focus leading up to the war, but also intimated a rising activist awareness among communities themselves. Despite the attempts by the Indian Office to create a singular, and therefore controllable, vision of what it meant to be Indian in the twentieth century, the evidence

from the lived experiences of tribal members disassembles this notion. As a periodical, *Indians at Work* was able to capture the complexities of these lives as they unfolded in a rapidly changing social, economic, and cultural environment. American Indian communities are visible in New Deal scholarship and historiography, unlike other periods in U.S. history. But this view is limited, skewed, and always from the margins. Readily accessible primary sources such as *Indians at Work* provide an opportunity to not only bridge narrative descriptions of the era but to refocus and reframe the view in which American Indian experiences are central to understanding the period as a whole.

Notes

1. For a discussion of Lange, see Elizabeth Partridge, ed., *Dorothea Lange: A Visual Life* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994). For a comprehensive discussion of the photograph, see James C. Curtis, “Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother, and the Culture of the Great Depression,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 1–20. A more recent discussion of the photo in comparison to other FSA photos is in Mary Murphy’s article, “Picture/Story: Representing Gender in Montana Farm Security Administration Photographs,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 33, no. 3 (2001): 93–115. Marisa Silver’s *Mary Coin* (New York: Blue Rider Press, 2013) is a fictionalized account of both women based on the photograph.

2. For a discussion of Florence Owens Thompson, her reactions to the photograph, and her biography, see Geoffrey Dunn, “Photographic License,” *New Times: San Luis Obispo*, January 19–25, 1995. Various newspaper articles and websites include discussions of her biography and include references to her own oral history in which she states she was born “in a teepee.” This statement, among others, has been discussed in various comment sections on websites with some people casting suspicion on this claim. Barbara O. Natanson’s description, “Exploring Contexts: Migrant Mother,” in *American Women: A Gateway to Library of Congress Resources for the Study of Women’s History and Culture in the United States*, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awpnp6/migrant_mother.html (accessed September 12, 2014) refers to Florence Owens Thompson as being of Native American heritage.

3. For a discussion of citizenship and the Cherokee Nation, see Circe Sturm, *Blood Politics: Race, Culture and Identity in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and *Becoming Indian: The Struggle over Cherokee Identity in the 21st Century* (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of Advanced Research Press, 2011).

4. See Michael Hiltzik, *The New Deal: A Modern History* (New York: The Free Press, 2011); William E. Leuchtenburg, *The FDR Years: On Roosevelt and his Legacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Robert McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America, 1929–1941* (New York: Times Books, 1993). McElvaine's book *The Depression and the New Deal: A History in Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) does briefly discuss the Indian Reorganization Act; and Ronald Edsforth, *The New Deal: America's Response to the Great Depression* (London: Blackwell Press, 2000) makes a brief reference to it. Important scholarly sources such as Lizabeth Cohen *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) make no mention of Native communities despite their presence in urban centers at the time.

5. See Lawrence Kelly, *The Assault on Assimilation: John Collier and the Origins of Indian Policy Reform* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983); Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920–1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977); Elmer R. Rusco, *A Fateful Time: the Background and Legislative History of the Indian Reorganization Act* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000).

6. There has been renewed public attention to this time period with Ken Burns's recent documentary *The Dust Bowl* (2012), which was based on Timothy Egan's book *The Worst Hard Time* (New York: Mariner Press, 2005).

7. Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal* makes the claim that the New Deal, with the establishment of social security and other reforms, reshaped the individual's relationship with the federal government and supplanted older mutual aid societies and welfare capitalism.

8. See Graham Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934–45* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980); Akim Reinhardt, "A Crude Replacement: The Indian New Deal, Indirect Colonialism, and Pine Ridge

Reservation,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2005). For an excellent examination of reorganization within tribal communities, see Thomas Biolsi, *Organizing the Lakota: The Political Economy of the New Deal on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998). Paul Rosier’s book *Rebirth of the Blackfeet Nation, 1912–1954* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001) is an important, era-spanning account of the Blackfeet Nation that examines effects of the IRA through the termination era.

9. This dichotomy is evident in his editorial for the special issue of *Indians at Work* dedicated to art, in which he opposes “the Indian” and the “modern world.” For more on Collier’s ideas, see Philp, *John Collier’s Crusade*; John Collier, *From Every Zenith: A Memoir and Some Essays on Life and Thought* (New York: Sage Books, 1963); and Jennifer McLerran, *A New Deal for Native Art: Indian Arts and Federal Policy, 1933–1943* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009), 42–46.

10. Donald Parman’s article, “The Indian and the Civilian Conservation Corps,” *Pacific Historical Review* 40, no. 1 (February 1971): 39–56; and Calvin Glower’s article, “The CCC Indian Division: Aid for Depressed Americans, 1933–1942,” *Minnesota History* 43, no. 1 (Spring 1972): 3–13, both provide excellent overviews of the CCC–ID. However, the major works regarding the CCC, including Neil Maher’s recent book, *Nature’s New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), do not discuss the CCC-ID.

11. Some recent scholarly works have used the periodical *Indians at Work* as source material. These include Jennifer McLerran’s *New Deal for Native Arts* (2009); Brian Hosmer’s chapter, “‘Dollar a Day and Glad to Have It’: Work Relief on the Wind River Indian Reservation as Memory,” in *Native Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Brian Hosmer and Colleen O’Neill, 283–307 (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2004); and John J. Laukaitis, “*Indians at Work* and John Collier’s Campaign for Progressive Educational Reform, 1933–1945,” *American Educational History Journal* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 97–105.

12. While Collier wrote the editorials and served as the publisher of the periodical, the actual job of soliciting and selecting articles fell to a number

of editors who served over the course of the run. These included Mary Heaton Vorse and Floyd LaRouche, both of whom were journalists of the American labor movement.

13. “Hopi Indians Of Arizona Wish Public Informed of As To True Significance Of Ceremonials,” *Indians at Work* 7, no. 1 (September 1, 1939): 30.

14. “From IECW Reports,” *Indians at Work* 4, no. 20 (June 1, 1937): 49–51. This parallels the discussion in Maher, *Nature’s New Deal*, where he connects the work of the CCC with larger social and political transformations within the United States. Considering the direct impact the work of the CCC-ID as well as other relief programs had on reservation communities and the local landscapes in which Native people lived, this transformation demands further attention. The issue of damming is particularly important for communities in the northern plains, who were significantly affected by the damming of the upper Missouri as part of the Pick-Sloan Plan. Though not begun until 1944, the relief projects were the direct precursor to the project. See Michael Lawson, *Dammed Indians: The Pick-Sloan Plan and the Missouri River Sioux, 1944–1980* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994); and *Dammed Indians Revisited: The Continuing History of the Pick-Sloan Plan and the Missouri River Sioux* (Pierre, S.D.: South Dakota State Historical Society, 2009).

15. See Maher, *Nature’s New Deal* for a discussion of the links between the CCC, national parks, and the expansion of tourism.

16. Mark Burns, “Indians and the New Deal,” *Indians at Work* 2, no. 9 (December 15, 1934): 42.

17. The scholarly literature on Native communities, their participation in market economies, and the development of wage labor is robust. See Jessica Cattelino, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008); Hosmer and O’Neill, *Native Pathways* (2004); Chantal Norrgard, *Seasons of Change: Labor, Treaty Rights, and Ojibwe Nationhood* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); and Paige Raibmon, *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late 19th Century Northwest Coast* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005).

18. W. S. Murdock, “Hop Picking Time in Yakima,” *Indians at Work* 2, no. 9 (December 15, 1934): 39–41.

19. "Community Gardens at Tongue River," *Indians at Work* 1, no. 6 (December 1, 1933): 28.
20. Myron Sippi, "Work in the Family Camps at San Carlos," *Indians at Work* 1, no. 6 (December 1, 1933): 15.
21. Ibid., 15–16.
22. Eli Tate, "I Eli Tate," *Indians at Work* 3, no. 1: 26 (August 15, 1935).
23. H. N. Clark to Michael Kennedy, March 6, 1941, NARA-DEN, RG 75, Decimal Files 1917–1938 (8NS-075–96–443), Box 133. For a more comprehensive discussion of Flying's work for the Montana project, see Mindy J. Morgan, "Constructions and Contestations of the Authoritative Voice: Native American Communities and the Federal Writers' Project, 1935–41." *American Indian Quarterly* 29, nos. 1 & 2 (Winter 2005): 56–83; and "'This Piece of Authentic Work that Many a Novice has Failed to Get': Critiquing Anthropological Knowledge in the Montana Writers' Project," *Histories of Anthropology* 4 (2008): 83–105.
24. Maher, *Nature's New Deal*, 97–99.
25. Ibid., 109.
26. E. R. Burton, "Finding Regular Jobs for Indians with Good ECW Records," *Indians at Work* 1, no. 6 (November 1, 1933): 27.

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Chapter 13: Positioning the American Indian Self-Determination Movement in the Era of Civil Rights

JOHN J. LAUKAITIS

In the film *Smoke Signals*, written by Sherman Alexie (Coeur d'Alene/Spokane), Thomas Builds-The-Fire provides insight into how American Indians have been positioned in the history of the civil rights era. The film's central storyteller, Thomas, says, "During the sixties, Arnold Joseph was the perfect hippie, since all the hippies were trying to be Indians anyway. But because of that, he was always wondering how anybody would recognize when an Indian was trying to make a social statement."¹ Alexie directs attention to one of the common problems of teaching American Indian activism, namely, that the activism of American Indians during the 1960s and 1970s is commonly undifferentiated in its underlying meaning and grouped with civil rights activism. In this way, American Indian self-determination often becomes an extension of the civil rights movement in U.S. history survey courses. While self-determination did parallel the civil rights movement in time and, in many instances, form, self-determination was distinctly different from the pursuit of civil rights in its purpose and intent. Unlike the civil rights movement that pursued the rights of all American citizens, the self-determination movement centered on issues of sovereignty as American Indian tribes fought for their distinctive rights as independent, sovereign nations separate from the American government.²

In approaching American Indian activism during the civil rights movement, historians teaching U.S. history need to consider how they can lead students to understand that American Indian self-determination represented a separate movement within a larger framework of activism. Having students distinguish the differences between the sovereignty rights of tribal nations and the civil rights of individuals within the United States becomes a necessary starting point for integrating Indian activism during the 1960s and 1970s into history courses. Such an approach brings to light how American Indians fought for their right to be separate through a legal

demand of their distinctiveness and independence, not—as in the case of discriminated minority groups—to be integrated and given the same rights through a legal demand of their equality. Integrating American Indian activism into a U.S. history survey course possesses a great deal of potential for getting students to understand the particular aims of American Indians during the 1960s and 1970s and how those aims differed from minority groups fighting for equal protection under the law. Providing and analyzing distinctions between sovereignty rights and civil rights as they relate to American Indian and minority-group activism, respectively, allows students to expand their knowledge of social and political unrest in an era associated with protest and confrontations with power dynamics.

The Theme of Activism

In looking at how to best position American Indian history during the civil rights era into U.S. history survey courses, the perennial problem of having to focus on breadth rather than depth in such courses has to be addressed. By and large, U.S. survey courses focus on chronicling events rather than pursuing the cause, effect, and significance of events and discovering connections between events.³ A rethinking of how one approaches history—from learning facts toward analyzing the past—needs to take place. Efforts toward this end have been put forward, but the “facts first” approach still constrains survey courses.⁴ Aligning courses to the processes historians use in their own practice, such as “questioning, connecting, sourcing, making inferences, considering alternative perspectives, and recognizing the limits to one’s own knowledge,” rather than a covering of facts puts an emphasis on inquiry, not the coverage of static subject matter.⁵ With an emphasis on historical practice, offering opportunities for students to delve into key central themes throughout a course will allow for the meaningful integration of American Indian history. Rather than becoming an addition to the curriculum, American Indian history, if integrated authentically through the historical process and emphasized through key themes, can avoid the perception that American Indian history only deserves a place outside the dominant culture’s history. Student inquiry into a theme, for instance, on activism or the pursuit of rights during the 1960s and 1970s will allow students to begin thinking historically and discover that, while American Indian self-determination and the pursuit of sovereignty rights connect to the

general theme of activism, the purpose for the activism differed from the rights pursued by other groups.

Another challenge for historians integrating American Indian history into U.S. history survey courses is the limitation often placed upon them by survey texts. For instance, one common survey text, *America: A Narrative History*, by George Brown Tindall and David Emory Shi, now in its ninth edition, wedges “Native American Rights” between “Hispanic Rights” and “Gay Rights” in a chapter titled “Rebellion and Reaction: The 1960s and 1970s.”⁶ Designed for fact-based survey courses, these types of texts cover large expanses of time. In his study of U.S. history syllabi in higher education, Daniel J. Cohen shows that history instructors rely heavily on survey texts for their courses, and their courses align with the sweeping nature of the texts (e.g., American history to 1865 and American history since 1865).⁷ Furthermore, U.S. survey texts represent not only the dominant reading in many survey courses; they often represent the only reading.⁸ To place an emphasis on student engagement with the historical process and integrate American Indian history into a course, historians need to break away from a sole reliance on survey texts with their “mile-wide, inch-deep” perspective of history. With online journals, primary and secondary sources on the World Wide Web, and the ability to upload PDF files, historians can go beyond survey texts by developing a more meaningful reading list for students. When it comes to integrating American Indian history into a theme on, for example, activism or the pursuit of rights during the 1960s and 1970s, historians who rely primarily on survey texts will find themselves limited.

In U.S. history survey courses, the integration of American Indian history into the central theme of activism or the pursuit of rights during the 1960s and 1970s calls for readings that highlight how, on the one hand, American Indians fit within the general period of activism during the civil rights era and how, on the other hand, they differed in their pursuit of sovereignty rights through protests, demonstrations, and court battles. Also of import, well-selected readings can intentionally place an emphasis on American Indian scholars who have clarified the distinctions between American Indian activism and minority activism during the civil rights era. With the caveat that no one individual represents the whole, the inclusion of American Indian scholars writing on issues of sovereignty gives voice to those who have

historically been excluded from the writing of U.S. history in general and American Indian history in particular.⁹

Readings on American Indian Activism during the Era of Civil Rights

Historians teaching survey courses are not all going to have a depth of knowledge on American Indian self-determination as it applies to sovereignty rights. One of the purposes of this chapter is to provide historians with recommended texts and online resources that can be used for reference and, in some instances, assigned in a survey course. Selections from primary and secondary sources on American Indian activism and sovereignty rights can provide students with a general framework for understanding how social and political activism during the 1960s and 1970s—while perhaps one dimensional in the eyes of undergraduates—possesses great complexity, especially as one begins to compare the demands of American Indians for sovereignty rights to the demands of minority groups for equal protection under the law through, for example, voting rights, school integration, and nondiscriminatory employment and housing practices.

A reading from an American Indian perspective that focuses on the distinct differences between American Indians and minority groups in the civil rights era is Vine Deloria Jr.'s chapter "The Red and the Black" in his now-classic *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. Published in 1969, the book possesses a then-contemporary analysis of the ways in which social and political forces defined American Indian and minority causes as analogous to one another. In addressing this, Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux) wrote, "Since the most numerous group has been the blacks, programs designed for blacks were thought adequate for the needs of all groups. When one asks a liberal about minority groups, he unconsciously seems to categorize them all together for purposes of problem solving."¹⁰ Throughout the chapter, Deloria examined the civil rights movement from an Indian perspective and analyzed the reasons many American Indians intentionally kept a distance from it. For Deloria, "Peoplehood is impossible without a cultural independence, which in turn is impossible without a land base."¹¹ Here, he captured one of the essential differences that he saw at the time, namely, that cultural separateness and the right of land ownership as legally

defined through treaties served as a significant distinction between the American Indian pursuit for sovereignty and groups that pressed for equality. On this point, Deloria ended his chapter with, “The future, therefore, as between the red, white, and black, will depend primarily upon whether white and black begin to understand Indian nationalism.”¹² By nationalism, Deloria argued for a recognition of sovereign status and for tribes to be legally set apart from the United States.¹³ This chapter, for students being introduced to sovereignty rights as distinct from civil rights, would serve as a solid primer on the reasons why American Indians did not frame their activism in terms of equality, for self-determination depended on sovereignty rights, those rights that by treaty enabled American Indians to direct their own tribal nations.

Another reading that stresses the distinctions between sovereignty rights and civil rights is Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle’s *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty*. Chapters within this text, however, contain a more sophisticated approach to understanding the distinctions and include some detailed policy analysis that U.S. history survey students might find challenging. With that said, the text does offer an insightful and informative perspective on how civil rights dominated policy decisions and affected American Indians fighting for sovereignty rights. For example, Deloria and Lytle explained how the 1968 Indian Civil Rights Act—a title that will naturally imply a positive outcome to students—actually threatened aspects of tribal sovereignty. “The Indian Civil Rights Act (ICRA),” Deloria and Lytle wrote, “radically changed the substance of tribal courts. It incorporated the First Amendment and Fourth through Eighth Amendments into a package of enumerated rights that tribal governments were forbidden to abridge.”¹⁴ As Deloria and Lytle explained, “The Indian Civil Rights Act transforms the aboriginal sovereignty by objectifying it in institutions designed by non-Indians.”¹⁵ Presentation of such arguments will begin to help students understand the distinctions between sovereignty rights and civil rights as rights of a separate nation from those of individuals within a nation, respectively. Furthermore, it will also allow students to see that the concept of civil rights do not imply—as most undergraduates perhaps commonly assume—an ultimate benefit when considered from American Indian perspectives.

To develop more activist-centered illustrations of the fight for American Indian self-determination and draw clear distinctions of how the struggle for

sovereignty rights differed from the struggle for civil rights, integrating readings that examine what is commonly referred to as the Red Power movement will provide students with an understanding of how American Indian activism was similar in form but distinctly different in its underlying purposes. Three readings on the Red Power movement include Daniel M. Cobb's *Native Activism in Cold War America*, Joane Nagel's *American Indian Ethnic Renewal*, and Troy R. Johnson's *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island*. Written by non-Indian scholars, these three works position and distinguish American Indian activism in its social and political context and emphasize issues of sovereignty. For U.S. historians integrating American Indian activism into their courses, selections from these texts would provide students with an analysis of the distinctiveness of the Red Power movement and its call for tribal sovereignty.

Cobb's *Native Activism in Cold War America* is one of the most thorough analyses of American Indian activism during the era of civil rights. His treatment moves issues of sovereignty into the foreground, thereby establishing the necessary groundwork to understand American Indian protests as truly distinct not in form but in their underlying causes. Cobb writes, "Indeed, one of the central themes running through this book is how Native and non-Native people translated the politics of 'cold war civil rights' into the language of tribal sovereignty."¹⁶ Cobb reveals how new organizations such as the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) employed strategies existent within the civil rights movement and formed alliances with civil rights campaigns but remained separate in their pursuit of sovereignty rights. His treatment of, for example, the NIYC's contributions to fish-in demonstrations throughout the Pacific Northwest and the organization's participation in the Poor People's Campaign illustrates the ways in which American Indians pursued rights distinctively different from those pursued by minority groups.¹⁷ American Indians were agents of their own activism and intentionally used the already existent structure of activism, when necessary, to meet their own ends. Selections of Cobb's work would provide students in a survey course with a solid foundation for understanding how American Indians debated, defined, and moved forward on issues of sovereignty through detailed accounts and analyses of lesser-known struggles for sovereignty during the era of civil rights.

The underpinnings of the Red Power movement cannot be separated from long-standing issues related to tribal status and treaty rights. For historians

guiding students to understand that social and political protests came, in many instances, at the same time but were fueled by different charges, Joane Nagel's *American Indian Ethnic Renewal* examines the key events that are most commonly associated with the Red Power movement and frames them within the fight for sovereignty. In her chapter "Red Power: Reforging Identity and Culture," she examines the fish-ins of the 1960s, the occupation of Alcatraz Island, the Trail of Broken Treaties, and the American Indian Movement's stand at Wounded Knee. The chapter positions American Indian activism as paralleling the civil rights movement but remaining distinct from it. Nagel, for instance, quotes Robert C. Day's important point that "Indian leaders have generally shown very little 'borrowing' of tactics from either white or black culture without substantial innovation and alteration in 'the Indian way.'"¹⁸ She directs particular attention to the causes of Indian activism that concentrate on treaty-based rights. Her section on the Trail of Broken Treaties, if taken from the chapter, would provide students with an examination of how activism connected with the campaign for sovereignty rights and was clearly differentiated from other campaigns for civil rights.¹⁹

Balancing the interest of students in a survey course with the intention of deepening an understanding of American Indian activism, self-determination, and sovereignty in the era of civil rights, the history of the sustained American Indian protest on Alcatraz Island will establish a clear entry point. Troy R. Johnson's *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island* gives a thorough account and analysis of Alcatraz Island as a sphere of protest during the 1960s and 1970s. Johnson's book contextualizes the protests by making clear the reasons for the buildup to the 1964 and 1969 occupations and identifies how the protests differed from the larger civil rights movement. As Donald L. Fixico writes in his foreword to the work, "As other groups spoke out about their identities and equal rights, the time was right for Native Americans to be heard. Years of anger and frustration at their endless struggle with the federal bureaucracy led to the occupation that would launch a new American Indian history of self-determination and identity that came directly from the Indians themselves."²⁰ Providing students with selected passages from the Indians of All Tribes' press statements and transcribed interviews with many of the participants included in Johnson's work would enable them to examine some of the contrasts between the occupation of Alcatraz Island with the civil rights protests of minority groups occurring at the same time.

The examination of primary sources on the primary reasons for American Indian activism, namely self-determination and sovereignty, will allow for a more inductive approach for enabling students to grasp how American Indian activism was rooted in a demand quite distinct from the pursuit of civil rights. On some particular methods for integrating primary sources, historians can refer to Lendol Calder's "Uncoverage: Toward a Signature Pedagogy for the History Survey" from the *Journal of American History*.²¹ Juxtaposing, for instance, selected primary sources that give an American Indian perspective with the perspectives of other minority groups during the civil rights era would allow students to approach the contrast between sovereignty rights from civil rights heuristically. With scholars largely in agreement that the 1961 American Indian Chicago Conference (AICC) represents the beginning of the American Indian self-determination movement as it connected to American Indian activism of the 1960s and 1970s, providing students with the AICC's *Declaration of Indian Purpose* affords them an opportunity to discover how American Indians framed self-determination and sovereignty during a period of growing dissent regarding changing federal policy.²²



FIGURE 13.1 Charles Berta photograph of a cell block entrance, Alcatraz, following the Indian occupation. Charles Berta Alcatraz Photographs, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, GOGA 17588a.

In reading and analyzing the *Declaration*, students can deduce in their own words the essential points and, when juxtaposed against primary sources advocating civil rights, compare and contrast the primary messages. Passages from the *Declaration* such as, “The right of self-government, a right which the Indians possessed before the coming of the white man, has never been extinguished; indeed, it has been repeatedly sustained by the courts of the United States,” will point to one of the main issues within the document, namely, the issue of sovereignty.²³ Available on Google Books, the *Declaration* is an easily accessible document that could be integrated into a survey course as required or supplemental reading.

Another entry point for primary sources that highlights American Indian sovereignty in relationship to activism is centering on influential American Indian activists. Just as within the civil rights movement, leaders emerged who defined positions and a vision for change. Clyde Warrior (Ponca) was one such figure. A founder of and leader within the National Indian Youth Council, Warrior strategically positioned his cause at times within larger protest movements to strengthen his efforts and reach a wider audience. His speech before the National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty in 1967, for example, criticized the War on Poverty for its paternalism and ultimate threat to sovereignty.²⁴ Contrasting Warrior's position on the War on Poverty with the rhetoric of politicians and perhaps minority voices that supported War on Poverty programs could serve as a way for students to recognize how some American Indians viewed the federal bureaucratic structure and why—because of their past experience within such structures—they rejected these programs. Warrior's position rested on the principle that cultural and political sovereignty would only come through tribal self-determination.²⁵ His “We Are Not Free” speech, in this light, would establish a framework for students to discuss how sovereignty rights represented the rights of a tribal nation and greatly differed from the rhetoric of key figures within civil rights protests. Warrior's “We Are Not Free” speech is available on several websites and could easily be accessed by students for a survey course.

Integrating American Indian Activism into the U.S. Survey Course Thematically

Historians can use the themes of activism and rebellion to introduce and examine issues of American Indian self-determination and sovereignty in the 1960s and 1970s. In U.S. survey courses, students possess a high level of interest in the protests and confrontations that marked many movements during the era, not only in the United States but also around the world. The American Indian occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969 can serve as an entry point for integrating American Indian activism within other protest-confrontation and activist movements. This historic episode situated in the midst of large moments of social and political upheaval can begin directing attention to the essential distinctions between American Indian battles for sovereignty rights and the battles for civil rights occurring at the same time. In a time marked by the 1967 riots in the cities of Detroit and Newark, the

assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, and the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, the close of the 1960s also represented a critical time for American Indians as they sought to bring national attention to their calls for self-determination and sovereignty rights.

The integration of the occupation of Alcatraz Island can lead to what becomes a direct conversation between the historic episodes that are commonplace in U.S. survey courses and the largely ignored episodes of American Indian protests during the 1960s and 1970s. Using the proclamation of the Indians of All Tribes from Alcatraz Island, students can explore the central issues presented in the writing. As the first section of the proclamation begins with, “We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians *by right of discovery*,” immediate attention to the issue of land comes to the foreground (figure 13.1).

Other issues within the first section including references to federal trust status and treaties directly connect to land rights and shape the satirical edict.²⁶ Comparing, for example, film footage from *Alcatraz Is Not an Island*, a public-television documentary, showing Richard Oakes (Mohawk) delivering the proclamation with speeches such as the one given by President Lyndon Baines Johnson on April 11, 1968, on signing the Civil Rights Act of 1968 will draw attention to the distinct differences between sovereignty rights and civil rights.

Oakes’s reading of the proclamation makes reference to the Indian Claims Commission’s decision that awarded American Indians in California forty-seven cents per acre for their land holdings. The 1964 monetary settlement provides a context to understand treaty violations and subsequent violations of redress that the Indians of All Tribes sought to bring to light through their protest on Alcatraz Island.²⁷ Presenting treaties as international agreements and the breaching of those agreements as injustices to independent, sovereign nations helps frame American Indian activism in the 1960s and 1970s as distinct from the activism for civil rights through examining how the violations and injustices differed in law. President Johnson’s speech on the Civil Rights Act of 1968 mentions the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1965. His words speak to the attempt by the federal government to ensure equality for all of its citizens from voting rights to housing rights. What becomes clear when examining these two speeches in the context of the late 1960s is that Oakes is demanding the rights of a

legally sovereign people be honored, whereas Johnson is reporting on the civil rights of all citizens within the United States. The recognition of rights that are apart from the United States through federal treaties (i.e., sovereignty rights) and within the United States through the U.S. Constitution (i.e., civil rights), then, can help students to distinguish that the goals of American Indians differed greatly from those other groups pursued at the same time.

Positioning the American Indian self-determination movement in the era of civil rights should, first and foremost, avoid categorizing American Indian activism as an extension of civil rights activism. For historians integrating American Indian activism into their survey courses, the distinction between sovereignty rights and civil rights needs to be clear. Students see protests and demonstrations during the 1960s and 1970s as being essentially for the same purpose, equality. This, when it comes to American Indian activism, is especially common. In addition to dedicating attention to American Indian history as an important subject unto itself, giving students opportunities to delineate between the causes for American Indian activism and the activism of, for example, African Americans can give students a fuller understanding of the distinctions between sovereignty rights and civil rights. Through this distinction, a broader goal of helping students understand the problems associated with movements as historical constructs becomes possible as they analyze the various voices within the period commonly approached as the era of civil rights.

Notes

1. Sherman Alexie, *Smoke Signals: A Screenplay by Sherman Alexie* (New York: Hyperion, 1998), 38.

2. On American Indian sovereignty rights, see, for example, David E. Wilkins and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *Uneven Ground: American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).

3. Sam Wineburg, "Beyond 'Breadth and Depth': Subject Matter Knowledge and Assessment," *Theory into Practice* 36, no. 4 (Autumn 1997): 257.

4. Lendol Calder, "Uncoverage: Toward a Signature Pedagogy for the History Survey," *Journal of American History* 92, no. 4 (March 2006): 1361.

5. Ibid., 1364.
6. George Brown Tindall and David Emory Shi, *America: A Narrative*, Vol. 2 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013), 1364–67.
7. Daniel J. Cohen, “By the Book: Assessing the Place of Textbooks in U.S. Survey Courses,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1407.
8. Gary J. Kornblith and Carol Lasser, “‘The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth’: Writing, Producing, and Using College-Level American History Textbooks,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (March 2005): 1380.
9. See, for example, Angela Cavender Wilson, “American Indian History or Non-Indian Perceptions of American Indian History?,” in *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians*, ed. Devon A. Mihesuah (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).
10. Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 170.
11. Ibid., 180.
12. Ibid., 196.
13. Ibid., 241.
14. Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 210.
15. Ibid., 212.
16. Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 4.
17. Ibid., 94–95, 156–57. On the topic of fish-ins, also see Bradley G. Shreve, “‘From Time Immemorial’: The Fish-in Movement and the Rise of Intertribal Activism,” *Pacific Historical Review* 78, no. 3 (August 2009): 403–34.
18. Joane Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 161.
19. Ibid., 168–69.

20. Donald L. Fixico, foreword to *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism*, by Troy R. Johnson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), xi–xii.

21. Calder, “Uncoverage,” 1358–70.

22. On the significance of the American Indian Chicago Conference, see, for example, Nancy Oestreich Lurie, “Sol Tax and Tribal Sovereignty,” *Human Organization* 58, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 108–17; Cobb, *Native Activism*, 30–57; Laurence M. Hauptman and Jack Campisi, “The Voice of Eastern Indians: The American Indian Chicago Conference of 1961 and the Movement for Federal Recognition,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 132, no. 4 (December 1988): 316–29.

23. *Declaration of Indian Purpose* (Chicago: American Indian Chicago Conference, 1961), 16.

24. Cobb, *Native Activism*, 156–57.

25. Paul McKenzie-Jones, “‘We Are Among the Poor, the Powerless, the Inexperienced and the Inarticulate’: Clyde Warrior’s Campaign for a ‘Greater Indian America,’” *American Indian Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 249.

26. See Troy R. Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and The Rise of Indian Activism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 53–55.

27. On the 1964 Indian Claims Commission’s settlement with the Indians of California, see, for example, Robert F. Heizer and Alfred L. Kroeber, “For Sale: California at 47 Cents Per Acre,” *Journal of California Anthropology* 3, no. 3 (Winter 1976): 38–65.

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Chapter 14: American Indians Moving to Cities

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Isabel Wilkerson, in her comprehensive tome on the subject, referred to the Great Migration of some 6 million African Americans from the South as “perhaps the biggest underreported story of the twentieth century.”¹ The history of American Indians in the years after the first Wounded Knee (1890) also falls into the largely underreported category. And within the field of American Indian history, the study of the massive demographic upheaval of the twentieth century has been, with a few exceptions, heavily marginalized. By the end of the twentieth century the population of American Indians in the United States grew from its nadir of 250,000 in 1900 to nearly 3 million. By the beginning of that century American Indians had begun to migrate, individually and in family groups, from their homelands to far reaches of the United States, and by the end of the century some three-quarters would live off of reservations. Both trends—population growth and off-reservation living—continue to increase in Indian Country. According to the 2010 census, 78 percent of the 5.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States live off of reservation lands.²

A key component of this demographic shift was the development of urban American Indian communities across the United States. The groundwork for the creation of these communities was laid during the Progressive Era, and the communities ballooned in the years following the Second World War. American Indians made up perhaps one percent of the U.S. population during the twentieth century, even after their population growth, and in cities American Indians generally represented a tiny minority of the population. Politically, economically, and socially they were rarely noticed, so that they became in most places an “invisible minority.”³ This invisibility is apparent over the course of the time period our analysis explores, from the first Wounded Knee in 1890 to the second Wounded Knee in 1973. The process of urbanization and the development of urban American Indian communities during these years are reflective of changes in Indian Country and the United States, and provide insights into both.

In this essay, we will examine three places in which the study of American Indian urbanization interconnects with U.S. history. The first is the impact of the Progressive Era reform movements sweeping the country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on individual Indians. During the Indian boarding school era, a cadre of western-educated American Indians began to broaden their view of what historian Frederick Hoxie has referred to as “This Indian Country” to include new habitations sometimes far from their original homelands.⁴ Many individual Indians were trained by and developed alliances with Progressive Era reformers, and their actions and relationships provide insight into both the demographic shift in Indian Country and the reform movement.

Second, as America began to work toward homogenization in the post-World War II era, American Indians—both by choice and by federal government pressure—left their reservation communities and moved to cities in ever-increasing numbers. Some ardently pursued the American dream with success; others were locked out. Finally, in the civil rights era and the years following, urban American Indians began to develop increasingly sophisticated methods to pursue their own processes of self-determination. In the final analysis, the result of these twentieth-century changes illuminates the successful efforts of a small, vibrant, unique minority population to adapt to rapid change by combining their societal core cultural values with core American values to carve out new spaces in a modern world. Although we will discuss urbanization and demographic shifts as national phenomena, we will focus our stories on Chicago and the Midwest, the heart of America.

American Indians in Cities before the Twentieth Century

The history of urbanization in the Americas long predates the coming of Europeans to these lands. The largest urban center in what is now the United States, referred to as “the third largest prehistoric construction in the [western] hemisphere,” was Cahokia, home to tens of thousands of people and located in what is now Illinois, not far from St. Louis, Missouri. Cahokia was abandoned by about 1300 a.d.⁵ As Europeans moved into America and developed cities in strategically located areas, they did so on lands acquired from American Indians, and in places that Indians had abandoned or long used in varieties of ways. From the earliest times, the Indians of those

regions developed and maintained relationships with the growing urban areas.

Most American cities have a long-standing interrelationship with the tribal peoples of the regions in which they are located. In some places it was almost impossible, in the early years of urbanization, not to recognize the American Indian population. In mid-eighteenth-century Green Bay, Wisconsin, for example, some 81 percent of the households were of American Indian or mixed-blood Indian and white ethnic background.⁶ As migrant and immigrant populations in U.S. cities grew, however, American Indians became increasingly marginalized in those places, until in most cases they were almost completely forgotten. As historian Coll Thrush has observed in his book *Native Seattle*, in the popular mind, “Native history and urban history—and, indeed, Indians and cities—cannot coexist, and one must necessarily be eclipsed by the other.” He posits that the reason for this is that “Indians and cities coexist at opposite ends of the American imaginary; one represents the past, while the other represents the future.” One role of urban American Indian history is to bring Indians into our consciousness of the urban landscape.⁷

As U.S. cities developed throughout the nineteenth century, some individual American Indians remained connected to them even after their tribes had been forced west. Some broke ties with their tribal communities and remained living in or near cities, for example. Others traded such things as foods that they hunted, fished, or gathered to expanding urban markets. By the late nineteenth century some American Indians became increasingly familiar with U.S. cities as they provided entertainment as part of Wild West shows or athletic events. Not only did Indians maintain a presence in urban areas, by the late nineteenth century that presence began to grow.⁸

The Progressive Era

At a time when the United States itself was beginning the process of urbanization in earnest, American Indians began to develop ways to make cities their homes away from home. In some ways the boarding school era laid the foundation for the modernizing changes that began to impact Indian Country in the early twentieth century. As the United States itself was becoming a more unified nation rather than a collection of distended, largely unconnected communities, so too was Indian Country. The national network

that Indians would develop, known to academics as “pan-Indianism” and to American Indian people as an extension of kinship networks beyond the biological, was both fomented in the boarding schools and a product of the Progressive Era.

Those western-educated American Indians moving to America’s urban centers would begin the process of creating a new future while maintaining values of the past—and their connections to their homelands. By the early twentieth century a small but steadily increasing number of “migrating Indians” were making cities their homes, either permanently or temporarily.⁹ Many of these people had attended or graduated from off-reservation boarding schools. While most American Indian boarding school students returned to their reservation homes, some no longer felt they fit in there; others moved to cities for the opportunities promised by their new training. Some moved to cities near their families and reservation homelands; others moved far away. A cadre of American Indian activists who came of age in Progressive Era America became outspoken advocates of Indian rights. These individuals worked hard to define a place for American Indians in the modern world, and to redefine American perceptions and definitions of who Indians were and how they related to America. They formed alliances with progressives and presented a forward-looking perspective of American Indians during a time when society at large, including policymakers, academics, and purveyors of popular culture, viewed Indians as representatives of “a vanishing race.”¹⁰

The hotbed for early twentieth-century American Indian off-reservation activism was Chicago, Illinois. The most well-known American Indian activist there, Dr. Carlos Montezuma, a Yavapai man and a renowned stomach surgeon, devoted his life to advocacy for Indian people. His experiences help illuminate the adaptations American Indians were undergoing and the ways that urban American Indian leadership attempted to negotiate that. As a child of five or six, Montezuma had been kidnaped by Pima Indians in a raid on his family’s village in 1871 and sold to Carlos Gentile, a white man who adopted and raised him. Despite not spending most of his childhood within a Native community, Montezuma became one of the strongest advocates for American Indian rights. After attending medical school and before moving to Chicago for virtually the last quarter-century of his life, Montezuma worked as a physician at Carlisle Indian

Industrial School, where he developed what would be a lifelong friendship with its founder, Richard Henry Pratt.¹¹

In addition to his medical work, Montezuma took for himself the role of making individual American Indians—whether visitors or permanent residents—feel welcome in Chicago during the time he lived there from the late 1890s to 1923 when he died. He did so both by caring for those less fortunate and by hosting individual Indians visiting or passing through the city. American Indians from a broad variety of different tribes from across the United States moved to and passed through Chicago in these years, which provided a common meeting ground for individual Indians from many different backgrounds. Montezuma also spent a great deal of time and effort advocating for American Indian rights, both locally and before entities such as the federal government. In conducting his advocacy for a multiracial population from an urban platform, he was working to reframe common perceptions of Indians as rural peoples of the past to modern peoples with various places within contemporary society. His work exemplifies the shift in attitude Americans would need as, in Philip Deloria's words, they increasingly interacted with "Indians in Unexpected Places."¹²

This type of advocacy established the basis for the creation of a new community among American Indians in the city. Montezuma was undeniably the individual who fought most consistently for American Indian rights in the first quarter of the twentieth century from an urban setting. He spoke to local non-Indian organizations, wrote letters to local and national newspapers, and worked with American Indian leaders in various ways to advocate for Indian rights.¹³ This was the beginning of a long-standing effort by American Indian leaders in Chicago to educate non-Indian students and educators about American Indian history, culture, and politics. Montezuma established a model that was carried on by Chicago and other urban Indian leaders through the rest of the century. They advocated for recognition of the place of American Indians in the city and the modern world. This advocacy both created community and created space for American Indian community within the city.

Despite Montezuma's belief that modernization provided the best opportunities for American Indians to survive in contemporary society, he did not give up ties to his home reservation community or to his American Indian friends. Many of his actions clearly reflected historic American Indian community values—even though he was raised by a white man.

Besides his assertive advocacy work on the national level, Montezuma played a low-key yet perhaps more significant role in Chicago. He carried on his advocacy both within and outside of his profession as physician. In doing this he began to carve out a definition and example of the role of American Indian leaders in an urban setting. Montezuma was a genius at navigating relationships with reservation communities, with American Indians living in and passing through the city, and with the non-Indian population. He would establish an ongoing pattern of advocacy on two levels: advocacy on behalf of American Indian individuals in relation to city life, and advocacy to change the city's and the larger American society's perceptions of the place of American Indians within it. Montezuma published his own newspaper, *Wassaja*, which circulated nationally. National organizations such as the Society of American Indians (SAI) solicited his membership. Although he maintained an uneasy relationship with the SAI throughout the last decade of his life, Montezuma was well respected by American Indian leaders from across the United States. He was a figure of influence for both American Indians and non-Indian people who also supported American Indian rights.

Montezuma's dual roles of advocacy and social service were functions that would be needed by American Indians even as times changed. By welcoming Indian people to the city and helping them navigate it, Montezuma modeled an important feature of future forms of urban Indian leadership. The legacy he left was both national and local. He supported American Indian self-improvement, championed the rights of individual Indians less fortunate than he, fought against societal stereotypes of Indians, and worked endlessly to bring recognition of modern American Indian life to the larger society. In so doing he served as a role model not only during his lifetime but after his death.

American Indians who came to Chicago beginning in the early twentieth century hailed from a variety of tribal backgrounds. They began to form community among themselves based on some core values that many American Indian communities held in common. They developed relationships similar to kinship relations, created in a new multitribal way in urban communities. They found ways to support the least fortunate in their communities. They began to form organizations and groups in the cities based on their commonalities as American Indians rather than individual tribal groups. By forming organizations and working with non-Indians to create change, educated American Indians hoped they could create a

collective political voice. When they wrote books, gave speeches, or staged performances they wanted their voices to be heard.

The organizations established by American Indians in Chicago provided similar advocacy and social services for community members as those fraternal organizations established by many ethnic and immigrant groups in this era. Around the time of Montezuma's death in 1923 three newly founded organizations in Chicago began to carry on the type of advocacy work that he embodied. One, the Indian Fellowship League, was short lived. The other two, the Grand Council Fire of American Indians and the First Daughters of America—an organization of American Indian women who were part of the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs—were longer lasting. Oliver LaMere, a Winnebago, wanted the world to know that American Indians had something positive to contribute to "civilization," and so he wrote and published. The Chippewa leader Scott Henry Peters added that Indians wanted the world to know that they "were a civilized race." Both were members of the Grand Council Fire. Tsianina Blackstone, the well-known Cherokee-Creek opera mezzo-soprano, used her fame to create connections in the city to advocate for American Indian rights. These people formed alliances with wealthy and politically connected progressive Chicagoans who helped advance American Indian causes.¹⁴

Despite their differences, American Indians and non-Indians believed they had enough in common that they could work together within the early bicultural/biracial urban organizations they established. On a surface level, they could. In many instances, the goals of both groups were met to some degree, through elaborate compromise. But on the other hand, the differences often caused tension, sometimes productive, sometimes uncomfortable, along racial lines. The major difference was that while American Indian allies were *useful* to non-Indian organizers, the alliances were *necessary* for Indian participants, due to both their small numbers and the lens of defined or implied inferiority through which the larger society viewed American Indians. U.S. society was not yet ready to hear American Indian voices except through a non-Indian filter. Nonetheless these individuals and organizations created a foundation for those American Indians moving to cities in larger numbers by the 1950s.

Postwar Homogenization?

In the years after the Second World War the American cultural landscape changed dramatically. This was also the case for the American Indian cultural landscape. As soldiers returned from the war and the American economy surprisingly maintained its growth and strength the American values relating to space and place shifted. As the American middle class benefited from postwar federal programs such as housing and highway improvements, white middle-class Americans began to envision a suburban lifestyle as idyllic. The new suburban communities promoted homogenization of race, socioeconomic class, and social interaction represented in such planned communities as Levittown, Pennsylvania. This reflected the erroneous national perception of America as a “melting pot” wherein people’s ethnic identities would no longer be meaningful as people from the world over living in this country assimilated to its lifestyle and values. Significant numbers of white middle-class families moved from the cities even when the breadwinners in the home kept their jobs there.

The decline of their middle-class citizenry caused many American cities to take an economic downturn. Urban poverty fell most heavily on minority communities. It was into this changing urban landscape that American Indians began to move in increasing numbers in the postwar years. This move to the city had both “push” and “pull” components, as federal policy focused on moving American Indians to cities and the attraction of work and opportunity pulled Indian people away from their reservation communities.

The federal policy, known as relocation, involved a conscious federal effort to move American Indian people in significant numbers away from their reservation communities. This policy initiative dovetailed well with the termination policy aimed at tribes. From a federal perspective they were clearly interrelated. At the start of the war more than 90 percent of American Indians lived in reservation communities; by the end of the 1960s nearly half lived in urban areas, with a shared portion of the movement coming both under the federal relocation policy and by American Indian people moving on their own.¹⁵

The relocation efforts brought American Indian individuals and families to cities by paying one-way transportation costs, providing help finding housing and employment, and offering job training. Relocation housing patterns initially created urban Indian neighborhoods, generally in lower-level socioeconomic communities. Job placements were generally made in unskilled or semiskilled positions. Like the training that had occurred under

the boarding school system, job training in the relocation program was generally for semiskilled or manual labor positions. These multiple factors created urban Indian communities of poverty. While a small number of American Indian individuals made successful professional careers in cities, the majority became caught in cycles of poverty.

Intensifying the problem of poverty, many American Indian people moving to urban areas had difficulties adapting to their new circumstances—losing the support of extended family units that they left behind; losing the opportunity for subsistence-based supplementary income; living in unfamiliar surroundings; and living in multitribal communities that made the maintenance of cultural practices problematic. The relative invisibility of urban Indian communities to the larger society, together with a fundamental misunderstanding of American Indian aspirations by the larger society, only exacerbated the problems.



FIGURE 14.1 American Indian children on a school trip in Chicago. Ayer modern manuscripts, Chicago American Indian Accession, 2009–14, box 2, photo A18, Newberry Library, Chicago.

A series of articles written by Carl Rowan for the *Minneapolis Tribune* in 1957 illuminates the general population's misunderstanding of American Indian people's needs, desires, and situations. In the series, on the surface a sympathetic reflection on what had long been termed "the plight of the Indian" in American society, Rowan blamed American Indian poverty on the reluctance and refusal of American Indians to assimilate into the American melting pot. In arguing this he grounded his interpretation of American Indian needs in the larger context of the nascent civil rights movement, which focused on integrating minority people into the American mainstream.

This perspective ignored American Indian desires both to maintain a separate political relationship with the United States and to retain their cultural value systems.

The *Minneapolis Tribune* articles did serve to galvanize the Chicago American Indian community in opposition to media coverage, which was reflected in a series of meetings held at the recently established All Tribes American Indian Center in Chicago.¹⁶ These meetings were reflective of a growing national movement to actively protest mistreatment and misunderstandings of American Indians and Indian issues. The American Indian response to Rowan's articles in Chicago illuminates a new venue for interaction of American Indians from a broad variety of tribal backgrounds who had begun to identify themselves as "urban Indians."

American Indians in newly established urban enclaves joined together to establish community centers to provide both social outlets and access to social services for Indians living in the city. These community centers served an especially valuable service of providing a comfortable place in new surroundings for new arrivals to the city to gather and establish community and provide support for each other. Places such as the All Tribes American Indian Center in Chicago, established in 1953, the Intertribal Friendship House in Oakland, California, established in 1955, and the Los Angeles Indian Center, established in 1935, celebrated the tribal diversity of Indian ethnicity in new surroundings. Their mission was to ensure that individuals and families from the broad variety of backgrounds who were moving to the city had a place there.

Indians moved to cities across the United States, from big urban centers such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles to smaller cities such as Albuquerque, Seattle, Minneapolis, and Boston. They did so in pursuit of their vision of the American dream, in the hopes of being able to support themselves and their families. Most never intended to give up their ties to their original home communities, nor to assimilate into the American melting pot that many white Americans gladly entered in an age of homogenization. In fact, most urban Indians came from families and communities that had been maintaining cultural integrity in the face of sometimes-harsh assimilation efforts for decades or centuries. Unfortunately the federal efforts to decentralize American Indian populations and diminish reservation authority occurred just as white flight from the country's urban centers created an increasingly impoverished urban landscape. American

Indians were able to develop a sense of community in their new urban surroundings, but they did so in new settings of poverty.¹⁷

These two features—a strong sense of cultural heritage and a place in the lower socioeconomic levels of urban areas—defined the American Indian place in the city after World War II. Although white America was increasingly homogenizing and many white Americans increasingly became part of a relatively affluent suburban middle class, American Indian experiences to a large degree reflected those of other minority groups. They remained among the economically poorest population cohorts in the country, they faced constant discrimination based on race and social class, and they worked hard to ensure their futures in ways that would honor their heritage. As the twentieth century advanced into the 1960s and 1970s urban Indians became increasingly vociferous in their efforts to address these problems and to honor their cultural integrity.



FIGURE 14.2 American Indian community members in Chicago meeting with American Indian Center director Robert Rietz (standing). McNickle box 34, folder 289, 07017, Newberry Library, Chicago.

The Civil Rights Era and American Indians

The dramatic social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s also affected American Indian people. Urban Indians took a lead role in exposing social injustice and inequities that American Indians, both those who lived on and off of reservation lands, continued to endure.

In 1961, with the support of anthropologist Sol Tax of the University of Chicago, American Indian leaders from across the nation met in Chicago to outline a call for American Indian leadership to provide direction for American Indian policy on a variety of levels. In response to this, a number of younger American Indian activists, under the leadership of Clyde Warrior and others, established the National Indian Youth Council. This organization aggressively demanded recognition of American Indian treaty rights and fair and equal treatment of American Indian individuals.¹⁸

Then in 1968 several Chippewa Indian leaders in Minneapolis, including Clyde Bellecourt and Dennis Banks, established the American Indian Movement (AIM). AIM came to symbolize American Indian resistance to oppression for many Americans. The organization began as an effort to improve conditions in the Minneapolis Indian community and quickly evolved into a more radical and activist national movement. As Banks described AIM's founding activism, "we immediately set out to bring about change in those institutions of public concern: housing, education, employment, welfare, and the courts."¹⁹ American Indians in cities faced discrimination in all of these arenas.

Banks and Bellecourt had been in and out of prison and had also held steady jobs in the Twin Cities area. As they became activists in the late 1960s they began to focus their energies on both improving the living conditions of American Indians in Minneapolis and St. Paul and opposing the institutional racism that individual Indians there faced on a daily basis. AIM established "Red Patrols" to monitor the actions of police, for example, and its membership became known as people whom American Indians facing various kinds of discrimination could come to for effective help in navigating urban life.²⁰

After Russell Means (Lakota) joined its leadership in 1969, AIM became a national movement. AIM branches were established in several cities throughout the Midwest, including Denver, Cleveland, and Milwaukee. Its national organizers grabbed media attention and gained widespread non-Indian support in the 1970s when they invaded the Bureau of Indian Affairs offices in Washington, D.C., and participated in the occupation of Alcatraz Island and in the siege at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, among other localized actions. AIM leaders such as Means came to symbolize American Indian resistance to American colonialism to many Americans, who now

began to see the advocacy of American Indian rights as a legitimate part of the civil rights movement.

In the wake of AIM protests, in cities across the United States American Indians took action to protest their treatment and attempt to gain better access to social services. In Chicago in the summer of 1970 Indians set up camp across from Wrigley Field in the Chicago American Indian Village, and the next year they laid siege to the Nike Missile Site and Argonne National Laboratories and other places in an effort to draw attention to their causes. In 1970, in Seattle, under the leadership of Bernie Whitebear (Colville), American Indians occupied Fort Lawton, a decommissioned military base. This action would lead to the establishment of the Daybreak Star Cultural Center under the aegis of the United Indians of All Tribes. To this day, this center remains the hub of Indian community in Seattle, providing a social gathering place for Indian people and events, and coordinating for social services to urban Indians.

Though it had its origins in the Chippewa (Ojibwe) community within the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, AIM spoke to disenfranchised urban Indians from across the United States. It strengthened and engendered a new American Indian identity among its followers and among the non-Indian Americans who came to support it. The efforts of AIM's leaders inspired urban Indian activists across the United States to seek solutions to problems of uniquely urban American Indian communities. So while reservation community leaders fought such policies as termination with less attention from the press and the public, urban Indians came into the national spotlight as representative of white suppression of American Indians' rights and oppression of Indian individuals. As the American Indian population became increasingly urban, American Indians in cities became increasingly adept at defining their futures in urban spaces. To a large degree because of AIM's efforts at Wounded Knee in 1973 and in other national actions, urban Indian communities lost their cloak of invisibility and became an increasingly recognized minority in the city.

Conclusions

American Indians played an important role in the modernization of the United States in the twentieth century, during the Progressive Era, in post-World War II social efforts at American cultural homogenization, and in the

tumultuous 1960s and 1970s. By the end of the twentieth century a majority of American Indians lived off of reservation lands, the culmination of a massive demographic shift. American Indian history is both reflective of American cultural changes and unique to an ethnic group whose population during the century hovered at about 1 percent of the nation's as a whole. American Indians have been largely ignored in histories of progressivism in America. But the efforts of urban Indians during this time period both to advocate for better conditions for Indian people and to define who they were to the larger society were made within the context of the progressive reform movements of the era and would not have been possible without the network of alliances they created with non-Indian reformers.

In the years following World War II urban Indian history both dovetailed with and stood in contrast to the histories of national demographic changes and social upheaval. While the movement of white Americans during the immediate postwar years tended toward a homogenized suburbanization, the movement of American Indians to cities created multitribal "urban Indian" communities. Urban Indians related to each other through broadly similar cultural traditions but also maintained their ties to distinct reservation communities. In socioeconomic terms American Indians remained marginalized in America during this time period, near the bottom of the economic ladder and facing discrimination based on both their racial background and impoverished neighborhoods. The response of urban Indian leaders to this during the civil rights era mirrored the broader civil rights movement in the sense that they were seeking social justice and to rectify historic inequalities. But they strayed from the goals and values of the broader civil rights movement. They insisted that they retain the connections of individuals to their unique heritage communities and the separate political place of reservation communities in American society at large. This was in line with long-standing efforts of American Indian leaders to retain their unique place within the United States.

In the twenty-first century a new generation of urban Indian leaders such as Nichole Maher (Tlingit) in Portland, Oregon, and Janeen Comenote (Quinault/Hesquiaht/Kwakwaka'wakw/Oglala) in Seattle are leading the way in the development of modern urban Indian organizations within the United States. They are creating a unified voice for the majority of American Indian people now living off of reservation communities, many of whose families have now lived in cities for several generations. They continue to advocate for

urban Indian people to have access to better services from the larger urban societies in order to improve the quality of their lives as urban Indians. These leaders not only serve urban Indians, but have also become significant players in terms of local politics and broader community development in their respective cities. In doing so they are bringing to fruition the vision of Carlos Montezuma and other American Indian activists from the Progressive Era through the postwar American years and the civil rights movement to provide a place for American Indian people in modern America.

Notes

1. Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010), 9.

2. Tina Norris, Paula L. Vines, and Elizabeth M. Hoeffel: "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010," Census Brief C2010BR-10 (January 2012): 12. Available from U.S. Bureau of the Census, <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-10.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2013). Part of the increase in numbers in the 2000 and 2010 censuses can be traced to a new multiracial categorization. Circe Sturm argues that a part of the increase also can be accounted for by what she refers to as "racial shifters," people who changed their self-identified racial affiliation to census takers over time. *Becoming Indian: The Struggle over Cherokee Identity in the Twenty-first Century* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2010), 5.

3. David R. M. Beck, "The Chicago American Indian Community, An 'Invisible' Minority," in *Beyond Black and White: New Voices, New Faces in United States Schools*, ed. Maxine S. Seller and Lois Weis, 45–60 (Albany: State University of New York Press: 1997).

4. Frederick E. Hoxie, *This Indian Country: American Indian Activists and the Place They Made* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012).

5. Biloine Whiting Young and Melvin L. Fowler, *Cahokia: The Great Native American Metropolis* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), ix, 6, 310.

6. Jacqueline Peterson, "Ethnogenesis: The Settlement and Growth of a 'New People,' in the Great Lakes Region, 1702–1815," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 6, no. 2 (1982): 23–64.

7. Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 7–11.

8. This early growth was long ignored even by historians of urban Indian history in favor of analysis of the more dramatic post–World War II urban Indian population growth. Exceptions are early chapters in Thrush, *Native Seattle*; Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); and Rosalyn R. LaPier and David R. M. Beck, *City Indian: Native American Activists in Chicago, 1893–1934* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015). See also Nancy Shoemaker, “Urban Indians and Ethnic Choices: American Indian Organizations in Minneapolis, 1920–1950,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (1988): 431–47; LaPier and Beck. “Crossroads for a Culture,” *Chicago History* 38, no. 1 (2012): 22–45; and LaPier and Beck, “‘A One Man Relocation Team’: Scott Henry Peters and American Indian Urban Migration in the 1930s,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (February 2014), 17–36. Alexandra Harmon has perceptively observed that the focus on reservation and rural tribal communities came about in part because “the federal government created convenient collections of documents concerning well-defined groups,” while it also “generated few records about Indians outside the federal enclaves” of reservation communities: “The Urban Indian Experience in America,” Book review, *Western Historical Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2002): 68. Federal officials did create relatively copious documentary records relating to the relocation program of the 1950s–1970s, and so it should come as little surprise that scholars have studied urban American Indian communities in the modern era in greater depth than earlier urban Indian groups. Yet the earlier process of urbanization both helped define the relationship of American Indians to the larger American society and laid the groundwork for later urbanizing processes.

9. “Migrated Indians,” in *The Problem of Indian Administration*, ed. Lewis Meriam et al. (1928; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Company, 1971), 667–742.

10. David R. M. Beck, “The Myth of the Vanishing Race,” Edward S. Curtis’s The North American Indian website, Northwestern University Library and Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ienhtml/essay2.html> (accessed May 13, 2014).

11. For biographies of Montezuma, see Peter Iverson, *Carlos Montezuma and the Changing World of American Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982); and Leon Speroff, *Carlos Montezuma, M.D., A Yavapai American Hero: The Life and Times of an American Indian, 1866–1923*. (Portland, Ore.: Arnica Publishing, 2003).

12. Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

13. See documents in Carlos Montezuma Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago.

14. For more on these and other leaders, see LaPier and Beck, “Crossroads for a Culture.”

15. For early relocation history, see Kenneth R. Philp, “Stride Toward Freedom: The Relocation of Indians to Cities, 1952–1960,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1985): 175–90.

16. See entry 155, “Rowan Articles,” in David Beck, *The Chicago American Indian Community 1893–1988: Annotated Bibliography and Guide to Sources in Chicago* (Chicago: NAES College Press, 1988), 24.

17. For examples, see James B. LaGrand, *Indian Metropolis: Native Americans in Chicago, 1945–1975* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002); Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country*; Myla Vicenti Carpio, *Indigenous Albuquerque* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011); Thrush, *Native Seattle*; and Jeanne Guilleman, *Urban Renegades: The Cultural Strategy of American Indians* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975).

18. See Bradley G. Shreve, *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Native Activism* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011); and Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

19. Dennis Banks, also known as Nowa-cumig, “Foreword,” in Duane Champagne, *Native America: Portrait of the Peoples* (Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1994), xii.

20. See “The American Indian Movement” in Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 127–48.

Suggested Readings

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Chapter 15: Beyond the Judeo-Christian Tradition?

Restoring American Indian Religion to Twentieth-Century U.S. History

JACOB BETZ

I believe that they [American Indians] would easily be made Christians, for they appeared to me to have no religion.

—CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, *The Four Voyages*, 1492

Traditional [Native believers] ... are fundamentally religious and are perhaps the only consistent religious groups in American society over the long term.

—VINE DELORIA JR., “Secularism, Civil Religion, and the Religious Freedom of American Indians,” 1992

As the U.S. history survey is frequently taught, both American Indians and American religion make significant appearances before 1865. Yet, after the Civil War, Native Americans are moved offstage historiographically, mirroring their literal marginalization onto the reservations as settlers homesteaded the West. Religion likewise fades as the U.S. survey progresses past the Civil War. Religion’s antiquated believers are often portrayed as subsumed by the modernity of industrial capitalism and urbanization. Both subjects, then, dissipate as the survey enters the twentieth century.

Yet, of course, American Indians continued to persist in the twentieth century, and likewise the United States has, if anything, become more—not less—religious, with profound consequences for today’s political environment. This essay combines both subjects, arguing that the struggle of American Indians to maintain their religious beliefs throughout the twentieth century is part of this larger story of religious resurgence in

America. It contextualizes the American Indian experience—not just how Indians reacted to whites but also vice versa—within the broader ebb and flow of religious liberty in United States history. To that end, both directly and indirectly, American Indians have helped shape both national ideas about church and state as well as the scope of First Amendment protections for religion.

At the onset of the twentieth century, the country remained by and large a Protestant nation, dominated culturally and politically by Protestantism since the nation's founding. In the 1940s this changed as Supreme Court rulings began enforcing the First Amendment's two religion clauses against individual state laws. For minority religious groups—who had often found themselves disadvantaged by laws that privileged Protestantism or Christianity more generally—the possibilities of religious freedom expanded greatly. Though by no means a wholly triumphalist narrative, the fact remains that minority religious groups successfully pushed back against the Protestant religious milieu after World War II, creating a more inclusive Judeo-Christian America with space for Catholics and Jews alongside Protestants.¹ But adherents of religions *outside* the Judeo-Christian tradition—such as traditional Indian religions—were stymied repeatedly between the 1970s and the 1990s in their attempts to enjoy this expanding religious freedom. Seeing this, many Americans—even those who belonged to the Judeo-Christian tradition—worried a lack of freedom for American Indians signaled a growing disregard for religion generally in a secularizing America.

The stories of American Indian religion and of religion more generally in the United States are intimately tied together. This essay begins with an overview of American Indian religious freedom through the nineteenth century and then examines more closely the events of the twentieth century in relation to the American Indian experience, including freedom to perform Native religious dances, protection of sacred lands and burial sites, and the sacramental use of hallucinogenic plants. Its central thrust is that even with regard to general questions about religion in today's United States—such as defining *religion* and the extent to which it deserves protection in America—the American Indian experience has a great deal to say to the broader population.

As mentioned above, Native American spirituality—indeed Native Americans in general—tend to be much more prevalent in the first half of

the U.S. history survey. Though it was long customary to begin the survey with the arrival of European explorers and settlers, the survey often now begins with an overview of Native North America. In fact, the sheer variety of American Indian religious traditions at the time of European arrival can hardly be overstated.² This is important to stress in the U.S. survey, not merely because Native beliefs constitute legitimate sites of scholarly interest in and of themselves, but also because European colonization was justified in part upon the fiction that American Indians lacked any religious traditions at all.³ Though the European arrivals did not recognize it, Native Americans possessed complex belief systems that varied across geography and time. Native religious traditions differed, however, from Europeans' in that, instead of sacred *texts*, they emphasized the sacred power of *place*.⁴ Moreover, they maintained a connection between the natural and the supernatural, as plants, animals, and landscapes possessed spiritual power.⁵ As we will see, over the course of the twentieth century, these differing notions of what it meant to be "religious" created problems as Native Americans litigated religious claims based on the sacred lands and plants.

Throughout the colonial period the notion that American Indians lacked a religion persisted. For example, although Roger Williams—the founder of the colony of Rhode Island and an early champion of religious freedom— forbade colonial authorities from interfering with Native ceremonies, he was a rare exception.⁶ Even those white Americans who envisioned a place for Indians in the new nation predicated such a vision upon the necessity of Indian conversion to Christianity. Assimilation required the erasure of Native cultural forms and the subsequent adoption of Christian civilization.⁷ In short, the elimination of Native spirituality was the goal.

Consequently, as the much-cherished American value of religious freedom took hold, it was a protection rarely applied to Indians.⁸ The United States Constitution (ratified in 1788) and the accompanying Bill of Rights (adopted in 1791) profoundly altered how religion existed in the new nation, severing the formal linkage between church and state at the federal level and protecting religious beliefs from federal interference. Nevertheless, the religious clauses had no power at the state level until the 1940s and, though the individual states voluntarily ended their official tax-supported churches, they were still free to aid or discriminate against religion in any way they saw fit. Thus, when teaching the U.S. survey, it is important to impress upon the students the rise of what is sometimes

labeled the “moral establishment” during the nineteenth century. As an Anglo-Protestant cultural and religious identity came into force in early nineteenth-century America, groups that fell beyond those acceptable strictures either altered their religious beliefs or experienced forced or self-imposed marginalization. For example, the Second Great Awakening during antebellum America fostered an alliance of evangelical Protestants who sought to maintain the United States’ Protestant character. They interpreted their freedom of religion to mean the right to fashion American society in their vision. They advocated laws to limit activities on Sunday (the Christian Sabbath) and punish blasphemy, promote abstinence from alcohol, work toward the abolition of slavery, and distribute religious tracts to unbelievers.⁹

American Indians, too, felt the effects of this homogenizing crusade. Yet, unlike most other religious minorities in the nineteenth-century United States, Indians also were seen as racially different. The power of race to demarcate groups had grown steadily during the colonial era, and now in the early nineteenth century it created differing avenues of action for American Indians. American Indian culture and religion were deemed incompatible and were pushed west of the Mississippi. Meanwhile, the “Friends of the Indian” worked to eradicate Native culture and religion through a system of boarding schools and reservation missions.¹⁰

As Catholic immigration increased, Indian Country became a site for competition between Catholics and Protestants. The issue came to a head with President Grant’s “Peace Policy,” which began in 1869. In an effort to stem the corruption of the government’s Indian agents, Grant turned over the western reservations (and government funds) to religious denominations to administer and educate. In the allocation of reservations, Protestants received disproportionately more reservations than they had historically been active on; Catholics immediately cried foul and successfully lobbied for control of more reservations. They marshaled the voices of Indian Catholics from across the American West to protest what they perceived as the Protestant control of the reservation system. As one member of the Grand Ronde on the Northwest Coast declared: “I am a Catholic; so are all of my family. All the children are Catholics. We want the sisters [Catholic nuns] to come and teach the girls.”¹¹ Clearly, in the nineteenth century, what little discussion there was of Indian religious liberty focused on

whether they had the freedom to choose between Protestantism and Catholicism.¹²

Early in the twentieth century victories for Indian religious liberty remained cast in this older Protestant-Catholic dichotomy. The legal case *Quick Bear v. Leupp*, decided by the Supreme Court in 1908, provides an excellent example. In *Quick Bear*, the Supreme Court ruled that American Indians were free to spend their government allotment monies on the denominational schools of their choice. In other words, the use of government funds to pay tuition at religious schools was not an unconstitutional violation of separation of church and state. *Quick Bear* is important for two reasons. First, American Indians successfully pressed in court for their religious rights. And, second, the Indians in question were Christian. This again reminds us that American Indians' religious rights—at least until the early twentieth century—were more likely to be taken seriously and accorded protection when their beliefs were Christian.¹³ This brief overview has sought to stress that students should be made aware that until the early twentieth century American Indian spirituality was frequently denied existence, and that, where it was acknowledged, it was confined to a Protestant-Catholic paradigm. While not entirely overcome, these constraints would be partially weakened during the twentieth century.

In twentieth-century America, ideas about religious liberty underwent a profound transformation. This change occurred for a number of reasons. First, increasing acceptance of religious difference worked to break the Protestant-dominated culture in the United States (this rising disapproval of religious discrimination was compounded by the horror of the Holocaust). Second, Catholics and Jews (the two most visible non-Protestant groups) had accumulated sufficient economic and political power to enter onto the national stage and force recognition of their rights. Third, because of Supreme Court decisions in the 1940s, the First Amendment's religion clauses (the "no establishment" and "free exercise" clauses) were now applied not just to federal law but also to state laws. The travails of American Indians' religious rights during the twentieth century would touch upon all three of these developments.

Beginning in the early twentieth century, two Native religious traditions—Pueblo dancing and the sacramental use of the peyote plant—distill two themes. Religion scholar Tisa Wenger has elegantly shown how Pueblo Indians succeeded in breaking free of the Catholic-Protestant binary

described above. During the 1920s Pueblos argued that their Native traditions (neither Catholic nor Protestant) were indeed a *religion* and thus worthy of First Amendment protections.¹⁴ The survival and reemergence of Pueblo dancing is both indicative of a new way of conceiving of religion beyond the Judeo-Christian framework as well as a testament to the underground survival of Native religious traditions that had been officially banned since the 1880s.

Similarly, peyotism—the sacramental ingestion of a small rounded cactus native to northern Mexico and southern Texas—was a religious tradition that had been in existence for centuries. Ingesting the cactus induced physiological and psychological effects and, like ceremonial dancing, had been suppressed by the federal government. Peyotism often contained characteristics of Christianity, and in 1918 in Oklahoma, peyote users incorporated their organization as the Native American Church (NAC). The NAC had hoped that taking on a Christian organizational structure might lessen the regulations against their practices, and, when that result did not occur, they actively litigated on behalf of peyotists.¹⁵

The 1930s brought federal policy changes for Native religions. John Collier, appointed as commissioner of Indian affairs in 1933 by President Roosevelt, worked to open a cultural space for Indians to perform religious practices that fell outside the Catholic-Protestant binary. Collier had previously spent time at Taos Pueblo and was aware of the cultural and religious Native traditions that had been actively suppressed by government agents in the nineteenth century.

Under Collier, the federal government began to reverse course on its previous policy of individual land allotment and Christianizing the Indian. Collier forbade reservation superintendents from mandating Indian attendance in Christian churches, and he also lifted bans on traditional ceremonies on the reservations.¹⁶ The tenacious effort of Native Americans to maintain these religious practices over the course of more than a half-century of suppression was evident. American Indians were now permitted to conduct ceremonial dances and rituals on the reservations, but religious liberty remained constrained elsewhere.¹⁷

Broadening our scope, during and following World War II numerous religious groups turned to the courts to win their rights. Two changes made this new strategy possible. First, culturally, postwar America was far more open to the participation of non-Protestants in public life. This cultural turn

was in part a reaction to the horrors of the Holocaust as well as an ecumenical response to the onset of the Cold War against “godless communism.” Second, legally, the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1940s began to enforce the First Amendment’s religion clauses against state laws.¹⁸ Thus plaintiffs could challenge in federal courts those state laws that either established religion or infringed upon free-exercise rights. And so, in the 1950s and early 1960s, Catholics and Jews successfully brought suits to do just that.¹⁹ Likewise smaller religious groups such as the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Amish were equally successful.²⁰ Thus any survey of U.S. history must at least acknowledge expansion of constitutionally protected religious rights in the postwar period and the concomitant collapse of Protestant hegemony. Protestant America was gradually being replaced by the newly created concept of a “Judeo-Christian” America.²¹

This steady expansion of rights, however, hiccupped when it came to Native American religious rights, especially away from reservation lands. Indians faced arrest for possession of sacred bald eagle feathers or taking peyote as part of a religious ritual, as well as the destruction of—or denial of access to—sacred lands on federal property.²² These constraints on Native religious liberty led to agitation on the part of American Indians for legislative remedy. As a result, Congress passed in 1978 the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), which admonished federal agencies to take into account Native religious concerns when drawing up their policies and undertaking operations. Yet the act proved to be an empty gesture. While federal agencies solicited Native groups for religious input, they were under no obligation to act on that feedback.²³ This situation of Native believers lacking the protections of the First Amendment continued into the 1980s.

American Indian agitation for the passage of AIRFA in 1978 did not, of course, occur in a vacuum. It was part of the broader Red Power movement that spanned the late 1960s to the late 1970s. The nearly nineteen-month occupation of Alcatraz Island, the “Trail of Broken Treaties,” and the siege at Wounded Knee, S.D., in 1973 were all part of the broader American Indian rights movement.²⁴ There was one aspect of solicitude toward Native religiosity to which the federal government did agree—the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990.

NAGPRA sought to counteract the centuries-old practice of collecting and selling American Indian human remains and grave goods. It directed all museums and other similar institutions that receive federal funding to inventory their collections of Native remains and objects. The act allowed tribes to request the return of such items. Additionally it criminalized the sale and transport of Indian human remains and funerary goods. Although imperfect and generating continued contestation over cultural patrimony, NAGPRA marked a “watershed in relationships” between American Indians and the United States.²⁵

Aside from NAGPRA, however, decades of Indian activism after World War II opposing the denial of their religious rights—including the right of adherents of the Native American Church to use peyote—had resulted in the largely ineffective American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Contextualizing AIRFA’s 1978 passage is important, however; that same year is often cited as the birth of the politicized Religious Right in the United States. The Internal Revenue Service’s questioning of the tax-exempt status of private Christian educational academies (on the grounds that they were founded to evade public school desegregation orders) ignited religious conservatives who demanded a form of separation of church and state that protected the church *from* the state.²⁶ In any U.S. history survey course, the emergence of the Religious Right in the 1970s and its political successes in the 1980s will be a major theme. Thus it is important to emphasize that beginning in the late 1970s and continuing through the 1980s, religious groups, often from across the political spectrum, worried about what they saw as the marginalization of religion more generally in a gradually secularizing America.²⁷

This broad concern about the marginalization of religion in American culture can be tracked with a closer look at public reaction to American Indian efforts to litigate various religious infringements in the courts. Instructors of the U.S. history survey would find useful a comparison of two Native American legal cases that wound their way up to the Supreme Court during the 1980s. These two cases deal with different aspects of traditional Native religion that have proved difficult to square with both the First Amendment and America’s much-revered Judeo-Christian tradition. Moreover, both cases had ripple effects of varying degrees that help to elucidate the broader state of religious liberty in the United States.

The two high-profile Supreme Court cases—both of which American Indians lost—were *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association* (1988) and *Employment Division of Oregon v. Smith* (1990).²⁸ In *Lyng*, three Native American tribes unsuccessfully brought suit to prevent the U.S. Forest Service from building a road through a sacred burial ground in the High Country of northern California. In ruling against the tribes, the U.S. Supreme Court seemed at a loss as to how to deal with Native claims dealing with sacred land. Many observers charged the court was the product of a Judeo-Christian religious culture that privileged sacred texts (i.e., the Bible and the Torah) over sacred lands. One scholar lamented that the First Amendment lacked “a concept of the sacred or the holy.”²⁹ It seemed a return to the colonial-era denial of the very existence of Indian religion. Even non-Indian religious commentators recognized something was amiss, discerning the threat of *Lyng* to any religion that fell outside the dominant Judeo-Christian tradition. One religious believer wrote, if “your way of practicing your religion is very different and especially very threatening to the way in which the larger culture practices religion, you will have a much harder time [obtaining religious freedom].”³⁰

Then, in 1990, the *Smith* decision further threatened religious freedom for all Americans, Native or otherwise. In this case, the court upheld Oregon state law that had denied unemployment compensation to Klamath Indian Al Smith, who had been fired for using peyote in a Native American ceremony. The effect of the *Smith* ruling meant that laws that inhibited a person’s ability to practice their religion were permissible so long as that law was neutral and generally applicable—such as a drug law. The First Amendment could provide no succor. Unlike the *Lyng* decision, however, the *Smith* decision’s potential ramifications for all religions created a religious freedom firestorm and resulted in a “groundswell of interfaith collation building.”³¹ The writing was on the wall—the power of legal precedent meant an injury to Indian religions was a potential injury to all religions. Native American civil rights attorney Walter Echo-Hawk observed that *Smith* precipitated a threat “not only for native worship but for *all* worship. It created a human rights crisis.”³² American Indians suddenly found their cause championed by the nation’s most powerful religious groups. Dozens of religious organizations—large and small, conservative and liberal—rallied to the cause, though not always, of course, for disinterested reasons. Those dominant religions sensed a foreboding

danger; what was next—perhaps laws prohibiting circumcision, or maybe the prosecution of the underage consumption of communion wine? A broad coalition formed to decry the *Smith* decision, and it created a case of strange bedfellows in the cause for American Indian religious freedom. As Native religious scholar Vine Deloria Jr. wrote in 1992, “For the first time in American history, then, Indians have common cause with other Americans.”³³

Lobbying by this coalition of religious groups resulted in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993) as well as the subsequent revision of the 1978 AIRFA to allow for peyote use. It should be noted, however, that although *Smith* ignited a broad concern about religious rights, advocacy for Native peyote use was absent from these lobbying efforts. The use of hallucinogenic plants proved too controversial—too far beyond the Judeo-Christian tradition—upon which to base a religious liberty argument. Separately, then, AIRFA was finally amended in 1994 to cease federal prosecution for the use of peyote. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court’s consistent refusal to acknowledge the religious rights of American Indians remains a cause for concern among legal scholars.³⁴

Lyng and *Smith* thus deal with two central themes that speak to broader U.S. religious history. *Lyng* dealt with sacred land, a dispute that was unlikely to occur among the text-based dominant religions in the United States. Conversely, *Smith* concerned religious sacramental activities to which other non-Native faiths could relate (i.e., a baptism or a bar mitzvah).³⁵ It was, predictably, the latter restriction that generated a firestorm among non-Indians. In this sense, the lawyer Felix S. Cohen’s midcentury observation that American Indians are the “miner’s canary,” such that “our treatment of Indians, even more than our treatment of other minorities, reflects the rise and fall of our democratic faith,” seems particularly apt in the wake of *Smith*.³⁶

In closing, recent scholarship on the freedom of religion in U.S. history has demonstrated the tenuousness of that freedom and shown its oscillations between persecution, toleration, and pluralism. This chapter has argued that American Indian religion is important—and at times central—to the story of religious liberty in twentieth-century America. There is a sense that American Indians’ emphasis on group rights and their refusal to submit to a compartmentalization of the sacred and profane means that Native religion

will continue to affect the broader trajectory of religious liberty in the United States in years to come.³⁷

The tribulations of American Indians in the twentieth century speak loudly to fundamental questions about religion in America. How does one define *religion*? Is it sacred lands, sacred texts, sacred rituals? Is religious liberty a right that belongs to individuals or to groups? Does the First Amendment offer protection of religious activities above and beyond the whims of a legislative majority? What is the place of religions—especially those quite different from the majority Judeo-Christian framework—in a nation whose founding constitution is a secular document? For the teacher of U.S. history, Native religions touch on all these concerns—in court cases such as *Quick Bear*, *Lyng*, and *Smith*—with ramifications that extend even to non-Native believers. The American Indian religious experience is all the more important because religious liberty is a cherished value to which the United States claims the utmost fealty. No U.S. history survey can ignore the powerful role religion continues to play in the early twenty-first century, and thus it becomes essential to recognize the role of American Indian faiths in both challenging and upholding that purported ideal.

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Chapter 16: Powering Modern America

Indian Energy and Postwar Consumption

ANDREW NEEDHAM

Design for Dreaming, a 1956 short film created to market new products from a variety of companies, epitomizes a vision of postwar American modernity. The film opens in a suburban bedroom. A top-hatted gentleman materializes suddenly, waking a sleeping young housewife before quickly sweeping her away into the world of tomorrow's products, today. After briefly stopping to examine the cars of GM's new model year, the man sweeps the now ball-gowned housewife into the "Kitchen of Tomorrow" and disappears with a poof. The housewife briefly laments, in a minor blues key, that "Just like a man. You give him a break / and you wind up in a kitchen, baking a cake." The music starts to swing, however, as she surveys the kitchen. Ovens pop to life, and beaters descend with the insertion of a punch card. "No need for the bride to feel tragic, the rest is push-button magic / So whether you bake or broil or stew, the Frigidaire kitchen does it all for you." As dinner cooks, the woman abandons her apron, changing into tennis clothes, golf outfits, and a swimming suit before the buzzing timer signals that her cake is done.¹

The 1956 film easily fits into a number of familiar historical narratives about postwar America. The housewife's overwhelming domestic concerns reflected the postwar division of gender roles, critiqued only three years later in *The Feminine Mystique*. The "kitchen of tomorrow's" open layout demonstrated the new residential spaces of suburban America. Multinational corporations that produced goods for both "the Consumer's Republic," to use Lizabeth Cohen's term, and the "military-industrial complex" of the Cold War national security state made the name-brand appliances that filled the kitchen. And the kitchen's "push-button magic" displayed the emergence of what one historian of technology has called "high energy society," a vision of modern life in which ready and available energy supplies created car culture, transformed domestic life, and drove suburban sprawl.²

Indians appear to have little place in this vision of modernity. Few of the Indians moving to cities in the postwar years lived in suburbs, excluded both by federal policies that saw racial difference as a sign of unstable property value and by the structures of poverty that trapped most urban Indians in the least well-paid sectors of the American economy. Indians living on reservations supposedly lived at an even greater remove from the new world of defense manufacturing and high-tech consumer goods that defined affluence in postwar America. Located in peripheral locations that critics likened to “prisons” and “concentration camps,” reservations seemed the antithesis of postwar modernity.³

If we follow the electric power lines that reached into suburban houses back to their beginnings, however, surprising new connections between Indian peoples and postwar modernity appear. Moving away from homes, many of those power lines led back to Indian land. In the Pacific Northwest, power lines to Portland and Seattle traced back to the plutonium-refinement facilities at Hanford and to dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers, rivers that had, for millennia, formed the subsistence base for the Pacific Northwest’s Native people.⁴ In the Midwest, transmission lines into Chicago and Minneapolis began at power plants fed by coal from Crow lands and a power plant abutting the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, both in eastern Montana.⁵ And in the Southwest, the lines into Phoenix, Los Angeles, and Albuquerque, cities where much of the nation’s aerospace industry located after World War II, originated at five “mine-mouth” coal-fired power plants on or near the Navajo Reservation.

Following the trail of these power lines introduces Indians in new ways into narratives of postwar history. It demonstrates that Indian lands often provided the energies that fueled the Consumer’s Republic and the military-industrial complex. Following power lines does more than that, however. It allows historians to tell new stories of environmental change and regional inequality by showing how postwar prosperity rested on far-flung ecological transformations that dramatically altered the way of life of Indian peoples, as well as other residents of the so-called periphery. It also contains stories about the way such changes were justified as a form of “modernization,” a way of teaching supposedly isolated and backward Indian peoples the ways and means of American economic life. That American advisers carried these ideas about “modernization” with them as they engaged newly decolonized nations in the Cold War years allows stories about power lines to connect not

only Indians with cities, but also federal Indian policy with the United States' emerging role as an agent of a particular form of economic development in the Third World. In short, it raises new questions about postwar modernity and its shortcomings both in Indian Country and in the world at large.

The second half of the twentieth century saw the rise of both the suburb and Sunbelt. As federal housing policies encouraged the mass production of new houses, more and more Americans began to live and work in landscapes of single-family homes on the urban periphery. A disproportionate number of these newly built homes were located in the South and West, where military manufacturers, flush with federal contracts, sought the farmland, open space, and welcoming politics available in locations far from the nation's earlier industrial centers.

Phoenix, Arizona, represents these changes in microcosm. In 1940, approximately 100,000 people lived in the small city at the heart of an agricultural valley. Canneries and broom factories represented the city's main manufacturers.⁶ By 1970, however, that landscape had been transformed. More than 200,000 new residents moved to northern Phoenix between 1955 and 1960 alone. By 1970, Phoenix's metropolitan population surmounted the 1 million mark. Former farm fields became suburban subdivisions and the site of new high-tech plants for Motorola, Honeywell, and other elements of "the military-industrial complex."⁷

This new landscape dramatically increased demands for energy. The proliferation of air conditioning allowed homes, businesses, and factories to remain cool in the desert summer. Utilities lowered electrical rates for manufacturers, allowing local politicians to assure prospective industries that they could inexpensively "air condition a ... whole factory without any problem."⁸ The new stress on mass consumption as a core element of citizenship increased energy demand as well. Ads urged husbands to buy their wives an "electric valentine," a vacuum, washer/dryer, or electric skillet that "will help her get more fun out of life by making her homemaking easier—and remind her of your thoughtfulness every day of the year." Electric companies offered free trips to homebuilders who developed "the best example of modern electric living."⁹ By 1970, electrical demand in Phoenix had increased 2,000 percent since the end of World War II.¹⁰

Even increasing electrical use reflected American ideas of modernity. Since the New Deal, federal officials had considered the provision of inexpensive electricity as vital to economic growth. With the Tennessee Valley and Bonneville Power Authorities and with Boulder Dam, New Dealers had promoted a vision of hydroelectric power as an engine of economic modernization and social progress. Officials in the Bureau of Reclamation had embraced this vision and built dams across the South and West in the 1930s and 1940s, many of which became icons of American technological capability, and which, in World War II, helped power the dramatic increase in defense manufacturing that allowed the United States to operate as the “arsenal of democracy.”

As suburban development and Cold War manufacturing boomed in the early 1950s, driving electrical demand ever higher, opportunities for new hydroelectric projects dwindled. Reclamation officials shifted their focus to coal reserves “sufficient to last 1,000 years,” reserves that were located largely on land throughout the intermountain West belonging to the Navajo, Hopi, Northern Cheyenne, and Crow Tribes. While reservation borders went unacknowledged in the Bureau of Reclamation’s publications, the coal that lay beneath them did not. Indeed, illustrations portrayed the intermountain West as buried beneath enormous mounds of coal, coal that could, in the eyes of Reclamation officials, supply the electricity demanded by the 50 million new consumers that would move to the West by 1975. Other illustrations showed power plants located near coal supplies and power lines streaming away to consumers from the industrial Midwest to the Pacific Coast.¹¹

Between the 1950s and 1970s, that system of energy production and consumption slowly took shape. During the 1950s and 1960s federal officials facilitated the leasing of mineral rights to over 120,000 acres of the Navajo and Hopi Reservations in Arizona and New Mexico to Utah International and Peabody Coal, multinational energy companies with far-flung operations across the globe. In the late 1960s, federal officials negotiated leases in which Peabody Coal gained mineral rights to virtually the entire Northern Cheyenne Reservation in eastern Montana. The economic terms of these leases were markedly unequal. For example, while Utah International paid the Navajo Tribe royalties of between \$0.15 and \$0.20 per ton for coal from Navajo Mine, it sold that coal to its sole customer, Phoenix’s largest utility, at rates ranging between \$2.50 to \$3 per

ton. Some of those proceeds paid wages of the approximately one hundred Navajos who worked at the mine, who earned between \$41 and \$50 per day in 1970. With Navajo Mine producing 4,000 tons of coal per day by that time, however, far greater profits flowed away from the reservation, to Utah International's headquarters in San Francisco, and to its shareholders located around the world.



FIGURE 16.1 Coal from Navajo Mine with Four Corners Power Plant in the background, 1962. Utah Construction Company/Utah International Collection, Special Collections Department, Stewart Library, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah.

Coal mined on Indian land was burned for the most part in new, “mine-mouth” power plants, built in close proximity to the mines (figure 16.1). These plants reflected technological changes in electricity-transmission technology that made coal more attractive as a fuel for electrical generation. Previously, utility experts had regarded coal as a last resort, a heavy, dirty

fuel that was difficult to transport and produced undesirable pollution. Improvements in transmission technology allowed larger amounts of energy to be shipped longer distances. These improvements allowed mine-mouth plants to be located near coal mines, and power lines to ship “coal by wire” to far-distant consumers. This new system allowed the separation of coal’s benefits—ample, inexpensive electricity—from its locational cost of air and water pollution. The biggest beneficiaries of the new energy development on Indian land, then, were suburban consumers, who received ample supplies of electricity to light and air condition their modern homes and factories without witnessing or realizing the costs associated with it. Flashing across space at the speed of light, electricity did not appear something produced at all. Rather, it merely was, an ever-available part of modern life.

Examining the resources from Indian territories that came to power much of the American West allows new stories that place the expropriation of natural resources and the industrialization of Indian land as central to the postwar political economy of suburbanization and militarization. Such stories add a third space to Robert Self’s portrait of the simultaneous “overdevelopment of suburbs and the underdevelopment of cities.” The coal mines on Navajo, Hopi, and Northern Cheyenne lands suggest that the spaces beyond booming metropolitan areas were equally transformed by suburbanization. Indeed, in revealing the dynamics of energy development, the production that enabled suburban consumption, we can come to a better understanding of the distribution of the costs and benefits of the suburban way of life that developed after World War II and that continue to define the life experiences and natural environment of large numbers of Americans now and into the future.

Many of the costs of postwar development were ecological. Postwar energy development brought broad-scale environmental changes to Indian lands. These changes did not arise from the mere fact that coal was mined. Archaeological evidence indicates that indigenous peoples living on the Plains and in the Southwest had long burned coal for heat. In the mid-1920s, Navajos began mining coal for sale, at \$6 a wagonload, in the reservation border towns of Gallup and Farmington. Coal mines, for Navajos, represented a portion of a broader subsistence economy, a means to survive economic and ecological instability. Indeed, one inspector referred to them as “subsistence mines,” explaining that “when it’s time to plant or tend other agricultural matters, most coal production comes to a halt.” Navajo miners

also followed specific ritual actions to avoid disrupting *hozho*, the balance or harmony that surrounds all life, animates the universe, and maintains the health of all living things, including the land itself. As miner Burton Yazzie explained, “You have to make an offering to her when you disturb ... mother earth.” While BIA officials fretted that Navajo miners had “almost no responsibility for safety or good mining practice,” their underground mining did little to alter the surrounding landscape.¹²

It is the changing scale and scope of energy development that marked the environmental changes of the postwar years. The mining that began in the late 1950s differed so dramatically in its disruption of the local environment that to use the same word to describe it seems inappropriate. Rather than “subsistence mining” oriented around family and clan groups, a multinational construction conglomerate, Utah International, with far-flung operations reaching from Pakistan to Peru, managed mining operations on the Navajo Reservation. Unlike the earlier small-scale mining that occurred underground, the new operations were strip mines. They utilized massive drag shovels (figure 16.2) to remove “overburden”—the plants, topsoil, and sandstone that covered coal to depths of sixty to eighty feet—enabling dynamite charges to shatter the exposed coal seams. Strip mining lowered costs and increased rates of production, important in a moment when coal had hit its historical price nadir. It created massive environmental changes, however. As “overburden” was relocated, it created mountains of tailings upon which grew none of the gramma, bluestem, or other grasses that had once sustained Navajo sheep and goat herds. Mine areas were fenced off and restricted from entry, in effect limiting the spaces where sheep herding, the foundation of Navajo economic life, could occur. Place names during the two mining regimes symbolized the changes that had occurred: areas once called “Ram Springs” and “No Fat Valley” became known as “Area #1” and “Area #2” of “Navajo Mine.”¹³



FIGURE 16.2 Navajo sheep herd stands before a drag shovel used in strip mining at Navajo Mine. Utah Construction Company/Utah International Collection, Special Collections Department, Stewart Library, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah.

Power plants also created dramatic environmental changes. In the early 1950s, No Fat Valley remained the residence of Navajo shepherds and their small herds, who struggled to eke out subsistence on the sparse forage that gave the valley its name. By 1961, the valley had been transformed. Much of its land had disappeared under the waters of Morgan Lake, a 1,600-acre cooling reservoir. Along a newly built road, trucks larger than suburban houses carried the coal a short distance away from Navajo Mine to a dense collection of pipes, conveyors, and boilers known as Four Corners Power Plant. Within Four Corners, unearthed coal was set afire. The burning coal released fly ash, nitrogen and sulfur dioxide, heavy metals, and carbon

dioxide, all of which traveled up the power plant's stacks and into the sky. Mercury and fly ash fell to earth relatively quickly, making their way into the arid soils and limited water of the Navajo Reservation, as well as the bodies of the people and animals that lived upon it. Nitrogen and sulfur dioxide stayed in the air longer, until they mixed with moisture and fell to the earth as rain significantly more acidic than normal. The plant's carbon dioxide remained aloft, mixing with similar emissions from the increasing numbers of power plants and automobiles that burned fossil fuels in the region, nation, and world.¹⁴

Emissions, however, were byproducts: the unvalued, if inevitable, results of unleashing coal's energy. The product was electricity, electricity that, coursing through circuits at the speed of light, zipped out of No Fat Valley and arrived into homes and factories in metropolitan Phoenix. By the late 1960s, those power lines traveled to other cities, including Albuquerque and Los Angeles. Mines on Black Mesa and power plants on the Navajo Reservation's periphery repeated the unequal patterns at Four Corners, with some slight variations, such as the 300-mile slurry line that used water drawn from aquifers deep below the Navajo and Hopi Reservation to carry coal to Mojave Generating Station in southern Nevada.

Energy, as Richard White argues, fundamentally links humans to nature.¹⁵ Humans consume natural energy to survive, both in the form of food and in the form of the myriad energies that sustain contemporary life. Tracing the flows of energy into our lives can reveal these connections, leading to understandings of how humans exist both in place and within systems that reach to far-distant spaces. The spatial inequalities of energy therefore also reveal inequalities between people. Following power lines can reveal these imbalances, helping us to make better sense of the ways in which people living beyond suburban boundaries, Indian and non-Indian alike, have attempted to shape their futures within circumstances not of their own making.

The power plants and strip mines built on Indian lands were political creations. Their eventual structure reflected the frequently conflicting visions of progress held by federal officials, Indian leaders, and grassroots organizers, as well as the imbalances of power that separated those actors. As such, energy development provides an opportunity to work the frequently confusing postwar developments in Indian political history—the eras of

termination and self-determination—into the broader stories that we tell about national and global politics in the postwar era.

In the midst of World War II, American leaders achieved a consensus that the postwar world could be remade by the spread of the American economic system throughout the world. Some leaders, such as Franklin Roosevelt's vice president, Henry Wallace, argued that the world would be remade by a globalized New Deal, in which governments guaranteed that "opportunities are open to everyone" to produce societies in which "the world moves straight ahead." Others such as *Time* publisher Henry Luce suggested it required government to step back from economic intervention, allowing "the abundant life produced by free economic enterprise" to spread globally in the "American Century." These divergent political visions, however, shared a common consensus. The world could be improved, poverty and ignorance could be alleviated, and individuals could gain independence, they professed, if "underdeveloped" parts of the world were incorporated by "the dominant world power," in Luce's words, into the global economy.¹⁶

Indian reservations provided one of the first testing grounds for these ideals. Indians in the postwar years faced continued poverty resulting from the destruction of their subsistence economies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Per capita incomes ranged from 7 percent to 25 percent of the national average for various tribes. For many tribes, federal welfare payments composed the primary source of income, and members of some tribes faced near starvation. Dire poverty amid growing affluence raised basic questions about the nation's global priorities and its responsibility to Indian peoples who had fought for their country during the war. As a writer in *Collier's* asked, "Why do we give millions in Europe while ... our own people ... are slowly starving to death because we have not kept faith with them?"¹⁷

Federal officials quickly came to focus on the isolation of reservation economies and Indian political autonomy as the sources of poverty. Ignoring the legacies of conquest, they attacked tribal governments and federally protected reservations as remnants of a past era that retarded Indian progress. The Hoover Commission on Government Efficiency stated in 1947 that tribal political autonomy had been "smashed a generation ago" and that reservations had been "maintained in isolation deliberately as a matter of erroneous policy." In part, the commission's report represented a backlash against John Collier's Indian New Deal, which had attempted to buttress

tribal land rights and create new means of tribal governance, policies that postwar critics denounced as attempts to preserve Indians as “human museum pieces” and “vestiges of a life that was picturesque.” More important, however, it represented the imperial assumption of postwar politics, which envisioned integration into the American economy as the solution to both domestic and global poverty. Eliminating tribal governments and federal protection for reservation lands would, as advocates for what became known as “termination” explained, remove “an artificial barrier between Indian and non-Indians in social and political interaction” and bring Indians “into this nation’s modern economic life.” The goal, as articulated by Julius Krug, secretary of the interior under Harry Truman, was “to bring the American standard of living to Indians throughout the nation.”¹⁸

Termination bills, passed in the early 1950s, allowed the federal government to unilaterally end federal supervision, eliminate tribal governments, and extend state authority over Indian lands. Their advocates presented these changes as a step in the ongoing march of American freedom. Introducing one such bill in 1953, Senator Arthur Watkins of Utah proclaimed, “Following the footsteps of the Emancipation Proclamation ..., I emblazon the letters of fire above the heads of the Indians—these people shall be free!”¹⁹

While few tribes faced full termination, the legislation represented a small part of the broader policies that aimed to disempower Indian tribes and remove protections to Indian lands under the guise of freeing Indians from poverty. Embedded in these politics was the assumption that Indians would have to be paternalistically introduced into the mores of American economic life in order to escape the economic dead end of reservation life. These assumptions suffused the energy development that began at the height of the termination era. Royalties from energy leases could, BIA officials believed, provide a steady source of revenue that could replace federal welfare payments. Work in low-level positions in coal mines and power plants, and in construction of the necessary associated infrastructure, would also provide an opportunity to gain valuable training in what one scholar has called “industrial work discipline” that might enable them to gain future employment off the reservation or to succeed in the BIA’s efforts to relocate Indians to Chicago, Denver, or other urban areas. Reservation work, in this sense, was more about breaking a “culture of poverty” by training Indian workers than providing well-paid work, an aspect apparent in the low wages

earned by Indian employees as well as their employment in the lowest rungs of occupational hierarchies.²⁰

Energy development helps illustrate, then, the ways that federal policies during the termination era of the 1950s reflected American leaders' assumptions that integration into American economic institutions would resolve issues of global underdevelopment. It also reveals their assumptions that newly integrated peoples should surrender political control over most aspects of their local economies and would require "modernization" in the form of tutelage in the mores and expectations of this new global economic order.

The response by tribal governments and Indian actors at the grassroots demonstrates that new demands for Indian sovereignty arose amid the accommodations and resistances to incorporation into this global economy. Indian leaders in the 1950s and early 1960s generally embraced energy development. Paul Jones, Navajo tribal chairman from 1954 to 1962, thanked the "Divine Providence" that had brought "unexpected wealth" from "natural resources not known to be there in our earlier history."²¹ Jones and his successor, Raymond Nakai, chairman from 1962 to 1970, encouraged the leasing of energy resources, although they generally played a minor part in negotiations controlled by BIA officials. During their administrations, the tribe began developing its own safety net, using royalty payments to create social service agencies, establish tribal scholarships, and pay for the costs of tribal government itself. Attempting to provide opportunity for Navajo youth and security for the large population of poor and elderly Navajos, tribal government grew in power as it mirrored, in ends if not in means, aspects of the emerging postwar American welfare state. While efforts at Navajo social security were limited by the relatively small royalties the tribe received, they do demonstrate that, rather than leading to dissolution of tribal government, as terminationists envisioned, energy development helped give tribal government new power and authority.²²

Energy development thus empowered tribal government to protect Indians against what leaders believed to be the inevitability of the withdrawal of federal support and possible termination. As Paul Jones explained in a 1956 speech, "We are not going to let our people starve. We will give them as decent a living as we can without our power. That is the reason for the various projects, to get industry and drilling for gas and we are able to do this."²³ The social service institutions established during Jones's

term with proceeds from energy development also represented a response to termination's attack against tribal government. With established and enduring political institutions, federal officials would find it more difficult, Navajo leaders believed, to eliminate tribal government. Energy development, Jones and Nakai hoped, could be used to buttress Navajo sovereignty in a moment in which challenges to it appeared imminent.

By the late 1960s, many Navajos no longer agreed that energy development represented an opportunity to create progress and protect sovereignty. Increasingly, young activists, many with college educations funded in part by the tribe, viewed energy development as a form of exploitation, a manifestation of internal colonialism that limited Indian possibility. While young activists criticized both the BIA and tribal leaders, they directed the majority of their anger toward electrical utilities, mining companies, and residents of the Southwest's cities, who "destroyed our land so they can use electric can openers and tooth brushes."²⁴ As the editors of *Dine Baa-Hani*, an "alternative" newspaper published by members of the National Indian Youth Council, wrote, "They say the Indians must join the market economy, but they force us into a colonial economy. This is not economic development. This is economic termination."²⁵ These young activists launched a searing critique not only of energy development, but of postwar growth in general. As Michael Gruber wrote to the *Navajo Times*, "The Whiteman will do anything for money and greed. His cities have dirty, filthy air. We Indians used to have clean air and no traffic jams and noise of the city. Now the Whiteman is trying to force that on us as well, destroying everything that is beautiful"²⁶ For young Navajos like Gruber, suburban America represented not a place of modern life and consumer comforts but a location launching attacks on Navajo beliefs and territories.

Navajo officials in the 1970s embraced some aspects of this critique. Peter MacDonald, Raymond Nakai's successor as tribal chairman, stated in 1971 that "economically, our reservations are in a colonial relationship with the rest of the United States."²⁷ He also criticized excessive suburban energy use, explaining in 1975 that "we have seen our land scarred by mine sites ... so that the giant cities of our country can be too cool in summer and too warm in winter and choked with smoke from unnecessary automobiles."²⁸ MacDonald, however, sought to transform the dynamics of energy development so that Navajos could receive, in his words, "a piece of the action." Rather than primarily criticizing energy companies or metropolitan

consumers, he focused his ire on the BIA and called for greater tribal control over resources. In negotiations in the early 1970s, MacDonald insisted that the tribe hold an ownership stake in the plants and that companies create management-training programs for Navajo workers, eventually leading to the nationalization of energy development. Indeed, MacDonald envisioned energy-rich western tribes forming an “Indian OPEC” that could set prices for energy in the West and the nation at large.²⁹

MacDonald’s attempt to transform, yet still pursue, energy development reflected the dilemmas faced by energy-rich tribes. The American economy’s near insatiable demand for energy imbued tribal resources with great value. Value created opportunity: new jobs, new wealth, and a form of sovereignty based in political and economic power. Energy development remained, however, highly destructive of valued landscapes. Navajos revolted against MacDonald’s plans, rallying support from young activists who denounced MacDonald as an “apple,” red on the outside but white on the inside, or as a self-interested politician lining his own pockets (imputations that bore increasing truth as MacDonald channeled tribal resources to supporters and family members throughout his term). They also rallied support from environmental activists off the reservation, who used regulatory mechanisms contained in the Clean Air Act and the National Environmental Policy Act to challenge and block proposed developments.³⁰

While MacDonald saw opportunity in future energy development, his tribe faced continued structural inequality. With leases able to be renewed as long as coal was recovered in paying quantities and no escalator clauses that would increase royalties, coalmining leases returned an increasingly smaller and smaller fraction of coal’s value. Power plants and power lines, as well, represented structural barriers to MacDonald’s visions of “an Indian OPEC.” As forms of private property, power lines and power plants received protections from America’s legal system that prevented officials from gaining control of power over ongoing extractive industries on tribal lands.

Following the power lines away from the suburban houses and defense plants of the postwar Southwest, then, suggests the central place that Indian land and labor played in the creation of modern American life. By following those lines, and the other connections between Indian and non-Indian landscapes, we can come to a sense of the uneven distribution of the costs and benefits of postwar growth. Following power lines, and other commodity flows, away from consumers does something even more

profound, however. It challenges the very boundaries we have drawn around “modernity” as a historical narrative. By and large, historians have located urbanization as the key force in the development of modern America and modernity in general. In such portraits, the lands beyond urban or metropolitan borders, the lands where many Indian peoples continue to live, are described as “underdeveloped,” “backward,” or some other adjective that suggests places existing in isolation from historical change.³¹ Such narratives of Indians as living outside the modern world or, in Phil Deloria’s terms, “missing out on modernity,” have been central to popular understandings of Indians for centuries.³² The stacks of Four Corners Power Plant, or the drag shovels of Navajo Mine, allow us new ways to question these stories. They help to show that both Phoenix and the Navajo Nation were modern, and that metropolitan development and Indian underdevelopment went hand in hand in postwar America.

Notes

1. *Design for Dreaming* (MPO Productions, 1956). Available at <http://archive.org/details/Designf01956>.
2. For the postwar division of gender roles, see Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1989). For the new residential spaces of postwar suburbs, see Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820–2000* (New York: Vintage, 2004). For analysis of “high energy society,” see David Nye, *Consuming Power: A Social History of American Energies* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 157–260. For postwar consumption, see Elizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage, 2003).
3. The history of Indian urbanization is beginning to emerge as a rich field of historical scholarship. The two best recent works are James LaGrande, *Indian Metropolis: Native Americans in Chicago, 1945–1975* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005); and Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration and Identity in Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012). The classic text about Indian urbanization, though it focuses more on identity than urban experience, is Joane Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture*

(New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). For the comparison of reservations to concentration camps and prisons in the Cold War, see Paul Rosier, “‘They Are Ancestral Homelands’: Race, Place, and Politics in Cold War Native America, 1945–1961,” *Journal of American History* 92 (March 2006): 1300–1326.

4. For construction of these dams and their relationship to Indian economies, see Richard White, *The Organic Machine* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

5. For energy development on Crow and Northern Cheyenne land, see James Allison, “Sovereignty and Survival: American Energy Development and Indian Self-Determination” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2013).

6. Writers’ Program of the Works Project Administration in the State of Arizona, *Arizona: A State Guide* (New York: Hastings House, 1940), 222.

7. See Andrew Needham, *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), chapters 2–3.

8. Frank Snell Oral History, Phoenix History Project, Arizona Historical Society, Tempe, Arizona (hereafter AHS).

9. For Arizona Public Service contest, see “Confidential to Members,” 3/18/1955, 1955 Scrapbook, Page 18, Folder 1, Box 2, Homebuilders Association of Central Arizona Records 1953–87, AHS.

10. Percentages derived from Federal Power Commission, *Statistics of Electrical Utilities in the United States ... Classes A and B, Privately Owned Companies*, and *Statistics of Publicly Owned Electric Utilities in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945–70).

11. Bureau of Reclamation, *A Study for Future Electrical Transmission in the West* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952).

12. For quotes and details on early Navajo coal mining, see Colleen O’Neill, *Working the Navajo Way: Labor and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2005), chapter 2.

13. For description of the ecology of the Navajo reservation, see Marsha Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009). For detail of strip mining, see Edward Abbey, “The Second Rape of the West,” in *The Journey Home: Some Words in Defense of the American West* (New York: Penguin, 1978). For place names

of coalmining landscapes on the Navajo Reservation, see Dana Powell and Dalain Long, “Landscapes of Power: Renewable Energy Activism in Diné Bikéyah,” in *Indians and Energy: Exploitation and Opportunity in the American Southwest*, ed. Sherry L. Smith and Brian Frehner (Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2010).

14. The best description of the landscape of Four Corners is in Abbey, “The Second Rape of the West.”

15. White, *The Organic Machine*, 2. For recent work on energy networks as creating natural connections, see Edmund Russell et al., “The Nature of Power: Synthesizing the History of Technology and Environmental History,” *Technology and Culture* 52 (April 2011).

16. Henry Wallace, “The Price of Free World Victory,” in *Democracy Reborn* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1944), 190. Henry Luce, “The American Century,” *Life*, February 17, 1941.

17. Needham, *Power Lines*, 130–31.

18. Ibid., 130–34.

19. Rosier, ““They Are Ancestral Homelands,”” 1304.

20. No one has yet jointly explored these dual pressures during termination to both force Indian peoples away from reservations and bring Indian resources into local economies. For early work on both trends, separately, see Larry Burt, “Factories on Reservations: The Industrial Development Program of Commissioner Glenn Emmons,” *Arizona and the West* 19 (Winter 1977); and “Roots of the Native American Urban Experience: Relocation Policy in the 1950s,” *American Indian Quarterly* 10 (Spring 1986): 90.

21. Peter Iverson, *Diné: A History of the Navajos* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 190.

22. Needham, *Power Lines*, 145–50.

23. Jones quoted in Peter Iverson, ed., “*For Our Navajo People*”: *Diné Letters, Speeches, and Petitions, 1900–1960*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 39.

24. Douglas Dunlap, letter to the editor, *Navajo Times*, November 5, 1970.

25. “They’re Just Saying That,” *Diné Baa-Hani*, September 1970.

26. Michael Gruber, letter to the editor, *Navajo Times*, July 8, 1971.
27. “Opposes Leasehold Tax: Pete Talks in Phoenix,” *Navajo Times*, March 4, 1971.
28. “MacDonald Warns Against Continued Exploitation of Indian Energy Resources,” *Navajo Times*, January 6, 1975.
29. See Needham, *Power Lines*, chap. 7.
30. Ibid.
31. For an elaboration of this argument as it applies to urban history, see Andrew Needham and Allen Dieterich-Ward, “Beyond the Metropolis: Metropolitan Growth and Regional Transformation in Postwar America,” *Journal of Urban History* 35 (November 2009).
32. Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

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- Rosier, Paul, ““They Are Ancestral Homelands’: Race, Place, and Politics in Cold War Native America, 1945–1961.” *Journal of American History* 92 (March 2006): 1300–1326.
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Part III: Reconceptualizing the Narrative

Chapter 17: Teaching American History as Settler Colonialism

MIKAL BROTN OV ECKSTROM AND MARGARET D. JACOBS

The “opening of the reservation” has been the theme of the local newspapers for some months past, and the land has been talked of as though it were veritable prairie. Fears that I might allot it without discrimination as grazing land have led to some funny performances on the part of a portion of the people hereabouts: You can fancy me followed about by persons who consider it their “duty to look after the interests of the settlers”; and you would be amused, if not incensed, at the strange comments and almost threats when it is discovered that desirable locations are already allotted. It is often openly declared, “The Indians have no right to the land; they ought to be made to stay in the cañons.” Perhaps the Indians have no right, and perhaps the white men have none either. Right to land is considered by some people a mooted question, but I fancy the average Idahoan does not bother his head about agrarian theories, apart from reservations.

—ALICE FLETCHER, *Proceedings from the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian*, 1889

Reformer and anthropologist Alice Fletcher wrote this account shortly after the U.S. government had hired her to implement the allotment of the Nez Perce (Nimiipuu) Reservation in present-day Idaho. Under the terms of the General Allotment Act of 1887, or the Dawes Act, Fletcher endeavored to break up communally held Indian land and allot individual plots of 160 acres to each Indian adult male and 80 acres to each single Indian adult female. Once the reservation was allotted, any surplus lands would revert to

the U.S. government to make available in the public domain. Fletcher and other “friends of the Indians” believed that allotment would help Indians to assimilate and become self-sufficient American citizens, and they had lobbied hard for the passage of the Dawes Act. As Fletcher’s experience in Idaho illustrates, however, the act also stood to benefit non-Indian squatters and land speculators who hungered for land, and they, too, had agitated for its approval. Like much legislation before it, the Dawes Act facilitated settler colonialism.

The story of allotment on the Nez Perce reservation represents one case study for a survey class that takes a settler-colonial approach to teaching American history. This framework makes the struggle over land between indigenous people and Europeans (and then Americans) a central and omnipresent theme in the teaching of U.S. history. True to the past, a settler-colonial approach recognizes that “the Indian problem,” as generations of European and American authorities deemed it, was an ongoing and vexing feature of American history. As the British and then Americans envisioned North America as a colony of settlement that would harbor religious exiles, relieve population pressures, and turn a handy profit, the presence of Indians and their claims to territory represented an obstacle, a “problem.” While early colonists turned to violence against resistant Indian tribes, and thanked Providence for killing thousands of Indians through disease, other authorities turned to legal maneuvers and behind-the-scenes manipulation to wrest land away from Indian peoples. When this, too, met with resistance, a series of Indian wars forced compliance. But still, even into the late nineteenth century, reformers such as Fletcher and U.S. government authorities complained of an Indian problem, now defined as the ongoing dependence of Indian peoples on federal largesse. Assimilation policies, including allotment and Indian boarding schools, became the new humanitarian answer to the Indian problem in the late nineteenth century. The “problem” would not go away, however; it surfaced again and again in the twentieth century, as Indians failed to fully assimilate and continued to fight to reclaim their lands.

Typically, Indians make only brief appearances in the survey classes we American historians teach, usually at the beginning of our pre-1877 course, perhaps during the Cherokee Removal, and maybe, if our students are lucky, in the mid- to late nineteenth century with the Indian wars. If our post-1877 classes touch on Indian history at all they might mention

Wounded Knee in 1890, never again to discuss Indians. Many of us would like to include more on Indians, but our overall narratives and the themes and textbooks we choose often make it awkward to insert a more meaningful coverage of Indian history. A survey class based on a settler-colonial paradigm, however, keeps Indians in the frame throughout both halves of the survey and still enables historians to cover a wide variety of historical material. Moreover, a settler-colonial framework requires students to grapple with historical legacies and vividly shows students how the past is alive in the present. For these reasons it offers a valuable way to conceptualize the U.S. history survey.

What Is Settler Colonialism?

Since the 1990s, Canadian and Australian scholars have developed settler-colonial frameworks to explain the distinctive type of colonialism that marked their nations' pasts. In 1995, two feminist sociologists, Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis, defined settler colonialism as a type of European expansion that resulted not in overseas empires but in "societies in which Europeans have settled, where their descendants have [become and] remained politically dominant over indigenous peoples, and where a heterogeneous society has developed in class, ethnic and racial terms." While "colonies of exploitation" or extractive colonies rested on the "appropriation of land, natural resources and labour" through "indirect control" by a small group of "primarily male administrators, merchants, soldiers, and missionaries," settler colonies "were characterized by a much larger settler European population of both sexes for permanent settlement." Settler colonies entailed "much more elaborate political and economic infrastructures" and eventually obtained either formal or informal independence from the metropole.¹ Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis's framework incorporated questions of gender and emphasized the heterogeneity of settler colonies through immigration as much as the subjugation of indigenous peoples.

In the meantime, some Australian theorists were also working out a settler-colonial framework. In the late 1990s, Patrick Wolfe elaborated a theory of settler colonialism that reached its full expression in a 2001 *American Historical Review* article. Wolfe's definition of settler colonialism did not differ in substance from that of Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, but he

innovated an important phrase—that settler colonialism rested on the “logic of elimination” of indigenous peoples—and dazzled his readers with a multilayered comparative analysis of three settler societies—Brazil, the United States, and Australia—and their racial regimes.²

Australian historian Lorenzo Veracini has further theorized settler colonialism by bringing greater attention to the role of not just European (primarily British) settlers and indigenous peoples, but also certain racialized migrant groups. “All settler projects need to manage in specific ways the triangular relationships involving settlers on the one hand, and indigenous and exogenous Others on the other,” Veracini writes. Whereas settlers enjoy “permanent residency and sovereign entitlement,” “exogenous Others” are “probationary settlers.” Settler-colonial states practice a selective inclusion of these racialized migrants that changes over time, as, for example, shifts from anti-Irish xenophobia to anti-Asian exclusion.³

Many scholars of settler colonialism have argued that it is a distinctive form of colonialism that warrants its own analysis. In contrast to the studies of extractive colonialism that delve into issues of postcolonialism, for example, settler-colonial theorists have argued that “it is misleading to refer to settler colonialism in the past tense.”⁴ As Veracini elaborates, there are two moments of decolonization in settler colonies—settler independence and indigenous self-determination, which has yet to be determined in many settler colonies. “Lacking the possibility of a clearly defined decolonizing moment,” Veracini posits, “the settler colony polities have retained the policy objectives, if not the methods, of their settler colonizing pasts, i.e. further extinction assimilation of indigenous law, tenure, autonomy, and identity.”⁵ For scholars of American Indian history, this certainly rings true.

Curiously, though, within the United States, only a few scholars have taken up the settler-colonial paradigm, which leads one to ponder why the framework has had so little influence here.⁶ Veracini has argued that settler colonialism “obscures the conditions of its own production” and that it is most invisible in the United States and Israel. It could be that scholars have been as blind to U.S. settler colonialism as has the general population.⁷ However, it may be for far more prosaic reasons: most U.S. historians simply do not read scholarship by Canadians and Australians. Our graduate programs require continental and postcolonial theorists such as Michel Foucault, Edward Said, and Benedict Anderson, but not the settler-colonial

theoretical scholarship that might help us to make sense of our past by providing an overall framework for understanding U.S. history that centers American Indians.

Teaching U.S. History as Settler-Colonial History

How then would a historian teach an American history survey course based on a settler-colonial framework? This course would weave four major themes throughout: the “logic of elimination” as a guiding principle of settler colonies and settler-colonial nations that led to efforts to dispossess Indians of their land; a simultaneous drive to repopulate newly conquered lands with a settler population; an analysis of the triangular relationship between settlers, indigenes, and “exogenous Others”; and the points of tension and resistance that emerged within the settler-colonial dynamic.

Such a framework would shift the ways we teach American history. For example, in the early U.S. survey, historians often teach that early American needs for labor in the southern colonies transformed from a system of indentured servitude from the British Isles to race-based African slavery sometime in the 1600s. A settler-colonial approach would tie this development to the logic of elimination, the desire to displace Indian people from their lands rather than exploit their labors for the purpose of colonial profit. Studies of the northern Puritan-based colonies would focus on reproduction of the British settler population coupled with the introduction of disease, the destruction of Indian farmlands, and total war as a means of demographically overwhelming the local Indian populations. Instead of dwelling primarily on the issue of taxation without representation as a root cause for the American Revolution, a settler-colonial approach would bring greater attention to issues related to land by highlighting how Americans chafed at the British Proclamation Line of 1763.⁸

In current U.S. history surveys, from the early national period up through the Civil War, instructors might mention Cherokee removal or the Indian wars, but often in isolation from other events. A settler-colonial approach, however, would concentrate on the ways in which the federal government and many state governments became settler-colonial powers intent on gaining ever more Indian land. Private documents between Thomas Jefferson and Congress demonstrated strategies for extinguishing Native title.⁹ Government efforts such as the 1830 Indian Removal Act

dispossessed Indian people of their land, while other legislation—such as the 1824 Florida Donation Act, the 1850 Oregon Donation Act, and the 1862 Homestead Act—facilitated the obverse of Indian elimination: settler repopulation. Moreover, the displacement of Indian people is integrally related to the expansion of slavery and the coming of the Civil War.¹⁰

The settler-colonial framework continues to be a viable framework for the post-1877 survey, when the federal government still confronted “the Indian problem.” Up to our own time, American Indian groups have sought to own land communally and to carry out distinctive cultural practices that were often anathema to European-based settler cultures. They have insisted that the federal government carry out its treaty obligations. From the 1880s up through the 1920s and again from the 1940s to the 1970s, successive administrations sought in vain to end the Indian problem once and for all through assimilation policies. As we detail below, allotment efforts in the late nineteenth century constituted one of the federal government’s most vigorous settler-colonial efforts to divest Indians of their land while assimilating them to settler ways.

In addition to allotment, other moments in the post-1877 U.S. survey are ripe for a settler-colonial approach. Using Veracini’s concept of a triangular relationship between fully entitled settlers, indigenous people, and “probationary settlers,” a historian might have her class compare and contrast efforts to educate newly freed slaves, assimilate American Indians (both of which occurred simultaneously at Hampton Institute), and Americanize particular immigrant groups. A settler-colonial take on the post–World War II era would point out the social and economic inequities between a growing middle class and the majority of American Indians and ask students to analyze this gap. Inquiry into the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s would include American Indians as major players, not as supplementary extras who merely mimicked the African American civil rights movement. Such an approach to the post-1877 survey would lead to productive discussions about the legacy of earlier settler-colonial dynamics, the challenges of a pluralistic, heterogeneous society, and questions of reconciliation.

The Case of the Nez Perce

The allotment of the Nez Perce Reservation in the late nineteenth century serves as one significant case study that elucidates how settler colonialism demanded the continual transference of title from American Indian to settler hands. Through lecture, reading of primary documents, discussion, and writing assignments, we use the Nez Perce case to raise key questions. Why did most reformers concerned with “the Indian problem” support allotment? How did settler colonialism underpin the government’s efforts to force the Nez Perce to take up their allotments? How did the Nez Perce navigate the allotment process? Did the allotment process solve the “Indian problem”? This methodology illuminates the ideologies of Indian reformers, government officials, and local squatters as they sought to implement allotment, but it also stresses Native agency.

A case study of the Nez Perce allotment would begin with some basic background on the tribe and a brief history of their early encounters with Europeans and Americans. Originally, their interactions with Europeans took the form of an extractive rather than a settler colony, primarily through the fur trade. In 1805, when Lewis and Clark encountered them in a state of starvation near present-day Weippe, Idaho, the Nez Perce were the largest tribal grouping on the Columbia Plateau, with a population of about 6,000.¹¹ By 1813, the Nez Perce were firmly engaged in trading with the Northwest Company post on the Upper Columbia. Trade in fur and parfleche fostered a period of relative prosperity for the Nez Perce and those non-Natives in Oregon Territory.¹² This form of colonialism did not undermine Nez Perce cultural lifeways nor require removal from their homelands. With trade, however, came an unintended consequence: the ravages of disease.

From the 1830s, the U.S. government vied with other colonial powers for the present-day Pacific Northwest. In contrast to Britain and Russia, American colonial authorities envisioned the territory as a colony of settlement, not merely as a place from which to extract valuable resources. Initially, missionaries formed the vanguard of settler colonists. With funding from the U.S. government, Presbyterian missionaries Henry and Eliza Spalding, and later the McBeth sisters, proselytized the Nez Perce. Unlike traders, missionaries sought to fundamentally change Nez Perce society through conversion, horticulture, written laws, and the printing press.¹³ Missionaries centered their activity at the Spalding mission site and

Kamiah, which they built upon traditional power centers of the North Central Idaho bands.¹⁴

While missionaries preached, the U.S. military scouted the area for potential fortification sites, ushering in the next phase of colonialism.¹⁵ After the passage of the Oregon Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, an early precedent for the Homestead Act, incoming settlers flooded into the area. From the 1840s through the 1860s most squatters who staked claims in the area were cattlemen who sought title to vast tracts of land. The U.S. government built their colonial outpost, Fort Lapwai, in 1862, just three miles south of the original mission. There, squatters and Indian agents negotiated secret rental agreements. Tensions climbed between incoming settlers and the Nez Perce, especially in the Wallowa Valley, where the young Chief Joseph refused to cede land. Conflict between so-called traditional and progressive forces among the Nez Perce and with other tribes who claimed the same land further compounded the tension. These struggles posed a problem for the U.S. government, who viewed the settlement of the Oregon Territory as way to stymie British claims. The Nez Perce expressed concerns over the ever-encroaching settlement of non-Natives on and near their reservation, but the federal government responded to Nez Perce grievances with apathy. And when Nez Perce attempted to reclaim stolen land, the U.S. government unleashed military force against them, resulting in more Nez Perce land converting to settler title.

Attempts to solve the federal government's "Indian problem" led to a form of "spatial control" alien to the Nez Perce: their confinement to lands with fixed boundaries through a series of treaties in 1855, 1863, and 1868.¹⁶ With the treaty of 1855, the Nez Perce ceded 7.5 million acres of land, but they secured guarantees of continued off-reservation hunting and fishing rights and continued to hold their land communally. When reservation trespasser Elias D. Pierce discovered gold worth 3 million dollars in 1860, a new wave of miners and squatters deluged the reservation.¹⁷ In 1863, in what the Nez Perce refer to as the "thief treaty," the American government reduced the reservation to 750,000 acres in an attempt to preempt Nez Perce claims to the Wallowa Valley in Oregon, the Red River in Idaho, and parts of Washington.¹⁸ Nevertheless, settlers and the American government continued to pressure the Nez Perce to sell their lands, resulting in yet another treaty five years later. Though the 1868 treaty provided the tribe with U.S. military power to protect Nez Perce timber, the settler-colonial

project continued, inscribing itself onto the land through the placement of railroads and the ever-increasing settlement of squatters on and near Native land.¹⁹

Students are probably somewhat familiar with events that occurred in 1877, when the U.S. government waged war against Chief Joseph after he and other leaders refused to move their bands to the designated reservation. Joseph led his followers on a 1,600-mile migration over eleven weeks, hoping to migrate to Canada. The U.S. cavalry pursued him doggedly and engaged his band in battle thirteen times before finally capturing them just miles from the Canadian border. Government authorities promised Chief Joseph and his followers that upon surrender they could live on a reservation in Lapwai; instead the U.S. government exiled them to the Ponca Agency in Oklahoma for a decade and then relocated them to a reservation in eastern Washington.²⁰ With this military venture behind them, the U.S. government considered their “Indian problem” resolved, resulting in even more ranchers, settlers, and miners asserting “squatter sovereignty,” as Jane Gay described it, by moving onto Nez Perce lands. While American history survey classes frequently narrate such events as progress, a settler-colonial framework reveals them to be a relentless effort to remove Indians from their land and replace them with a settler population.²¹

Still, the hunger for land drove the logic of elimination. This time it came in the form of converting communally held tribal land into private allotments. The 1887 Dawes Act and subsequent legislation called for the allotment of 160 acres to each Indian head of household, 80 acres to every registered individual Indian (including women), and 40 acres to orphans. Aiming to show Natives the benefits of mixed husbandry and civilization, the act’s focus on private land ownership functioned as just one part of a larger, more aggressive assimilation policy. Backed by the “friends of the Indian,” Colonel Richard Henry Pratt’s Carlisle Institute served as a model for another feature of assimilation: a network of Indian boarding schools that removed Native children from their homes with the aim of civilizing them. With both settler-colonial projects set in motion, Native parents experienced a new regime of private property, while the government attempted to indoctrinate their young children.

White women such as Alice Fletcher shaped this reform movement and became assimilation agents of the federal government. In 1889 Fletcher

brought the Dawes Act to Nez Perce Country, accompanied by her friend E. Jane Gay. Fletcher was part of an elite circle of reformers whose world connected the halls of the academy, the pews of Protestant churches, and the desks of senator's offices. Fletcher relied on money from the East and the missionaries in the West to carry out her work, while Gay, an amateur photographer, captured and recorded the intricacies of settler-colonial nation building.²²

A series of primary documents by Fletcher and Gay offer many teachable moments for student discussion and written assignments. A close reading of their personal papers highlights discrete aspects of the settler-colonial project. While Fletcher's letters and diary afford students an opportunity to view the struggles of enacting policy, E. Jane Gay's photographs and letters written to her niece formulate a stinging critique of the ideals of the reformers and the machinations of local "squatters." Unlike Fletcher, Gay was not a governmental employee, so she could write candidly about the allotment process and even her close friend's role within it. For example, Gay refers to Fletcher as "her Majesty" ninety-two times in her letters.

These primary documents illuminate how the government, through its agent, Fletcher, had to exert intense pressure on the Nez Perce to accept allotments.²³ Fletcher faced a formidable challenge in "selling" the idea of communal property to the Nez Perce. Requiring more than mere diplomacy, Gay noted, Fletcher had to "to convince them, man, woman and child, of the desirableness of breaking their tribal relations, giving up their tribal rights under U.S. treaty," all for "American citizenship and a very moderately sized farm cut out of their tribal inheritance."²⁴ By November 1891, the Office of Indian Affairs stated that any Nez Perce who refused to sign an allotment would not be permitted to hunt in Montana, which amounted to starvation for the traditional Nez Perce. This new government order resulted in increased acceptance of allotments.²⁵

The letters provide insight not just into officials' and reformers' views and actions, but also into the perspectives of local squatters. Gay recounts how cattlemen who wished to protect their grazing "rights" routinely approached Fletcher to influence the process. Although Fletcher states that it was her "duty to place the Indians upon the best lands," Gay interprets the cattlemen's vision of the Dawes Act as a "skilful [*sic*] contrivance to dispossess the aborigines and facilitate the opening of their lands to squatter sovereignty."²⁶ Here, the letters illuminate the tensions between Indians and

non-Indians within the boundaries of the reservation, while at the same time underscoring how settlers sought to steer the actual implementation of the act to their benefit.

While the letters grant students access to the motivations and actions of government authorities and nearby settlers, they also highlight various expressions of Native agency. They reveal that the Nez Perce divided in their response to allotment and that internal conflict erupted between so-called progressives and traditionalists. Those Nez Perce whose names Fletcher inscribed in her allotment registry sometimes feared for their lives and dreaded that while they were in church, allotment opponents would lodge porcupine needles in their horses' brains, killing them instantly.²⁷ Letters show, too, how Nez Perce relied on their own cultural values during the allotment process. Many claimed plots along rivers and canyons—places of cultural and spiritual significance—leaving much of the arable land on the prairie open for settlement.²⁸

Moreover, various documents allow students to see how the issue of surplus land became a significant issue. Nez Perce leaders balked at selling the surplus, wanting to save it for future generations and for grazing livestock. Their greatest fears were fully realized in 1895, when after the reservation had been allotted, “three commissioners appeared upon the ground, to buy the surplus, or unallotted land.”²⁹ Still, the Nez Perce strategized to resist the government's plan. In a clear sign of Native agency, the Nez Perce Tribe found a railroad company willing to pay more for the land than the government was offering. Refusing to allow another bidder, and through duplicitous practices, the federal commissioners secured the Nez Perce Agreement of 1893, once again demonstrating to students how the government relied on deceit and coercion to divest Indians of their land while gaining even more land for white settlement and development.³⁰

A discussion of these documents might conclude with posing the question of whether allotment solved the perennial Indian problem. Certainly, if the Indian problem was defined, as reformers saw it, as continued dependence on the federal government, allotment did little to further Indian independence and self-sufficiency. But if the Indian problem is seen through a settler-colonial lens, allotment was wildly successful because it reduced Indian landholding overall by 90 million acres.³¹ With more than 76 percent of the reservation wrested from Nez Perce hands, the

net result clarifies how the Dawes Act functioned as a form of settler colonialism in American history.

These primary documents could also form the basis for many worthwhile writing assignments. Projects might include students tracing the genealogies of their own family properties or constructing a diary focusing on the process of personal loss. Instructors could ask some students to write to an imaginary Indian agent espousing the benefits of allotment and others to petition local officials highlighting the impending harm hidden within the Dawes Act. Having students write letters to newspaper editors or create political cartoons, pamphlets, or protest signs might provide additional creative strategies for deeper investigation.

To complete this unit, teachers can turn back to a lecture to discuss the long-term effects of allotment on the Nez Perce and other Indian tribes. Instructors might show students how many of the issues stemming from the allotment era played out over many generations and in many different arenas. Those interested in legal history and gender, for example, could highlight how interracial marriages led to land transfers. Instructors could also demonstrate how the Nez Perce resolved the cycles of land falling into non-Native hands by moving their land to “trust land,” which prevented its sale to non-Natives. Finally, by centering a discussion on how the Wallowa Band of Nez Perce repurchased stolen land in Oregon in 1995, teachers can bring students nearly up to the present and help them vividly witness the importance of settler-colonial history to ongoing events.

The allotment of the Nez Perce provides one significant case study for understanding how settler colonialism played out within American history. Even after the Indian wars had ended, students learn, the government still acted upon the logic of elimination in its unceasing attempt to gain more Indian land. Although driven by different motivations, a wide variety of Americans supported this policy, from idealistic reformers such as Fletcher to land-hungry squatters such as the cattlemen who sought to influence her. Yet this project did not proceed as smoothly as its supporters envisioned. Tension and resistance also characterized the settler-colonial project, as American Indians sought to assert their own ongoing claims to the land, and some members of the settler population, such as Gay, critiqued its true foundation. Applying the settler-colonial model to an American history survey class offers an alternative to the conventional narrative that more often than not writes Indians out of history. Instead it places the conflicts

between American Indians and incoming settlers at the very center of American history. Most assuredly it demonstrates why you cannot teach American history without American Indians.

Notes

1. Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis, "Introduction: Beyond Dichotomies—Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class in Settler Societies," in *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class*, ed. Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 3.

2. Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (June 2001): 866–905.

3. Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 18, 26. For other recent scholarship, see James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo World, 1783–1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 2009); Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington, eds., *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

4. Bateman and Pilkington, "Introduction" to *Studies in Settler Colonialism*, 2.

5. Lorenzo Veracini, "Telling the End of the Settler Colonial Story," in Bateman and Pilkington, *Studies in Settler Colonialism*, 215.

6. Frederick Hoxie, "Retrieving the Red Continent: Settler Colonialism and the History of American Indians in the United States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31, no. 6 (2008): 1153–67; Dolores Janiewski, "Gendering, Racializing, and Classifying: Settler Colonization in the United States, 1590–1990," in Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis, *Unsettling Settler Societies*, 132–60; Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880–1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

7. Veracini, *Settler Colonialism*, 14, 15.

8. Rana, *Two Faces*, 67.

9. Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philosophy and the American Indian* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974); and “Confidential Message to House of Representatives and the Senate,” Presidential Messages of the 7th Congress, 12/07/1801–03/03/1803, Record Group 233: Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1789—2006; National Archives and Records Administration-Main Branch, Washington, D.C.

10. For high school and introductory courses, instructors might rely on the public radio show *This American Life*’s story “Trail of Tears” as recounted by Sarah Vowell. Most students will recognize Vowell as the voice of Violet from Pixar’s *The Incredibles*. “Episode 107: Trail of Tears,” *This American Life*, <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/107/trail-of-tears> (accessed March 11, 2013).

11. Alvin M. Josephy Jr., *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 45–47.

12. Deward E. Walker Jr., in *Conflict and Schism in Nez Perce Acculturation: A Study of Religion and Politics*, 2nd ed. (1968; reprint, Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1985), 38.

13. Digging into the Earth was seen as sacrilege. See Josephy, *The Nez Perce Indians*, i. For missionary treatment of Nez Perce, see Clifton Merrill Drury, *Henry Harmon Spalding* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1936), 175.

14. E. Jane Gay, *With the Nez Percés: Alice Fletcher in the Field, 1889–92*, ed. Frederick Hoxie and Joan Mark (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 33.

15. Letters Received Relating to the Nez Perce Indians 1873–1874, Preliminary Inventory Records U.S. Military Installations, Ft. Lapwai, RG 393, Department of War, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

16. Emily Greenwald, *Reconfiguring the Reservation: The Nez Percés, Jicarilla Apaches, and the Dawes Act* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002).

17. Bruce Hampton, *Children of Grace: The Nez Perce War of 1877* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 29. This claim was part of

the tribes Indian Claims Commission claim, Docket No. 180-A, July 5, 1950.

18. Nez Perce Tribe, *Treaties: Nez Perce Perspectives* (Lewiston: Confluence Press, 2003), 40.

19. John K. Flanagan, “The Invalidity of the Nez Perce Treaty of 1863 and the Taking of the Wallowa Valley,” *American Indian Law Review* 24, no. 1 (1999/2000): 82–83.

20. J. Diane Pearson, *The Nez Percés in the Indian Territory: Nimiipuu Survival* (Tulsa: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008); Josephy, *The Nez Perce Indians*; W. H. Babcock, “Joseph, The Nez Perce,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 58 (1878): 109.

21. Gay, *With the Nez Percés*, 11.

22. Kate McBeth, *The Nez Percés Since Lewis and Clark*, ed. Peter Iverson and Elizabeth James (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1993), 185.

23. Gay, *With the Nez Percés*, 80–81; McBeth, *The Nez Percés*, 145.

24. Gay, *With the Nez Percés*, 16, quote on 23.

25. *Ibid.*, 152.

26. *Ibid.*, 10–11.

27. *Ibid.*, 51, 54.

28. Nicole Tonkovich, *The Allotment Plot: Alice Fletcher, E. Jane Gay and Nez Perce Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 142–44.

29. McBeth, *The Nez Percés*, 187.

30. Nez Perce Tribe, *Treaties*, 54.

31. Indian Land Tenure Foundation, “History of Allotment,” <http://www.iltf.org/resources/land-tenure-history/allotment> (accessed February 20, 2014). Currently, the Nez Perce Reservation remains a checkerboard, with 36,949 acres in tribal trust (land held in trust by the U.S. government), 47,244 acres in individual trust (land allotted to Nez Perce), and 721,612 acres designated fee simple (the most common form of property in the United States). See Terry Lee Anderson and Dean Lueck, “Agricultural Development and Land Tenure in Indian Country,” in

Property Rights and Indian Economies (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992), 150.

Suggested Readings

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Piatote, Beth. *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and Law in Native American Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

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Chapter 18: Federalism

Native, Federal, and State Sovereignty

K. TSIANINA LOMAWAIMA

U.S. history cannot be taught without American Indians because the United States has been inexorably shaped by Native nations. Formatively, Native nations set the conditions for the creation of the United States as Native lands were claimed as U.S. land. Everything else flows from that irreducible violence. Native realities and their impacts on settler society have, however, largely been erased from U.S. history in textbooks, popular culture, and the understanding of many citizens. Confronting the erasure and making Native America visible is a daunting but worthwhile battle. The history of U.S. federalism presents a compelling opportunity for a fresh narrative.

Federalism, a definitive relationship of U.S. governance, has evolved as a relationship among *three* sets of sovereigns, not two: the states, the federal government, *and* Native nations. U.S. history narratives have erased Native nations as co-forgers of federalism as part of a multipronged imperative to “eliminate the Native.”¹ Two case studies, which have at their heart settler claims of entitlement to Native wealth and lands, build a strong evidentiary foundation for this triple sovereign interaction in U.S. state formation. The cases show how: (1) British attempts to control Indian trade and settler access to Native land through the Proclamation of 1763 provoked a revolution and initial conceptions of federalism; and (2) Indian removals in the 1800s forestalled southern states’ threats of nullification and secession in order to preserve the union. This chapter focuses on removal to analyze the Native-federal-state dynamic at a critical juncture in the construction of U.S. federalism. Grounding this discussion in the realities of teaching brings home the challenges and opportunities of casting a more accurate and truthful U.S. history.²

What Is Federalism?

Many scholars agree there is no “fully fledged” political theory of federalism.³ An array of related terms, however, has been applied to governmental structures and processes. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay wrote *The Federalist Papers*, eighty-five essays arguing for ratification of the Constitution.⁴ Michael Burgess uses *federation* to refer to a governmental structure that accommodates constituent units (such as states) in decision-making processes of the central government; he uses *federalism* to describe “active promotion of support for federation.”⁵ In U.S. history texts *federalism* is sometimes used synonymously with *federation* to refer to a government structure; and sometimes to promote federal over state authority. This latter use of *federalism* overlaps with the use of *federalist* to refer to advocates of strong federal authority. Whatever terms are used, the structure and history of U.S. federalism have been hotly contested.⁶ *Federalism* is used here to describe a particular government structure and *federalist* to indicate advocacy for federal over state and Native nation powers.

Within the United States the Constitution orders relations between federal and state sovereigns, and federal-state relations have always been hotly contested. Federalists and states’ righters battle for authority over abortion, commerce, education, gun control, health, immigration, marriage, taxation, water rights—and American Indian affairs. Many U.S. citizens seem to take for granted the idea of structured relations between federal and state sovereigns, however hotly debated the particulars might be. The idea of Native nations as sovereigns, however, often seems anomalous, peculiar, or abnormal. The contrast came clear at a 2011 public forum on Native sovereignty held in Palm Springs, California: “One pertinent question from the audience summed up the tensions: ‘How can one sovereign exist within the territory and jurisdiction of another?’ The question was rooted in one context—the Cahuilla Indians existing as a sovereign nation within the city of Palm Springs, the State of California, and the US—which seemed to present an irreconcilability. The answer changed the context: ‘Let’s ask the Pope.’ The audience laughed.”⁷ Coexisting sovereigns with overlapping territories and jurisdictions seem ludicrous when Indians are involved and possible elsewhere, even where territorial and jurisdictional issues are bitterly contested. No one in the audience questioned how sovereign

California could exist within the territory and jurisdiction of the sovereign United States.

Three steps build toward bringing Native nations into the cognitive field of “taken for granted” sovereigns: (1) Illustrate how Native nations shaped the world in which U.S. federalism was forged; (2) Connect Native sovereignty to federalism as an existing knowledge structure where coexisting sovereignties seem possible, not ludicrous; (3) Fracture the hierarchical structure of U.S. federalism to position indigenous nations as visible, respected sovereigns. Moving from step one to step three challenges us to recognize why and how Native nations have been erased from U.S. history.

A critical pedagogy approaches *federalism* as a tool and a target. Using federalism to model overlapping sovereignties (the second step) requires us to fracture federalism (the third step) and reorder its logic. Fitting Native nations under the umbrella of U.S. federalism’s hierarchy on a par with the states is unconstitutional, as Native inherent sovereignty predates the U.S. Constitution and federalism. Brief consideration of the Constitution provides useful context.⁸

As a political contract, the Constitution allocated powers to central federal and constituent state sovereigns.⁹ The Constitution indirectly recognized the sovereignty of Native nations by excluding most Indian people from the social contract and through the commerce clause: “Article 1, section 8: The Congress shall have power ... to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.”¹⁰ Article 6, the supremacy clause, does not refer specifically to Native nations, but its elevation of federal law above state law federalized the political relationship with Native governments. Treaties are explicitly named among the federal instruments that make up the supreme law of the land: “This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.”¹¹ Federalism was created as a balancing act among dynamic sovereigns. It assigned central authority to federal government while expressly limiting federal powers; it elevated federal law and treaties as the supreme law of

the land while reserving undesignated powers to the states and to the people.

I argue that Native nations helped forge U.S. federalism even as federalism tried to render them invisible. Before briefly mentioning the U.S. revolution and then turning to Indian removal as an exemplary case study, however, it is necessary to describe the pedagogical setting of Many Nations of Native America/MNNA.

The Classroom Setting

MNNA is built on a simple pedagogical premise and an explicit learning outcome.¹² The pedagogical premise: human beings learn by linking new information to existing structures of knowledge. The learning outcome: students will be able to define and describe sovereignty in the modern world, using examples of sovereigns such as Native nations, the United States, states, and other nations.

MNNA presents scholarship about Native peoples that is new to many students. Assimilating new information is difficult when existing knowledge structures are inaccurate, prejudicial paradigms that systematically erase Native reality. Powerful stereotypes situate “Indians” as exotic others in the past, not present; iconic of nature, not human society; primitive and naïve, not savvy political players; circular thinkers traumatized by a linear world.¹³ Let’s call this prejudicial structure the “Indian” paradigm. The “Indian” paradigm challenges us because the paradigm is strongly endorsed by settler-colonial society, and it is false. We do not want to use it: we want to demolish it with scholarly evidence. Many students, however, have been trained to take the paradigm for granted.¹⁴ They come to college expecting to learn “new things” but are not well prepared to deal with new things that overturn what they have been taught all their lives. The “Indian” paradigm undermines the desired learning outcome that the inherent sovereignty exercised by Native nations is not peculiar, anomalous, or different from the sovereignty exercised by Great Britain, Afghanistan, Monaco, or the United States. How might we achieve a more accurate global understanding of sovereignty that does not undermine indigenous sovereignty? MNNA makes the attempt by connecting to a popular and academic narrative that we’ll call the “American” paradigm.

The “American” paradigm assumes sovereignty is characteristic of the states of the union, the United States, and “foreign” nations, especially First World nations. Sovereigns compete—war is the extreme case—or collaborate through relationships structured by diplomacy, treaties, and the court of public opinion. Federalism is a structured relationship among sovereigns that is familiar to many students, and so we connect to this established structure of knowledge to introduce new content. Case studies build upon one another to encourage students to build upon their understandings of federalism, expand their understandings of federalism, and then consider restructuring what federalism might become in the twenty-first century.¹⁵

Case One: The Road to Revolution, 1763–1783

MNNA students are asked to list U.S. sovereign powers. They easily articulate powers to protect borders, define citizenship, pass and enforce laws, collect taxes, print money, declare war, and so on. The next question: name one example of a constraint on U.S. sovereignty. This usually takes some time; it appears many students on first thought conceive of the United States as an unfettered sovereign. On second thought, they generate a list: trade tariffs on exports, treaties and trade agreements, accordance with United Nations resolutions. This exercise highlights the fluid, negotiated, and constrained character of sovereignty;¹⁶ and sets the stage to discuss the English colonies on the cusp of revolution. Briefly considering that world in turn sets the stage to discuss how nineteenth-century Indian removals shaped U.S. federalism.

Diverse colonists, land-speculating companies, colonial governments, European nations, and Native nations interacted in the often-violent eighteenth-century Atlantic world. Colonies and their settler citizens competed for Indian land and profit from the Indian trade. The British Crown sought dominion over territory, the alliance of Native nations as protectorates, and peace, particularly by controlling the trade. Equipping troops in the Americas was expensive, and as colonial provocations continually breached the peace, the British issued the Proclamation of 1763.¹⁷

The proclamation aimed to regulate access to Indian wealth and lands, barring settlement on Native lands and demanding those already so settled

to withdraw. Legal settlement required Crown permission, and the Crown reserved the sole right to acquire Native land. Imperial powers on this scale require a substantial subsidy: taxes. The 1765 Stamp Act brought to a head growing colonist opposition to a Parliament where the colonies had no right of representation. American historians have enshrined resistance to “taxation without representation” but erased the reason for the tax: to regulate the Indian trade, control settlement, reserve acquisition of Indian lands for the Crown, and fund military enforcement. Colonists were at least as vehemently opposed—if not more so—to the *reasons* for the tax as to the tax itself. History texts stress that the former colonies strove to not replicate the Crown’s abusive powers in the new federal government. In fact, less than three weeks after signing the Treaty of Paris in 1783 Congress recreated the controls of the 1763 British Proclamation. Congress forbade its citizens to settle on Indian lands, regulated the sale of Indian land, and required congressional approval for any individual or state purchase of Indian lands. The first assertions of federal authority in incipient federalism were to assume precisely the powers of the British Crown that provoked the revolution. The rhetoric of revolt against taxation without representation was merely the icing on the cake. The cake entailed concrete economic and territorial imperatives to dispossess Native nations. The impetus to revolution and federalism emerged from a world where Native trade and Native lands were at stake.

Case Two: Preserving the Union, 1802–1840

The United States was still young when the fragile union was threatened by southern states’ threats to nullify federal laws and secede. The issue was not slavery but persistent revolutionary themes: claims to Native wealth and lands, and resistance to taxes. Southern states, led by Georgia, wished to remove Indian peoples and appropriate their wealth and lands; South Carolina led a movement to nullify the imposition of federal tariffs. In the face of threats to the union, U.S. executive, legislative, and judicial branches spurned Native sovereignty. In one case states’ rights were supported; in another, federal authority was reinforced. President Andrew Jackson refused to enforce federal treaties to protect the Cherokee Nation against Georgia; Congress passed the 1830 Removal Act; and the Supreme Court elevated federal power over Native sovereignty in *Cherokee Nation v.*

Georgia (1831). In *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) the court elevated federal authority over the states. Native nations were sacrificed to solidify federal and state claims to land, to solidify state and federal standing as federalism's partners, and to preserve the partners' tenuous balance (at least temporarily).

As Georgia flouted federal treaties in its eagerness to remove Indians, South Carolina moved to nullify federal law and threatened secession over tariffs. We will see how President Jackson's pro-state stance on removal directly contradicted his profederalist stance regarding tariff nullification. Comparing the cases illuminates how federalism was shaped to balance federal and state sovereignties while eliminating the challenge of Native sovereigns. The material interests at stake in removal were claims to land, the territory essential to state and federal sovereigns' power. A different material interest was at stake in the nullification crisis—revenue to support the union—and here Jackson emphatically supported federal authority. Comparison of a range of primary source documents reveals how discourses about federalism shifted dramatically as different material interests took center stage.

Tensions leading to removal intensified as federalism reinforced federal and state polities *as sovereigns* in contrast to Native nations. The reality of Native sovereignty and the impasse it created are apparent in conflicting federal promises: promises made in numerous treaties and in congressional legislation with Native nations versus promises made to Georgia in the Articles of Agreement and Cession of April 24, 1802.¹⁸ A stable federal government required a territorial base, and the United States staked claims as Britain had to all "unclaimed" (Native-owned) lands to the west and south of the originating states. U.S. claims competed with states' claims, and the 1802 Articles worked a compromise. Georgia surrendered some land claimed in its charter; the United States promised to extinguish Indian title to all lands within state boundaries: "The United States shall, at their own expense, extinguish, for the use of Georgia, as early as the same can be peaceably obtained, on reasonable terms, the Indian title."¹⁹ Only a few weeks before ratifying the articles Congress had passed the Indian Intercourse Act recognizing Native dominion over their lands and criminalizing non-Native U.S. citizens' trespass, hunting, surveying, settling, or unlicensed trading.²⁰ These promises, including treaty agreements with Native nations, stood at cross-purposes.

What changed between 1802 and 1830 that motivated southern threats to secede? Demographic, technological, and economic developments all played a role. White settler and enslaved African American populations were growing rapidly, as was the value of prime agricultural lands. After Eli Whitney patented the cotton gin in 1793 “the yield of raw cotton doubled each decade after 1800. Demand was fueled by other inventions of the Industrial Revolution, such as the machines to spin and weave it and the steamboat to transport it. By mid century America was growing three-quarters of the world’s supply of cotton ... [and] the South provided three-fifths of America’s exports—most of it in cotton.”²¹ In 1829, gold had been discovered on Cherokee land. Backed by Georgia governor George Gilmer and the state militia, Georgia’s legislature unilaterally “dissolved” the Cherokee government, annulled its laws, and declared Cherokee people “citizens” with no rights to vote, assemble, or testify in court against a white person. Georgia claimed Cherokee gold mines and set up lotteries to distribute Cherokee lands to white citizens. Georgia dared to flout federal intercession, as Andrew Jackson had been elected president in 1828, and Jackson did not disappoint. Jackson supported Georgia, refusing to protect the Cherokee from the state or its citizenry or to enforce any federal treaty counter to the state’s wishes. With no physical or legal barriers to escalating violence, non-Native citizens seized Cherokee property, burned down Cherokee homes, and terrorized those who resisted.

Jackson had been elected president on a populist platform of state’s rights and restricted federal authority. In his first State of the Union address on December 8, 1829, he celebrated state powers: “The great mass of legislation relating to our internal affairs was intended to be left where the Federal Convention found it—in the State governments. ... This ... belongs to the most deeply rooted convictions of my mind. I can not, therefore, too strongly or too earnestly ... warn you against all encroachments upon the legitimate sphere of State sovereignty. Sustained by its healthful and invigorating influence the federal system can never fall.”²² Jackson was troubled by Indian tribes who “mingled much with the whites and made some progress in the arts of civilized life, [and] have lately attempted to erect an independent government within the limits of Georgia and Alabama.”²³ Jackson dismissed the possibility of a “foreign and independent government” within state boundaries and advised the tribes to emigrate west or submit to state laws, as a “State can not be dismembered

by Congress or restricted in the exercise of her constitutional power.”²⁴ Jackson’s antifederalist stance was context specific: tribes could not exist independently within states, but Congress could not restrict the independence of states within the union.

Jackson’s 1830 address similarly promoted the “importance of sustaining the State sovereignties as far as is consistent with the rightful action of the Federal Government, and of preserving the greatest attainable harmony between them.”²⁵ Harmony and “mutual forbearance” were important.²⁶ Jackson felt the “benevolent” policy of removal buttressed harmony within the Union: “It puts an end to all possible danger of collision between the authorities of the General and State Governments on account of the Indians.”²⁷ Claiming that the federal government possessed “as little right” to control the states as “to prescribe laws for other nations,” Jackson elevated the 1802 Articles over the never-mentioned legal standing of treaties.²⁸

Jackson returned to the dangers Indians posed to the union in his third State of the Union in 1831: “Time and experience have proved that the abode of the native Indian within their [state] limits is dangerous to their [state] peace and injurious to himself.”²⁹ Jackson applauded his solution: to extinguish all Indian title to land within state boundaries and to remove all Indian people unwilling to submit to state laws.

The Cherokee Nation disagreed vigorously with the alleged justice, morality, and benevolence of Jackson’s solution. In 1830 the Cherokee National Council forbade further western emigration by its citizens and established the death penalty for any citizen negotiating to sell property. The Cherokee Nation petitioned Congress, filed cases in the courts, and addressed the U.S. public through the media, particularly the bilingual newspaper *The Cherokee Phoenix*.³⁰ In 1835 the Georgia Guard seized the paper’s printing press and silenced the *Phoenix*. Congress had long since concluded its divisive debate, authorizing the president in the 1830 Indian Removal Act to exchange Indian lands within the states for federal lands west of the Mississippi River.³¹

The executive and legislative branches were joined by the judicial branch in protecting federalism’s precarious balance from Native sovereignty. In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), federalist Chief Justice John Marshall threaded a passage between the Scylla of full inherent sovereignty of Native nations and the

Charybdis of federally untrammelled state sovereignty. In *Cherokee Nation* Marshall fabricated the status of “domestic dependent nation” and subjugated Indian “wards” to federal “guardianship.” In *Worcester* Marshall took a stand against Georgia’s affronts to federal authority: “The Cherokee nation, then, is a distinct community, occupying its own territory ... in which the laws of Georgia can have no force, and which the citizens of Georgia have no right to enter. ... The whole intercourse between the United States and this [Cherokee] nation, is, by our Constitution and laws, vested in the government of the United States.”³² Both cases elevated federal powers within federalism, as Patrick Wolfe has incisively argued: “the circumstances of the [*Worcester*] judgment’s delivery make clear that it was timed to save the Union, not Indians.”³³ The timing of *Worcester* ensured its unenforceability. Marshall was “acutely aware” of congressional support for states’ rights, South Carolina’s threat to secede, and Jackson’s support of Georgia.³⁴

A broad-brush survey of removal paints Jackson as an ardent states’ rights advocate, but his 1832 Nullification Proclamation contradicts that simplistic picture. Jackson scoffed at South Carolina’s “strange” argument that a state might declare an act of Congress void: “our social compact, in express terms, declares that the laws of the United States, its Constitution, and treaties made under it, are the supreme law of the land.”³⁵ Jackson even quoted the supremacy clause! His language merits detailed attention given its thorough contradiction of his own removal arguments and the insight thus provided into U.S. nation building. “I consider, then, the power to annul a law of the United States, assumed by the state, *incompatible with the existence of the Union, contradicted expressly by the letter of the Constitution, unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle on which it was founded, and destructive of the great object* [to create a more perfect union] *for which it was formed.*”³⁶ Jackson declared that South Carolina had no right to oppose federal law or to secede: secession was an “offence” against the Union.³⁷ This was the same Jackson who refused to enforce treaties with Native nations, refused to intervene when Georgia’s violence against Indian people was declared unconstitutional, and ignored the supremacy clause in the context of removal. Jackson’s profederalist stance was context specific to nullification over tariffs.

Looking back to Justice Thompson’s 1831 dissent in *Cherokee Nation* helps make sense of the crosscutting currents of pro- and antifederalist

discourse. Thompson addressed the question of “whether the Cherokee Nation is a foreign state. ... We ought, therefore, to reckon in the number of sovereigns those states that have bound themselves to another more powerful, although by an unequal alliance. ... Provided the inferior ally reserves to itself the sovereignty or the right to govern its own body, it ought to be considered an independent state. ... Testing the character and condition of the Cherokee Indians by these rules, it is not perceived how it is possible to escape the conclusion that they form a sovereign state.”³⁸ Cherokee “full” sovereignty as a foreign state was too threatening to the emerging standing of federal and state sovereigns. Marshall’s “domestic dependent nation” fabrication trumped Thompson’s dissent in a dramatic move to erase Native nations as potential partners in the dynamic of federalism. With federal and state claims to land more secure after removal, Jackson reversed his arguments in order to secure federal revenue in a complicated dance. Shifting discourses delineated the dance partners within federalism who would henceforth be considered bona fide: federal and state sovereigns. Native nations were literally, physically removed from the South; they would increasingly be written out of political and historical narratives as key sovereigns in the construction of federalism.

Removal and Federalism in History Textbooks

Recent textbooks do not only excise Native nations from the conversation. Federalism itself is hardly mentioned. In James West Davidson and associates’ *The American Nation* (2000) federalism is not central enough to be listed in the index but it appears in chapter 5 under the subheading “A Federal System.” Defined as the division of power between states and the national government, tensions between the two are glossed over as the founders of the Republic are said to have made the Constitution the supreme law of the land to “settle disagreements.”³⁹ Chapter 10 discusses the 1832 nullification crisis in South Carolina and the removal of Native Americans to clear valuable cotton lands but does not connect the two; neither process is linked to federalism. Jacqueline Jones and associates’ *Created Equal* (2011) acknowledges that dispossessing Indians of land was essential to establishing the Union: “western acquisitions transformed the Confederation into something more than a league of states. With lands of its own to organize, the Confederation government took on attributes of a

sovereign ruling body.”⁴⁰ Chapter 11 contextualizes events of the early 1800s—debate over the national bank, the threat of nullification, and Supreme Court cases sparked by removal—under “Federal Authority and its Opponents” and “Judicial Federalism and the Limits of Laws.” Neither textbook charts a trajectory of Native influence in forging federalism or illuminates how Native sovereigns shaped and shape the balancing act between federal center and constituent states.

Conclusion

When the Supreme Court adroitly assigned Native nations to the fictive category “domestic dependent nation” it diminished Native sovereignty and reinforced the “full” sovereignty accorded federal and state polities. The synergism of judicial reasoning, congressional legislation, and executive (in)action removed Indians from federalism’s dynamic of sovereigns, reinforcing the powers of the players left on the field. The architecture of federalism carefully crafted through the early 1800s proved sturdy enough to weather the catastrophic impact of the Civil War, although vigorous struggles over its contours persist today. From its inception the settler-colonial union and its historians have shared the conceit that Indians were passive victims and not active shapers of U.S. governance structures and practices. Just as the hierarchical structure of federalism must be fractured to imagine multiple, mutually respectful sovereigns, so the dominant historical narratives must be fractured, built, and written to clearly see Native nations and Native peoples shaping U.S. history.

Notes

1. Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409.
2. Evidence is drawn from a general education course at the University of Arizona titled Many Nations of Native America (MNNA).
3. Michael Burgess, *Comparative Federalism: Theory and Practice* (London and N.Y.: Routledge, 2006), 1.
4. “The Federalist Papers,” Library of Congress, Primary Documents in American History,

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/federalist.html> (accessed August 14, 2013).

5. Burgess, *Comparative Federalism*, 2.

6. Cynthia Bowling and J. Mitchell Pickering, "Fragmented Federalism: The State of American Federalism 2012–2013," *Publius: Annual Review of Federalism* 43, no. 3 (2013): 315–46; Kiera L. Ladner, "Colonialism Isn't the Only Answer: Indigenous Peoples and Multilevel Governance in Canada," in *Federalism, Feminism, and Multilevel Governance*, ed. Melissa Hausman, Marian Sawyer, and Jill Vickers (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2010), 67–82; Jill Vickers, "Is Federalism Gendered? Incorporating Gender into Studies of Federalism," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 43, no. 1 (2013): 1–23.

7. K. Tsianina Lomawaima, "Speaking from Arizona: Can Scholarship about Education Make a Difference in the World?," *Journal of American Indian Education* 51, no. 2 (2012): 13.

8. The Constitution declares a social contract with individuals and a political contract between federal and state sovereigns; this chapter focuses on the latter. Briefly, however, "We the People" privileged white male landowners, excluded white women from the vote, and excluded slaves and American Indians from citizenship. Congress conferred blanket U.S. citizenship by birth on American Indians in 1924 but Supreme Court decisions ruled Indian citizenship compatible with wardship. K. Tsianina Lomawaima, "The Mutuality of *Citizenship* and *Sovereignty*: The Society of American Indians and the Battle to Inherit America," in *The Society of American Indians and Its Legacies*, ed. Chadwick Allen and Beth H. Piatote, special issue, *American Indian Quarterly* 37, no. 3/*SAIL: Studies in American Indian Literatures* 25, no. 2 (2013): 333–56. American power required "stratified subjects" such as free blacks against whose diminished status full or "free citizenship" is defined. Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 114–15. I argue here that constructing "full" sovereignty for federal and state polities has required diminishing sovereignty for American Indian "tribes."

9. Section 8 lists the powers expressly granted to Congress; Section 10 excludes the states from express areas of federal authority. "Charters of Freedom, Constitution of the United States," NARA, <http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution.html/> (accessed

March 12, 2013). 10th Amendment: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” “Charters of Freedom, Bill of Rights,” U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter referred to as NARA), http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html (accessed March 12, 2013).

10. “Charters of Freedom, U.S. Constitution,” NARA, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html (accessed March 12, 2013).

11. Ibid.

12. Taught by American Indian studies faculty for the general education curriculum, MNNA is not part of the History Department curriculum.

13. Stephanie A. Fryberg, Hazel Rose Markus, Daphna Oyserman, and Joseph M. Stone, “Of Warrior Chiefs and Indian Princesses: The Psychological Consequences of American Indian Mascots,” *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 30, no. 3 (2008): 208–18; Laurence M. Hauptman, *Tribes & Tribulations: Misconceptions about American Indians and their Histories* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa McCarty, “To Remain an Indian”: *Lessons for Democracy from a Century of Native American Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 16–40.

14. Not all students accept the “Indian” paradigm, of course.

15. MNNA considers three case studies: the Revolution, Removal, and contemporary gaming.

16. Jessica R. Cattelino, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008), 163.

17. Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

18. Texts of many of the treaties ratified between 1785 and 1819 are accessible at the Cherokee Nation website, “About the Nation; History; Facts,” <http://www.cherokee.org/AboutTheNation/History/Facts.aspx> (accessed August 7, 2013).

19. Articles of Agreement and Cession, April 24, 1802, American State Papers: Public Lands (Washington, 1834),
<http://amindians.tripod.com/18022.htm> (accessed March 15, 2013).

20. Indian Intercourse Act, 2 Stat. 139, March 30, 1802,
<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=002/lls1002.db&recNum=176> (accessed March 15, 2013).

21. Eli Whitney Museum and Workshop, "The Cotton Gin,"
<http://www.eliwhitney.org/museum/eli-whitney/cotton-gin> (accessed March 15, 2013).

22. State of the Union Address of December 8, 1829, 15–16. Jim Manis, ed. *State of the Union Addresses of Andrew Jackson* (Hazleton: Pennsylvania State University Electronic Classics Series, 18201–1291 Portable Document File),
<http://www2.hn.psu.edu/faculty/jmanis/poldocs/uspressu/SUaddressAJackson.pdf> (accessed March 22, 2013).

23. Ibid., 21.

24. Ibid., 23.

25. State of the Union Address of December 6, 1830, 45. Manis, *State of the Union Addresses of Andrew Jackson*.

26. Ibid., 50.

27. Ibid., 53–54.

28. Ibid., 54.

29. State of the Union Address of December 6, 1831, 78. Manis, *State of the Union Addresses of Andrew Jackson*.

30. Theda Perdue and Michael Green, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), 87–92.

31. Ibid., 122–25.

32. Ibid., 83.

33. Patrick Wolfe, "Against the Intentional Fallacy: Legocentrism and Continuity in the Rhetoric of Indian Dispossession," *American Indian Culture & Research Journal* 36, no. 1 (2012): 16.

34. Ibid., 17. This interpretation is drawn from Wolfe's scholarship.
35. Andrew Jackson, "Nullification Proclamation," Library of Congress, Primary Documents in American History, 584, <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Nullification.html> (accessed August 14, 2013).
36. Ibid., 585, emphasis in original.
37. Ibid., 587–90.
38. *Cherokee v. Georgia*, 100 US 1 (US Supreme Court, 1831), Justice Thompson Dissenting Opinion, http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC_CR_0030_0001_ZS.html (accessed March 15, 2013).
39. James West Davidson, Pedro Castillo, and Michael B. Stoff, *The American Nation* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2000), 129.
40. Jacqueline Jones, Peter H. Ward, Thomas Borstelmann, Elaine Tyler May, and Vicki L. Ruiz, *Created Equal: A History of the United States* (Boston: Prentice Hall, 2011), 198. The "confederation" here refers to the postrevolution colonies-become-states, not the later southern Confederacy.

Suggested Readings

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- Calloway, Colin G. *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
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Chapter 19: Global Indigeneity, Global Imperialism, and Its Relationship to Twentieth-Century U.S. History

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Undertaking a chapter on global indigeneity can be paralyzing. Thousands of indigenous peoples are spread over large parts of the globe and live in a massive diversity of everyday life as distinct from each other as colonizers are to one another. All of this makes for difficult decisions about who to include, who to leave out, what aspects to emphasize and which to skim over. This is a task complicated further still by the specific context within which I am being asked to describe it: broadly, how may we demonstrate the importance of American Indian history to the teaching of American history and, more specifically to this chapter, how can *global* indigeneity help us understand the relationship between U.S.-based indigeneity and American history?

Perhaps we can begin with some basic facts to tie the two contexts together. According to the most recent census, the American Indian population of the United States is about 5.2 million, split into about 500 federally recognized tribes, as well as more than 200 unrecognized ones. This single population estimate thus hides the multitude of indigenous languages and peoples whose territories have subsequently come to be claimed by the United States. In many ways, the diversity of indigenous peoples in the United States is mirrored by a global diversity. Though general, current estimates peg the global indigenous population at roughly 370 million people.¹ More important, this population is comprised of about 5,000 indigenous groups, each with its own language(s), belief systems, and relationship to land, territory, and each other. Despite this massive diversity, however, it turns out that there is much that indigenous peoples continue to hold in common, that binds them together but also that differentiates them from what academics are increasingly referring to as “settlers” and “settler societies.”

As such, American history and global history can inform each other in important ways. Although U.S. history can and often is taught without reference to its place in larger global events and structures, a good deal can be learned from both, because the history of America—especially in the twentieth century and especially with the rise of American consumer society in the post–World War II period—is also the history of *global imperialism*, in which the United States has played an important role. In addition to the United States’ own territorial acquisitions (Hawai’i, Spanish colonies, American Samoa, etc.), American history is, over the past century and more, also the history of the concentration of capital and the domination of certain parts of the world by others, of a wholesale transformation in the organization of capital, of the rise of global economic “integration,” of the boom and bust of national and global economies, and of the idea that perpetual economic growth constitutes a valid cultural and economic pursuit.² For good and ill, each and all of these have touched the lives and livelihoods of indigenous peoples not just within the United States itself but around the globe.

The point of this chapter is thus that in any discussion of U.S. history, students can fruitfully be encouraged to ask questions about the broad structuring of an increasingly powerful American foreign policy that has, in ways direct and indirect, enhanced the ability of its growing legion of international corporations to engage in resource-extraction industries in countries and territories around the globe. Indeed, far from appearing out of nowhere, the global tendencies thumbtacked in the previous paragraph represent the broad sweep of American foreign policies geared toward feeding an increasingly voracious consumer society at home, as well as producing goods for growing consumer societies abroad (particularly in western Europe and the Pacific). Thus, U.S. history is also always global to the extent that the lifestyles its citizens lead/are able to lead—not just materially but spiritually as well—are profoundly anchored in and shaped by the growing consumptive “culture of extraction” that required access to the raw materials and consumer items its citizens used to help realize “the American Dream.” Consumption thus offers a key lens through which we can understand and connect American history to global history primarily because, in the last century, American history is the history of consumption. And the history of consumption is the history of global colonialism.

Of course, although consumer items seem to appear out of nowhere in our local stores or even in brightly wrapped boxes presented at special occasions, they have histories, and they traveled well-worn trade and travel routes, usually wrapped or packaged by brown hands and unwrapped by white hands. The raw materials used to fashion these items are often extracted from indigenous territories whose ownership has been long contested by the colonial powers whose extractive desires extended into those territories. Thus, even American histories that include a global component miss a crucial part of how globalization “works” when they fail to think about the “indigenous question”: the colonialism that shapes globalization trends speaks directly to the continued presence of indigenous peoples, their continued relationship to place and territory, and their continued resistance to these extractive ethics.

A question that might legitimately be asked, however, is what this chapter’s emphasis on globalization has to do with the teaching of *U.S. history* in particular. In addition to what was just explained—i.e., that the United States is implicated in global resource-extraction projects—it is important to note that many of these extraction projects are taking place *within* the United States as well, and many of them on indigenous territories. In other words, U.S. history is comparative history, and this is perhaps especially the case with respect to indigenous issues. As such, understanding the global context offers a powerful teaching tool for those who might otherwise understand the United States’ treatment of indigenous people as exceptional or a “one-off.” The sorts of relationships that American Indians experienced were part of a broader set of projects that were happening around the world. Likewise, the growing activism of post–World War II indigenous leaders in the United States reflected the growing activism of indigenous leaders, communities, and peoples in nation-states around the world.

Though much of this chapter is dedicated to discussing colonialism as a “lens” for understanding not just American but global history with respect to indigenous peoples and issues, I wish to foreground the important point—a point I discuss further below—that indigenous global alliances are not merely the result of “resisting” against global colonialism or imperialism. Instead, they are long-standing features of the diplomatic relationships through which indigenous peoples engaged with one another in the

precolonial eras, and their power continues to shape contemporary relationships as well.

In any case, what follows in this chapter is not a sector-by-sector discussion of indigenous peoples (as though 5,000 different indigenous peoples could be summarized so easily). Instead, the chapter is an engagement with the ways in which this capitalism/colonialism has impacted indigenous peoples globally, with serious, long-lasting, and, in many cases, disastrous consequences, and how indigenous peoples have attempted to resist these intrusive projects. I will begin with a brief discussion of how I use the term “indigenous peoples” and explain in further detail what indigenous people hold in common globally that transcends their many differences. More important, I will detail how these elements tend to conflict with the kinds of social relations that are encapsulated in nation-states in general and the U.S. state in particular. The chapter’s second part will explore the impact of 500 years of global colonial projects and the various ways that indigenous peoples have resisted, adapted to, and, in some cases, been coopted by these projects.

Finally, the chapter will include a discussion of indigenous resistance through the exploration of the creation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. What does this phenomenon say about the ways that indigenous peoples communicate with each other globally, and what opportunities for resistance and coalitional politics have resulted? I will begin, however, with a discussion of the term itself. What does “indigenous” mean?

Part I. Indigenous Peoples in and outside the United States: Global Similarities and Alliances

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) presents several features of particular importance to thinking about global indigeneity, itself a shorthand term for the broad and diverse peoples that fall under its label. The International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs explains, “Indigenous peoples do not necessarily claim to be the only people native to their countries, but in many cases indigenous peoples are indeed ‘aboriginal’ or ‘native’ to the lands they live in, *being descendants of those peoples that inhabited a territory prior to colonization or formation of the present state.*”³

This classic definition ignores a good deal of the migration forced upon indigenous communities in the wake of colonial projects and new uses of land, but nonetheless, we can still take from this the fundamental point that *prior presence* sits at the heart of most definitions of indigeneity, even if a peoples' presence in a particular territory is the result of migration forced by colonialism.

In his excellent *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*, Richard Robbins suggests five characteristics of many indigenous peoples that make them vulnerable to the social relations that have encapsulated capitalist expansion and the growth of nation-states.⁴ First, they were historically less likely to live in single, settled locales. Migratory hunter-gatherers, pastoral nomads, and even agriculturalists made use of different regions during different times of the years. These characteristics are inconvenient to nation-states not least because historical indigenous territories cross international state boundaries, but also because they made indigenous groups more difficult to classify, count, and control. Seasonal migratory routes—often an adaptation to arid land or to moving food sources—can be found the world over, including much of North America, North Africa, and the Middle East.⁵

The northern plains of the United States—especially in the context of the buffalo-hunting tribes—are an excellent example of the extent to which migratory lifestyles conflicted with U.S. territorial concerns. Arapaho, Assiniboiné, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Crow, Gros Ventre, Kiowa, Lakota, Métis, Plains Cree, and Plains Ojibway all lived in tribally based societies whose relationship with—and movement on—their shared territories caused both anxiety and consternation for U.S. notions of territoriality that largely required that indigenous peoples “stay put” (and hence, the creation of a reservation system).

Second, indigenous peoples owned territories communally. Robbins argues that this presents a number of problems for contemporary nation-states and corporations.⁶ Communally held land is not easily sold or purchased and often requires extensive communal discussion. Communally held land makes it more difficult to use as collateral for individual debts or investments since it cannot be repossessed. Perhaps most important, however, communal ownership also makes short-term or extensive resource extraction more difficult, as lands are subject to more extensive conservation measures. Regarding this latter point in particular, the United

States today offers numerous examples of these conflicts. One in particular that has made the recent news has been the conflict over the construction of the so-called “Keystone Pipeline,” slated to run through the territories of the Lakota Nation, who have opposed its construction through a variety of legal and political strategies.

Third, indigenous social structures tended to be kinship based, binding people together in webs of love, obligation, and responsibility not conducive to consumption, a feature of more nuclear family units. Likewise, these kinship networks bound indigenous peoples to “place” in ways unhelpful to what capitalists would call “the free flow of capital.”⁷ Capitalism thrives best in places where populations are mobile and socially unattached. For example, people with kinship relations who feel a sense of responsibility to a particular place—whether taking care of family or land—are less likely to be able to go to the far reaches of the North or South (places without high population levels) to work for a resource-extraction corporation.

For example, a growing literature demonstrates that movements away from reservations to engage in seasonal work, after which the workers would return to their home reservation, had long preceded postwar indigenous urbanization in the United States. James B. LaGrand argues, for example, that while earlier legislation such as the Dawes Act (which “decommunalized” tribal land and opened it up for allotment by non-Indigenous people) forced tribal members to migrate away for work, this migration can also be “understood as a simple adaptation to pre-existing seasonal practices. ... Such wage laboring tended to take place near reservations so that those involved could travel with relative ease back and forth between reservation and work, maintaining both family and larger kin links to the tribal community.”⁸

Fourth, communally based indigenous societies tended toward egalitarianism, marked by less feeling about the necessity of consumption or a decreased tendency to mark social status through the possession of material things. In indigenous territories in what are now western Canada and the northwest coast of the United States, for example, social status was marked through the ability to *give away* material possessions. Likewise, egalitarian societies lacking a rigid political hierarchy complicated the ability to impose the administrative requirements necessary for the stability of a nation-state. Robbins writes: “Without a recognized leader with the

power to make decisions, who, for example, will collect the taxes? Who will enforce government directives? Who will ensure that the laws of the nation-state are enforced?”⁹

Finally, Robbins argues, indigenous peoples controlled the resources and territories desired by capitalists in the global upsurge of empire from the sixteenth century on. Indeed, the very concept of *terra nullius*—land belonging to no one—remained an important pillar through which colonial powers asserted their ownership of territories not claimed by other imperial powers. Colonialism is thus not simply an excuse for resource extraction but, rather, a basis of it: indigenous peoples did not utilize land and territory in a proper (usually Christian) fashion—i.e., they did not labor appropriately on it—and, therefore, had no right to make a sovereign claim to it. A series of U.S. court decisions in the early nineteenth century known as the “Marshall Trilogy” powerfully shaped the U.S. constitutional rights of Indians whose lands were sought by incoming (and often immigrant) settlers. Though complex, one important element of these court decisions was the idea that Indians did not *own* their land but, rather, had only the right to *occupy* the land, and any claims could only be settled by the U.S. state.

As pointed out earlier, this prior presence sits at the heart of what separates indigenous peoples from colonial or settler ones. However, I am not suggesting that, because of this, indigenous peoples are “traditional” and settler peoples “modern,” though that often serves as an anchor for much of the discussion about what makes indigenous peoples “different” from settlers. Rather, my point is that settlers and settler society have attempted to displace, dispossess, and *govern* indigenous societies in the interests of creating and maintaining colonial ones, a set of loosely coordinated processes that have been grouped together under the label “ethnocide.” This term, when used in a U.S. context, often refers to the so-called civilization policies from the mid-nineteenth century onward through which American tribal members were stripped of their culture, language, and land bases.¹⁰ Hence, the second part of this chapter will explain in more depth what I mean by colonialism, and again, making use of Robbins (2011), I will break down in finer detail what processes and projects “colonialism” actually entail.¹¹

Before we turn to this, however, it is important to note that the “structure” of precolonial indigenous societies in the United States is shared

by indigenous societies globally. Hence, when thinking about these structures in the context of teaching U.S. history, important comparative elements can be drawn between the *specific* structures of these precolonial indigenous societies elsewhere, the manner in which other colonial states attempted to deal with them, and what this has to tell us about the distinctiveness of U.S. history. As surprising as it might be for many to hear, U.S. history is colonial history, and the events it describes carry with them a number of distinctive features that we will turn to now.

Part II. Colonialisms

In a nutshell, colonialism represents the points at which indigenous communities lost the ability to effectively struggle against European, Euro-American, and Euro-Canadian territorial desires, to get them to acknowledge indigenous peoples as equals to be negotiated with rather than imposed upon. Georges Erasmus, Dene leader and former co-chair of Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, defined colonialism in the context of this loss of indigenous governing power: "Traditionally, we acted; today, we are acted upon. Our history since contact is the record of our struggle to act on our own terms. It is the record of our struggle to decide for ourselves as a people in the face of all the forces which have attempted to decide for us, define us and act for us."¹²

Early exploring, trading, and adventuring in the new worlds gave way—sometimes quickly, sometimes over centuries—to administrators, bureaucrats, and other authorities who worked to turn indigenous societies into ones that made more sense to *their* categories and practices. In other words, these authorities went about creating knowledge about "colonial subjects" and used that knowledge to create policy to intervene into indigenous communities. In this way, they attempted to overtake existing indigenous decision-making structures in an attempt to "decide," "define," and "act" for indigenous peoples. Colonialism, in this sense, is rooted in a particular worldview and particular material practices. It involves a "general cultural sphere," a web of "political, ideological, economic and social practices"¹³ that sets in place trajectories of intrusion, conquest, exploitation, and domination.¹⁴ Underlying these strategies were colonial officials' confidence that what they were doing was both right and necessary. Returning again to Georges Erasmus: "With the coming of the

Europeans, our experiences as a people changed. We experienced relationships in which we were made to feel inferior. We were treated as incompetent to make decisions for ourselves. Europeans would treat us in such a way as to make us feel that they knew, better than we ourselves, what was good for us.”¹⁵

Adopting John H. Bodley’s discussion of how nation-states go about transferring power—and access to resources—from indigenous peoples to settlers, Robbins explains the process in a number of steps.¹⁶ These steps—which are neither universal nor always undertaken in the same order—nonetheless encapsulate the broad colonial processes through which colonial authorities have attempted to take over indigenous territories and societies. These include: a) a frontier situation; b) military intervention; c) extension of government control; d) land policies; e) cultural modification processes; f) “progressive” education; and g) economic development. We can each think of the numerous contexts within which indigenous peoples have felt the impact of these various processes—what they looked like, how they impacted indigenous peoples, how indigenous peoples resisted and, yes, were coopted by them. I begin with a discussion of the frontier situation.

Frontier Situation

A frontier is at the “outer limits of European civilization,” a geographical area outside the power of direct government control or “effective sovereignty.” This latter term refers to activities undertaken by a European power to exert and sustain its control over a particular geographical territory.¹⁷ Effective control is thus associated with both an “on the ground” control of indigenous inhabitants and the ability to ward off the rival claims of competing imperial powers. Frontiers have no colonial surveying cartography, census taking, imposition of taxes, ability to demand conscription or the right of eminent domain (i.e., the right to seize private land for public use), or the ability to enact and enforce the rule of law over the geographical territory that was claimed.¹⁸ Frontiers are thus locales rich in natural resources yet outside of the formal control of imperial powers. These were often intensely contested by imperial powers jockeying for geopolitical position in the new world.

We can easily think of indigenous territories marked by colonial authorities as frontier spaces. Bodley summarizes a thousand-page 1836–37 Parliament committee publication—the *Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements)*—which was mandated to explore measures for the increased protection of indigenous rights in frontier areas. Interviewing numerous colonial authorities who had spent time in either South Africa, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the South Seas, or British Guiana (Guyana), the authors concluded that frontier-society-based contacts between British and indigenous peoples had generally produced relationships through which these indigenous peoples were oppressed: their land and property confiscated, disease decimating their population levels, and a general lowering of their previous quality of life.¹⁹ In a U.S. context, the latter issue of disease has proven particularly controversial, and debates continue over whether, in fact, the U.S. military did or did not engage in “germ warfare” as part of their historical conflicts with indigenous peoples.²⁰

Military Intervention

Scholars of colonialism have justifiably explored its relationship to violence and, in particular, the role military intervention played. Though Canada is known for the supposed peace with which it subdued “its” indigenous peoples, the United States of America is equally well known for the so-called Indian wars through which it attempted to open up territory for settlers to move into indigenous territories, encapsulated in General Philip Sheridan’s famous declaration that “the only good Indian is a dead Indian.”²¹ Robbins suggests, however, that there was nothing inevitable about the decision to use military force to subdue indigenous resistance, nor was the outcome foretold.²² Using the example of the Maori people of New Zealand, for example, he demonstrates the extent to which less well-armed Maori warriors held off British military invasions for more than a decade.

Nonetheless, in an American context, armed warfare between American soldiers and various indigenous tribal nations proved an expedient policy of attempting to subjugate the latter following the movement of miners and settlers into previously indigenous-controlled territories. Though the U.S. military engaged in numerous conflicts over much of the nineteenth

century, among the most intense and protracted conflicts occurred with the Sioux of the northern plains and the Apache of the southwestern region.²³

Extension of Government Control

If colonialism can be seen as a system of cultural modification—in many facets of preexisting indigenous life—one of the most important aspects of colonialism must include a discussion of government control. That is, when colonial authorities put down their swords and guns and pull out their ink and quills to produce a morass of laws, rules, and regulations by which indigenous communities and individuals must—and are made to—abide. Colonial authorities extend government control in a number of different ways: by direct rule, in which they simply take over a particular region and impose new rules and regulations, but also by what is often called *indirect rule*, in which they install indigenous elites in positions of power (or strengthen and centralize forms of power already in existence) in the new governing system. British colonialism is well known for tactics of indirect rule, particularly in India, but the British were certainly not the only colonial powers who engaged in indirect rule as a means of seeking intrusion into indigenous territories.

The extension of government control is broadly understood in terms of the kinds of activities, broadly grouped under the notion of “effective sovereignty” or “effective control,” through which state authorities attempt to impose forms of economic, social, and cultural saturation onto the preexisting societies of indigenous peoples. Indeed, techniques such as the ability to tax citizens, the right of eminent domain (the right to take private property for public use), standardized place names, the ability to conscript citizens for army duty, a post office, proper census identifications, etc., all operate as key moments and institutions through which governing authorities attempt to extend and superimpose their categories of reality onto those already in place in preexisting societies such as those of indigenous peoples.²⁴ James Scott, John Tehranian, and Jeremy Mathias detail the manner in which the U.S. state enforced a policy of adding and fixing surnames to indigenous populations, frustrated as they were with the more flexible and context-specific naming practices present in many indigenous communities.²⁵

It is important to keep in mind that an official understanding of indigenous peoples as developmentally stunted or disabled grounded much of the extension of government control into indigenous territories. Arguments that these intrusions were simply for economic gain, while true, do not capture the broader complexity of colonial impulses or strategies.²⁶ While in many cases such intrusions began with an accompanying assumption that indigenous peoples would eventually disappear, throughout the twentieth century colonial authorities attempted to institute plans and policies that would propel indigenous individuals and communities into modernity, part of the movement toward so-called development policies. Colonial authorities hoped in many cases to build in indigenous peoples a tendency toward economic productivity, improved hygiene and overall health, and, wherever possible, the stability of a Christian education. These also formed the backbone of the cultural modification policies that many nation-states attempted to implement (explained in further detail below). Not the least of these strategies were deliberate attempts by relevant organizations to move indigenous peoples from reservations to urban spaces. This was a policy followed not in the United States but in nation-states more globally.²⁷

Land Policies

Accompanying the extension of government control into indigenous territories was the creation of new and usually alien land policies. As discussed earlier, often the visions of relationship to land differed greatly between indigenous and colonial powers. Communal relationships to land—like those held by indigenous communities—tended to encourage long-term stewardship rather than the short-term and more intensive extraction favored by profit-hungry capitalists. In some cases, as in Canada and the United States, indigenous relationships to land were formally recognized (at least rhetorically) in the form of treaties and, in Canada, in the additional form of scrip (a coupon for land worth \$240 or 240 acres).²⁸ However, Robbins rightly points out that these relationships only remained valid until imperial powers decided that they desired that particular piece of land. Imperial powers broke legal agreements as deemed necessary.²⁹

These separate ontologies to land also manifested themselves in legal jurisprudence. As already discussed, the concept of *terra nullius* was used

to justify the global expansion of colonialism. While we have detailed the issues of land alienation in Canada and the United States, territorial dispossession is of course a hallmark of global colonialism, and indigenous peoples in regions as far flung (from one another) as South America, Siberia, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand faced various vernacular forms of land confiscation. In Brazil, for example, legislators worked diligently to enact laws that would limit the kinds of legal relationships indigenous peoples could maintain. Then, over the course of a century, they enacted further laws that sped up the removal of these peoples from their traditional territories.³⁰ Similar relationships in Bolivia, Columbia, Chile, Argentina, and Venezuela are also apparent. Likewise, colonial African legislators created land-dispossession policies in French Equatorial Africa, the Congo Free State, Southern Rhodesia, and Kenya; Bodley argues that the harshest land-alienation policies were reserved for indigenous peoples in Asia and the Pacific.³¹

In the United States, the Dawes Act of 1887 imposed the most dramatically new land systems, in many cases wholly at odds with indigenous tenures in existence prior to its imposition. In particular, the allotment scheme of the Dawes Act provided for 160 acres for each Indian head of family, held in trust for twenty-five years to prevent immediate speculation by non-Indigenous speculators. The effect of the Dawes Act, as detailed above, was to create a massive “decommunalization” in which indigenous tribal members lost much of their collective land base, and massive sections of land were opened up for non-Indigenous settlement.

Cultural Modification Policies

Part of the extension of government control into indigenous territories, cultural modification policies were meant to abolish “any native custom considered immoral, offensive, or threatening ... Indigenous kinship systems and social organization were particularly threatening to colonists.”³² Thus, aspects of many indigenous societies that differed from colonial norms were fair game for attack. Though Robbins notes that anthropologists played a central role in collecting knowledge about indigenous customs and cultures, many academics can share blame in these modernizing schemes. Indeed, many of the modification strategies used in

indigenous communities come not from knowledge gained by academics but rather through the day-to-day interactions with a new education system.

Canada's and the United States' residential and boarding school systems (respectively) are notorious throughout the world as an exemplar of the attempt to undermine indigenous education systems as well as disrupt family units (by forcing indigenous children to attend school far away from their homes, often getting to see their parents only once or twice a year). Often a joint program in which religious orders ran the schools and the various governments footed the bill, these educational systems utilized often-harsh systems of discipline and corporal punishment and advocated stripping students of their language and culture, instead attempting to instill in them the rudiments of reading, writing, and religious instruction but also of "white" gender roles—young women were taught how to be wives and mothers (sewing, laundry, cooking, etc.), and young men were taught some kind of laboring skill.

Economic Development

I have already mentioned the central role played by colonial authorities' confident assertion that indigenous peoples—their communities and individuals—were developmentally stunted. An important way that colonial authorities attempted to overcome this gap or deficit was by attempting to "integrate" indigenous economies and communities into the emerging national economy of the overarching colonial nation-state. This was undertaken in a number of different ways. Robbins argues that throughout the twentieth century, this often took the form of forced labor.³³ But it also took the form of conscription, with those who were conscripted being required to work a certain amount of time on national projects (railways, highways, and irrigation).

Robbins argues that a second technique for integrating indigenous labor into the national economy included burdensome taxation regimes that either forced indigenous peoples out of their own economic pursuits and required them to become laborers or required them to adopt mono-agricultural pursuits through which they sold their new crops for cash. He provides the example of the Azande in the southern Sudan, who were asked to plant cotton crops as part of a larger modernization scheme that would see the Azande abandon their "traditional" ways and move toward a more

economically and culturally modern lifestyle. Robbins argues that the problem with this scheme and others like it is that when the world markets later exhibited their usual boom-bust cycles, formerly stable indigenous economies had no ability to ride out a sudden decline.³⁴

Certainly, the early U.S. context was marked by a transcontinental fur trade through which “Natives and newcomers” interacted—and in some cases, intermarried—producing distinctive fur-trade communities separate from geographically adjacent tribal villages and collectives.³⁵ With the displacement of traditional economies, however, tribal community members became increasingly entrenched into the national U.S. economy, often in the form of wage-labor employment.³⁶ More recently, in many tribal communities economic development has taken the form of casinos.³⁷

When laying out the various facets of colonial projects—the establishment of a frontier, the use of the military to subdue indigenous resistance, the extension of government control, land, culture, education, and economic-modification policies—it can be difficult to realize that these attempts at imposition were rarely entirely successful. One of the reasons we know this is because indigenous peoples are still here, despite the best attempts of colonial authorities to wipe their presence off the maps, literally and figuratively. In other words, though we should not dismiss the tremendous power of nation-states over the past several centuries as they attempted to invest themselves in indigenous communities—Claude Denis once suggested that the power of modernity is not (just) that we live in it but that it lives in us—we should also bear in mind that colonial nation-states were and are never as powerful as their own stories make them out to be.³⁸ Indigenous peoples resisted—sometimes successfully, sometimes not—these various attempts at “integrating” them into colonial states. In this last section, I want to touch on a specific global example of indigenous resistance and alliance building: the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

U.S. History Writ Globally: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

I will explain in a moment the events leading up to the eventual adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. To contextualize its use for studying U.S. history, it is important to note long-

standing international relationships between indigenous peoples in and outside of the (now) United States. To suggest that these connections are not merely the result of colonialism is not to say that the effects of colonialism play *no* role, merely that indigenous peoples had and have their own reasons and protocols that exist for making or maintaining such connections, in addition to any desires on the part of colonial administrators. Hence, although understanding global contexts is important for comparing, contrasting, and contextualizing U.S. history and indigeneity, important transnational or global links between indigenous peoples cannot be explained away as an effect of colonialism.

To be sure, the indigenous coalitions and transnationalism that led to the eventual creation of UNDRIP has much earlier roots, dating back to the nineteenth century. Indigenous individuals traveled to Britain to advocate on behalf of indigenous peoples in what is now western Canada; Maori leaders from New Zealand sent delegations to Britain in the late nineteenth century; West Coast chiefs met with the King of England in the early twentieth century; Haudenosaunee leaders (from the United States) traveled to Switzerland to meet with members of the League of Nations in the 1920s and again in the 1970s. Each of these examples demonstrates the agency of indigenous leaders in pressing their concerns and claims to international political bodies. These efforts have been followed by numerous and coalitional efforts by indigenous leaders from around the world—including the United States—to press international organizations to recognize indigenous rights and indigenous peoples. Out of this transnational and coalitional advocacy comes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

On September 13, 2007, the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Like all United Nations declarations, UNDRIP is not legally binding. However, it carries the moral force of all UN declarations and can be used, in certain cases, to embarrass national governments into more just or equitable relationships with indigenous peoples whose territories they claim. As the UN put it, the declaration represents “an important standard for the treatment of indigenous peoples that will undoubtedly be a significant tool towards eliminating human rights violations against the planet’s 370 million indigenous people and assisting them in combating discrimination and marginalization.”³⁹

UNDRIP itself consists of a large orienting preamble of twenty-three clauses, followed by forty-six articles that deal comprehensively with the rights of indigenous peoples globally. The declaration acknowledges the right of indigenous peoples to be different and to have that difference respected, that any theories or practices that begin with a presupposition that certain cultures or nations are inherently superior to others are unjust and racist, that indigenous peoples have suffered greatly from centuries of discrimination, and that their sovereignty, while historically denied, should represent a starting point for new and respectful relationships between indigenous and nonindigenous peoples and nations.⁴⁰ In this broader context, the declaration lays out protections relating to individual and collective rights, cultural rights and identity, rights to education, health, employment, language, and a host of other sectors of social and cultural life. Likewise, it acknowledges the importance of gender equality and the role of the United Nations in bringing about the realization of these articles.

UNDRIP is itself a monumental accomplishment, but we must understand that it is also an effect of decades of collective struggle and hard labor on the part of indigenous peoples around the globe to counter the impacts of ongoing cultural domination and large-scale resource extraction on their traditional territories (which in many cases supplant their own long-standing economies). That is to say, in addition to the various forms of resistance against local resource-extraction attempts, cultural domination, and entrenched inequities, indigenous peoples and their allies also came together more globally in their attempts to raise consciousness of and challenge the massively destructive effects of global colonialism/capitalism. While indigenous leaders had long protested colonial intrusions and in some cases sought (and received) audiences with various monarchs throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they also sought to build relationships with the United Nations.⁴¹

The specific origins of UNDRIP began in 1981, when (then UN special rapporteur of the Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities) José R. Martínez Cobo published a report about the systemic discrimination faced by indigenous peoples globally: “Study of the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations.”⁴² Following this, in 1985 the UN set up a Working Group on Indigenous Populations, which began to draft a document as part of its mandate that provided expert advice on the human rights of indigenous peoples. Two

decades later, due to the hard work and advocacy of indigenous peoples and their allies, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was finally signed. Though several notable countries refused to vote in favor of it in 2007 (including Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand), all have since formally supported it. In particular, in a December 16, 2010, speech to the White House Tribal Nations Conference, President Barack Obama announced that the United States endorsed the “aspirational” document.⁴³

Conclusion

Part of the point of this chapter is that, while the term “indigenous peoples” hides a massive amount of diversity under its umbrella, the one thing that indigenous peoples have held in common—and continue to hold in common—is their stubborn and even obdurate resistance to colonial attempts to erase the ‘s’ from “peoples.” The chapter began by discussing some of the major elements that characterize indigeneity and, in particular, the ways in which it clashes with colonial cultural and material norms—that is, the things that made and make it difficult to impose colonial relations onto indigenous communities and peoples. More specifically, we explored some of the major elements of colonialism to which indigenous peoples have been subjected, features that hold a surprising commonality regardless of the imperial power that exercised them or the indigenous peoples who endured them.

A second point here, explored in part three, is that indigenous peoples did not stop being indigenous, however much colonial authorities wished or even believed it was the case. They resisted—always, they resisted: sometimes successfully, sometimes not, and sometimes with disastrous consequences. But more than resisting, however, indigenous peoples’ links to one another predate and thus complicate colonial ideas about their imagined disappearance.⁴⁴ The fact of the matter is that despite colonial powers attempting to assimilate or “integrate” them, and despite the fact that they wish they would “just go away,” indigenous peoples are still here. Colonialism was never as effective as its champions made it out to be, and, likewise, indigenous peoples were never as “different” as colonial authorities thought was the case. Nonetheless, global indigeneity is marked as much by the similarity of its resistance to colonialisms as it is by the

kinds of elements—relationship to land, spirituality, etc.—that are often thought to bind indigenous peoples together. Moreover, as the UNDRIP efforts contend, indigenous peoples have been able to make use of modern structures of power—such as the United Nations—to produce political spaces that allow them to continue to assert their indigeneity *and* to speak in terms that make sense to nonindigenous peoples as well.

Notes

1. “Who are the indigenous peoples?,” <http://www.iwgia.org/culture-and-identity/identification-of-indigenous-peoples> (accessed March 11, 2013).
2. John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 5th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Alta Mira, 2008), 57.
3. “Who are the indigenous peoples?” Emphasis added. Note that in certain nation-states, prior occupancy is not always present, given the massive scale of displacement of indigenous peoples by resource-intensive encroachment.
4. Richard H. Robbins, *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2011), 237–38.
5. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 131–33.
6. Robbins, *Global Problems*, 238.
7. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 326.
8. James B. LaGrand, *Indian Metropolis: Native Americans in Chicago, 1945–1975* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 19.
9. Robbins, *Global Problems*, 238. See also Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 146–47.
10. Donald Grinde, “Taking the Indian out of the Indian: U.S. Policies of Ethnocide through Education,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 19, no. 2 (Autumn 2004): 25–32.
11. Ibid.
12. Georges Erasmus, “We the Dene,” in *Dene Nation: The Colony Within*, ed. Mel Watkins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 177.

13. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 9.
14. Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1994).
15. Erasmus, "We the Dene," 178.
16. Robbins, *Global Problems*, 238–45.
17. W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier* (Austin, Tex.: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969), 1.
18. James Scott, John Tehranian, and Jeremy Mathias, "The Production of Legal Identities Proper to States: The Case of the Permanent Family Surname," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2 (2002): 4–44.
19. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 38–39.
20. See Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775–82* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).
21. Ibid., 40.
22. Robbins, *Global Problems*, 240.
23. Jeff Barnes, *Forts of the Northern Plains: A Guide to the Historic Military Posts of the Plains Indian Wars* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 2008); James H. Merrell, "Some Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians," *William and Mary Quarterly* 46, no. 1 (1989): 94–119; James H. Merrell, "Second Thoughts on Colonial Historians and American Indians," *William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2012): 451–512.
24. Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); and Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias, "The Production of Legal Identities."
25. Scott, Tehranian, and Mathias, "The Production of Legal Identities," 18–20.
26. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.
27. Evelyn Peters and Chris Andersen, eds., *Indigenous in the City: Contemporary Identities and Cultural Innovation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013).
28. Frank Tough, "As Their Natural Resources Fail": *Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870–1930* (Vancouver:

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29. Robbins, *Global Problems*, 241.

30. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 103.

31. Ibid., 108–13.

32. Robbins, *Global Problems*, 241.

33. Ibid., 244.

34. Ibid., 245.

35. See Jacqueline Peterson, “Prelude to Red River: A Social Portrait of the Great Lakes Métis,” *Ethnohistory* 25 (1978): 41–67; Helen Hornbeck Tanner, “The Glaize in 1792: A Composite Indian Community,” *Ethnohistory* 25 (1978): 15–39.

36. See Alice Littlefield and Martha Knack, eds., *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).

37. Jessica Cattelino, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008).

38. Claude Denis, *We Are Not You: First Nations and Canadian Modernity* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1997).

39. United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, *Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Voices* (New York: United Nations, n.d.), http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/faq_drips_en.pdf (accessed March 22, 2013).

40. United Nations, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (New York: United Nations, 2008).

41. The UN, formed in 1945 following World War II, has four main purposes: to keep peace throughout the world; to develop friendly relations among nations; to help nations work together to improve the lives of poor people, to conquer hunger, disease and illiteracy, and to encourage respect for each other’s rights and freedoms; to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations to achieve these goals. The United Nations itself is comprised of seven main bodies, including the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In turn, ECOSOC is comprised of a number of subsidiary bodies, including “expert panels,” one of which is the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII), established in 2002. Along with the

Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the PFII is mandated to “provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the Council, as well as to programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations, through the Council raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system, prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues.”

42. José R. Martínez Cobo, “Study of the Problem of Discrimination against Indigenous Populations,”
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/MCS_intro_1981_en.pdf
(accessed March 22, 2013).

43. The White House—Office of the Press Secretary, “Remarks by the President at the White House Tribal Nations Conference,” December 16, 2010. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/12/16/remarks-president-white-house-tribal-nations-conference> (accessed March 22, 2013).

44. Jean O’Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

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