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## Native Americans, New Voices: American Indian History, 1895–1995

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R. DAVID EDMUNDS

IN OCTOBER 1895, WHEN THE FIRST NUMBER of the *American Historical Review* was mailed to members of the American Historical Association, the United States was poised on the brink of a new century. The country had recently been troubled by economic depression, a growing army of populists, and serious labor unrest, and much of the American public worried that the nation was caught in a maelstrom of political, social, and economic dissent. Yet, as the decade continued, Americans grew more optimistic, confident that new political leadership and rapidly expanding technology would restore social order and economic prosperity. Indeed, as the Progressive Movement emerged, many intellectuals and academics subscribed to such optimism, confident that education, skillful management, and a renewed interest in the public's welfare would ensure political, economic, and social reform. The country had changed. Progress was inevitable. The nineteenth century was ending, and many vestiges of that century would either be abandoned or soon extinguished.

Most historians envisioned Native Americans and their history as part of this exclusion of what was past. In 1893, just two years before the initial publication of the *American Historical Review*, Frederick Jackson Turner delivered his now-famous essay at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, in Chicago. The essay, which celebrates the frontier and the alleged march of American civilization across the continent, discusses the Native American role as both a facilitator and an opponent of such expansion. Turner argued that while “the Indian trade pioneered the way for civilization,” the “Indian frontier” also served as a “consolidating agent . . . a common danger demanding united action.” Yet, in 1893, both the frontier and Indian people seemed to be part of the past. Three years earlier, in 1890, the United States Bureau of the Census had reported that the frontier had vanished and that the Indian population had fallen to 248,253. Native Americans had played a major role in the history of the frontier, but the frontier was gone. For Turner and other historians, Indian people and their role in American history were also on the road to oblivion.<sup>1</sup>

Several individuals made helpful suggestions in the preparation of this article. Their comments improved the essay, while the essay's faults are entirely the author's own. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Michael McGerr, Wendy Gamber, Raymond DeMallie, Frederick Hoxie, Neal Salisbury, Michael Green, Theda Perdue, and Michael Leslie.

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in George Rogers Taylor, ed., *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*, rev. edn.

Other events in the 1890s seemed to confirm such predictions. In 1890, the year in which the frontier had officially “closed,” the Ghost Dance swept out of Nevada onto the Great Plains, where it found willing adherents among the Lakota. Confined to reservations and forced to walk the white man’s road, the Lakota welcomed the promise of a religious deliverance, but their acceptance of the new faith frightened Indian agents and ultimately led to the massacre at Wounded Knee, a “battle” that non-Indians envisioned as the last gasp of Native American resistance. Meanwhile, throughout the 1890s, federal agents busily implemented the Dawes Act, legislation designed to allot the reservations into small individual farms and to force Indian people into the American mainstream. Proponents of the act assured the American public that after the reservations were allotted, Indian people would accept their individual land holdings and would be completely assimilated. Native Americans, as a separate and unique ethnic minority group, would essentially disappear.<sup>2</sup>

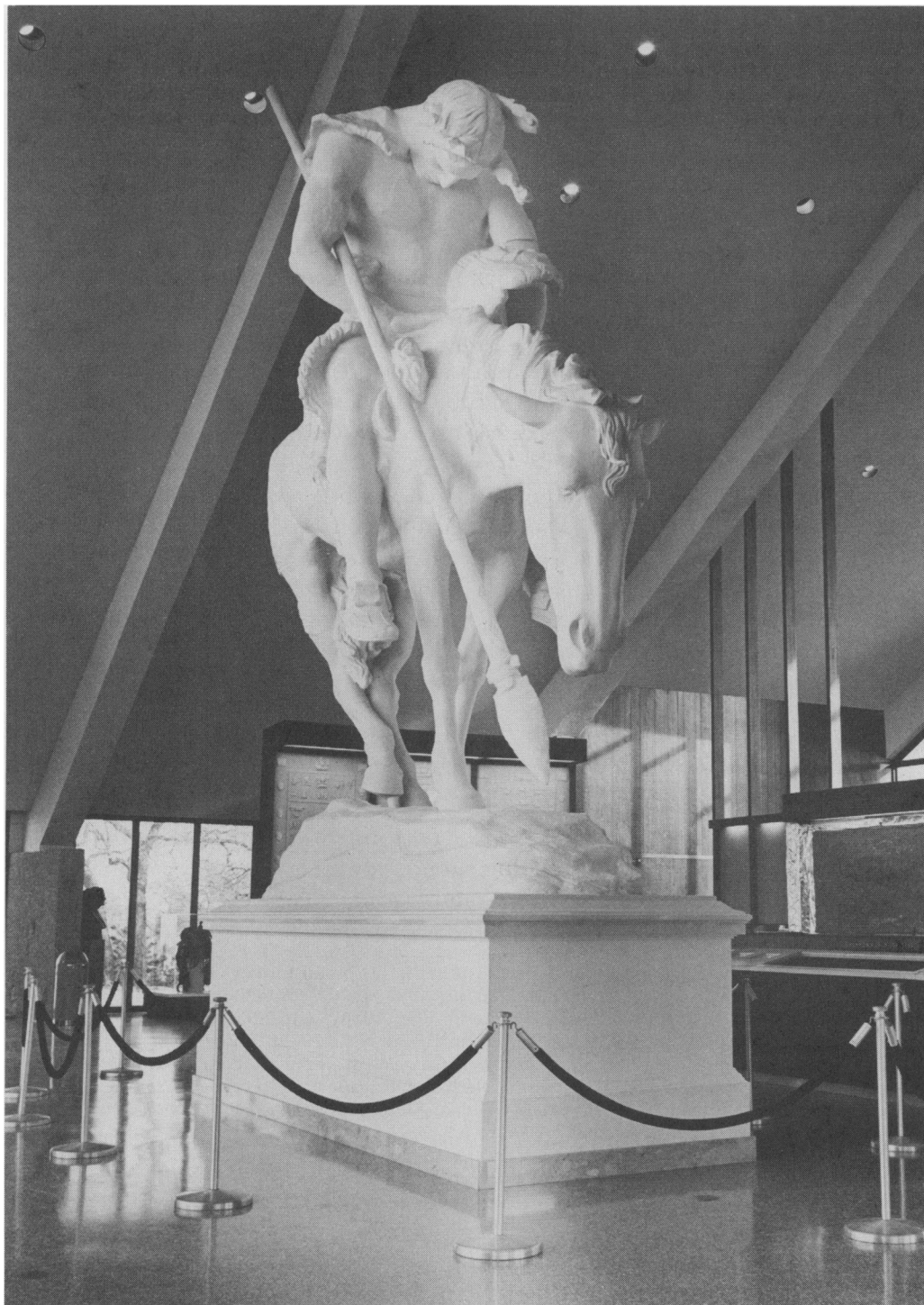
Most Americans accepted this prognosis. Popular images of Indian people as romanticized “vanishing red men” permeated dime novels, popular magazines, and the newly emerging motion picture industry during this period, and almost all of these stereotypes focused on the past. Perhaps the classic manifestation of both the public’s and the intellectuals’ subscription to the “vanishing red man” concept can be found in James Earle Fraser’s popular sculpture, “The End of the Trail.” Fraser portrayed a defeated Plains Indian warrior mounted on a bedraggled pony; the man slumps forward, his head hanging down on his chest. Emphasizing Native Americans as part of a previous age, Fraser dressed his subject entirely in skin clothing and provided him with a stone-tipped lance. The trail slopes downward. Obviously, both the Indian and his culture are descending into oblivion. The 1900 census seemed to agree with Fraser’s portrayal. Returns from that year indicated that Indians numbered no more than 237,196, the historic nadir of Native American population.<sup>3</sup>

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(Boston, 1956), 1–18; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Report on Indians Taxed, and Indians Not Taxed in the United States (except Alaska)* (Washington, D.C., 1894), 24. The terms “Native American” and “Indian” are used interchangeably throughout this essay. Although “Native American” is the term of choice among academics, “Indian” is more commonly used among most of the Indian population in Oklahoma and on reservations in the West.

<sup>2</sup> For a good account of the Ghost Dance and its impact on the Lakota, see James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890, Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1892–1893, Part 2* (Washington, D.C., 1896); and Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (New Haven, Conn., 1963). Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880–1920* (Lincoln, Neb., 1984), provides an excellent discussion of the Dawes Act and its failure to assimilate Native Americans into American society. Also see Janet A. McDonnell, *The Dispossession of the American Indian, 1887–1934* (Bloomington, Ind., 1991).

<sup>3</sup> Alfred T. Collette and Donald M. Lantzy, *James Earle Fraser: The American Heritage in Sculpture* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1985). Preconceived images of Native Americans have long influenced both colonial and federal Indian policies. James Axtell points out that both Europeans and Native Americans first approached each other with preconceived notions regarding the other’s place in the scheme of things. Tragically, each side soon replaced early favorable assessments with more negative appraisals. Axtell argues that the new Indian assessments resulted from their exposure to European disease and aggrandizement, while Europeans used a more negative stereotype of Native Americans to facilitate their imperialism. See Axtell, “Imagining the Other: First Encounters in North America,” in Axtell, *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York, 1992), 25–74. Also see Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Baltimore, Md., 1967). Bernard W. Sheehan has argued that, despite Native American hospitality, colonists in Virginia were unable



Plaster version of the sculpture by James Earle Fraser (1876–1957), *The End of the Trail*, featured at the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915, now at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Our thanks to the National Cowboy Hall of Fame for supplying this photograph by Ed Munro.

THE PAGES OF THE *American Historical Review* reflected the same perspective. Although the "Documents" sections of the *AHR* included a few primary materials that focused on the Native American response to George Rogers Clark's campaign in the Illinois Country or discussed Indian relations as one of many factors affecting diplomacy during the Federalist period, the *AHR* published no essays on Native Americans during the first ten years of its existence.<sup>4</sup> In July 1905, however, the journal published "The Indian Boundary Line," a ten-page essay by Max Farrand, a professor at Stanford University, which examined British Indian policy in the trans-Appalachian West between 1763 and 1776. In 1908, it was followed by E. G. Bourne's article "The Travels of Jonathan Carver," which investigated the authenticity of an early nineteenth-century memoir but used the ethnographic content of Carver's narrative to argue that his account was fictitious. Although a few other documents were published, no essay on Indians appeared for the next nine years. In October 1917, the *AHR* published Herbert E. Bolton's classic "The Mission as an Institution in the Spanish American Colonies" and two years later Verner Crane's "The Southern Frontier in Queen Anne's War," which examined British and French alliances among the Creeks, Choctaws, and Chickasaws.<sup>5</sup>

Almost all the documents and essays focusing on Native Americans that were printed in the *AHR* during the first quarter-century of its existence reflected the limited scope of historians' interest in Indian people in this period. With the exception of Bolton's essay, the articles featured Europeans and their institutions and discussed Native Americans primarily as objects of European or early American actions or policies. For example, Farrand's "Indian Boundary Line" examined the efforts of British Indian agents William Johnson and John Stuart to implement British policies in the West, but it failed to address how these policies resulted from earlier Native American efforts to retain control over their lands and economies. In addition, Indians were rarely portrayed as initiating any important activity; they participated in or responded to European initiatives but seemed to be incapable of formulating agendas of their own. They remained the supporting cast in a drama whose plot and leading roles were European.<sup>6</sup>

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to transcend their belief in "ignoble savages" and that Jeffersonian Indian policy was an outgrowth of stereotyped images of Native Americans not based on reality. Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, 1980); and Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1973). Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York, 1978), provides an excellent survey of how changing images of Native Americans have influenced American science, literature, art, and Indian policy. Raymond William Stedman, *Shadows of the Indian: Stereotypes in American Culture* (Norman, Okla., 1982), focuses on Native American images in popular culture.

<sup>4</sup> In Documents, see "Intercepted Letters and Journal of George Rogers Clark, 1778-1779," *AHR*, 1 (October 1895): 90-96; "Carondelet on the Defence of Louisiana, 1794," *AHR*, 2 (April 1897): 474-505; "The Illinois Indians to Captain Abner Prior, 1794," *AHR*, 4 (October 1898): 107-11; "English Policy toward America, 1790-1791, First Installment," *AHR*, 7 (July 1902): 706-35; "George Rogers Clark and the Kaskaskia Campaign, 1777-1778," *AHR*, 8 (April 1903): 491-507.

<sup>5</sup> Max Farrand, "The Indian Boundary Line," *AHR*, 10 (July 1905): 782-91; E. G. Bourne, "The Travels of Jonathan Carver," *AHR*, 11 (January 1906): 287-302; Herbert E. Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies," *AHR*, 23 (October 1917): 42-61; Verner Crane, "The Southern Frontier in Queen Anne's War," *AHR*, 24 (April 1919): 379-95.

<sup>6</sup> Farrand, "Indian Boundary Line," *passim*. Two books by Louise Phelps Kellogg epitomize this perspective. Until the 1960s, Kellogg's *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (Madison, Wis., 1925), and *The British Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (Madison, 1935), served as the standard

Europeans also formulated the dialogue. Like other historians during this period, those scholars who wrote about events in which Native Americans played major roles based their research on traditional sources. Since government records, military reports, religious documents, and economic entries were usually generated by European males, accounts using these sources reflect their biases. Although women's historians have pointed out in the past three decades that male observers often failed to record the important contributions American women made in a broad spectrum of political and economic activities, or were ignorant of the distinct and separate "women's spheres" in which women spent their lives, at least these women shared a language and some cultural patterns with the male observers, and at least some American women left their own written (though often misinterpreted or ignored) records and memoirs. In comparison, Native Americans were culturally different from early literate white observers and did not share the same native language. Even though most tribes maintained a rich oral tradition, in the early twentieth century this cultural and historical information was often dismissed as "myth" or "legend" and rarely used by historians. Since Indians initially produced no written records of their own, accounts of their history were formulated by Europeans, using records or accounts written by other Europeans, many of whom had relatively limited familiarity with the Native American cultures and languages they were describing.

Tragically, one of the greatest blunders committed by historians peripherally interested in Indians at the turn of the century was their failure to collect or use the oral accounts held by many tribal members whose lifetime spanned much of the nineteenth century. Many of these individuals, or their parents or grandparents, had participated in events early in the nineteenth century. Since extended families and tribal communities continued to exist, these oral accounts could have provided a considerably enlarged Native American perspective. Unfortunately, during the twentieth century, much of this valuable information was lost.

The middle decades of the twentieth century brought few changes. Native Americans remained marginalized in American history, and many academic historians considered Native American history to be "popular history" or "cowboys and Indians," not worthy of serious research. In the four decades between 1920 and 1960, for instance, the *AHR* published only four articles on Native American subjects. Two written during the 1930s continued the pattern established at the beginning of the century. One examined American Indian policy in the Old Northwest during the War of 1812, while the second concentrated on British military policies and tactics during Braddock's Defeat, while generally ignoring the Indian forces responsible for inflicting the heaviest loss of life on a European or American army in all of American history. In 1949, a third essay examined John Evans's bizarre attempts to prove that prairie tribes such as the Omahas, Arikaras, and Mandans were of Welsh origin, but the essay focused on Welsh and American antiquarianism rather than the Indians. By far the most

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histories of Indian-white relations in the western Great Lakes from the colonial period through the War of 1812. These are well documented, scholarly accounts, but they reflect the obvious European bias of their author.

perceptive article during these years was Mary Young's "Indian Removal and Land Allotment: The Civilized Tribes and Jacksonian Justice." Published in the October 1958 number, the essay discussed the implementation of Jacksonian Indian policy, but Young also described the Indian response and argued that intra-tribal politics contributed to the loss of allotments.<sup>7</sup>

Young's interest in Jacksonian Indian policy, the Five Southern Tribes, and the loss of Native American land reflected the focus brought to these subjects by two historians in Oklahoma. During the 1920s, Grant Foreman, an attorney initially employed by the Dawes Commission in Oklahoma, collected records documenting the history of the Five Southern Tribes, then wrote several volumes on the Indian experience in the removal period. Foreman's *Indian Removal*, published in 1932, provided the first comprehensive account of the removal of the Five Southern Tribes, while *Advancing the Frontier* examined their experiences upon arrival in the West. *The Last Trek of the Indians*, also published in 1932, provided brief summaries of the removal of many of the midwestern tribes. Although Foreman's work has been criticized as unsophisticated and biased in its sympathy toward the Indians, his volumes remain basic studies in this field. Moreover, in contrast to earlier studies, Foreman's writings concentrated on the experiences of Native Americans rather than white political or military figures.<sup>8</sup>

Angie Debo's publications followed a similar format. Trained as a professional historian (M.A., University of Chicago, 1924; Ph.D., Oklahoma University, 1933), Debo investigated the loss of Native American land through the misadministration of the Dawes Act. Her research indicated that prominent Oklahomans had participated in this fraud. Her life was threatened, and she was denied a teaching position in the state's universities; but volumes such as *Still the Waters Run* and *The Road to Disappearance* were highly acclaimed and brought her national recognition. Her studies of the Creeks and Choctaws during the latter half of the nineteenth century and her analysis of the subterfuge surrounding the loss of Indian land in Oklahoma are still the standard works on these subjects.<sup>9</sup>

Most Americans were more interested in Indian-white military confrontations. Historians such as George Hunt, Randolph Downes, Howard Peckham, and

<sup>7</sup> Julius W. Pratt, "Fur Trade Strategy and the American Left Flank in the War of 1812," *AHR*, 40 (January 1935): 246–73; Stanley Pargellis, "Braddock's Defeat," *AHR*, 41 (January 1936): 253–69; David Williams, "John Evans' Strange Journey, Part II," *AHR*, 54 (April 1949): 508–29; Mary E. Young, "Indian Removal and Land Allotment: The Civilized Tribes and Jacksonian Justice," *AHR*, 64 (October 1958): 31–45.

<sup>8</sup> William Welge, telephone interview by author, January 17, 1995. Welge is the curator of manuscripts at the Oklahoma Historical Society and is writing a biography of Foreman. See Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes: Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole* (Norman, Okla., 1934); Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians* (Norman, 1932); Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier, 1830–1860* (Norman, 1933); Foreman, *The Last Trek of the Indians* (Chicago, 1932). Since the Five Southern Tribes (Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles) had adopted many Euro-American cultural patterns, non-Indians often referred to them as the "Five Civilized Tribes." I prefer the term "Five Southern Tribes," since all Native American people are "civilized" within the parameters of their own cultures.

<sup>9</sup> Angie Debo, *The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic* (Norman, Okla., 1934); Debo, *And Still the Waters Run* (Princeton, N.J., 1940); Debo, *The Road to Disappearance: A History of the Creek Confederacy* (Norman, 1941). Debo's life and career have been admirably portrayed in "Indians, Outlaws, and Angie Debo," produced for "The American Experience" series (PBS) by Barbara Abrash and Martha Sandlin, 1986.

Douglas Leach produced solid accounts of warfare east of the Mississippi, while other scholars shifted their focus westward to the encounters on the plains.<sup>10</sup> At Oklahoma University, Walter S. Campbell, a professor of journalism who wrote under the pen name Stanley Vestal, collected personal accounts from warriors who had fought in the Sioux wars, and he published three volumes: *Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux*, *Warpath and Council Fire*, and *New Sources of Indian History*. Highly readable, the books make extensive use of Native American interviews and oral traditions.<sup>11</sup> Also written during this period, Mari Sandoz's *Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas* and *Cheyenne Autumn* focus on plains warfare and, like Vestal's accounts, incorporate considerable Native American testimony. The literary quality of Sandoz's works is exceptional, and they enjoyed both an academic and a broad general audience.<sup>12</sup>

Many of Foreman's, Debo's, and Vestal's books emerged from the University of Oklahoma Press; for, during the middle decades of the twentieth century, this press, under the directorship of Savoie Lottinville, formed the vanguard in the publication of Native American history. In 1932, the press published *Forgotten Frontiers*, the first of its now-famous "Civilization of the American Indian" series, which at present numbers over 215 volumes. The series includes biographies, volumes of edited documents, oral traditions, and ethnographic accounts but was noted for its publication of tribal histories, to which many prominent historians contributed studies. This tribal-history format has recently been criticized for its limited scope, yet many of these volumes remain the standard reference works on the individual tribes and serve as the basis for educational materials within the modern tribal communities.<sup>13</sup>

DURING THE 1960s, the study of Native American history was transformed. The emergence of the civil rights movement markedly increased both the public's and the academy's interest in the history of ethnic minority groups. As the consensus interpretation of American experience faded, many historians initially turned to

<sup>10</sup> George T. Hunt, *The Wars of the Iroquois: A Study in Intertribal Relations* (Madison, Wis., 1940); Randolph C. Downes, *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio: A Narrative of Indian Affairs . . .* (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1940); Howard Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* (Princeton, N.J., 1947); Douglas Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York, 1958).

<sup>11</sup> Stanley Vestal, *Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux* (New York, 1932); Vestal, *Warpath and Council Fire: The Plains Indians' Struggle for Survival in War and Diplomacy, 1851-1891* (New York, 1948); and Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History, 1850-1891* (Norman, Okla., 1934). Also see Ray Tassin, *Stanley Vestal: Champion of the Old West* (Glendale, Calif., 1973).

<sup>12</sup> Mari Sandoz, *Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas* (New York, 1942); Sandoz, *Cheyenne Autumn* (New York, 1953).

<sup>13</sup> Alfred Barnaby Thomas, ed., *Forgotten Frontiers: A Study of the Spanish Indian Policy of Don Juan Batista de Anza, Governor of New Mexico, 1777-1787* (Norman, Okla., 1932); John Drayton, telephone interview by author, February 2, 1995. Savoie Lottinville served as the editor of the press from 1938 through 1967. Examples of useful tribal histories from the series during this period include George E. Hyde, *Red Cloud's Folk: A History of the Oglala Sioux Indians* (1937); Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle* (1956); William T. Hagan, *The Sac and Fox Indians* (1958); and John C. Ewers, *The Blackfeet: Raiders on the Northwestern Plains* (1958). The series continues to include excellent tribal histories. See Donald J. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (1963), and *The Cheyenne and Arapaho Ordeal: Reservation and Agency Life in the Indian Territory, 1875-1907* (1976); Arrell M. Gibson, *The Chickasaws* (1971); W. David Baird, *The Quapaw Indians: A History of the Downstream People* (1980); and William Unrau, *The Kansa Indians: A History of the Wind People, 1673-1873* (1971).



the study of African Americans, but by 1968 scholars were also taking a new look at Native Americans and their contribution to the country's past. Unquestionably, the war in Vietnam added impetus to the latter inquiry. Historians who opposed the conflict drew similarities between interpretations of modern American imperialism in Southeast Asia and earlier American expansion onto Indian lands in the West. Meanwhile, the soldier's term "Indian Country," commonly applied to those regions of the Vietnamese countryside held by the Vietcong, reflected a broader, if less sophisticated, recognition of these parallels. In some instances, such similarities were overdrawn, but American uncertainty over involvement in the war gave credence to a newer, more critical evaluation of the government's relations with tribal people. It is not surprising that Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, while not very good history, struck a responsive chord with the American public during these years.<sup>14</sup>

The renewed interest in Native American history was also strengthened by the Red Power movement. Following the example of African Americans, younger, more militant Native American leaders appeared in the urban Indian communities and on university campuses in the West. While members of the American Indian Movement occupied Wounded Knee and the public spotlight, other activists in the urban Indian communities and on college campuses successfully petitioned university administrators to establish Native American Studies programs. Almost all these programs included courses in Native American history as part of their basic offerings, and history departments across the United States rushed to add undergraduate Native American history courses to their curricula. Although the job market was contracting, new openings in Native American history appeared. Eager for employment, many historians jumped on the buckskin bandwagon, marketed themselves as "Indian historians," and ventured forth into the classroom. Some were adequately trained; others were woefully lacking in their preparation.<sup>15</sup>

Ironically, the burgeoning interest in Native American history coincided with a significant change in methodology. Excellent studies of the formulation and administration of federal Indian policy continued, but scholars now attempted to develop a Native American perspective. For years, historians had complained that although anthropologists possessed a better understanding of tribal cultures, their historical research was inadequate, their prose was jargon ridden, and they often failed to place their analysis within a broader perspective. They knew what "was going on," but they did not know what "was happening." In rebuttal, anthropologists charged that historians were interested only in military or diplomatic affairs and were so dependent on written documents that they failed to understand the Native American viewpoint. They were writing "white man's history" about Native

<sup>14</sup> Cecil Eby, *That Disgraceful Affair: The Black Hawk War* (New York, 1973), is a good example of an attempt to reinterpret Native American history through an obvious Vietnamese perspective. Also see Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York, 1970).

<sup>15</sup> Native American Studies programs were established at the University of Minnesota in 1969, at UCLA in 1969, and at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1972. The first "American Indian" position to be advertised in the "Professional Register" section of the "AHA Newsletter" appeared in February 1969 (vol. 7, no. 3, p. 17): a position in "colonial and/or American Indian" at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point.

American people. They knew what “was happening,” but they really did not know what “was going on.”<sup>16</sup>

During the late 1950s, these conflicting perspectives converged (or at least hybridized) to form a new methodology called “ethnohistory.” For years, anthropologists such as Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin, John C. Ewers, and Anthony F. C. Wallace had pioneered this technique, but historians had been slow to adopt it, discounting the inclusion of a Native American viewpoint as speculative since such a perspective could not be documented by traditional means.<sup>17</sup> In retrospect, however, Wallace’s anthropological study *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* probably marks a watershed, since it was widely acclaimed by both historians and anthropologists and served as a model for many younger historians (ethnohistorians) just beginning their careers. James Axtell has traced the growth of the discipline and argues that ethnohistory is “the use of historical and ethnological methods and materials to gain knowledge of the nature and causes of change in a culture defined by ethnological concepts and categories.” Some of its adherents still disagree among themselves over the proper definition of the term, but during the past two decades its methodology has been widely accepted.<sup>18</sup>

The “new Indian history” employs this methodology of ethnohistory. Designed to place the tribal communities within the broader American perspective, this history also illustrates how Native American people were motivated by their unique cultural patterns and how those patterns adapted to change. Although Indian people have been forced to react to European and American policies, the new Indian history attempts to analyze the Native American response and to demonstrate that tribal cultures have been remarkably resilient, maintaining many of their traditions through decades of forced acculturation. In addition, this new scholarship has endeavored to present an “Indian-centered” perspective: an account of Indian-white relations that analyzes this interaction from the Native American point of view. Indian people are no longer portrayed solely as pawns of

<sup>16</sup> Foremost among those scholars who have continued to produce excellent studies of American Indian policy is Francis Paul Prucha. In a career that has spanned four decades, Prucha has written or edited numerous volumes and essays on the development and administration of federal policy. His volumes are too numerous to mention, but perhaps the capstone of his scholarship is *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, 2 vols. (Lincoln, Neb., 1984), a masterful survey of the subject. Even historians who disagree with some of his interpretations admire and rely on his meticulous scholarship.

<sup>17</sup> The American Society for Ethnohistory emerged from the efforts of Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin, an anthropologist at Indiana University. Employed by the Indian Claims Commission, during the 1950s Wheeler-Voegelin directed a project that amassed considerable quantities of documents and early secondary materials focusing on residency and land use by the tribes of the Great Lakes and northern Ohio Valley. In 1953, scholars interested in this subject attended a conference at Ohio State University and formed the Ohio Valley Historic Indian Conference, which evolved into the American Society for Ethnohistory. *Ethnohistory*, the journal of the society, began publication in 1954.

<sup>18</sup> See John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, with Comparative Material from Other Western Tribes* (Washington, D.C., 1955); and Ewers, *Blackfeet*. Also see Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York, 1970). Also see Calvin Martin, “Ethnohistory: A Better Way to Write Indian History,” *Western History Quarterly*, 9 (January 1978): 41–56; and James Axtell, “Ethnohistory: An Historian’s Viewpoint,” in Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York, 1981), 5. Axtell’s definition is probably the most widely accepted general definition of “ethnohistory,” but in 1989 I interviewed numerous anthropologists and historians and found that there still was considerable disagreement. One historian, who admitted that he could not precisely define the discipline, stated, “Whatever it is, John Ewers does it.”

federal policy; they developed their own methods of manipulating a system designed to control them.

The emergence of the new Indian history is closely associated with the D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian, at the Newberry Library in Chicago. Founded in 1972, the center has hosted dozens of workshops and conferences and has awarded hundreds of fellowships to academic historians, public school teachers, and tribal historians, who have traveled to the Newberry to use its rich resources. The academic historians in the center's fellowship program currently include most of the world's leading scholars in this field, and many of the secondary teachers and tribal historians who have participated in the workshops have used their residency in Chicago to develop new instructional materials for use in their classrooms and tribal communities. Unquestionably, the McNickle Center has played a critical role in the growth and development of the new Indian history. As one historian has noted, "the McNickle Center has become for Indian history what Paris is for fashions."<sup>19</sup>

Since 1970, the new Indian history has expanded in many directions. No longer interested primarily in federal policy or military affairs, historians have extended their investigations to subjects or periods previously ignored. During the past decade, the pre-Columbian period has attracted considerable attention. Long dismissed as irrelevant to the "mainstream" of American history, pre-Columbian Native Americans had been dehumanized in opening sections of textbooks, which often included pre-Columbian societies in general discussions of climate, topography, flora, and fauna. Unfortunately, most data on pre-Columbian societies had been supplied by archaeologists, who were more interested in describing and classifying artifacts than in discussing the people and societies who used them. Consequently, as Samuel Eliot Morrison stated in *The Oxford History of the American People*, "when we try to tell the story of man in America . . . , the lack of data brings us to a halt. There are plenty of surviving objects . . . but no written records . . . [T]he history of the American People is the history in America of immigrants from other countries." Surveys of American history textbooks conducted as late as 1986 indicated that many authors and publishers still subscribed to such reasoning.<sup>20</sup>

More recent scholarship has altered this pattern. During the past decade, some authors of American history survey textbooks have reexamined the pre-Columbian past and have placed pre-Columbian cultures within a broader context. Instead of depicting pre-Columbian North America as a cultural backwater, isolated from the

<sup>19</sup> Frederick Hoxie, telephone interview by author, January 25, 1995.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Eliot Morrison, *The Oxford History of the American People* (New York, 1965), 3. Morrison does include a preliminary chapter of fifteen pages, "America under Her Native Sons," at the beginning of his survey. The entire volume, excluding the index, is some 1,122 pages. Recently, some archaeologists have adopted new methods of interpreting and discussing the pre-Columbian past. A good example of a relatively jargon-free, humanistic approach to the use of archaeological materials is in Janet D. Spector, *What This Awl Means: Feminist Archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota Village* (St. Paul, Minn., 1993). An interesting attempt to combine archaeological evidence with tribal oral traditions can be found in Roger Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), "Kara Katit Pakutu: Exploring the Origins of Native America in Anthropology and Oral Traditions" (M.A. thesis, University of Colorado, 1994). James Axtell's survey, "Europeans, Indians, and the Age of Discovery in American Indian Textbooks," *AHR*, 92 (June 1987): 621-32, obviously focuses on the "Age of Discovery" but also indicates that textual coverage of both the pre-Columbian and subsequent periods is inadequate and often error ridden.

general development of “civilized” societies in the Old World, historians have placed pre-Columbian cultures into a world-wide pattern, with manifestations similar to those of contemporary societies in Africa and Eurasia. Focusing on the Adena, Hopewellian, and Mississippian people of the eastern United States, scholars have drawn parallels to contemporary cultures in Europe or Mesopotamia. For example, the Mississippians, a riverine people, flourished between 700 and 1700 A.D. and constructed large earthen mounds that served as ceremonial and population centers. Governed by a theocracy, Cahokia, a Mississippian community opposite modern St. Louis, emerged as a nascent city-state that dominated the surrounding river valleys. An important trade center, in 1100 A.D. Cahokia had a population exceeding ten thousand. Several American history textbooks published within the past decade have featured Cahokia as indicative of the pre-Columbian societies, and interest in the pre-Columbian period continues. In 1992, *America in 1492: The World of the Indian Peoples before the Arrival of Columbus*, a volume edited by Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., and sponsored by the McNickle Center, offered a series of essays surveying pre-Columbian cultures; and, more recently, other scholars such as Charles Hudson and Francis Jennings have attempted to investigate the connections between pre-Columbian societies and historic tribes in the United States.<sup>21</sup>

Critical to the renewed interest in pre-Columbian societies are the revised estimates of pre-Columbian populations. In 1965, Morrison’s *Oxford History of the American People* indicated that, although “the population of the Americas in 1500 is largely a matter of conjecture . . . , the latest scholarly estimates of Indian population in the present area of Canada and the United States vary from 900,000 to 1,500,000.” Today, these estimates have increased almost fivefold. Current figures range from 5 million to 12.5 million, with perhaps 6 to 7 million emerging as the most commonly accepted estimate. Obviously, the increased numbers give credence to the arguments for more sophisticated pre-Columbian societies, since larger populations could more easily provide the goods and services needed to support a complex, stratified society. Moreover, like “civilizations” in Eurasia, the pre-Columbian population and its complex societies appeared to rise and fall. Cahokia reached the height of its population and influence in about 1250 A.D.; by 1400, it had been abandoned.<sup>22</sup>

Yet other, more ominous population losses loomed on the horizon, and recent

<sup>21</sup> Some American history textbooks now include a chapter or an enlarged section on pre-Columbian America. See John Mack Faragher, Mari Jo Buhle, Daniel Czitrom, and Susan H. Armitage, *Out of Many: A History of the American People* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1994), vol. 1; Paul S. Boyer, Clifford E. Clark, Sr., Joseph F. Kett, Neal Salisbury, Harvard Sitkoff, and Nancy Woloch, *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People* (Lexington, Mass., 1993), vol. 1; and Gary B. Nash, Julie Roy Jeffrey, John R. Howe, Peter J. Frederick, Allen F. Davis, and Allan M. Winkler, *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society* (New York, 1987), vol. 1. Also see Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *America in 1492: The World of the Indian Peoples before the Arrival of Columbus* (New York, 1992); Charles Hudson and Carmen Chaves Tesser, eds., *The Forgotten Centuries: Indians and Europeans in the American South, 1521–1704* (Athens, Ga., 1994); and Francis Jennings, *The Founders of America: How Indians Discovered the Land, Pioneered in It, and Created Great Classical Civilizations, How They Were Plunged into a Dark Age by Invasion and Conquest, and How They Are Reviving* (New York, 1993).

<sup>22</sup> Morrison, *Oxford History of the American People*, 15. For more recent discussions of the Native American population north of Mexico in 1492, see Henry F. Dobyns, *Their Number Become Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1973); Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History since 1492* (Norman, Okla.,

scholarship has analyzed their magnitude. In 1540, when Hernando De Soto journeyed across the Southeast, he encountered populous Mississippian societies residing in fortified towns surrounded by extensive fields of corn and other crops. De Soto was received by powerful leaders, draped with pearls, who rode in sedan chairs; when hostile warriors opposed his entrance, they fought in well-organized ranks, commanded by native officers. One century later, these populous societies were gone, swept away by a pestilential holocaust. Within the past two decades, scholars such as Alfred W. Crosby, Henry Dobyns, and Russell Thornton have investigated these events and have demonstrated that because Native American peoples possessed no natural immunities to Old World pathogens, they succumbed to these epidemics by the millions. At first, such a catastrophic loss of human life seemed almost incomprehensible, and some historians were reluctant to accept the magnitude of these figures; but, when demographers examined the impact of smallpox and other diseases on historic tribal communities, they could confirm by extrapolation that the initial estimates were valid. Indeed, scholars such as Peter Wood have shown that the epidemics continued to ravage the Mississippian homeland well into the eighteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

The implications of such a holocaust are profound. In the early seventeenth century, when the British and French first established settlements on the eastern seaboard, they did not encounter well-organized, populous incipient city-states. Instead, they met the scattered remnants of a Native American population devastated by disease. The pandemics were so disruptive that they destroyed the social and political structures of most Mississippian peoples and played havoc with simpler woodland societies along the northeast coast. The golden age of the Mississippians was gone. The towns and ceremonial centers had been abandoned. Native Americans had been plunged into a dark age not of their own making. They were vulnerable to the European immigrants who landed on the edges of their world.<sup>24</sup>

NATIVE AMERICANS WERE OVERWHELMED, but they also persisted. Unlike historians of the early twentieth century, who portrayed Indian people as “vanishing Americans” on “the road to disappearance,” recent scholars have emphasized

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1987); and Josephy, *America in 1492*, 6. Also see Thomas E. Emerson and R. Barry Lewis, eds., *Cahokia and the Hinterlands: Middle Mississippian Cultures of the Midwest* (Urbana, Ill., 1991).

<sup>23</sup> Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust*; Dobyns, *Their Number Become Thinned*. See Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Conn., 1971). Crosby presents an excellent discussion of the biological impact of the “discovery” of the Americas on both eastern and western hemispheres. Also see Peter Wood, “The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview by Race and Region, 1685–1790,” in Peter H. Wood, Gregory A. Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley, eds., *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast* (Lincoln, Neb., 1989), 35–103.

<sup>24</sup> See Jennings, *Founders of America*; and Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1975). David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World* (New York, 1992), presents an even more critical analysis of the European conquest. By 1680, only one viable Mississippian society, the Natchez, remained. Led by the “Great Sun,” a hereditary leader with almost absolute power, the Natchez were attacked and destroyed by the French during the 1720s.

Native American adaptability and perseverance. Indeed, it is within the realm of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the first period of sustained contact between Native Americans and European settlers in the United States, that the new Indian history has made the most profound impact. Since 1982, although studies by William Cronon, Neal Salisbury, Richard White, and Daniel Usner have clearly demonstrated that Indian societies used land, resources, and commodities in different ways from Europeans, they also indicate that Native Americans adapted European technology and economic patterns to their own needs.<sup>25</sup> Other historians have focused on the Iroquois Confederacy, tracing these nations' emergence and role as political power-brokers during the colonial period. Recently, claims by some Native American historians that the Constitution of the United States was modeled after the Iroquois confederacy have attracted the public's attention and engendered considerable controversy.<sup>26</sup>

Indians also played key roles in the formation of new American societies. Even though Native American people were rarely integrated into the British colonies that clustered along the eastern seaboard, Richard White has argued that they joined with French traders in the interior to form a cultural and genetic "middle ground," a way of life in which Indian and French worlds "melted at the edges and merged," and in which it became unclear "whether a particular practice or way of doing things was French or Indian."<sup>27</sup> Until the 1970s, these multi-ethnic cultures of the American interior had received scant attention. Dismissed as marginal societies, caught between the Indian and European worlds, they were once depicted as tenuous, both in population and duration. More recently, scholars have reappraised these societies and have established that many were dominated by people of mixed lineage, who, far from being outcasts between two cultures, bridged cultural gaps between these groups and also served as intermediaries between frontier societies and European or American governments. In the Great Lakes region, métis, or mixed-blood, leaders such as Charles Langlade (Ottawa), Siggenauk (Potawatomi), and Jean Baptiste Ducoigne (Kaskaskia) rallied both

<sup>25</sup> William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York, 1983); Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500–1643* (New York, 1982); Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln, Neb., 1983); Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992). Albert L. Hurtado has shown that Native Americans in California also were adaptive but that they were overwhelmed by demands for their land and labor after the arrival of Anglo-Americans during the late nineteenth century. See Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (New Haven, Conn., 1988).

<sup>26</sup> Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992); Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from Its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York, 1984); Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell, eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600–1800* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1987). In *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy* (Los Angeles, 1991), Donald A. Grinde, Jr., and Bruce E. Johansen argued that the political theories of the "founding fathers" were heavily influenced by their familiarity with the political structure of the Iroquois Confederacy. Their assertions have created considerable debate and have attracted both the media, the public, and Congress. Also see Oren Lyons (Onondaga), John Mohawk (Seneca), et al., *Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the U.S. Constitution* (Santa Fe, N.Mex., 1992).

<sup>27</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, 1991), 50.

natives and creole French in support of the French, British, or American cause. These leaders enjoyed the support of the Indian communities, but according to George Rogers Clark, many conducted themselves “as much in the French manner as possible.”<sup>28</sup>

South of the Ohio, men such as Alexander McGillivray (Creek) and William McIntosh (Creek) combined Native American and Scots or Irish ancestries to emerge as influential figures. They led multi-ethnic societies of Indian, European, and African-American members along a diplomatic tightrope between Spanish, British, and American governments. Moreover, scholars James H. Merrell, Richard White, Michael Green, and Daniel Usner have shown that, for many Indians in the South, the European and African entrance created an “Indians’ New World,” which, in many ways, was as “new” for Native Americans as it was for the Europeans. Although the multi-ethnic component of these societies differed markedly among different tribal communities, studies of these societies have provided insights into the development of southern attitudes toward slavery and race.<sup>29</sup>

The evolution of Indian leadership in the early decades of the nineteenth century also has undergone considerable revision. New analyses of Native American resistance movements prior to the War of 1812 have de-emphasized the role of Indians as mere allies of the British and have pointed out that leaders such as Tecumseh, who attempted to forge a pan-Indian political and military alliance, championed agendas very much their own. Moreover, Gregory Dowd, Joel Martin, and other scholars have shown that religious revitalization movements markedly influenced this resistance but that many Indian people were alienated by such nativism and supported the United States. Both historians and the general public have long been fascinated with Tecumseh, and recent scholarship has separated the man from the myth and analyzed his appeal to non-Indians.<sup>30</sup>

Most mixed-bloods opposed Tecumseh’s efforts, and in the decades following the War of 1812, their influence increased. Historians such as Foreman or Debo earlier chronicled the rise of an acculturated mixed-blood population among the southern tribes, but since 1970 scholars have analyzed the methods used by

<sup>28</sup> George Rogers Clark to John Brown, 1791, *George Rogers Clark Papers*, James Alton James, ed., *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, 38 vols. (Springfield, Ill., 1903–78), 8: 252–55. The nomenclature of bicultural people of mixed lineage continues to cause problems. “Mixed-blood” currently is the most widely used term, but some academics dislike it because of its emphasis on race, not culture. People of French-Indian descent have long been known as “métis” in Canada and the Great Lakes region, and today “métis” is often used to refer to people of mixed Indian and European lineage in that region. Recently, some scholars have suggested that “bicultural” should be used, particularly in reference to people of mixed lineage and culture among the southern tribes. Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe) has used terms such as “crossblood” or “postindian” in his novels of modern Native American life. Since “mixed-blood” is the most common term employed within the Native American communities, it will be used in this essay.

<sup>29</sup> James H. Merrell, *The Indians’ New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1989); Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln, Neb., 1983); Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis* (Lincoln, 1982); J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People* (Lincoln, 1986); Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*.

<sup>30</sup> Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore, Md., 1992); Joel W. Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees’ Struggle for a New World* (Boston, 1991). Also see R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln, Neb., 1983); and Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (Boston, 1984).

mixed-bloods to attain their positions of leadership and have also examined how they attempted to change tribal societies. The late William McLoughlin argued that many traditional, conservative Cherokees transformed the teachings of Protestant missionaries into a syncretic faith, combining traditional tribal religious beliefs with the Christian doctrines. In contrast, other scholars have argued that missionaries played a key role in providing the mixed-bloods with both the formal education and the moral support to enable them to centralize their tribes' political structures. Unlike earlier historians, modern scholars have focused on intra-tribal politics, tracing changes from older, more traditional patterns to the statutory structures of the late 1820s and 1830s. Championing the concept of private property, the mixed-bloods defended the retention of tribal homelands since they had developed plantations, farms, or other enterprises in the region. In turn, their defense of the tribal estate attracted the support of the less acculturated members of their tribes and gave their centralization of power a veneer of legitimacy. Yet, like the opportunistic American society that surrounded them, many of these mixed-blood leaders used their position to enhance their own fortunes. In reality, they were far removed from the common stereotypes of Indian leaders as war chiefs, "noble savages," or victims. As the new Indian history has illustrated, they were complex figures, representatives of complex societies, but they were people who controlled their own fortunes and who did much to shape the wealth of their tribal communities.<sup>31</sup>

Much less attention has been given to the Native American societies north of the Ohio. White's *Middle Ground* traces the development of these societies through the War of 1812, but relatively few scholars have examined their subsequent history, and most of these studies have been limited by their rather traditional, monographic approach. Initial investigations indicate that a métis leadership among tribes such as the Potawatomis and Miamis provided role models for less acculturated members of these tribes and that métis entrepreneurs played a major role in the Indian trade in much of the region during this period. Many of these métis merchants were relatively well-educated, prosperous individuals. (In 1816, when Indiana entered the union, Jean Baptiste Richardville, a Miami trader, was reputed to be the wealthiest man in the state.) Because they refused to engage in agriculture and occupied good farm land, however, they were condemned as "savages" and removed west of the Mississippi.<sup>32</sup>

Transplanted Native American societies temporarily flourished in the West. In Indian Territory, the Five Southern Tribes rebuilt political and socioeconomic

<sup>31</sup> Between 1984 and 1990, William G. McLoughlin published four volumes that analyze and discuss Cherokee society during the first four decades of the nineteenth century: *Cherokees and Missionaries, 1789–1839* (New Haven, Conn., 1984); *The Cherokee Ghost Dance: Essays on the Southeastern Indians, 1789–1861* (New Haven, 1986); *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic* (New Haven, 1986); and *Champions of the Cherokees: Evan and John B. Jones* (Princeton, N.J., 1993). Also see White, *Roots of Dependency*; Green, *Politics of Indian Removal*; and Theda Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540–1866* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1979).

<sup>32</sup> White, *Middle Ground*. Also see Gary C. Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650–1862* (Lincoln, Neb., 1984); R. David Edmunds, *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* (Norman, Okla., 1978); Stewart Rafert, *The Miami Indians of Indiana, 1654–1994: People of the Middle Ground* (Indianapolis, Ind., forthcoming, 1996); Sarah E. Cooke and Rachel Ramadhyani, eds., *Indians and a Changing Frontier: The Art of George Winter* (Bloomington, Ind., 1993).



structures that had emerged prior to their removal, and, although these societies were plagued by the bitter vestiges of removal politics, many of their members prospered. Tribal membership provided access to economic opportunities, and in some instances tribal societies formed a socio-cultural elite, growing numbers of whites married into the tribes, and the pace of acculturation accelerated. Meanwhile, in Kansas, many of the Potawatomi métis flourished as merchants, providing merchandise and services to emigrants en route to the gold fields in Colorado. Tragically, all of these transplanted Indian societies were decimated by the Civil War, but for two decades preceding the conflict they served as focal points for the introduction of new cultural patterns into the trans-Mississippi west. Ironically, like their white counterparts, they, too, served as "pioneers." Although scholars have begun to examine this process, the character and impact of these transplanted societies need more investigation.<sup>33</sup>

While the transplanted societies developed in the West, remnant groups from these communities remained behind, forming the nucleus of a surprisingly large Native American population, which has continued to grow throughout the twentieth century. Significant numbers of Cherokees and Choctaws stayed in North Carolina and Mississippi, while much smaller communities of Native Americans were still in place from the Great Lakes to the Northeast. Some continued to occupy reservations (Eastern Cherokees, Ottawas, Menominees, for instance), but others resided on private lands, and federal officials refused to recognize them as Indians. Within the past two decades, many of these smaller, more diffuse Native American communities have petitioned the federal government for recognition but with mixed success. In 1992, for example, the Bureau of Indian Affairs refused to recognize the Miamis of Indiana but two years later extended federal recognition to the Pokagon Potawatomis, a community in southern Michigan. Why have these smaller, mixed-blood communities, though relatively acculturated, clung to their Indian identities? Devoid of federal recognition, what strategies have they adopted, conscious or otherwise, to maintain their sense of cohesion? Late in the twentieth century, as changing legal interpretations of tribal sovereignty offer Indian communities new economic opportunities (tax-free enterprise zones and gaming), some of these formerly marginalized communities have emerged as economic juggernauts. The historic antecedents of these modern entrepreneurs and their new economic activities offer ample opportunity for future scholarship, as does the impact of such individuals and communities on shifting definitions of Native American identity.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Debo examined these societies during the second quarter of the twentieth century, but her analysis was limited and lacked an ethnohistorical perspective. See Debo, *Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic; And Still the Waters Run; and Road to Disappearance*. More recently, William G. McLoughlin, *After the Trail of Tears: The Cherokees' Struggle for Sovereignty, 1839–1880* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1993), examines Cherokee politics in the post-removal period, while Duane Champagne, *Social Order and Political Change: Constitutional Governments among the Cherokee, the Choctaw, the Chickasaw, and the Creek* (Stanford, Calif., 1992), also contains chapters on the reconstruction of Indian political structures in the West. Also see H. Craig Miner, *The Corporation and the Indian: Tribal Sovereignty and Industrial Civilization in Indian Territory, 1865–1907* (Columbia, Mo., 1976); and Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., *The Chickasaw Freedmen: A People without a Country* (Westport, Conn., 1980). Littlefield has written extensively on the interaction of Indians, African Americans, and whites in Indian Territory.

<sup>34</sup> John R. Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees, 1819–1900* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1984); and *Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century* (Lincoln, Neb., 1991), provide a good

AT THE END of the twentieth century, questions of Native American identity continue to plague both Indian history and Indian politics. Obviously, during much of the early colonial period, issues of identity were almost nonexistent, since everyone in a tribal community knew everyone else or at least was familiar with an individual's kinship affiliations. Moreover, individual Native Americans envisioned themselves as members of an extended kinship network, and group identity was focused first on clan, then on a much more ambiguous tribal affiliation. In other words, one saw oneself first as a member of the Fox clan, then as a Mesquakie. If captives or other outsiders were adopted into a family, they became part of the clan and consequently were part of the "tribal community." Under such conditions, tribal membership was communally self-determined. Regardless of one's origin or ethnicity, if the Shawnees said you were Shawnee, you *were* Shawnee.

After half a century of contact, the parameters of identity began to change. Confronted by Europeans who classified all tribal peoples as "Indians," some Native Americans, while retaining their clan and tribal identities, began to identify themselves in opposition to the Europeans: as members of an indigenous American ethnic group whose broader membership transcended clan or tribal boundaries. As European or American expansion crossed the Appalachians, more tribespeople subscribed to the broader definition, and Native American leaders such as Pontiac or Tecumseh unsuccessfully attempted to channel such identification into pan-tribal political movements.<sup>35</sup>

Their efforts failed, and by the 1830s Indian communities were pressured to accept arbitrary and very selective foreign definitions of Native American and even tribal identity. At issue were the mixed-bloods. Although people of mixed lineage generally were accepted as Native Americans by their tribal communities, they were highly suspect to federal officials, who often based their definition of ethnicity on an individual's willingness to cooperate with the government. If mixed-blood leaders acquiesced in federal demands for land cessions, they were described as legitimate "chiefs and spokesmen" for the tribal communities, but if they opposed federal policy they were denounced as "degraded white men."<sup>36</sup>

It is the definitions of identity imposed by the Dawes Commission that have caused problems in the twentieth century. During the 1890s, when federal officials allotted the reservations, they refused to accept tribally defined membership,

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survey and analysis of this group, while Frank W. Porter III, ed., *Strategies for Survival: American Indians in the Eastern United States* (Westport, Conn., 1986), focuses on small communities along the central and northeastern Atlantic coast. Also see James Clifton, *The Pokagons, 1683–1983: Catholic Potawatomi Indians of the St. Joseph River Valley* (Lanham, Md., 1983); and Rafert, *Miami Indians*.

<sup>35</sup> Almost all scholars agree that, after a relatively short period, Native Americans from different tribal communities began to envision themselves as a distinct and common identity (Indians) in opposition to "white men" or Europeans, but historians disagree over the parameters and especially the political cohesion of such an identity. See White, *Middle Ground*; Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*; Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership*; and Michael N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its People, 1724–1774* (Lincoln, Neb., 1992).

<sup>36</sup> "Journal of the Proceedings Held on the St. Joseph's of Lake Michigan, September, 1828," Ratified Indian Treaties, Record Group 11, National Archives (M668, Roll 6, 192–196); George W. Ewing to the Secretary of War, February 12, 1837, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Record Group 75, National Archives (M234, Roll 355, 824–828).

demanding that Native Americans enroll with federal allotment agents and state their “blood quantum,” or degree of Indian ancestry. Although most tribe members had not previously considered blood quantum to be a primary factor in defining their constituency, during the twentieth century many adopted this government dictum as a regulatory mechanism in their own definition of tribal membership. For some tribes, this measure has had little effect, but for others it has served as an exclusionary device, debarring individuals who are only culturally Indian.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, since 1970, the self-identified (U.S. Census) Native American population in the United States has tripled, as growing numbers of Americans with at least partial Indian ancestry have attempted to renew or reclaim their Native American identity. Now, as in the past, Native American identity remains ambiguous. Historians need to investigate the circumstances that have periodically prompted non-Indian Americans to join or identify with the Native American communities. “Being Indian” has meant different things at different times, but the changing nature of Native American identity offers ample opportunity for future scholarship.<sup>38</sup>

Native American identity has been strongly influenced by the enrollment of Indian children in non-Indian schools. Since the colonial period, Native American parents have been either encouraged or coerced to enroll their children in educational institutions over which they exercised minimal control. The experience has markedly affected Native American concepts of self-identity and has also engendered divisions within the tribal communities over the role of their members in American society. Educational institutions have consistently functioned as agents of acculturation, and during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries their curricula and Dickensian methods of instruction often reflected a callous insensitivity to Native American children. Students were encouraged to renounce their traditional culture and to plunge headfirst into the mainstream of American life. Only a complete rejection of tribal identities would assure their assimilation into modern American society. Yet this promise failed. The adherence to white cultural patterns did not guarantee acceptance by non-Indians, and cultural patterns acquired at boarding schools often attracted criticism within the

<sup>37</sup> The blood quantum, or descendency clause, differs markedly among different tribes. The Western Cherokees, for example, enroll for membership anyone who is a direct descendant of a Cherokee listed on the 1907 roll, regardless of blood quantum. In contrast, the Kiowas require that all members be at least “one-quarter blood,” regardless of any relative’s enrollment; the Comanches require that members be at least “one-quarter blood” with at least one ancestor enrolled; and the Otoe-Missourias require that tribal members be at least “one-quarter blood, with at least one parent already enrolled in the tribe.” Telephone interviews, tribal enrollment offices, Cherokee, Comanche, Kiowa, and Otoe-Missouria tribes, February 6, 1995.

<sup>38</sup> Several excellent recent studies have investigated the cultural mechanism used by tribal communities to define tribal identities and maintain tribal cohesion. See Morris W. Foster, *Being Comanche: A Social History of an Indian Community* (Tucson, Ariz., 1991); Loretta Fowler, *Arapahoe Politics, 1854–1978: Symbols in Crises of Authority* (Lincoln, Neb., 1982); and Fowler, *Shared Symbols, Contested Meanings: Gros Ventre Culture and History, 1778–1984* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1987). William E. Unrau, *Mixed-Bloods and Tribal Dissolution: Charles Curtis and the Quest for Indian Identity* (Lawrence, Kan., 1989), offers an interesting case study in acculturation and mixed-blood identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Also see Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*; Margaret Connell Szasz, ed., *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (Norman, Okla., 1994); and Peter Iverson’s insightful *When Indians Became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Cattle Ranching in the American West* (Norman, 1994).

tribal communities. Since World War II, these attitudes have changed somewhat, but for many Native American people who passed through the boarding schools in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, the institutions profoundly shaped their lives.<sup>39</sup>

Because students shared classes with members from other (often distant) tribes, the experience also facilitated intertribal friendships, “boarding school marriages,” and a sense of pan-tribal, Native American identity. Ironically, although the boarding schools were highly structured institutions, often disruptive of Indian family life, many of the students who attended the schools later held fond memories of them, Tsianina Lomawaima has reported. Lomawaima’s study *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* provides excellent insights into student experiences at one boarding school in Oklahoma, and scholars have recently examined the educational environment at several other institutions. Yet additional studies of student experiences at both boarding and public schools are needed, as are analyses of the students’ careers after leaving these institutions.<sup>40</sup>

In the twentieth century, the parameters of Native American identity have also been shaped by the urban experience. During World War II, many Native Americans left the reservations to serve in the military or to seek employment in the defense industry, and during the 1950s the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ relocation program continued to encourage this exodus. Even though historians have examined the development and implementation of the relocation policies, relatively little has been written regarding the Native American experience in the cities. By 1990, almost half the Native American population of the United States lived in urban areas; and, although most of these individuals maintained ties to reservation communities, residency in cities has affected their participation in reservation affairs. Many urban Indians still vote in tribal elections, return to the reservation communities to participate in ceremonial or social occasions, and even anticipate a retirement back on the reservation. But their urban residency has fostered a new sense of community with other Native Americans who share their particular urban environment and has encouraged pan-tribal identities, which have deepened in the latter half of the twentieth century. It is not surprising that the American Indian Movement emerged in an urban setting (Minneapolis–St. Paul) or that most of its early membership came from an urban Indian

<sup>39</sup> James Axtell, “Dr. Wheelock’s Little Red School House,” in Axtell, *European and the Indian*, 87–109. Classic descriptions of early nineteenth-century teaching methods and curricula can be found in Isaac McCoy’s reports and correspondence in the Isaac McCoy Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas; and in Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (1840; rpt. edn., New York, 1970). An excellent example of the racist rejection of educated, acculturated Native American students can be found in Elias Boudinot’s experiences at Cornwall Academy. See Ralph Gabriel, *Elias Boudinot, Cherokee, and His America* (Norman, Okla., 1941); and Theda Perdue, ed., *Cherokee Editor: The Writings of Elias Boudinot* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1983). Also see Michael C. Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850–1930* (Jackson, Miss., 1993); and Robert A. Trennert, Jr., *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891–1935* (Norman, 1988).

<sup>40</sup> K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln, Neb., 1994). Also see Devon A. Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds: The Education of Women at the Cherokee Female Seminary, 1851–1909* (Urbana, Ill., 1993); and Margaret Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination, 1928–1973* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1974).

population. Like that of the Native American urban experience, a scholarly history of the American Indian Movement is also overdue.<sup>41</sup>

In contrast to the proliferation of recent scholarship on the role of women in the broader sphere of American society, relatively few volumes have been written regarding the influence of Native American women. As Nancy Shoemaker has pointed out in her introductory essay to *Negotiators of Change*, accounts of Native American society usually were written and compiled by white men, whose own assumptions about gender precluded them from either observing or understanding the key roles that Indian women played in Native American society. Consequently, the traditional documentary evidence to support an analysis of women's activities remains limited. Shoemaker argues that, within many tribal communities, "gender was a socially constructed category, and not biologically determined." Since Native American societies were less patriarchal than their European counterparts, Indian women (and children) enjoyed more freedom. Moreover, although "Indian women (initially) had more authority and were more respected than their counterparts in Europe," their status generally declined after European or American contact. Yet, as Shoemaker and fellow essayists Theda Perdue, Clifford Trafzer, Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, Harry Kersey, and Helen Bannon show, Indian women "actively, creatively, and often successfully resisted marginality."<sup>42</sup>

Because of the recent evolution of the field, and the limitations of traditional sources, much of the scholarship in Native American women's history has been concentrated in essays or journal articles.<sup>43</sup> In addition, scholars have relied heavily on interviews and oral testimony to produce biographical studies of Native American women in the twentieth century. In 1984, Gretchen Bataille and Kathleen Sands surveyed such literature in *American Indian Women: Telling Their Lives*. During the past decade, volumes such as Mark St. Pierre's *Madonna Swan: A Lakota Woman's Story*, Ruth Boyer and Narcissus Gayton's *Apache Mothers and Daughters*, and Jay Miller's *Mourning Dove* have added to this tradition, examining the lives and contributions of women within reservation societies. Native American women's history offers considerable opportunity for future scholarship. It continues to attract growing numbers of younger scholars, and, as any survey of

<sup>41</sup> *New York Times* (March 5, 1991): A1, A10; Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs* (Norman, Okla., 1991); Donald L. Fixico (Shawnee-Sac and Fox-Creek-Seminole), *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1986). Alan L. Sorkin, *The Urban American Indian* (Lexington, Mass., 1978), presents a brief sociological survey of the urban experience.

<sup>42</sup> Nancy Shoemaker, ed., *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women* (New York, 1994). Perdue, Trafzer, Murphy, Kersey, and Bannon have written essays in this collection.

<sup>43</sup> For example, see Kathryn E. Holland Braund, "Guardians of Tradition and Handmaidens of Change: Women's Role in Creek Economic and Social Life during the Eighteenth Century," *American Indian Quarterly*, 14 (Summer 1990): 239-58; Clara Sue Kidwell (Choctaw), "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators," *Ethnohistory*, 39 (Spring 1992): 97-107; Theda Perdue, "Cherokee Women and the Trail of Tears," *Journal of Women's History*, 1 (Spring 1989); and Helen Hornbeck Tanner, "CooCoochee: Mohawk Medicine Woman," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 3 (Spring 1979): 23-42. Also see Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine, eds., *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women* (Lanham, Md., 1983). In contrast, an excellent monographic study of Native American women can be found in Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties": *Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870* (Norman, Okla., 1980). Also see Carol Devens, *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900* (Berkeley, Calif., 1992).

contemporary Native American politics illustrates, Native American women still exert a powerful influence within their communities.<sup>44</sup>

THE ISSUE OF WHO should exercise the appropriate “Indian voice” currently looms on the horizon of modern scholarship. Partially as a result of the repatriation controversy, and also motivated by Native American concerns over the usurpation and commercialization of sacred objects and ceremonies, both Indian academics and political leaders have recently questioned the content, methodology, and even the purpose of Native American history. In an essay, Donald A. Grinde, Jr., a Yamasee scholar, has argued that “the image of the American Indian in history, literature, and art has been largely an ‘invented’ tradition external to the American Indian experience . . . Native American people often find their history imprisoned by the rhetoric and scholarly inventions of empire.”<sup>45</sup> Other Native American historians have accused academics of extracting privileged information from Native American informants, then using such material for their own purpose, while callously disregarding the sensitivities of the tribal communities. Moreover, many are offended by historians and anthropologists who assume self-appointed roles as “caretakers of tribal histories and cultural knowledge” and who “claim that Indians are too witless to chronicle their own histories.”<sup>46</sup>

At issue in this debate is a conflict over “voices” and audiences. Indians have repeatedly claimed that much of “academic” Indian history does not reflect a Native American perspective; it reflects only what non-Indian academics think is important in the lives of Indian people. For example, when historians have written about Native American history on the plains during 1833, they emphasize events such as intertribal warfare, the fur trade, a cholera epidemic, or monumental floods along the Arkansas River. In contrast, the winter counts, or pictographic calendars recorded by the Great Plains tribes, for 1833 focus primarily on a spectacular shower of meteors that fell to earth during the evening of November 12, and the plains people remember this time as “the winter that the stars fell.” Many people in tribal communities want a Native American history that focuses on the parts of their life or the lives of their grandparents of interest to them, and historians on the faculties at tribal community colleges or larger institutions with Native American Studies programs responsive to local communities have produced works that do so. Many of these histories are admirably designed for the

<sup>44</sup> Gretchen M. Bataille and Kathleen Mullen Sands, *American Indian Women: Telling Their Lives* (Lincoln, Neb., 1984); Mark St. Pierre, *Madonna Swan: A Lakota Woman's Story* (Norman, Okla., 1991); Ruth McDonald Boyer and Narcissus Duffy Gayton, *Apache Mothers and Daughters: Four Generations of a Family* (Norman, 1992); and Jay Miller, ed., *Mourning Dove: A Salishan Autobiography* (Lincoln, 1990). Research conducted by anthropologist Loretta Fowler has confirmed the continued influence of women in tribal politics in Oklahoma. See Fowler, “Oklahoma Arapaho Chieftainship: Rethinking Cultural Perspectives in Ethnohistory,” a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory, 1988.

<sup>45</sup> Donald A. Grinde, Jr. (Yamasee), “Teaching American Indian History: A Native American Voice,” *Perspectives*, 32 (September 1994): 11–12.

<sup>46</sup> Devon A. Mihesuah (Choctaw), “Suggested Guidelines for Institutions with Scholars Who Conduct Research on American Indians,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 17 (1993): 132.

needs of the audiences for which they have been produced, but some have been rejected by other academic historians. In this instance, tribal historians and scholars addressing their studies to particular Native American audiences may share problems similar to those of public historians.<sup>47</sup>

Closely related to the issue of audience is the question of an “Indian voice.” Ideally, an Indian voice should address those historical questions considered important by Indian communities but should also present a Native American perspective, even on historical issues that may be of secondary interest to most tribal people but that have been, or are, championed by non-Indians. Of course, any discussion of an “Indian voice” assumes a perspective shared by most Indians, and in many situations Native American opinions have been so diverse that to attain a representative, unified voice is difficult, if not impossible. Yet almost all Native American historians, academic and otherwise, would agree that historical accounts and analyses of Indian people would be enhanced by the inclusion of the perspectives of the people participating in them. Do historians who are members of the tribal communities possess particular insight into these historical issues? Are their insights into recent events much more valid than those in the distant past? Can historians (non-Indian) who are not members of the tribal communities speak with an “Indian voice”? If they are thoroughly familiar with tribal communities and have conducted careful research, can they infuse their work with a tribal or Native American perspective?

These are difficult questions, and both Native Americans and academic historians differ with each other, and among themselves, over the proper response. Most academic historians who are not members of tribal communities but who have devoted their professional careers to the pursuit of Native American history would hesitate to assert that they write (or present their research) with an “Indian voice.” But most would also argue that they have attempted (with mixed success) to include a Native American perspective in their work. Obviously, as Donald Grinde points out, most academic historians do approach their subjects within the framework of traditional European or American methodology, and the parameters of that methodology (“the rhetoric and scholarly inventions of empire”) continue to shape their inquiry. Yet the fruits of that inquiry (books, essays, and documents written or edited by academics), even in the hegemonic strictures of Foucauldian interpretation, now provide a basis for either revision or further investigation by a growing number of young, talented Native American historians who have emerged from the tribal communities. Moreover, insights provided by these scholars have both enlarged the more traditional academic perspective and have generated considerable debate. In contrast, the danger of the “every group its own historian” approach is the potential atomization of scholarship and the failure of different camps even to communicate. Perhaps the best of all possible worlds is, to paraphrase Richard White, a method of inquiry in

<sup>47</sup> Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540–1854* (Topeka, Kan., 1972), 251–52; Garrick Mallory, *Pictographs of the American Indian, 4th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, D.C., 1886), 116. For the dilemma of public historians and an analysis of the problems encountered in the formulation and writing of African-American and women’s history, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, 1988).

which Native American and non-Indian perspectives and methodologies “melt at the edge and merge” and in which it becomes unclear “whether a particular practice or way of doing things” is Native American or non-Indian. Certainly, Grinde’s suggestion that non-Indian historians immerse themselves in Native American languages is a logical step toward achieving this process.<sup>48</sup>

Since this essay began with a general lament over the historical profession’s former dismissal of Native American history, and an enumeration and complaint about the paucity of articles or essays focusing on Indian history published in the *American Historical Review* during the first sixty years of its existence, perhaps it should end on a happier note. Within the past two decades, Native American historiography has seen explosive growth, and publishers are actively seeking worthwhile manuscripts for their lists. The University of Oklahoma Press continues to add to its series, but it has been joined by university presses from Nebraska, Arizona, New Mexico, North Carolina, Indiana, and Illinois, as well as several other academic and commercial publishers who now recruit and publish monographs. Older established scholarly journals have published a growing number of essays focusing on native subjects, while several new journals dedicated to Native American history and culture have emerged. Meanwhile, expanding enrollments in Indian history courses or Native American Studies programs have engendered several textbooks that have found wide acceptance.<sup>49</sup>

The table of contents for the *American Historical Review* during the past two decades reflects such changes. In addition to this essay, since 1975 the *AHR* has published two review essays, one presidential address from Charles Gibson, and two scholarly articles that focus on Native American history. In 1975, Wilbur Jacobs’s essay, “Native American History: How It Illuminates Our Past,” examined many of the books that were emerging as part of the new Indian history and argued that they “threw a fresh beam of light on general American history.” Twelve years later, James Axtell surveyed American history textbooks in “Europeans, Indians, and the Age of Discovery in American History Textbooks” and demonstrated that many of these volumes continued to ignore or misrepresent Native Americans during this period. Charles Gibson’s Presidential Address, “Conquest, Capitulation, and Indian Treaties,” examined the nature of diplomatic agreements between Indian nations and Spain, while Alden Vaughan’s essay, “From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian,” pointed out that the English originally believed that Native Americans would be integrated into a European-dominated society and did not

<sup>48</sup> Grinde, “Teaching American Indian History,” 11–16. Also see James Axtell, “The Scholar’s Obligations to Native People,” in Axtell, *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York, 1988), 244–53; Frederick Hoxie, “The Problem of Indian History,” *Social Science Journal*, 25 (1988): 389–99; Novick, *That Noble Dream*, chap. 14; White, *Middle Ground*, 50.

<sup>49</sup> The *American Indian Historian* began publication in 1964; the *American Indian Quarterly* in 1974; and the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* in 1974. Textbooks currently include Arrell M. Gibson, *The American Indian: Prehistory to the Present* (Lexington, Mass., 1980); William T. Hagan, *American Indians*, 3d edn. (Chicago, 1993); Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds., *Major Problems in American Indian History* (Lexington, 1994); Roger L. Nichols, *The American Indian: Past and Present*, 4th edn. (New York, 1992); Frederick Hoxie, ed., *Indians in American History* (Chicago, 1984); R. David Edmunds, ed., *American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity* (Lincoln, Neb., 1980); Donald L. Parman, *Indians and the American West in the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington, Ind., 1994).



focus on Native Americans' skin color. During the eighteenth century, however, after the English began to have doubts about assimilating the Indians, they increasingly described Native Americans as "inherently inferior 'redmen'" who were "prevented by 'nature' rather than education or environment from full participation in American society." In 1991, Melissa Meyer's article, "'We Can Not Get a Living as We Used To': Dispossession of the White Earth Anishinaabeg, 1889–1920," demonstrated that Chippewa tribespeople used the White Earth Reservation as a "region of refuge," where they practiced diverse economic activities that enabled them to slowly adjust to a market economy. When federal officials succumbed to state and local lumber interests and permitted the premature sale of individual allotments, much of the reservation land base was lost and the Chippewas were somewhat assimilated but were "marginalized" in the American economy. Yet, more important than the publication of these articles, the decision by the editors of the *AHR* to include an essay on the growth and development of Native American history in their centennial issue reflects the acceptance of this field as a crucial part of American history. It is difficult to imagine the inclusion of such an essay prior to 1970.<sup>50</sup>

In 1895, the mounted warrior in Fraser's "End of the Trail" was portrayed as symbolic of all Native Americans: tragic figures, associated with the past, and descending into oblivion. One century later, such an assessment has proven wrong. Indian people continue as a viable part of American society. A renewed interest in their past tells us much about the American experience.

<sup>50</sup> Wilbur R. Jacobs, "Native American History: How It Illuminates Our Past," *AHR*, 80 (June 1975): 595–609; Charles Gibson, "Conquest, Capitulation, and Indian Treaties," *AHR*, 83 (February 1978): 1–15; Alden T. Vaughan, "From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian," *AHR*, 87 (October 1982): 917–53; Axtell, "Europeans, Indians, and the Age of Discovery in American History Textbooks"; and Melissa L. Meyer, "'We Can Not Get a Living as We Used To': Dispossession and the White Earth Anishinaabeg, 1889–1920," *AHR*, 96 (April 1991): 368–94.