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**OSHKAABEWIS
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Dr. Dave Gonzales, Editor
Kent Smith, Managing Editor
Earl Nyholm, Ojibwe Language Editor



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Prologue

Two recent publications, *1492-1992: Re/Discovering Colonial Writing*, edited by Rene Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini, and Rolena Adorno's new book, *Guaman Poma, Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru*, have contributed to my understanding of writing and oral tradition during the early colonization of the Americas.

At the outset, we need to dissolve the misconception that all Native People have one colonial language. North American Indians speak and write in English, simply because the colonial language is English. Indians in South and Central America speak and write in Spanish, because the official language of the Europeans was Spanish. As a result, tribal people have a man-made barrier in the form of European languages that keep Indians from exchanging information and research. If 1992 marks five-hundred years of oppression, we need to make an effort to inquire into, or probe beyond, English and Spanish to get a sense of those five-hundred years and the impact on early colonization. This is truly research, an investigation that goes beyond artificial language barriers.

Jara, Spadaccini, and Adorno question the implications of the European writing system in the context of the colonization of the "New World." The Spanish (Diego de Landa in the Yucatan Peninsula) burned Mayan written records, which the Spanish called "books." Yet according to researchers today, translating hieroglyphs into alphabetic units was more commonplace than book-burning. Through translation, Western civilization used the letters of the alphabet as a means of conquest and colonization. The Western premise is that truth can only be recorded in writing, and writing must conform to a Roman system of linear, phonetic symbols.

What followed historically has come to be viewed as "the tyranny of the alphabet" which attempts to foster respect for the written word over the spoken word and the book as a repository of both language and the wisdom of former ages. Walter Mignolo clarifies the Western emphasis on literacy by pointing out that the Spanish "... were able to build a pedagogical, administrative, and philosophical apparatus of human beings with respect to their lack, or possession of, alphabetic writing." Thus in keeping with this thinking, the written word is civilized and the spoken word is pagan.

II

There is evidence of the suppression of picto-ideographic writing system during the sixteenth century. It was more difficult to suppress oral tradition. We now have European scholars reading Native codices, but they do not fully understand the knowledge in the signs. In addition, the Spanish were unable to suppress hundreds of Native languages which are still being spoken in the Americas. The alphabet is the only writing system in use today in the Americas. Native individuals quickly realized that the alphabet could be used to resist assimilation and christianization during the early colonization of the "New World." Some manuscripts were even written in the Native language of Nahuatl, a language of the Uto-Aztecan family, spoken by various tribes of North and Central America, but never published because printing was in the hands of the Spanish colonizers.

There were unforeseen results, however, of Western literacy in the Americas. Natives began to write to resist rather than to assimilate. Documented during the sixteenth century, Natives read books in their assembly "some of them were read following the rhythm of the drums; . . . others were sung, and still others were enacted." What existed was a mixture of genres.

For instance, Dakota poet John Trudell recently recorded a new tape, *Fables and Other Realities*, singing, speaking, and chanting words accompanied by a guitar. On another of Trudell's tapes, *But This Isn't El Salvador*, a traditional drum provides the background for the spoken words, his songs, his poems. These are not distinct experiences. The song is like a story, and the poem is like a song. It is only in Western culture that we make a distinction, as if there is a crystal-clear and well-defined differentiation in orality. This is the strength of oral tradition. In turn, all these are enacted on stage.

Mignolo reminds us that "as time went on, the European script that the friars were so eager to transmit in order to be more effective in the christianization of the natives" was used to stabilize their past, to adapt themselves to the present, and to transmit their own traditions to future generations. The true history of writing in the Americas must be acknowledged to understand the role of Western literacy and writing in Native communities. The idea that writing reflects the truth while the oral tradition has less value is rooted in Western thinking. The destruction of Native "books" during the sixteenth century was an effort to destroy our knowledge and system of communication. Oral tradition is more difficult to do away with. The use of a mixture of genres by Native People has continued to the present.

This mixture of genres is reflected in the mixture of interviews, essays, poetry, and prose included in the spring issue of *Oshkaabewis Native Journal*. It is also the milestone, the waymark, to the forthcoming publication focusing on the past five-hundred years of oppression.

The words in *Oshkaabewis* number three have been selected from a variety of sources, Native and Non-Native.

This issue also explores orality and writing in essays, interviews, reviews, and and prose pieces that address the mixture of genres in Native tradition. Between the genres there is a splicing of speaking and writing. This issue illustrates the idea that we cannot just blink at the oral tradition, as though the written word is more worthy of respect, nor can we ignore the need to document the oral tradition.

Dave Gonzales

Symbolic Mediation

HOLLY YOUNG BEAR TIBBITS

The question of how geographic and landscape appraisals are symbolically mediated in group consciousness has long provoked the interest of geographers. Such inquiry goes to one of the most familiar of geographic themes - the relationship of community and place. Within this broad context, less is known of how such symbolic mediation motivates migration and settlement. Efforts of conscious community creation, premised on geographic or spatial strategies, offer a particularly rich resource for the investigation of such symbolic mediation. The need to elicit the words, acts, and intentions of migrating communities suggests the value of individual case studies. When a region has inspired several such initiatives, it begs comparative analysis. Such is the case of central eastern Wisconsin which lured migrants, both native and Yankee, to reestablish themselves in novel community building efforts: the Utopian community of Ceresco near present day Ripon, and the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin Indians who settled near Green Bay. Beyond the inquiry itself, such a comparative analysis offers the opportunity to pose some "second order" questions: to assess differences in documentary resources in cross-cultural studies; to critically explore revisionist historical doctrines of interdependency; and finally to examine the degree to which migration became in and of itself a necessary

Holly Young Bear Tibbits teaches geography at The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

component of community creation.

Superficially, one is struck by the similarities between the Cerescoans and the Wisconsin Oneidas. Both were undoubtedly conscious community building groups, originating in New York, who chose Wisconsin as the site for radical community building based on very definite notions of spatial determinism. They were both devout Christian socialists disillusioned by political rectification of social problems. Each was given to accept doctrines espoused by charismatic leaders. Both were viewed as interlopers by the local indigenous communities of Menomoniees,

Pottawatomies, and Winnebagos. Despite these similarities, ultimately only one factor most distinguishes one group from the other - their longevity. Although the utopia Cerescoans came armed with a much more well elaborated scheme of community structure, they would endure only six years. The Oneida, whose lives were frequently reordered at the whim of Indian agents, administrators, and the other actors beyond their reach or control, have nonetheless endured and prospered. They are today the largest employer in the Green Bay area, owners and developers of lands both within and outside the reservation boundaries, and committed to a land repurchase program sufficient to accommodate a rapidly growing membership. An examination of the origins and impulses of the migration history of each may suggest how this circumstance came to be.

THE ONEIDA EXPERIENCE

"The People of the Standing Stone," or Tiionenote (later Anglicized and abbreviated as Oneida) were the second nation to align themselves with the Iroquois confederacy. 1 Their social organization was both matriarchal and sedentary, premised on two tenets of Longhouse law. The women, who it was said "owned the land," 2 secured their tenure through filial associa-

tion with "the three sisters": corn, beans, and squash. 3 Clan mothers of the three Tiionenote totems (bear, wolf, and turtle) selected clan leaders and tribal headmen based on life long observation of their disposition, talents, and community commitment. 4 Leaders so chosen served at the pleasure of these clan mothers who relied in some degree on the appraisals of the women within their respective clans. Because these social and economic relations were reiterated as sacred institutions within the Longhouse religion, a clear division of responsibility based on gender was integral to both the secular and sacred life of the Oneida. As initial participants in the Iroquois League the Oneida were entitled to send nine speakers to the Iroquois Council which bound the Oneida and the Onondaga in a confederation of peace and mutual defense.

The League subsequently was extended to the Mohawk, Seneca, Cayuga, and much later to the Tuscarora. 5 Although typically viewed as a political mechanism, the Iroquois League was much more than an international treaty. Its genius lie in the fact that the League and the Longhouse both replicated and reflected one another - a complete synthesis of sacred and secular life. For the League, member nations represented much more than mere political allies. The Oneidas were symbolically and geographically understood to be "The Western Door" of both the Longhouse and the League, its first line of defense: psychologically, spiritually, economically, militarily, and politically.

Once so unified, the League became a formidable political force in the Hudson and St. Lawrence River valleys, extending their political and geographical dominance over the less powerful - native and European alike. Eventually, the League stood as a buffer between French interests to the north, and English interests to the south. While the allegiance of the League was generally to the latter, the Oneidas independently entered into a number of treaties with the French when Franco domination

of the regional fur trade deemed it expedient. Oneida-French relations were not an affront to the League, rather they were based on a longstanding trade relationship. Indeed, the first written account of the Oneidas, offered by the Dutch surgeon Meyndersten van den Bogaert in 1634, notes that the Oneida men were wearing French coats and shirts and using French axes and razors. 6 Despite such economic accommodations, the Oneidas in general adhered to the pro-English alignment characteristic of the League. Nowhere was this more evident than in their religious life.

That aspect of their community life would have profound implications for their future. Where French Jesuits had not only failed, but risked early martyrdom in attempting to win converts, the Anglicans found much less resistance. In part, the reasons for this are clear. While Jesuits like Fr. Le Jeune attempted to replace the Longhouse with "the one true church," the Anglicans understood that the Longhouse was much more than a religious institution which might be better dismantled over time than directly confronted is not clear. What is apparent is that they did not take offense at the Oneidas maintaining ties to the Longhouse as long as they would also listen to the Gospel. In many respects, the Jesuits had condemned not only Oneida religion, but the very heart of its social life when it attempted to impose the hegemony of patriarchy. If God was the holy father, asked the Oneida, who were the Clan Mothers that had selected him? While the English may have privately derided the matriarchal structure of the community, they did not attack it with the force with which the Jesuits had. Jesuit purges of the Longhouse may have proven their undoing. Where they would countenance no authority other than papal mediation, Anglican missionaries focused their attention on supplanting only the sacred, not the secular aspects of the Longhouse, whose civil authority indeed served the English interests well.

Later Jesuit efforts proved more successful. In 1699 Father Bruyas had discovered that the Oneida women would more patiently study their catechism while the men were out hunting if he rewarded superior efforts with gifts of beads.⁷ While other itinerant clergy had made some contacts with the Oneida, the first organized effort came in 1700 when the Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge was organized for the purpose of providing Christian education. The society was endorsed by King George I who extended the society's mission to the colonies. The colonial evangelical effort was organized in Massachusetts and Connecticut as the Board of Correspondents, who in 1710, journeyed to the Oneida nation for the purpose of assigning a resident missionary.⁸ The Reverend Samuel Kirkland, a member of the party, was appointed to the post and immediately assumed its duties.

Kirkland came to a community far different than the one Father Bruyas had known. The Oneidas had been decimated by smallpox, too few men had survived to adequately supply the community from the hunt. Members of other communities similarly stricken had sought refuge with the Oneidas; Hurons dominated this group, but members of seven other smaller bands and nations had been given shelter also. Jesuits commonly conducted their services in both Oneida and Huron. In short, the Oneidas were becoming a minority population within their own homeland. Another change marked the Oneida landscape. Until 1690, the Crown had reserved the right to treat for Indian lands for itself. Mounting white pressure for Oneida lands created new difficulties. Individuals eager to settle Oneida lands invaded the periphery, some alleging past purchase, some merely vowing their intention to purchase lands at such time when the Oneida might be induced to sell. Disease and land incursions were complicated by an on-going "hit-and-run" mode of warfare with the French who had in one attack on a single Longhouse, killed over one hundred Oneida

warriors and leaders. The French assault on the member nations of the League were devastating to all. Peace would come only if the Oneidas and other members of the League removed to Canada, stipulated Frontecac. The Treaty of Ryswick which had ended King William's War in 1697 had further factionized a nation already divided, and those Oneida sympathetic to the French departed for Canada, in order they said to "keep alive the fire of the Oneida nation and name." The new era signaled by the arrival of Kirkland was to have profound affects on the Oneida nation. Tuscarora warfare against the colonists had resulted in the decimation of the Tuscarora. Eight hundred of their members were sold into slavery, and the rest were allowed to seek refuge with the Oneidas. The Tuscaroras were eventually offered a homeland between the Oneida and Onondaga hearth in present day Madison County, New York, and eventually incorporated into the League. Some Oneidas, in order to retain their tribal and clan integrity, began systematically to remove to more westward lands away from both the press of white settlement and the presence of other League members within their midst. In a sense, they were attempting to preserve the integrity of the nation by departing from it. It was specifically a migration to accomplish community cohesion.

Problems of colonial and native intrusion, nearly continual warfare, community factionalism based on national and religious affiliation, and continuing bouts with disease wreaked the Oneida nation. Colonial tensions had escalated significantly, and when revolution threatened, the Oneida were initially content to remain neutral in order to recover, rebuild, and renew their national integrity. And it might have been so, had not the Reverend Samuel Kirkland determined to intervene. Kirkland, who had established a mission and succeeded in winning a significant number of converts, who had established themselves as "The Christian Party," took up the colo-

nial cause. Through the pulpit, he admonished the Oneidas to support the revolution in order to avoid what would be a devastating trade embargo to Indian and colonist alike. Despite reassurances from the Crown that Iroquois trade would be continued from the north, Kirkland pressed Oneida alignment with the colonies and succeeded in convincing the prudence of such a cause.

When the war broke out, the Oneidas had two major settlements and several small settlements and outlying cabins south toward the Susquehanna River. Intermingled with the Oneida were Tuscaroras along the Susquehanna and a substantial village only six miles from Oneida. Kirkland's strength in the Northern Oneida villages was bolstered by the colonialist leanings of the war chief, Skenandoah, who sent a message that the Oneida would remain neutral in the war. The Oneida village at Oghwago, however, became a major operational staging area for British defense organized by the Mohawk. Oneidas who didn't sympathize with England were forced from their homes throughout the Oneida heartland. Whatever assumptions the Oneidas held of the perceptions of the balance of the League to their neutrality were shattered at the battle at Oriskany in 1777. Iroquois solidarity had been broken, nation by nation, but importantly, also on an individual basis. League members acted out their allegiances independently, and Oneidas who had sworn their neutrality found themselves with no choice but to fight for their lives. Ultimately, the revolution pitched the Oneidas and Tuscaroras as colonial allies against the other members of the League. The American Revolution was, for the Oneidas, a civil as well as a federalist war. At the close of the revolution a treaty was signed at Fort Stanwix in 1784. This agreement confirmed Oneida and Tuscarora ownership of their lands, but forced the rest of the Six Nations to cede most of their territory.

New York state awarded Rev. Samuel Kirkland 4,000 acres

of land near Fort Schuyler in appreciation for his services in fostering Oneida cooperation with the colonists. Kirkland used the land to found the Oneida Academy for the education of young Oneida men and women. The quality of education was extraordinary, and colonial enrollments began to challenge Oneida. Although Kirkland used the Indian students as justification for raising denominational funds for the university, its prosperity eventually eliminated the very students that it was created to serve. Like the Virginia Company, and later Harvard University, Kirkland discovered that the cause of Indian education had the power to stir European hearts and pocketbooks. Kirkland, like the founder of Harvard, found too that such "Indian Universities" met a demand for higher education from nonIndians. When Kirkland converted it to the all-male Hamilton College, Oneida enrollments declined. Also like the Virginia land company and the Massachusetts Bay colony, Kirkland diverted funds for Indian education to engage in personal land speculation. Increasingly, Kirkland removed Indian education for a century. Although Oneida protests to the Board of Commissioners did not immediately resolve the problem, the Anglican response was very different than had been that of the Crown or the Puritan fathers.

The Board established a mission of Indian education independent of Kirkland's operation, which it allowed to be reorganized as Hamilton College, diverted the flow of denominational capital to its new Indian education diversion, and importantly, appointed a committee to investigate his illegal land speculation activities. The committee referred to the State of New York for adjudication. It comes as no surprise that the State found for Kirkland, in that it had itself entered a number of dubious treaties with the Oneida.

During the revolution, the State of New York amended its constitution invalidating all land cessions since 1774, and secured preemptive treaty rights for itself. In 1783, when the

Congress of the United States sought to affirm the territorial integrity of the Oneida homelands, the State of New York attempted to intervene with their own preemption claim. In 1788, the Oneidas were forced to treat for lands peripheral to their primary village sites. The State of New York paid \$11,500 to the Oneidas and Tuscaroras jointly, plus a perpetual annuity of \$600 for title to the bulk of Oneida lands. By 1792, White pressure on the land became more intense as did the demands of other Indians. That year 46% of the Indians living on Oneida lands were members of other nations, and Reverend Kirkland's land speculation continued to bring in new settlers daily. While Kirkland's land claim was being forwarded to the State, the State itself engaged in two more coercive treaties with the Oneida in direct violation of the nonIntercourse Acts of 1790, 1792, and 1794. While Kirkland's efforts were plagued by his own version of institution building, other Anglican missions enjoyed better success. Kirkland's son would later acknowledge the missionary's failure to break the traditional Oneida relationship to the land:

...only in two or three instances did they imperfectly adopt our husbandry, possess the necessary farming utensils, and succeed in tillage. All the others in the nation get half or two-thirds of their subsistence by raising corn, beans, or potatoes, having no implement but the hoe; and the other part by hunting and fishing. Their remaining tracts they allow to run wild or lease for a small rent to neighboring whites. 11

However successfully, the Oneidas resisted the English impulse to "multiply their Wants, and put them upon desiring a thousand things they never dreamt of before." They proved less resistant to the Anglican doctrine of separation of church and state. Whatever psychology fissured the Oneida perception of their integrated Longhouse tradition is not revealed in the retained written and oral histories. What is revealed is that by 1802, the Oneidas had broken into two geographic and

social divisions. The Christian Party took new occupance in the western half of the reservation, the Pagan Party in the eastern.

Today, Oneidas of the younger generation will tell you that the "missionaries were sent to break up the Iroquois League by converting the Oneida," despite their own Christian affiliation. One informant adds the Indian maxim: "When the white man came he had the Bible, and we had the land; now we have the Bible and he has the land." This suggests that the Kirkland experience, associating land loss and Christianity, is long-lived in tribal memory, perhaps over-reaching the role of the state, a variety of land companies, colonial preemption rights, and the American Revolution. For while the Oneidas were protesting Kirkland's trespasses and adjusting their sacred and secular institutions, other forces worked steadily against the integrity of their land base.

New York interests exercised preemptive claims against all territorial tribes despite its adoption of the U.S. Constitution, and in disregard for its second amendment. The largest cession obtained from the Oneida was treated for at Fort Schuyler (formerly Fort Stanwix) in which the Oneidas reserved 300,000 acres for themselves in Madison and Oneida counties, and ceded the balance of their New York lands - some five and a half million acres - to the state of New York. 12 The terms of the treaty suggest that its negotiation had been coercive. Whereas the earlier treaty released 300,000 acres for \$11,000; the 1788 treaty accepted only \$2,000 for an area over sixteen times greater, likely not a voluntary pact. In fact, the Oneidas were victimized by forces both remote and distant.

The State of New York, in order to foster its own negotiating strength Had to secure the Oneida treaty. The recoverable facts are these: 19,000 square miles which included the Oneida homeland lie in dispute between grants chartered by James I to the Plymouth Colony and lands chartered by Charles I to the Duke of York. Both states ceded lands lying west of a line

drawn southerly from the western bend of Lake Ontario to the United States, but contested lands east of the demarcation. Ultimately, Massachusetts ceded its lands to New York which sold them to Gordon and Phelps, individual land speculators. Despite Oneida objections, the deal was thought secure until Gordon and Phelps defaulted on payment, at which time the lands reverted to Massachusetts. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts sold its preemptive rights to these New York territorial lands to Robert Morris who "agreed to aid Indian title extinguishment prior to completion of its sale to the Holland Land Company and other individuals." 13 By 1798, Morris had largely accomplished his mission, and except for the reserved lands, Oneida title had been ostensibly extinguished.

It seems no coincidence that these intrigues took place during the final years of Kirkland's tenure with the Oneidas, and may account for their perception that the missionaries had been instruments of the land speculators interests rather than of their denominations'. Whatever that link might have been is certainly not disclosed in the available archival record. What is surmisable, is that within the next six years differences in preferred land tenure and religious persuasion had divided the reservation. The Christian Party (or Skenandoahs) engaged in both land sales and land rentals, eventually diminishing their reserved half of the reservation to only about 350 acres. The Pagan Party (alternately called the Cornelius or Orchard Party) engaged exclusively in land leasing and repurchase. The repurchase strategy was enabled from rental receipts and land exchanges with the State of New York. 14 It is possible that as early as 1802, the Christian Oneidas considered migrating to another local. They did not fully disperse funds obtained from annuities or land sales, perhaps in anticipation of reorganizing their community some distance from both the inter - and extra - tribal animosities of their one-time affiliates. There is some indication that they either hosted or attended an 1810 Council

of New York Indians which may have addressed the potential of a massive relocation westward. 15 Whenever its initial inception it is clear that by 1815 the idea had gained considerable support among the Christian Oneidas and Tuscaroras.

A principal advocate of that move, and the leader who would eventually effectuate it, was Eleazor Williams, who returned from the War of 1812 as an Episcopal lay leader to the Oneida. Williams is one of those individuals over whom historians will long debate. By some he will be reckoned a profiteer, crackpot, or deluded messiah. Others will defend him as a man of extraordinary vision whose only fault was to propound ideas whose time had not yet come. The historical record of his life is compiled less of facts and events than it is of judgments of his character, intentions, and motives. Ultimately, determination of his contribution may well depend on whether or not one vies the Oneida migration of Wisconsin as a fortuitous event.

Williams envisioned not just removal from New York, but the creation of an "Indian empire" in some favorable western locale, and commanded persuasive powers commensurate with such a far-reaching vision. He became somewhat of a celebrity within the New York tribal communities and even attracted international acclaim. A delegation from France was sent to discover if he was "the lost dauphin of France," a title which he initially demurred, but later may have himself come to believe. In either instance, he clearly was a person of considerable personal and ecclesiastical ambition, who believed that he could lead his fellow League members in the reconstruction of an empire built by dedicated converts. Williams gained significant support among the younger Oneidas who largely comprised the Christian Party, and succeeded in converting substantial numbers of the Cornelius Party to Christianity who shared his vision of a new Indian empire. On their behalf, Williams obtained permission from the War De-

partment to visit western tribes likely to welcome the Oneida.

Such a proposal well suited the government's own agenda of creating a northern Indian Territory. The War Department dispatched one of its own agents, Jedadiah Morse, to undertake the initial reconnoiter and expedite the future site selection. Morse reported that the area around Fort Howard, in Menominee and Winnebago country would provide the most amenable to the New York tribes. In his report, he endorsed Williams's scheme as a first step in accomplishing the creation of an Indian Territory: "bounded on the south by Illinois; on the east by Lake Michigan, on the north by Lake Superior; and on the West by the Mississippi River - where they might enjoy territorial status until such time as they gain competency for statehood." 16

In 1821, a delegation of fourteen New York Indians, including Eleazor Williams, traveled to Green Bay to investigate the area as a resettlement site. Although the identities of the other investigators is unknown, apparently three were Stockbridge, four Oneida, one Onondaga, two Tuscarora, three Seneca, and one from the St. Regis Reserve. When they arrived to negotiate with the Menomoniees and Winnebago, they found that the land previously selected near the garrison at Fort Howard had been purchased by local Indian Agent, Bowyer. It is not clear whether his intent was to stave off Oneida migration, as he declared, or for other - perhaps pecuniary - reasons. Remnant French trade interests in the region had circulated the rumor that Williams' intended empire would subjugate local Indians. Linked with Bowyer's attempted purchase, it is tempting to speculate that the arrangements between traders and Indian agency personnel may not have stood the scrutiny of Indians who were literate in English, seasoned and shrewd traders, and schooled in the doctrine of Christian accountability. Expectedly, the Wisconsin tribal communities had been adversely predisposed to intervene in the sale of land to the agent. Conse-

quently, the Senate rejected the treaty forwarded by Agent Bowyer.

From all accounts, the Oneida parley with the Wisconsin tribes was amiable although the Winnebegos departed without agreeing to any land cession. The Menomoniees agreed to sell a five mile wide corridor of land crossing the Fox River at right angles with Little Laukauna (Little Chute) as the center, for a consideration of \$3,000. Williams told the Menomoniees that his followers wanted to migrate as the land companies were forcing cession, having already surveyed the lands. He returned to Fort Howard as the pastor to begin preparations for the arrival of his congregation. Although the record is hereafter somewhat controversial, the Oneida interpretation is that the Menomoniee tribe subsequently agreed to cede one half of their common interest in the northern half of Wisconsin to the Oneidas. The treaty was signed by President Monroe, despite the conflicting interpretation of treaty language, in which the Menomoniees held that they had agreed to set aside 500,000 acres for the New York Indians provided that the lands be settled within three years. Failing that settlement, the Menomoniees held that the half million acres would be apportioned at one hundred acres per capita for the settled population with the balance reverting to the United States. At the insistence of then Indian Agent Stambaugh, a proviso was added that the Oneidas pay an additional premium of \$3,000.

Although cause is not specified, the Oneidas apparently called for the dismissal of Eleazor Williams's as their pastor. Their petition to the Board of Missions and the War Department terminated Williams tenure and his vision of a Wisconsin Indian empire. Williams resigned, blaming "the meddling of white men" for the aborted effort. 17

Later, in 1822, the First Christian Party of four hundred, under the leadership of Daniel Bread, migrated to Wisconsin and settled the northern part of the reservation near present

day Oneida, Wisconsin. From this point forward, the record of their early occupancy is nearly totally obscured. The following year, two hundred members of the Second Christian Party (the former Orchard Party) migrated to Wisconsin under the leadership of Neddy Otisquette and settled in the southern part of the reservation. In February of 1838, the Oneida reserve was reduced to an area of roughly ninety six square miles. The 65,436 acre reserve had that year an official census of 448 First Christian Party members, and two hundred six Orchard party. Three years later, an additional forty four Oneidas (remnants of the Orchard Party) arrived in Wisconsin, initially settling the Little Chute area. 18 Apparently all three groups recreated their New York settlement patterns, building clustered town sites, and allowing individual members to independently farm whatever amount of acreage they might choose. Little more information exists in the archival record until the 1887 passage of the General Allotment Act.

Over eight hundred Oneidas signed a petition protesting allotment of their reservation. Their effort was seemingly of little avail, for in 1892 the reserve was allotted, save for an eighty five acre parcel reserved for school purposes. 18 Virtually every allotted parcel was alienated through the collusion of three brothers: the parish priest, the local banker, and a real estate broker. 19 By 1927, virtually the entire tribe was landless. In 1937, 1,270 acres were repurchased through the Indian Reorganization Act and placed in trust for the Tribe.

In 1971, the General Counsel (the governing body of the Oneida, comprised of the entire Oneida membership) issued a dedication of profits from their tribally owned enterprise toward the repurchase of lands within the 1838 boundaries. The repurchase program was undertaken with vigor which almost immediately inflated land prices within the reservation boundaries, forcing the Oneidas to undertake a more restrained approximately 4,800 acres, secured a promising investment

portfolio, own several profitable businesses, including a one-third interest in the State Bank of DePere, and administrate a variety of social, economic, and educational institutions for the benefit of their 11,000 member enrollment. Additionally, they own investment property in Green Bay and commercial property adjacent to the Green Bay Regional Airport. In some respects, albeit on a much smaller scale than envisioned by Eleazor Williams, the Oneidas have succeeded in creating a bit of an Indian empire.

In contrast to Williams's notion of a well-ordered theocracy based on allegiance to a single charismatic leader, the Indian empire of Wisconsin is governed by an active, autonomous, and often contentious political body of the whole.

THE UTOPIAN VISION OF CERESCO

On November, 21, 1843, the Franklyn Lyceum, a literary society of Southport, Wisconsin (now Kenosha) debated a question which had stirred the imaginations of Americans: "Does the system of Francois Charles Fourier present a practical plan for such a reorganization of society as well as a guard against social evils?" Two subsequent meetings posed similar questions for debate: "Is mankind so naturally depraved, and is society composed of such discordant material as to render the adoption of Fourier's plan impractical;" (December 5th) and "Would the system of Fourier, if adopted, tend to diminish the evils of society?" (December 12) 20 Seemingly, the debates were nonconclusive for the Lyceum's membership determined to personally test Fourier's "new science of social relations." The Lyceum was typical of the citizens of Southport, most of whom had recently migrated from New York, and were a "respectable and intelligent group of men and women." 21 The society at Southport had hearkened to a call given broad promotion in the United States by Albert Brisbane, who took up the nearly evangelistic task of spreading Fourier's notions

in the United States. Brisbane's fervor was aided by the popular press. Noted journalists, such as Horace Greeley, had espoused Fourier's novel plan for society, adding to Brisbane's appeals:

Not through hatred, collusion, and depressing competition not through War, whether Nation against Nation, Class against Class; or Capital against Labor: but through union, Harmony and the reconciliation of all interests, the giving scope to all noble Sentiments and Aspirations of the World, the Elevation of the degraded and suffering Masses of Mankind to be sought and affected.

Greeley closed his article with a quotation from Fourier: The error of Reformers is to condemn this or that abuse of Society, whereas they should condemn the whole system of Society itself, which is a circle of abuses and defects throughout. We must extricate ourselves from this Abyss.

It is with this newsclipping from the *New York Tribune* that the official record of the Wisconsin Utopian Phalanx begins. 22 Behind Greeley's overblown rhetoric stood a quite thoroughly detailed plan of how, exactly, communities might "extricate themselves from the abysmal system of society" developed by Fourier in the disappointing aftermath of the French Revolution. While replete to the most trivial of detail, the general outlines of Fourier's plan suggested a radical restructuring of society - one community (or Phalanx, as he designated them) at a time. It was in its most basic sense, a straightforward approach to civic education through the example of successful local phalantries. It was a scheme in every sense both communal and utopian. It was also slavishly devoted to a "science" of community organization which was premised on the notion of social and spatial determinism.

In an era when utopian strategies of every description flourished, it was the scientificism of Fourier's plan which most appealed to the well educated middle classes of the mid 19th

Century. Fourier's critique of the system of society ran to the principles upon which it was based. Principles, he said, which pervert the faculties and passions of mankind:

isolation and separation from fellows. In its stead, Fourier posed an integrated economic, and social strategy free of the falsity and defectiveness of unplanned social life. Such a life, he held, required "social renovation by those with a sacred devotion by all who hope for a better future for themselves and Humanity." 23

The Wisconsin Phalanx, it would seem, undertook their enterprise less with ardent devotion than with self-conscious deliberation and exacting, if uninspiring methodical approach of a collection of amateur social scientists. The records they have left, both official and informal, offer little comment on what the experience meant to them either collectively, or as individuals. Rather, they have left the exacting field notes of dollars and cents, expenditure of time and effort, names and deeds. The notion of social experimentation seems foremost in the record, and yet it is a highly impersonalized account.

During the winter of 1843, a resolution (although none is officially recorded) to establish a phalanx was apparently made. Interim meetings were held at the old temperance hall for the purpose of drafting a constitution, and five hundred copies were printed for distribution. (Fourier had designated a community of four hundred as the proper size for an association.) On March 23, 1844, the first meeting of subscribers to the constitution was held. Michael Meyers was elected as Chairman and William Starr as Secretary. A committee to be accompanied by land agent Ebenezer Childs was appointed to choose land for the experiment. E.C. Southworth, Confield March, and Orrin R. Stevens agreed to serve. W.W. Wheeler, Peter Johnson, and Warren Chase were elected trustees and "entrusted with personal and real property of the members." 24

By May of that year, seventy one members had signed the

constitution as either shareholders, or shareholders and participants. A premium of 25% payable in stock was offered to those contributing money to the treasury, and stock sales opened. At the May 8th meeting, the Secretary reported \$1,082.24 in the Phalanx account. The land committee reported that one and a quarter sections of homestead land had been purchased from the Green Bay land office and deeded to the trustees. (The record of the meeting notes that legal description to be NW4, Section 21, T. 16, R. 14, and the NE 4, Sec. 20, in the same township and range; but the actual deeds offer a different description: NE 4, Section 29, + NW 4, Sec. 29, + S 2, Sec. 17, + W 2 SE 4 + E 2, SW 4 of Sec. 20.)

Other business centered on the creation of community structure once in place: The by-laws provided for a nine member governing board, plus four officers and three trustees. It was agreed that when forty families had joined, a new form of government, administered by councils as agreed on by the membership, would go into effect. While a persona might be a member, a shareholder, or both upon acceptance of their application, members agreed to post two weeks notice of their intent, should they decide to leave. Upon departure, they would be paid their share of profits to date. Stockholders meetings were to be held twice a year with voting privileges assigned at one vote per share for the first share; one vote per five shares thereafter, not to exceed ten votes. On other question, members were to have one vote each, regardless of holding or gender. At the annual December stock meetings the profits of the corporation were to be apportioned 25% to stockholders and 75% to workers. (At the initial stock purchase, investors had the option of taking a 7% dividend as opposed to the actual share excesses.) A preamble to the constitution was drafted and endorsed: In order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, promote our common welfare, and to secure the blessings of

social happiness to ourselves and our posterity. 26

By-laws were ratified outlining conduct, work assignments and community responsibilities:

—All religions will be tolerated, but no taxes to support clergy will be assessed without the consent of the members. Goods, merchandise, board, and other necessities to be supplied to members at cost

—Free schools will be provided

—Rent should never exceed 10% of the value of the building occupied

—Cost of the privilege of one's own horse and carriage must be paid to the association

—Five or more workers in one branch of industry will organize and choose a foreman to keep records of their hours and skills which he will report once a week Disputes of foreman's tally can be appealed to the group members, whose decision is final

—Groups in the same branch of industry or "series" will elect a Superintendent who will rank each group in productiveness Superintendents to eventually organize a "Council of Industry" which will supersede the Board of Directors

—Work to be divided into three ranks of industrial classification: necessity; usefulness; attractiveness, and workers to be paid according to the nature of their work

—Work will be suspended on Sundays Members may be expelled by a majority vote for:

—rude and indecent behavior drunkenness, trafficking in intoxicants

—licentiousness, profane swearing

—lying or defrauding another

—protracted idleness

—willfully injuring the property of the association

—knowingly consenting the injury of the association or a member 27

Interestingly, it is not the exhaustive coverage of such fundamental organizational issues which dominates the record of that May meeting, but a heatedly debated resolution on the price due the association for providing laundry services. (Two shillings per dozen pieces was finally approved.) This is one of the few records of the Phalanx that offers even a glimpse of what sort of human concerns entered the deliberation of the Wisconsin Phalanx.

Three weeks following the organizational meeting, nineteen men, one boy, and assorted livestock began the six day trek to the purchased site on the banks of Silver Creek - land that had only two decades before belonged to the Oneida. They pitched three borrowed tents and set up two "series" of industry: agriculture and mechanics, each appointing a foreman. One member, "an old Scotch sailor" who would become the community chef, set up a cook tent on the site that would later become the tub house. 28 On Monday, May 28, 1844, ground was broken for three houses and potatoes, buckwheat, turnips, and vegetables were planted. Only three weeks later, a June frost destroyed the young vines and vegetables. By September 11th, the tents had been mended and returned, eighty acres of winter wheat planted, and a road to Fond du Lac begun. It was, by all accounts, a rough and early winter. The men reconstituted themselves into two new "series," one road building, the other standing knee deep in the icy waters of the creek building a saw mill. Little else is recorded about these men whose industry established the phalanx.

The oldest at forty eight, William Dunham is mentioned apparently only to record the eldest member. Two others, Uriel Formin, a Methodist minister, and George Stebbins, a Baptist minister are noted apparently only to record their occupation. Some others may have been named - Stuart, Beckwith, Stillwell, Newell, and Martin - but this is surmisable only on the basis that women designated Mrs. arriving with the first settlers

carried those surnames. Those families arrived on June 28, 1844 in the company of two other families and a single man. By the next February, a charter from the territorial legislature had been approved by Governor Tallmadge. The community of "Ceresco" named for Ceres the goddess of agriculture, had been officially launched. By late winter, the three original houses had been expanded, community space built within a twenty apartment "longhouse furnished with oak floors, woodwork, and roof shingles all made by hand" completed. 29

Here the social life of the community revolved in a "satisfactory fashion." 30 Monday evenings were given to the business of the administrative council; Tuesdays to a meeting of the Phalanx; Wednesdays provided singing sessions; Thursdays dancing. Saturday evenings were reserved for detailed reports by the Foremen. Ceresco was marked by a feeling of freedom of action and self-determination. Careful records of work hours and expenses were maintained. Indeed, it would seem often to the exclusion of other details of a more personal nature. Little is recorded of the human stuff of daily life: births, deaths, illnesses. Did the Cerescoans revive their origins in a literary or debating society, one wonders? Was Ceresco, like the Perfectionist communities, a center of lively debate on contemporary arts and literature? What form did the Children's education take? How were teachers valued in their industrial scheme? The record is sparse on these accounts. Where it is abundant, it is also mundane. Should one be interested in the yield and value of any acre of buckwheat in a given year, such data is carefully recorded. The balance of the record is sketchy and impersonal, save for the future political career of one member who became the first Free Soil candidate to serve in the U.S. Senate.

At the close of the first year, one-fourth of the earnings were distributed to shareholders, and three-fourths to labor in compliance with the by-laws. While Fourier had dictated a distri-

bution of twelfths (five parts to labor; four to capital; three to talent), the Ceresco modification proved adequate. Payment for the three classes of work were calculated on a sliding scale. Work of necessity (digging, stoning walls, all work in water, labor exposed to storms, mixing mortar and masonry) was calculated by worker hours and multiplied by a factor of twenty four. Work of usefulness (mechanical, agricultural, washing, teaming, milking, stock work, bookkeeping, and writing) by a factor of twenty. Work of attractiveness was factored by fifteen and included cooking, dining room, ironing, domestic chores, gardening, horticulture, care of fowl and bees, and serving on the Board of Directors. 30

By the second year, the Treasurer reported \$77,775.22 of unencumbered capital. \$102,760 of labor had been expended (\$21,170 of which were in cooking). Weekly board per member was calculated at 44 cents, plus five hours of labor valued at 7.5 cents per hour. Capital invested earned 12% during that year. Receipts totaled \$32,559.18 capital and \$9,029.73 hours of labor. Stock dividends were paid at 7.75%, and labor calculated at 7.3 cents per hours base. Under this formula a skilled worker, such as a mason, might be credited with as much as 25 hours in a day's work.

By 1846, the population at Ceresco had grown to one hundred eighty. Although both population and wages increased until 1849, the community would endure little longer. Some members apparently balked at "restrictions" although the specific nature of the complaints are unrecorded. Others simply moved and took up adjacent homesteads as "the spirit of land speculation grew in some of the thrifty members of the phalanx." 31 There is some indication that the city of Ripon, which had been settled east of Ceresco, had initiated political problems for the phalanx, denying them a post office and raising objections to their "three-cornered-building." In the delicate phrases of Minnie Jaynes, the dissolution of the com-

munity lay not just on the political "tangle" with Ripon. Rather, she claims, that the "men developed outside interests, while the women sought more unrestricted social advantages." 32 In 1850, the community of Ceresco was dissolved, its property appraised, and divided, netting its final member-owners an 8% premium on the \$40,000 dissolution.

CONCLUSION

The histories and geographies of these two groups are paradoxically entwined, although both are unique in the historical geography of Wisconsin. The land upon which Ceresco would be built likely would not have then been open to homestead had not the Oneidas broken the solid tenure of Menomonee territory, for these were the only cession of that nation's land until well into the 1850's. Unwittingly, the former enabled the latter in two of the many grand experiments which defined the early settlement of Wisconsin. Both plans offered novel and attractive schemes for a new way of life through vastly different approaches.

The Ceresco community was voluntary and altruistic. A new extension of associates only casually, and then perhaps only philosophically bonded. In contrast, although driven by geopolitical pressures unfathomable to the Ceresco communards, the Oneidas came to Wisconsin "of one mind" as they say, with long held ties of kin and clan relationships. Even the logistics which enabled new community creation were widely divergent between the two groups. There is no indication that any member of the Ceresco community sold their home in Southport to enable their move. Fiscally, they accomplished their experiment with what today we would call disposable income. Should it fail, all could exercise options in their lifestyle, location, and migration choices. No such option existed for the Oneida.

In order to purchase Wisconsin lands - not once but twice

for the same lands - they had to sell their New York homelands under a buyers market and acquire lands under terms dictated by the sellers. Their transactions remain one of the few by and between indigenous nations unmediated by the United States government. They were conducted with a sense of finality - returning to New York or resettling to another locale, should the Wisconsin settlement fail, would be a moot issue. Where the Ceresco community had the luxury of proclaiming religious tolerance, if not support, the Oneidas were both controlled and hampered in contrivances brought by their relationships with church and state, and the hand-in-glove relationship they exercised over Oneida community life.

Finally, there is the related pair of motive forces - leadership and vision - that distinguishes the experiences of the two groups. Fourier envisioned no less than the total elevation of mankind, which he avowed had a societal rather than political genesis. He was a visionary leader remote and in a sense secure from the criticisms of his followers at Ceresco. Whatever disillusionment the Ceresco community may have had at the breadth of this vision, they were financially compensated for their effort. In fact, such economic strategies provided one of the few instances when "women's work" was financially remunerated. No such alternatives existed for either Oneida men or women to participate in the wage economy then, or indeed until very recently, and then almost exclusively in tribally financed jobs. Whereas Fourier would remain one of the greatly esteemed visionaries of the age, Eleazor Williams enjoyed no such impunity. Albeit that this agenda was geared to the advancement of Indian rather than of all humanity, his notions of an Indian empire would be compromised from its inception by forces well outside his control: foreign nationals and the competition of other religious denominations less interested in Indian advancement than in hegemony. He was, among his followers, subject to their daily scrutiny and criti-

cism. His proposal and the mission which the Wisconsin Oneida undertook was a total, not just social, revolution in every aspect of community life.

Finally, we have no sense from the records of Ceresco what meaning the landscape which they settled had for them except as a material necessity for industry and agriculture. Today when asked, the Oneida of Wisconsin will tell you that their ancestors settled that region because it reminded them of their homelands in New York. It is a geographic fiction. Their New York lands lie in the foothills north of the "Finger Lakes" of upstate New York. It is an area of sharp relief, rolling hills and valleys, pine studded hillsides, and waterways surrounded by stands of mixed hardwood forests. In contrast, the Wisconsin lands are low lying, often swampy, with scrub oak on lattice gray clays. Occasional stands of jackpine are scattered around the reservation. While it is true that the reservation lands have been less subject to the plow than the flat agricultural lands of their white neighbors, the topography is little differentiated.

If there is a geographic ambience similar to that of their New York homelands, it is one of the Oneidas' own creation. But, importantly, they have invested that landscape with the mystique of meaning associated with their aboriginal lands. They have, simply said, made it their homeland.

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Gii-kwiiwizensiwiyaan

ZHAAWANOOWININI
(COLLINS OAKGROVE)

Mii apane gii-noondawag iko imbaabaayiban miinawaa Old Mallardiban gii-aadizookewaad imaa biboong gii-kwiiwizensiwiyaan imaa Miskwaagamiiwizaaga'iganiing. Ambegish miinawaa izhichigewaad.

Gigikaaninaanig ji-aadizookewaad. Mewinzha mii ko gaa-izhichigewaad.

Mii dash noongom, gaawiin geyaabi izhichigesiiwag awiia omaa endaayaang Gakaabikaang. Nimisawenimaa awiia ji-bi-aadizooked omaa ji-dadibaadodang iw isa enakamigizid gegoo, mii ingiw aadizookaanag.

Mii sa i'iw meminik ge-ikidoyaan. Niin sa go, Zhaawanoowinini indizhinikaaz.

The first part of the article discusses the historical context of the Ojibwa people, tracing their lineage back to the Anishinaabe confederacy. It highlights their traditional way of life, which was centered around hunting, fishing, and gathering in the Great Lakes region. The author notes how these practices were deeply intertwined with their spiritual beliefs and social structures.

A significant portion of the text is dedicated to the impact of colonialism and the forced relocation of Ojibwa communities. The author describes the hardships faced during the winter of 1862-1863, when thousands of Ojibwa died from starvation and disease on the Starvation Line. This event is presented as a pivotal moment in the history of the Ojibwa people, leading to a loss of land, culture, and population.

The article then explores the resilience of the Ojibwa people in the face of adversity. It discusses the efforts of community leaders and activists who fought for the recognition of Ojibwa rights and the restoration of their traditional lands. The author emphasizes the importance of oral tradition and storytelling in preserving Ojibwa identity and history.

In the final section, the author reflects on the current state of Ojibwa communities and the ongoing struggle for sovereignty. It discusses the impact of modernization and globalization on traditional Ojibwa life and the role of the Ojibwa in contemporary society. The author concludes with a call for continued efforts to honor Ojibwa heritage and ensure a bright future for the next generation.

Oral History to Historical Fiction: The Anatomy of a Novel

"I am two people. One is an insignificant person, leading the most insignificant of lives. The other is a receiver of the ancient wisdom of the Makaha, a tribe that has much to teach about our place in the universe." Thus Barbara Means Adams, a daughter of the Oglala Sioux of Black Elk, wrote in her book *Prayers of Smoke* (Adams 1).

"I've been changed by working in oral history," said Saul Benison, an early specialist in that professional art in the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University, in interviews with Studs Terkel and others (Grele 80).

What is this viable, organic something called "Oral History" that teaches one person and changes another? What use has Oral History for the historical novel?

The researcher and the writer seeks to bring forth from the human memory repository its words and phrases and thoughts and beliefs, joining them in such manner that they sing and dance, cry and moan, laugh and shout, in order that the rich, human experience of the narrator will become known. Oral history is the action of drawing from the individual memory record its contents, revealing them for use in various genre, one being the writing of historical fiction.

In the one-to-one relationship between researcher and narrator a unique people-to-people association comes into being by which both parties gain greater understanding of them-

E. P. Roesch are authors of *Ashana*, a new novel. *Ashana* is the first of the books by the authors portraying cultures in collision.

selves, walking together, as it were, into the freshness of a spring meadow, an open arena for their communication. Oral history bears a spontaneity rising from the mind and heart and spirit that formal documentation fails to offer, its soul being the strength and passion of the one-to-one experience of human beings meeting and talking. And from that process, by opening new memory records, the writer obtains an ever-expanding fund of personal life stories—oral history for use in the writing of historical fiction.

Hence, Oral History is communication between two human beings based upon the materials resident in the memory record of the mind of the narrator that draws out and reveals the experience, the motivation, the belief, the passion, the soul, the spirit of life as uniquely lived and viewed by that individual, the interpretation of life only that individual can offer.

The story of the human race is the narrative account of the many individuals that have walked the long trail of human history. But the experience of the “insignificant persons” recognized by Barbara Means Adams has been largely ignored in the formal writings of history. And in every era those “insignificant persons” have comprised the most substantial segments of the human race. The tragic fault of most histories is that they preserve, and reinforce preservation of, only the grand view, the broad but incomplete view—sweeping events and the leading actors who precipitated them.

A multitude of incidents of cultures in collision—their voices unheard in the formal histories—wait to begin the telling, the revealing for the full record. The writers choose the policy of Andrew Jackson, and the stated position of Jackson himself, in uprooting the Cherokees from lands and homes as a prime illustration of the need to listen and to understand, and of the worth for history of assuring that all voices have their day of speaking and so further assuring that an incident becomes clothed in full attire. The American democratic process acting

with vicious demagoguery denied and flaunted the United States Supreme Court's ruling that the Cherokees were a distinct nation into whose territory the citizens of Georgia had no right to enter without consent of the Natives. The forceful appropriation—arrogant and presumptuous in concept and execution—of tribal regions the Cherokee had possessed from ancient times and the infamous movement westward of the Natives that became known as the Trail of Tears—supported by Jackson and many government officials—appear in written histories as formal accounts, the broad view, of that event and the man who precipitated it.

Where is the record of the agony, the passion, the suffering of the individuals on that long walk? Where are the records of all the walks of men and women and children throughout history?

Oral history could have answered those questions and many more. It could have satisfied the searcher by presenting its own unique record, providing answers as it pulled away the wrappings that enfold memories, permitting the researcher to enter the memory of the participants in events, thereby revealing an honest record.

In using oral history in the creative process, the writer performs a special service in weaving into the writing the ever unfolding record of human experience and culture, together with supporting beliefs and tales and stories and mythology. The services of oral history span the broad spectrum of human experience, for oral history is as old as time itself, its primary ingredient of raw memory being the oldest form of documenting the life and affairs of the human race.

The only record of peoples who lived in the rolling tide of eras before the use of physical records are the individual memory records that preserved the substance of oral history over the vast expanses of time. During most of human existence, history has necessarily resided in memory, for as Dr.

Samuel Johnson said, "All history was at first oral."

In such primary sources—individuals and their memory records—the researcher and the writer discover the living stream of history that has transported those chronicles through myriads of generations. It is from oral history that the researcher and then the writer mines the lodes yielding the gleaming nuggets that will furnish the novel with living, dramatic, passionate action and thought and experience.

The storyteller—the preserver of the spoken record—has always been one of the significant individuals of the clan by reason of ability to pass on to succeeding generations the past and its implications. And rightfully so. Without the storyteller's insight into and preservation of the spoken record, and the succession of tellings spanning countless generations, human history would be but a skeleton.

To understand the narrative of a people, it becomes essential to expand research beyond the memory and the perceptions of the single narrator, to conduct many interviews, to talk with many people, for only in this way can comparisons be made, a complete picture brought into focus, and the facts of events established. The need to require more than a single example as the basis for making a conclusion is well commented on by Samuel Johnson in his Preface to Shakespeare: "... among the works of nature no man can properly call a river deep, or a mountain high, without the knowledge of many mountains, and many rivers; . . ." (The Major Critics 156).

Thus, the writers see oral history as the living stream of communication between human beings, a stream akin to that rising from a placid alpine lake, then rushing along a rocky course from high in the mountains, descending through narrow gorges, and flowing down into a green valley.

The use of oral history lends special offices to the creative writing process, most certainly in bringing heart and spirit to the writing of the historical novel. No other medium can

capture as it does the color, the passion, the speech, the strength, the personality, the truth, the spirit of characters and events that make up the living human record. The use of oral history opens up the life of the "insignificant" person, the segments of humanity usually passed by in the sweep of events. From oral history interviews, the insights and information harvested can be used in developing a complexity of character not "insignificant," but, rather, far more worthy of a novel than the queens and kings and generals of the world whose every thought and motive have been recorded time and again in formal, hard-bound histories. No other medium or discipline compares with oral history in bringing to the historical novel the human meaning residing in the individual memory record.

As nature works and moves according to immutable principles, so it may be said that the writer of fiction comes to grips with the bounds of human understanding and passion. The truths and verities of life, of the human creature, have been known from the beginnings of our race: Faulkner makes an appropriate summation of the writer's responsibility from apogee to perigee when he urges strict attention to the eternal verities: ". . . love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice. . . The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past" (The Faulkner Reader 3-4).

By being witness to and using the contents of the memory records of individuals, the researcher and the writer take under care a living stream of history from which to endow historical fiction with the most driving forces that attend men and women along the entire walk of life from before morning sunrise to beyond evening sunset. By understanding and portraying at full tide the ancient verities, the writer bares

driving emotions, creates new imagery from old cloth, weaves characters and plots. And so, these truths, breathing their immortal souls through well researched oral history, flow across the pages of fiction with the heart and the bloodstream of powerful literature.

If, for the historical novel, the writer focuses on one of the "insignificant" individuals walking the trail through the human vista, seeking all the while to reveal deep human emotions pulsing and resounding with eternal verities, the project enjoys the opportunity to derive significant life substance from the fact of its rarity. Some critics would say that the writer is at risk, but the challenge may well produce a historical novel so unique as to become noteworthy for its rarity, if the writing embraces character and sweep and conflict and if the writing meets the challenge. Further, it should contain action and dialogue from the mighty and the elite, for those echelons of society have their impact on the "insignificant" people of this world. And in such milieu the writer will have a unique vehicle for revealing the personal reactions of the "insignificant," for portraying the passions of the moment, for enlightening and perhaps astounding through the use of oral history.

Insignificant or not, the life of every individual beats with a heart and breathes with a spirit in triumph or tragedy, war or peace, joy or sorrow. This is the domain of oral history, and in this domain resides the greatest share of the depth and breadth of the world's history. To the researcher and the writer falls the responsibility to retrieve and wisely to use the contents of the memory repositories constituting that domain. Some may look and see only a historyless, even voiceless, thing for lack of a written account. But every people, every culture, is in fact more usually than not clear and articulate, waiting, as it were, for the researcher and the writer to enter and to reveal the oral history held in a memory record. All people do have a voice, accessible through oral history. The researcher has but to listen, to learn,

to understand, to accept. The failure to access each oral history and to preserve that unique record is the loss of the researcher, the writer, the history of human affairs, and all genres of writing.

With oral history in tow, the writer possesses a priceless source for writing the novel, for sketching more truly the people and the voice. The unique accuracy and longevity of the oral tradition which the skillful researcher is constantly able to discover constitutes a feature of oral history that is a phenomenon in its own right, sceptics to the contrary. Recognizing, as has been pointed out before in this article, that oral history is a chronicle of events as old as time itself, the writers see oral history's great merit for contemporary historical fiction to be its ongoing capacity to push back the horizons of historical knowledge, thereby constantly opening up new experiences and viewing them from fresh perspectives. In that process, oral history reveals to the researcher and the writer its special capacity to bring together views from widely divergent segments of society, from different disciplines; its intimate understanding of the human being offers new and detailed insights into the relationships of people, thereby broadening the sweep of the search and establishing further horizons to be pushed back. Oral history offers a medium for achieving firsthand a significant balance of perspectives in viewing history. The writers suggest, too, that for the creator of historical fiction oral history works as a unique voice in drawing out and interpreting materials bearing the substance of several disciplines, thereby bringing interdisciplinary power to the creative writing process.

From what has been said, oral history clearly possesses inherent advantages for use in the writing of historical fiction. Its flexibility is wide ranging, and the writer using oral history must recognize and adjust to that flexibility in both its strength and its weakness.

Strength: As an enduring form, oral history presents a living stream of tales and mythology and beliefs and experiences—the composite of all that makes up history—that have survived in human memory records, tellings that have covered vast stretches of time before the development of the physical means of setting down the history of the human race. Storytellers—those significant ones who received and preserved ancient wisdom—in different lands and times have framed the telling with new eyes and thoughts and feelings, have provided new adornments for what they have received from predecessors, and have felt the same essential experience but have felt it in somewhat different manner than any one else. Storytellers have borne the mantle of oral history while along the trail entertaining and informing listeners of all ages. Thus, the writer using oral history has a vast record to search, one that yields unique and irreplaceable views of mind and heart and spirit for the historical novel.

As succeeding storytellers have passed on the tales and the beliefs, each has burnished the telling with his or her particular rubbings. Comparison of the “rubbings” made by a particular teller at a particular time in history with earlier versions and with later versions can provide insights into and understandings of the culture, its mutations, its evolution, how the core of the tale survived, how the implications changed, how the rubbings came to be—strength that enhances the urgency of using oral history.

Weakness: The frailties of memory may plague oral history, and content may vanish. The death of the individual removes a particular version of the tale or story, of the belief, of the experience, a human memory record lost forever. Hence, to avoid loss, that record must be discovered, its life essence searched, its unique story preserved for future use; for if it is lost, the history of the clan, the time, the region is the less well told.

The human being may vascillate, tell inconsistent stories, back away from statements; but written histories, too, often contain biased views, inconsistencies, undocumented statements. Against this weakness in much formal history, oral history provides an office through which to restore accuracy, for the researcher can develop the scope of an interview to encompass the gaps and defects of the written record. Thus, an apparent weakness of oral history may be utilized as a strong tool for mending broken fences, and the writer of historical fiction will gain solid support for the writing.

Any such weakness notwithstanding, the writers' experience compels them to point out that most individuals speak with facts and truth—sometimes colored by emotional involvements or explosive events—that in comparison with other tellings contain the same essential kernel of veracity; they do not fabricate family names, invent names of places, misrepresent dates, twist tradition. Such mode of thought and of expression was essential in eras when the oral record provided the sole vehicle by which people passed on their experience and knowledge. Reliability and respect were basic ingredients of the process, for loss of respect in the matter of a man's word carried devastating consequences; only with great difficulty could the stigma of untruth be worn away. In most instances, then, the writers believe that for individuals in the past putting something into words was as positive for them as is the certainty today with which people write something down on a sheet of paper.

In seeking knowledge on a subject, search is mandatory into all available resources; the accumulated knowledge must be taken aboard by the writer to gain insight and understanding, and to assure that his historical novel is not subject to criticism for flaws that search of the known record could have avoided. Yet, beyond all the research and study in archives, books, museums, manuscripts, writings, scholarly scribings, and other

fixed forms of records, there is no substitute for the individual in whose memory record resides the intimate, personal, passionate, indelible view of life: a river adventure . . . scaling a mountain . . . sitting by a pond reflecting moonlight . . . wandering along a stream glistening in the warm spring sun . . . scurrying for cover under a bombing . . . glowing with an evening sunset . . . surrendering to ecstasy . . . submitting to despair . . . caressing the early flower of spring . . . searching for right and wrong . . . speaking with a fresh understanding of the human soul and spirit. No substitute exists for facing the individual and persuading him or her to open soul and spirit and mind and to reveal the unique memory record each alone possesses. Oral history provides as formal history does not the setting for direct, firsthand opportunity to encounter the narrator's memory record and draw out its life essence.

If Crazy Horse could again walk among the peaks and along the rivers of the Black Hills of Dakota, think of the intensity of life the writer would experience from personal talk with that Oglala Sioux chief, from hearing again his words rising from deep within his spirit, "One does not sell the earth upon which the people walk. . . . Hoka hey! Follow Me! Follow me! Today is a good day to fight, today is a good day to die!" (I have spoken 101, 103) No formal, printed page has capacity to open for the reader the force pouring out Crazy Horse's deepest belief. No record unknowing of the oral history of Crazy Horse is capable of portraying his story in terms of eternal verities. Hence, the use of oral history, the tellings by men of that day who spoke with Crazy Horse, could best have brought to life the innermost stirrings of that powerful soul, tellings that would have shed the truer light on cultures in collision.

Oral history constitutes the strength of the tale, for whether the soul of the story rises from the personal interview or becomes re-created from studying the recordings or the script

of an oral history project, the writer as the master of imagination plans and writes constantly as the purveyor of oral history. The raw material of the historical novel is oral history.

The integrity of the oral history will dictate the integrity of the writer's historical fiction. But beyond the matter of that integrity, without oral history, the writer must work in second- and third-level sources, frequently far removed from direct personal account and actions. Too often, one historian or researcher has compiled material and has allowed his point of view to prevail to the extent that the written product contains flaws and inaccuracies, preconceptions and filterings. Succeeding researchers, as the writers have found by experience, may include this prior study in their own research as an essential and accepted statement of the history involved. Such later follow-ups perpetuate errors that could have been avoided had the first researcher exercised more care in setting down the history or had guarded more fully against his own biases entering into the prepared record. For such reasons, the writers view oral history as the life blood of historical fiction. To oral history all subsequent records trace back. Therefore, the writer and the storyteller must exercise caution to create their stories from "authentic goods." The writer who is fortunate enough to have oral history as a primary source will use it in the fiction product in its purest form. Allowable metamorphosis must be restricted to writing that will retain integrity while placing the tale on the page in such form that it makes "a good read."

Insightful writers have the capability both of understanding the oral history in its original source form and of using that oral history so fervently that the writer sees with the eyes of the original teller, walks in his steps, feels with his touch, speaks with his voice. Those writers possess the capability of writing as intimately and as passionately as if they themselves had been that primary source. The challenge for writers everywhere is how to use oral history in order to match that perfor-

mance.

The writer or searcher who can accomplish firsthand retrieval of the oral history resident in the memory record of another person experiences the challenge of exploration into the unknown. The process bears a power between two people that is unique, noteworthy for the strength and understanding that flows between them in the communication. And the flavors that make life worthwhile are no more deliciously presented than in the achievement between individuals that is the experience of oral history. Once making retrieval and coming into possession of the living, moving passion, the writer bears the responsibility to use it in such manner that the historical novel will in turn speak with that living, moving passion.

The use of oral history in writing a historical novel compares to the weaving of a fine Persian carpet. Honest written and recorded history forms a simple matting of warp and weft, the background. Colorful strands of oral history knotted and interwoven with care and expertise onto that background can alone bring to life the final vibrant weaving. The warp and weft must not show, for that damns the work as clumsy, careless, flaws obvious to the critic and to the reader.

Only with care can the novel achieve the perfection of that fine Persian carpet—the drama throbbing and pulsing in the soul and the heart of people and their lives. Any novel is fiction, an imaginary story. The historical novel blends fact and imagination. It is not enough to pack the manuscript with established truths and information derived from intense study of historical sources and then set characters running through the pages lightly touching the reader through conversations or contrived scenes. “I hurry through his books,” a reader said of a novelist, “turning the pages of all that archaeological history stuff to get at the sex scenes—one about every eight pages. His characters are modern soap opera cats put way back. The time,

the place, does not ring true for them." Perhaps that writer needs to decide whether to be an archaeologist, a historian, or a novelist. If novel writing should become the chosen career, then well-rounded characters, believable actions, tight plot—all that could have been gleaned from the use of oral history materials—played against a thoroughly researched, but lightly touched, background would bring about a book needing no "... hurry through ... turning the pages ..."

Much of the history retrieved through oral interviews rests on a foundation of knowledge passed to the narrators from parents and grandparents, even from great grandparents—a living stream of oral history such as that known through generations of American Native culture.

A long ago interview took one of the writers to a single-room lakeside home, the north and west sides stacked with small hides and smoked fish. The kitchen-living-sleeping side left little room for maneuvering. An old grandmother greeted the visitor who had come to write down memories of people and events past—a first experience in oral history for the researcher.

Smoke from the fuel-barrel stove filled the eyes and burned the throat. All-day-boiled coffee served in a dented blue enamel cup assaulted the stomach.

Be sincere. Sensitive. Open. Understanding. Basic rules.

"We come from a long line of leaders. My people . . .," the grandmother begins.

Haven't I heard those words before? Everyone's ancestor a leader? A skeptic sits on the researcher's shoulder and nudges the mind struggling to remember "Rules for a good oral interview." Watery eyes try to read the carefully prepared questions. A distraction—a rat running over the furs? No, only a tame squirrel seeking its escape hole in the wall.

"We come from a long line of leaders. My people . . .," the Grandmother repeats, then continues, giving a sketch of a

person, a family, a way of life almost gone, in dialogue unique and nowhere else to be heard. "Did you write it all down? I want to tell our story so my grandchildren's grandchildren will know how it was with us. How it was long ago as we knew it."

The wavering researcher no longer wavered. She began to understand "how it was." Later interviews filled in the body of the story the grandmother had to tell. Then, talking with other people, reading earlier oral history accounts, the researcher began to question written history as she had studied it and brought into the open what she had long suspected—large groups of people and thousands of individuals were ignored in formal writings. Recorded history tells of great events, tragic or triumphant. It speaks of generals, statesmen, kings, presidents, queens, first ladies. War. Conquest. Empire.

"... long ago as we knew it," told a story different from the fur trade accounts of the history books. "... as we knew it," stemmed from people who had lived through events forming the unwritten side of fur conquest in the building of empire in America.

Grandmother spoke of the individuals of her family, the people of her clan, the impact of the fur trade on her environment and on her ancestors. Her story was fragmented, often biased in her family's favor, but she painted a three-dimensional view of herself and her people; her oral history contained the essence of a character, the core of a story, one of the sparks giving life many years later to the writers' historical novel *Ashana*.

The lessons grandmother taught are as true today as they were at the time of that interview—lessons showing the need for thorough research into the subject matter before the interview process begins, preparation of guides in conducting interviews, and careful nurturing of the source of the telling, a careful gathering of oral history for use in writing the historical novel. With the essence of that grandmother's life story re-

trieved, the writer must use it to recreate in historical fiction the stream of being, flowing with its fullest, surging current.

In creating the basis for the historical novel *Ashana*, the writers traced the stories, the customs, the beliefs, the happenings, the recitals—together with many mutations—constituting the rich oral cultural tradition of the Athabaskan clans of Ashana's people, tradition carried in the memory records of endless generations of storytellers. Ashana's father enjoyed high respect among her Athabaskan people. He was known as a man filled with "ancient wisdom" and as a preeminent storyteller.

The writers searched the story of the Russian invaders of Alaska—businessmen, traders, and churchmen—for their impact on the Native culture. Their records were the sum total of their own experiences during the conquest of Alaska, their observations provided solely for the benefit of the company and the church in the homeland—support organizations demanding accomplishments for the profit of the company and the glory of Mother Russia.

But why write the other side of conquest in America through the voice of one lone woman? The fact is that the oral history serving as the basis and setting for writing *Ashana* offers more insight into the eternal verities of Athabaskan culture than all the history as recorded by the invaders and their successors. One strong Native woman asserting the rightful place in history of her Athabaskan culture! Her record stands high among the passionate as well as the significant truths of the human race.

In the quest for Ashana's story, the authors searched a myriad of available sources and compared wide-ranging views, panning until the dross was washed away. They discarded much material because, after extended study, the authors found that most had been gathered and then filtered through hearts and minds that neither sought to understand nor to

portray with integrity the culture and the people.

Sadly, as the authors have studied the written records, they have learned that histories do frequently conceal and misrepresent, whether consciously or unconsciously, because they set down the story of human beings and their affairs according to the social phenomenon they perceive as the most appropriate, the most prevailing, the most fitting for the established milieu. More often than not the formal histories portray the story of humanity in terms of the prevailing power and social structures, of those who rule or make up an educational elite, of conqueror and colonial power, carrying along the prejudices and objectives and will of those minds; information may willfully be distorted and even suppressed. In the face of such impaired recordings, oral history plays an especially significant role, its evidence bringing to light the story of labor groups, women, children, ethnic minorities, the poor, the elderly, those previously viewed as historyless. All such revelations enhance the fund of knowledge at the command of the writer of historical fiction, and they provide channels for working around the weakness of oral history by urging to listen and to preserve. With such parameters of historical accuracy understood, the authors proceeded with their research for *Ashana*.

In writing *Ashana*, the authors listened to the voices of Native Alaskans, searching for and arriving at the truth of the culture and the people before committing words to paper.

Because of the power of oral history, the writers say through the storyteller of Ashana's clan, "The lives of all those who have gone before come back to us through their legends and stories. Those long ago people live with us to this day through the words and the tellings they have passed down to us. We must listen and hold their tellings in our memories that we may pass them on to the next generation." For in the words of Ashana's father, "The man without a story is a man without a head."

Ashana's story depended upon many memory records, far

ranging and rising from an ancient heritage; and the voices revealing their contents commanded attention by researcher and writer. Even the Russian invaders contributed to the oral history of the Native people, however unwittingly.

Nearly two hundred years ago, Alaska was visited by dignitaries who roamed the seas with the Russian navy's first around-the-world trip. One of the many navigators, Lieutenant Gavril Davydov, penned a shocking incident of oral history that bulwarked the authors' thesis that all was not well in formal history. Davydov's journal, a careful record of what he saw and heard, tells the story of a Kodiak Island Native who had wanted to kill his own son. That seemed an unusually brutal act to Davydov. So, the Lieutenant sought out the man, and through an interpreter asked him why he wanted to do such a thing.

The man's reply—"Better it should die than become a kaiur [slave]"—told in a few words the story of the two cultures in collision—the invaders and the indigenous peoples. Quoting the Native's words in his journal, that early ship's navigator unwittingly added strong fertilizer to the soil in which Ashana grew. That reply, bitter truth, provides a cryptic example of oral history. (Davydov 159)

During many months in earlier decades of this century, scholar Cornelius Osgood of Yale University lived and worked among Natives of the Kenai and Cook Inlet regions, the home of Ashana's Athabaskan people. Oral history constituted a major phase of his research, for interviews with individuals were the essence of his search. Dr. Osgood's *The Ethnography of the Tanaina* provides a descriptive presentation of the culture of the people shortly before European contact. He tells of his search for the oldest available "informant," of the difficulty of working through interpreters. He found memory records harboring much to say about Ashana's people giving the Russians a bitter struggle for supremacy: Old men told him

of the people fighting thirty alien convicts and killing at least ten of them—convicts sent to the Kenai by the Russian Baranov. Osgood's careful descriptions of tools, ceremonies, and hunting provide insight and detail; but it is in his short recordings of the belief system as told to him by his "informants" that the people come alive.

Individuals among Ashana's clan gained prestige by telling stories, for as stated previously they believed a man without a story is like a man without a head. When Dr. Osgood worked in the Kenai he found two such men, themselves old, who held in their memory records knowledge gleaned from "the old ones." Without tape recorder, allowing himself no embellishment of what he heard, Dr. Osgood set down their oral history by hand, and so through him we hear the voices of his "informants" telling us the raven gave light and brought fish. No story of Ashana's people could be written without listening to the long-ago voices of narrators Jim Nikita, Fred Tculin, Simeon Chickalusion, and other Kenai informants. (Osgood 21-25) Those voices have been echoed by men and women from Kodiak Island, from Sitka, from across Alaska who have shared their history orally with many later scholars.

By the power and range of oral history, the ancient Athabaskan language of Ashana's people has perhaps been salvaged for the heritage of those people and of linguistic America. Virtually eradicated by the Russians, largely unspoken by Athabaskans themselves for many decades following the alien occupation of Alaska, that language had nearly passed down the sunset slope by the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Scholars at the Native Language Center at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, have expended years of intense and diligent search among parents, grandparents, great grandparents and others who could provide the least scintilla that could aid in retrieval of that ancient language—a remarkable achievement

of oral history. The results are gratifying for historians and writers, for there was available for use in preparing to write *Ashana* a dictionary of words and phrases of that language. Without such indigenous word patterns, the full flavor of the times and the significance of meaning could not have been as precisely expressed (Kari, *Dena'ina Noun Dictionary*).

With similar diligence and research, the volume entitled *Shem Pete's Alaska*—Shem Pete himself Athabaskan and one of the most versatile Native storytellers and historians in the late twentieth-century Alaska—came into being. The introduction states: "This book is about the territory of the Dena'ina (Tanaina) Athabaskans of the upper Cook Inlet region of Alaska, based on interviews with Dena'ina people who know it well ... Because the Dena'ina and other Alaska Native peoples kept no written records, oral traditions in the form of stories, songs, and place names, for example, were a major source of knowledge and instruction for young and old alike. Passed from one generation to the next, these traditions contained the Dena'inas' accumulated knowledge of the world around them. As this book demonstrates, place names and the stories associated with geographic features are fine examples of the Dena'inas' rich and varied oral heritage. Shem Pete and the other contributors to this book are among the last people who convey the wisdom of the oral tradition. The depth and breadth of their understanding of their traditional territories illustrate the remarkable memories of these Dena'ina elders. That Shem and others remember so much also evidences the former vigor of Upper Inlet Dena'ina culture." (*Shem Pete's Alaska* 3-4)

Oral history's significance for this volume is further noted in the words of Dr. James Kari: "... The speakers report these place names with great care and with obvious affection for the associations among the names, the ancestors, and the land. These oral place names are independent of post-contact names in that they have been used almost exclusively by speakers of

Dena'ina (or Ahtna or one of the other neighboring Athabaskan languages). The names are strictly reported from memory; they are not taken from maps or written records. Speakers have repeatedly confirmed sequences of names. There is very little disagreement among the 32 speakers who contributed the names in this book. Significantly, places with forgotten names are now left unnamed. New names are never coined by individuals, and Dena'ina places are almost never named after people." (Shem Pete's Alaska 29)

Grandmother's voice telling "how it was" set in the brain of a very young researcher questions that needed answers. From studying records years later, the tragic message from the past left by Lieutenant Davydov renewed demand that those questions be answered. The collected oral history materials of Alaskan scholars dedicated to allowing the voices of Native Alaskans to speak and to preserving those voices enriched the answering of the questions.

But *Ashana* was not without its difficulties.

Squaring off oral history against formal written history is to learn again that all is not well with much of the historiography that rests on the bookshelves—textbooks, biographies, political narratives, social studies, cultural histories. Many formal historians have long held sacrosanct certain views of the American Natives which have become stereotypical throughout the world. Even though some little evidence of change exists, it is not enough. Moreover, Natives telling their own story through oral history will, the writers believe, have the capacity to begin revising those rigid, long-held views and open up firsthand avenues of investigation. Native voices speaking out through the medium of oral history will have fresh opportunity to reveal and correct the inaccuracies, fill in the omissions, wipe away the inertia-ridden biases contained in much of the formal written history.

The authors have a sense of urgency. The grandmothers

and grandfathers whose lives span from the age of the horse to the age of the nuclear will soon be gone. Their memory records are heavy with lore. All people will be ill-served if appropriate time and expense are not put to the task of recording their oral history.

Oral history carries a mission to aid in re-creating the story of past generations, and it also offers a dynamic method for gaining insight into modern culture and events. In the memory records of contemporary generations reside impressive holdings of experience and thoughts; the researcher, the sociologist, the historian, the economist, the political scientist should not fail to draw upon these holdings in examining and resolving the issues that govern the future of humanity. The living stream of oral history sweeps through current affairs and events, and the men and women who precipitate them, as directly as it did two hundred and more years ago.

The core of a historical novel now in preparation by the writers focuses on the life and times of the people of Viet Nam and seeks an answer to the question, What happened in Viet Nam? Explanations, apologies, examination of strategies, seering memoirs, histories of the Viet Nam war have been written. But continuing to elude Americans is the answer to the question, "What happened . . . ?"

The authors will seek to answer that question in a historical novel telling the story of Viet Nam through the voices of its people. The use of the oral history is contingent upon protecting the safety and absolute privacy of narrators. Only after assurance that names would not be revealed, that locations and circumstances of events would be obscured, did many of the narrators feel comfortable about sharing their experiences.

Scores of Indo-Chinese refugees in the United States have already been interviewed by the writers of this article. Greater depth comes to the writing by way of a research assistant who has traveled to Viet Nam, a land holding valuable, almost

inaccessible, sources of oral history, memory records needing immediate retrieval; by his interviews in that country he has brought to light many contrasting views of the culture in native settings. All of these sources must be preserved as the authors search for Faulkner's eternal verities, impacted by American and Vietnamese cultures in collision.

As the Vietnamese spoke to the writers, images of characters and scenes began forming. The information gleaned from those oral interviews brings a depth and breadth of credence to the fictional families and their members, for, again, oral interviews were squared off with recorded history. The Vietnamese narrators' truths became the authors' truths, for the integrity of the writing lies in the fact that the narrators lived in the settings and through the events being portrayed in the writing. In each memory record, the individual carried remembered truths. Scars showed. Sometimes one narration contradicted another. But for each person the memory was reality.

In aiding retrieval of those memory records, for the dual purpose of preserving them and of providing fresh, moving life stories for historical writings, the authors arranged and financed their own oral history project.

The process of developing and writing the historical novel is slow and painstaking: Assimilation of formal historical facts. Interviews. Time for possibilities to play through the mind. Time to resolve inconsistencies and contradictions. The mental birthing of imaginary people becomes an awesome spiritual experience, a fiercely demanding one. That experience culminates in exhilaration when the imagined person fits into historical context. It becomes mental anguish when the character and the actions fall out of line with known historical time and facts, for then the character must pine off-stage until an appropriate happening or die.

The historical novel cannot be spun out quickly, and the questions are always asked: "Why take so much time? Why

can't you write as fast as . . . ? You know he already has another one out. And you are still writing?" Offense or descent into regret is useless. At that point the author must be sustained by a pride such as that of the lioness in Aesop's Fable. When needled by a lady fox who bragged of giving birth to a multi-litter, the tormented one shrugged and said, "Oh, but mine was a lion."

Thus, the "insignificant person"—the sea otter hunter, the berry picker high in the Kenai mountains, the child running through a spring meadow, the refugee, the solitary kayakman—who settles the specific experience in his or her memory record becomes the repository of "ancient wisdom."

Oral history, holding in its archives multitudes of memory records, offers the historical fiction author a fluid, powerful source to aid the writing (without necessarily assuring the speeding of the process). In the retelling or the passing on of experiences and wisdom to others, the memory repository as a recorder of human history becomes a storyteller, a practitioner of oral history.

Beyond all the extended research and study in books and archives and records, in writing historical fiction the golden nuggets are the bits and pieces mined from the lodes of oral history. The writer, the researcher, is the assayer who will separate the gold from the dross.

The following paragraphs do not presume to be an entire guide or set of rules for an oral history project. But a few points learned during the experience of writing are shared in the interest of expeditious approach to accessing the memory record and of expertise in making use of oral history in the writing of the historical novel.

Goal: Define the goal for each project. Sketch the objectives for each interview. Assure that the objectives of the interview fit into the goal of the project.

Preparation: Before beginning interviews, the researcher

must prepare by undertaking a broad range of study, incisive inquiry into time, place, people, events, geography—all that offers comprehensive understanding of the researcher's subject. Before sitting down to interview, the researcher should put himself in the position of knowing as much as possible about the subject.

Inquiries for the narrator must be thought out ahead of time in order to establish the content sought to be extracted and to carry out the extraction with sound sequential telling. Of equal relevance, the researcher must lead the narrator to realize: Here is a person truly interested in my story . . . a person who believes that what I have to say does have significance.

Honest respect for the narrator of oral history is of prime importance. To avoid being judgmental, argumentative, challenging, messianic requires discipline and love—the kind of discipline that is willing to listen and understand . . . the kind of love that permits accepting a belief unlike one's own. To accept the other person's passion of soul for what it represents is a necessary achievement in oral history.

Respect for the narrator carries sensitivity for his ethnic heritage if it differs from that of the researcher. This issue bears many highly charged implications, and the researcher who would maintain trust and respect must attend upon those forces with skill.

The Interview. Honor the privacy of the narrator. Even a family member is a distraction, for another person has a different point of view, that other person's memory record perhaps worthy of its private interview at another time and place. Do not allow interferences during an interview, i.e., a second person prompting with statements such as, "Henry, I'm sure you've had a bad lapse of memory" or "No, Grandmother, Auntie said it was this way . . ." or "Now Steven, don't you remember, this is what happened . . .?"

Honor the confidentiality of the narrator. During the inter-

view process, never discuss with or reveal to another person the contents of an oral history session or the words and thoughts of a narrator. Tales get told. This invasion could be viewed by the narrator as a betrayal, thereby destroying the narrator's trust and confidence in the researcher. Such infringement could lead to problems for the narrator. On a controversial subject, it may lead to danger.

The matter of using in manuscript, novel, published work, and other writings the materials discussed and obtained from the narrator is another issue, for such use extends beyond one-to-one confidentiality. Written permission for such purposes should be obtained early in the interview process—at the point at which strong rapport exists between the researcher and the narrator.

Observe the narrator carefully from the moment the talking begins. Consider demeanor, bearing, eye contact, body language, feeling or lack of feeling of rapport developing as words come out and responses to each other occur.

The Technique. Establish trust, confidence, compatibility, and openness between researcher and narrator. “They [—those being interviewed—] can talk to you all day and not tell you anything, if they don't want to.” (Allen, 13) The meaning here is clear: social conversation is cheap and plentiful, talk impregnated with facts comes only after trust is established.

The matters of openness and confidence may be the most critical ingredients bearing upon the relationship of the researcher and the narrator. If the researcher develops openness, the narrator will gain confidence and develop a feeling of compatibility. The full measure of trust will assure continuing openness—thus the success of the interview process.

The researcher must guard against projecting preconceived ideas and concepts of the effects of experiences, the mode of articulation onto the person being interviewed. Such actions carry the danger that the narrator will feed back what the

researcher has signaled he wants to hear or will cover his statements with meaningless jargon. A danger that breeds miscommunication. Avoid questions that can be answered by yes and no.

A narrator may endeavor to adopt a third-person viewpoint or a screen clouding a full and open telling—perhaps often in a more or less unintentional manner—that will enable him to avoid talk of personal tragedies or subjects that first-person telling could render too emotional, too revealing—for whatever reason—for discussion. The researcher must in such situations sensitively guide the talk, bringing the narrator comfortably to the point where it is possible to recount in direct personal manner the material of the event. The points may need to be tabled until another interview. Quite frequently, with such complications, a different approach will be necessary.

Objectivity must be maintained, without pedantic formality, in the relationship. Personal touches, small conversation at the beginning of the interview, should be brief, and only for the purpose of creating an easy path to communication.

If a statement is shocking, so be it. If a statement is absurd, let it stand. If a statement is patently inaccurate or a lie, do not challenge at the time it first comes to the surface. If any of the above happens, the researcher must maintain balance and continue to value the narrator and the information, experiences, thoughts he or she has. Wait until a subsequent interview provides a comfortable setting. Come back to the shocking, the absurd, the inaccurate, the lie, at a later time, approaching the subject from a different point of view. Be cautious: Give the narrator a way to save face, to explain, to work his or her way out of a dilemma without embarrassment. The researcher may experience frustration, may sense a will on the part of the narrator to hold back, may burn at the waste of time. Do not show inner upset. Maintain calm. Restore easy communica-

tion with the narrator. Be secure in the wealth of knowledge gained through the broad search for truth.

The Mechanics. The manner of the researcher in carrying on the interviews may be the life or death of the oral history project. Communication must take place easily with understanding and with trust between the two people. Otherwise, the interview will be cut short or the project may die before it has taken its first breath.

Capture the narrator's words in the manner most comfortable for him, recording and retaining them in the exact form and manner in which they are expressed. The researcher must avoid coating them with his own interpretations. Give the narrator full reign to speak in his words with his feelings, his special dialect with his inflections, his twists of tongue and language. A few words of caution: Oral history in many instances resides with older people or with people from a different culture, the chasm between the researcher and them often difficult to bridge. Further, a narrator may have deeply imbedded suspicion of every stranger, and the researcher should watch carefully to detect disinformation. The researcher should develop skill in spotting inconsistencies as the interview proceeds and attempting smoothly to adjust them.

Always ask permission for note-taking because the narrator may be wary even of note-taking, let alone of the presence of a recorder or a camcorder. Establish an easy flow of words between researcher and narrator. Let him know the researcher values his willingness to talk and to take his time for the interview.

If the narrator is wary of note-taking, particularly at the first interview, immediately upon leaving the interview settle down in a quiet spot and reconstruct the entire interview, quoting inquiries and responses as completely, accurately, and sequentially as possible, including a few comments about the setting of the interview. Do not reword the narrator's story or set it

down in a sequence different from that in which given. Usually by a second or third interview, the narrator will be comfortable with note-taking and, hopefully, with the presence of a recorder. So, solid mechanics for an accurate record will have been established.

Always review these recordings immediately following the interview to correct errors and flaws, but more importantly because the researcher will find nuggets useful for later interviews leading deeper into the lode of oral history residing in the narrator's memory record.

Risk lies in attempting to construct summaries of a subject or a discipline. However, a few words with strong impact may be mentioned. "To sum up, the mode of discourse of oral history, whether in epic or prose, whether didactic or ethical, may be of historical value from three standpoints. First, it reveals the values and usages which motivate a people and condition their future acts through representation of archetypes from the past. In doing this, it not only reflects but also creates history. . . Second, oral tradition offers incidental descriptions of facts and objects. The reconstruction of the past is by no means wholly fictional. . . The epic is strewn with allusions to techniques and to objects which are not essential to the action but suggest the setting. . . rigid, formal and institutional oral tradition to which structure has been imparted in training schools is a third aspect of its historical value. . . Thus oral tradition is not just a second-best source to be resorted to only when there is nothing else. It is a distinct source in itself, with a now well-established methodology, and it lends history . . . a marked originality." (UNESCO Courier, 45-46)

The writers urge again thought for the words of Dr. Samuel Johnson, "All history was at first oral."

For keenness of insight into sources of the creative writing process—an insight, it seems, deep into the soul of oral history—the writers suggest study of Dr. Johnson's comments in

his appreciation of Shakespeare: "His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. . . It is this which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestic wisdom. . . Yet his real power is not shown in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenour of his dialogue; . . .

"It will not easily be imagined how much Shakespeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life, but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation, that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakespeare. The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard, upon topics which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction, but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation, and common occurrences." (The Major Critics , 158-159)

"This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life; that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before

him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language, by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world, and a confessor predict the progress of the passions." (The Major Critics , 161)

Samuel Johnson has delineated those qualities of human meaning, and of common humanity, that must be extracted and employed by the writer. Oral history offers the richest means for that extraction. Upon the passionate use of that oral history will depend the heart and spirit of the historical novel.

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The Native American Artist

CARRIE ORTIZ

Through countless millenia humanity has struggled to survive by inventing and adapting tools to make life easier. In the American Southwest, man's earliest stone tools reflect a growing unity between hand, mind, and artistic ability. The crafting of jewelry represented another expression of early human creativity. Jewelry is one of the oldest traditions, perhaps attributable to desire of humans to adorn themselves, as jewelry does not have a practical, survival, application. People have the desire to surround themselves with beauty, or perhaps it is a deep need or subconscious feeling of spirituality to protect ourselves from harm. Native American people continue to make items of usefulness as well as beauty. If beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder, then the age-old controversy of what constitutes Fine Art verses Arts and Crafts comes into play, as there is no exact definition, or any absolute method of distinguishing art from non-art. What to one person is fine art is to another person arts and crafts and vice versa. Native American artists have been shunted to the artistic margins by the arts community in this country. This tendency toward marginalization is evidenced by the view of native arts such as

Carrie Ortiz, an Ojibwe artist, did the direction and artwork for an adapted play, "Stars in the Sky," produced by White Earth.

wood carving, basketry, weaving, pottery, jewelry and applied designs in quills or beadwork as quaint or exotic artifacts. The norm for turn-of-the-century art was academic and realistic. When abstract art became fashionable, the recognition that it was not new to Native American Art was lost, to all but a few knowledgeable Europeans. The demands of discerning patrons, art historians and museum curators called this art to attention. However, the mainstream art world has not taken their work seriously (even less than work of women or other ethnic minorities). Native artists were not represented in the Museum of Modern Arts show of "Primitivism in Modern Art" or "The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985", at Los Angeles County Museum. Both exhibits have themes that relate to contemporary Native Artist concerns. These are just a few examples of the continuing marginalization of the Native American Artist. Some of the factors that contribute to the marginalization of Native American Art include social, economic, exploitative, and prejudicial factors.

Contemporary Native American artists confront the difficulty of several audiences for their work. In addition the marketplace still is based on nostalgia, and is ready to pay big money for stereotyped notions of what Indian Art should look like. Economic success supports artists but at the same time ghettoizes them. Socially, Native American people are not accepted unless they conform to ideals of the ethnocentric, dominant, Western culture. Any attempt to retain traditional values and lifestyles further alienates Native people. Therefore Native American art must meet certain criteria in order to be accepted.

Early contemporary artists found that acceptance of their art was slow in coming. When Hopi, Charles Loloma (readily acknowledged as the grandmaster and leader in contemporary jewelry art), first entered his unique jewelry in Native American exhibitions in the late fifties, it was rejected as not being

"legitimately Indian" for it didn't meet the predictable criteria of Indian styles of art. Galleries at one time refused to accept contemporary paintings by Juane Quick-to-See Smith (Flat-head/Shoshone/French-Cree), stating that they "weren't Indian enough." So Juane formed The Grey Canyon Group. "I rounded up half a dozen Indian artists like myself who were having the same problems." (1) Juane also wrote to museums and galleries across the country and eventually arranged thirteen group exhibitions for one summer season. Later an exhibition of their combined works toured the United States for two years.

In the past, gallery owners discouraged change in traditional art forms, for they knew that the buying public wanted "Indian Art." Some buyers questioned why they should purchase art that was not readily identifiable as "Indian." Art galleries handling Native work do not encourage change and often ask if they (Native American Artist) could add a few shells or feathers to make the work look more "Indian."

Granted, the age-old controversy of what constitutes Art, what then is Indian Art? Presently, if an artist adds a few feathers they may face a prison term. Such is the case with Esther Naygunaub of the Fond du Lac band of Ojibwe, near Sawyer Minnesota. Esther is currently awaiting trial for selling migratory bird feathers. Charges have been filed by the Fish and Wildlife, and she could receive a one-to-five year prison sentence. In a personal interview Esther states she never kills the animals which she uses. She finds feathers and or uses furs from road kill, or her friends give her feathers and furs. Naybunaub makes Ojibwe style Dream Catchers, which are cultural items used for protection from bad dreams or nightmares. The Dream Catcher is a circular hoop, made of willow (traditionally) or crochet hoop (contemporary) with beads and a center of string woven or tied in spider web fashion. The Dream Catcher "screens" the dreams, allowing good to pass

through and catching others. Fur and feathers from animals are added to enhance the Dream Catcher whose observed lifestyle is believed to help. Examples include hawk feathers (because the hawk has keen eyesight and nothing can slip past it), rabbit fur (soft), and goose fluffs (soft and calming), and the bear (which among animals is the champion sleeper).

Native American people have strong beliefs in the brotherhood of animals and humanity, and believe the Great Spirit put animals here for food (not Sport), and to learn from. This contrary to the attitudes of the dominant culture where little else is observed or lived by but, "Man shall have dominion over all creatures." In our interview, Esther stated, "White people want everything; land mineral rights, exclusive control of hunting and fishing, medicinal knowledge, spirituality - everything but the people." She also believes that the federal government has a vendetta against her involvement in treaty rights and other Native American issues. Naygunaub also discussed cases in California where Native people are being stripped and fined for sale, trade, use of, or merely possession of eagle and other migratory feathers, and furs. Esther believes this is a beginning of a national scheme to limit or forbid use of eagle feathers. The "feds" don't realize or recognize who has actually caused the extinction or near extinction of many animals.

The belief of harmony with nature is universal among all tribal affiliations. Every native religion has the respect for the earth and the Power that governs it. Prayers are offered whenever the faith and practices of our ancestors are observed. Offerings are made for anything taken from the earth, whether it is clay for pottery, wood or stone for carving, animals for food, or plants for medicine and food. With these considerations, motifs from nature are created on most contemporary art forms. Light, color and design are the three elements also given by nature. Feathers and animals are an integral part of

our culture and our way of life. Is not freedom of religion a constitutional amendment upon which this country was founded? Or does the law apply only to a certain class of people? If art is a reflection of society, then Native American people are in a dire situation: damned if they do and damned if they don't. What really looks Indian? Another problem that often plagues artists is the use of deities or sacred objects in their designs.

Native artists are sometimes torn between artistic desire and the deep religious ties within certain tribes, as the use of deities or sacred objects are strictly taboo. Often strict consequences are enforced such as confiscation, public ridicule and confinement or all of these. Tribes also limit outside camera use and sketching, during certain ceremonies. An analogy would be for someone to be taking pictures during a church service or funeral. Tribes wish to maintain privacy, but the demand for religious artifacts or sacred objects is extremely high. Delbridge Honanie (Hopi) carves wooden sculptures representing Hopi daily life. "I don't carve scenes from our ceremonies, because those events are sacred and secret." (2) Religious objects are also sold to non-native people, such as the pipe, which has deep religious meaning similar to Catholic chalice. Craft shops sell them at extravagant prices. Native people who do sell pipes often are very bad off financially, are not aware of the religious implications, or don't care.

Navaho sand paintings are traditionally used in curing ceremonies (medicine), however presently they are used in paintings or to adorn clocks. Certain deities are not used but still are on the market because of demand. Out of necessity Native American artists sometimes compromise to keep food on the table and a roof overhead. However, many Native American artists consider others "sellouts" or "apples" (red on the outside and white on the inside) when they sell or make sacred objects using a deeply spiritual format to make big

money. This is a very controversial issue with an ongoing debate. Native American art of a religious or sacred nature confronts contemporary Indian and non-Indian society with issues of ownership/ possession, exhibitions, interpretation, and "original" creation.

In a sense Native American artists are forced to succumb to the wants and needs of a market that differ from their own way of life. The market is dictated by an ethnocentric ideal of the market. Many dream of becoming a world famous artist, to have unique style, to perhaps make a statement to the world, or to create art for arts sake. The reality is that there is a small chance for world recognition. The "starving artist syndrome" then comes into play: to create unique art or to produce something that sells. If you are fortunate you can do both, however many artists must compromise to survive. Some Native American artists have another primary income which allows them more creativity, while others do not have that option. Buyers want "Indian Art," but what it is may be totally different from the artist's conception. An artist and historian, Frederick J. Dockstader, Ph. D. stated, "To achieve an understanding of what art of the American Indian represents, it is imperative that many preconceptions and judgments based on an evaluation of European art must be thrown out." (3) Perhaps people want to buy part of a vanishing culture, or they are intrigued by the spiritual mystique that partially shrouds our culture. Many people consider all Native American art as "novelty" or "arts-and-crafts" and are shocked at Native American prices. To me, arts and crafts are hobby kits or mass produced items, but again perhaps this is another label to dehumanize Native Americans for their fine artistry.

In *Beyond Tradition* the author states, "Never before has there been such excellent craftsmanship and outpouring of creative talent, as many Indian arts and crafts are transformed into incredibly fine art." (4) The defining line is very vague. A

Native American artist may consider their work fine art, only to be told, "What lovely arts and crafts." On the other hand some everyday items may be considered fine art. The debate is similar to "what is art?" Arts and crafts might also include Taiwanese ceramic pottery fashioned after Southwestern pottery. In the Southwest there is an incredible market for Native American Art, but there is also an amazing amount of counterfeit Native American art.

In the Southwest there is blatant exploitation which further marginalizes Native American art. In addition to Taiwanese imitations, there is Mexican jewelry and woven rugs that are sold to unknowing buyers as authentic American Indian work. In the main plaza of Santa Fe, or Old Town in Albuquerque, New Mexico, there are exclusive areas where Native American artists can sell their work, and have been doing so for many years. Thus a controversy exists having to do with reverse discrimination. But there is also controversy over non-Indians selling themselves as Native American artists. It seems as though every two-bit hobbyist wants to get into the action. When artisans attempt to sell their work to shops they often receive much less than they would if they sell directly to a consumer. Here in northern Minnesota similar exploitation exists. This I have personally experienced. In Sante Fe I sold contemporary earrings to shops for \$25.00, but in Bemidji a short time later was offered \$10.00 maximum. Many buyers take advantage of the number of artists and also the circumstances under which they live. Contemporary artists are too apprehensive to stray far from traditional-like work. As potter Jody Folwell (Santa Clara) stated, "I don't want to go too far out, but even the half-step I took was too traumatic for most dealers and buyers." (5) Artists take a loss on small items, not to mention the loss on a large, fine piece. In the Southwest dealers and/or agents are giving Native American artists better treatment, partly because of the competition among

dealers. Here in Minnesota exploitation is more evident, as is the underlying cause: prejudice.

Probably one of the most determining factors of the marginalization of Native American artists is prejudice. Prejudice is directed not only towards the arts, but toward the people themselves. How can people have an open mind toward the art when they cannot overcome their feelings towards the people? To say it does not exist is to not be in tune with reality. Jim Northrup, a freelance writer and Ojibwe basket maker, compared the dehumanization of Native American people with that of Asian people by the armed forces in Vietnam (He is a veteran). The Vietnamese weren't people, they were "gooks." Native American people are often looked down upon as sub-human and called "red skins" or "timber-niggers." As with other forms of prejudice, people do not receive equal pay for equal work (as far as labor and wages are concerned). Many Native American artists do not receive a fair price in sales for their work. The equality of Native American people can be attained only to a certain extent before prejudice overrules true equality. In the absence of prejudice, Native American art competes artistically with any art in the world. Due to prejudices and ignorance, how can a child learn of Native American Art when texts refer to it as "Primitive art?"

Native American people are an impoverished people in an economic sense. Since comparing their position to Whites, Native Americans are dismally behind on all standards of income and occupational status. As sociologist Murray Wax stated, "The domination by Europeans has disrupted the Indian's system of economic and social interdependence, a fact not measurable in statistics." (6) Native people have survived for thousands of years if not millions, by adapting to the environment and retaining cultural ways of life. The total assimilation of Native American people is unrealistic to our survival.

The Native American community is culturally diverse and made up of many nations or tribes. Over the years, because of federal policies of assimilation, inter-marriage, adoption, foster placement and personal preferences, membership in the Native American nation has become unclear. In addition, members of the larger culture, for their own personal reasons, sometimes wish to identify themselves as Native Americans. Some reasons may include monetary gain, visibility and spiritual or cultural identity.

Tourism is an important source of employment for many reservations either directly by serving the needs of visitors, indirectly by providing art items. However, such enterprises do not achieve the kind of success that significantly improves the economy of a Native American tribe. Many tourists are interested in trinkets, not the more expensive and profitable items. The "trading post business" has also taken its toll on Native American cultures. Many artisans have been manipulated by Whites and other Natives to produce what the tourists want. Creativity and authenticity have been replaced by mechanical duplication of "genuine Indian curios."

The artistic price of economic survival is high. If a Native American artist does something political, controversial, or radically different from the accepted art styles, they will be left out, much like the Impressionists of their time. Many artists and critics do not acknowledge that European and American artists such as Klee, Kandisky, Picasso, or Gaugin and Matisse were influenced by the art of "primitive" cultures. Native American art can compete with any art in the world, but not as a suppressed art.

As fine art by Native American Artist has been produced following centuries of tradition, and skills were passed down through time, contemporary artists yearn to preserve a part of their heritage. The art of the past is within us and what we consider contemporary today, may be traditional in the near

future. As a Native American woman, I wish all our youth to gain the correct knowledge and the most deserved respect of our Native American arts. In this way, it will endure.

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The Euphoria of Creation

AN INTERVIEW

Ernie Whiteman: If you notice how the sequence has played itself out. It started with the flag. Remember that? And that went to court. And it's moving to the arts now. The arts are starting to feel that. I think if the flag issue would have been now, it would have taken a turn because we've got troops in another country and a lot of American people are feeling patriotic. Even though they don't what our troops over there, they still feel that. So if the flag issue would have come up now, the public would have been behind it. But it didn't. That really concerns me, because I think it's really going to affect art. I think what's going to happen is that people are going to start pushing the artist more, which might be good.

Oshkaabewis Native Journal: Is that going to affect the Native artist, though?

EW: I think it will affect all art. I think there will be some Native artists that will step on the bandwagon, and there will be others who will just continue doing what they've always done. You have to look at the Indian artists. A lot of times they are

Ernie Whiteman, an artist, illustrated *Star Quilt's* cover, a collection of poetry by Roberta Hill Whiteman. Juanita Espinosa is a program Associate for Native American Cultural Arts Program in St. Paul, MN. Anthony White is a Visual Artist. David Gonzales interviewed for *Oshkaabewis Native Journal*.

excluded because they are an elite group from the rest of the mainstream. So a lot of things that affect the art world don't necessarily affect the Indian artist. It's kind of like the depression didn't affect a lot of Indian people. And to a lot of Indian artists, the starving artist is not a new concept. The whole realm of the thing is that they're always fighting. But I don't think there's going to be a lot of them that will change. I'm looking at people, do you know Rick Glaser? I think he is one of those people because of his issues, and Bob Hausas, I think, will be one of those people because he's very politically oriented with his work.

ONJ: These are Native artists? What kind of work do they do?

EW: Sculptures. [Bob Hausas] does steel and Rick Glaser does multimedia things. He does a lot of (Didn't catch the word — it sounds like "found") objects. Rick Glaser was banned from a show in the west one time over a controversial piece. It was about cowboys and Indians. And so he thought he'd enter the show. It was in Kansas or Nebraska. But he entered this show and his piece was entitled "Missionary Positions"

ONJ: What year was that?

EW: That was probably in the late '70's or early 80's. But what he did with that piece was that he had real graphic depictions on there of people making love, but it was like a shoebox — you know, that you shine shoes on — but he put all these different positions on it.

ONJ: What made it Indian art?

EW: Well, you see, that's what he was trying to show them, that Indian art is not just cowboys and Indians. That's what this

show was all about, that they wanted Indian artists in this show.

ONJ: *Did you agree with that? That Indian art doesn't necessarily have to be Indian images?*

EW: It can be anything.

ONJ: *So the Indian artist does a painting of the Empire State Building. That's Indian art because it was done by an Indian artist?*

EW: It depends, too. Some artists have a real difficult time with that. They don't want to be called an Indian artist. They'd prefer to be called an artist because sometimes you get labeled an Indian artist, and everything you do is Indian art, whatever you do.

ONJ: *So it works against the artist?*

EW: It depends on the individual.

ONJ: *But what do you think? Do you think that it works against the artist to be labeled as an Indian artist, as opposed to just an artist? Is there an Indian writer as opposed to just a writer?*

Juanita Espinosa: I think any label has its effects. It doesn't really matter what you're talking about as long as it's considered a label.

ONJ: *So it's got limitations?*

JE: I think it's the nature of the art. If an artist wants to be known as an artist then they're saying something about their culture that they want to be known. They're making a statement. It's

an individual, creative thing. It's up to them.

EW: I think if an Indian, like you were saying, painted the Empire State Building and put a title on it that referred to something historical like "Manhattan was sold for" however much —

ONJ: *"For sale: 24 cents" as a title.*

EW: — even though as you look at it there's no connection to my culture by the Empire State Building, nevertheless, the message I'm trying to convey is from an Indian's point of view.

ONJ: *The title does that.*

EW: But see, I'm also making a statement about Manhattan, how it's been transformed into what this is.

ONJ: *So the title would do it.*

EW: Yeah. I see a lot of artists who would do that with titles. What you can do is take a realistic-looking piece of art that has nothing to reflect Indian culture at all, but the title on it is making a statement about something in particular. I know there are times when I have to focus. It doesn't bother me too much anymore, but when I was younger, I'd intentionally do things that were of my culture. I think it was the fear of being completely assimilated into the art world. I didn't want to accept everything. I wanted to be able to use my culture to make decisions about different things. I wanted to be able to incorporate my culture and my life into my art. So I would find instructors occasionally that would make statements: "Oh, you're doing Indian stuff again?" Hey, what else am I going to do? That's my culture. I'm not going to change my art so that

it looks European or English just to get your A. So I would go ahead and do it and suffer the consequences, because they wanted my art to look very American, very contemporary. To them, that was what they were to teach. I said, "I can do that. There's no problems with that, but to me I'm not really fulfilling what I want to do." So that's why I tried merging things, and I found that more successful, by merging techniques, material, my culture.

ONJ: In literature they always make distinctions between the poem and the song, the short story and the novel. Is there that kind of thing in other forms of art? Is there a real distinction between sculpturing and painting on canvas with oil paints and singing a song?

EW: Yeah, there's a difference.

ONJ: What's the difference? It's not all one thing?

EW: The material and the technique are the basic differences in any of those art forms. An example would be where I come from. I started out as a painter and painted for a long time, but it became more than painting and I wanted to express myself in other ways. With painting you're basically an illusionist. You're painting light and dark; you're trying to convey a message through what you know and how your technique works. So if I'm trying to convince you that this is a chair, I've painted it on a flat surface and I want to give this chair dimension. I have to use my paints correctly so that you can see the reflection on this chair of the lights coming in, the shadow. So I create an illusion to convey the message to you. I just found it very difficult after a while to keep doing that. I wanted a multi-dimensional way of expressing myself.

ONJ: You know what they do. They categorize everything. So

somebody teaches the short story; somebody teaches poetry; somebody teaches novels. They categorize for the sake of teaching it, and it seems like there's a blur between the poem and a song and a story in Native tradition. Someone can sing and it's a story; someone can sing and it's a poem; someone can sing and it's a song. What they do in a European setting is they categorize it. Is that what Native artists are doing today? Are we saying, here's a guy who does sculpturing, here's a guy who does painting, here's someone—

EW: We do that purely because of the system. It's much easier for the system if we categorize everything we do. Indian people were never hung up on categories. An artist was multi-dimensional. He could combine everything. He could be an orator, he could sing, he could do his art. He could be doing all of this at once, and there were no categories like saying, "Is he singing or is he delivering a speech before us?" What's the difference? It doesn't matter. He's conveying the message any way he knows how to do it. He does it through his hands. So you look at Indian artists, and many of them are multi-faceted. They aren't just doing one thing; they can do a variety. But because the system teaches you "This is one thing, this is another thing," you have to do one or the other.

ONJ: *Here's another question. When Europeans write novels or stories, because they think linearly, in a line, the form becomes linear. When you read a novel by an Indian author, the form becomes circular. You can almost read the last page and the last page becomes the first page, and the first page becomes the last page. What happens there is that culture dictates the form because the artist doesn't think linearly; he thinks in terms of a circle or a naturalist circle. Does the same thing happen with sculpture and visual arts?*

EW: It depends on the awareness of the artist. An example of what I completed was my academic career. It concluded with

a showing and my thesis paper and orals. My thesis paper and orals worked with the show so that the show was the visual aspect for my orals but it was titled "Journey in the Circle." So what I have done is I have used my academic career as a circle. All this education process and my art academia was going in a circle so that when I finished my show, when I finished my orals, everything was encompassed within the circle. I completed that circle.

ONJ: *Including the actual object?*

EW: Everything. My show and everything is completed there. You can have many circles within a major circle. It doesn't necessarily mean that I'm complete and that's the end. I can take that, and I can continue with that inside a larger circle of my life. These circles are just portions of my life.

ONJ: *That's what writers do. Stories or a novel become part of a longer story so that the novel, short story, or poem is just one story of a longer story. What the artist brings to the novel is this holistic way of looking at life. Anybody from an oral culture has a mind that's holistic; nothing is fragmented; everything's related like a spiderweb — people, the land, the earth, the spirits. So how does an artist do that through something other than writing? I'm familiar with how a writer does it, for example Scott Momaday or Leslie Silko. I can see how they do it with *House Made of Dawn* and *Ceremony*. But how do visual artists do that? How do they bring in that holistic orality and then apply it to what seems to be a fragmented piece of art up here on a shelf or an exhibit out there? It's not connected with the rest of what we call life.*

JE: It could be a lot of different ways, though. It's like that title you were talking about. It's making it sing. A large part of what art does is to invite an audience to use their own imagination,

and for that reason the oral comes out in that. If someone says for whatever reason it's great, it's this, it's that, that becomes the connectedness of it. They could say all kinds of things about it. For me it's that interaction with it, because everybody sees something real different, and that leads to that oral discussion in addition to what it brings about.

ONJ: Does it engage the spectator? The spectator's not out there, either, by himself. You just said engages the spectator through the word, through the commentary, and engages the spectator with a piece of art that he's looking at. And then, like you said, Ernie, and what Juanita suggested, is that the title connects it to the idea of the treaty and the land, and the land being a place which people live on, and it all being interconnected some way.

JE: Maybe it's untitled though.

EW: That's what I was going to get at. There are times when artists prefer not to title a piece. And I think it's very difficult in this society to look at something that's not labeled. It's very difficult for people to walk up to a painting and say, "It's untitled?" You know? My god! You know?

ONJ: But isn't that a title—"Untitled?" Like a nameless protagonist. A character in a book has no name, like Winter in the Blood. James Welch gives us a character there who has no name. So he can symbolize anybody. He's nameless. Isn't titlelessness sort of like that? Can represent anything, and it's a title in itself?

EW: It's titleless in the sense that it's not written out for you. It is titled in the sense that you can see it visually.

ONJ: It's not spelled out.

EW: Right. And I think titles can be awful misleading. Titles can also be very persuasive if people begin to look at the title before they look at the painting. That could really be a drawback. Limitations, see? So some artists prefer not to use titles because they want the viewer to be the person who makes their own decisions, who does their own thinking. I know it's hard sometimes for people to do that, to look at something and to think about it. It's got to be spelled out for them. They can't think past what they see in front of them.

ONJ: *They have no original thoughts about it. We have to tell them what to think.*

EW: They don't see beyond the surface. One of the things about visual artists is that they are trained to look beyond. If you had a group of visual artists, and you ask them to analyze what this coffee pitcher was, you wouldn't say, "I want you to analyze this pitcher for me." You would ask them to analyze this object or analyze this, period. Each one of them would probably have something different to say about this piece. Some would look at the negative space here. They would not look at the solid form; they would look at the shape, the coloration, the mixture of materials—

ONJ: — *composition*—

EW: Yeah, anything but what it is.

ONJ: *So the space itself is part of composition.*

EW: You look at coloration; you look at space. The last thing that they would probably look at would be function. They would look at everything else except what this is and try to evaluate through those eyes. Whereas a group of salesmen

who sold brushes or whatever, if you had them describe this thing, they would all say that it's a coffee pitcher, it's a coffee thermos, it's a coffee mug.

ONJ: They're being literal.

EW: They're being very literal. So that's where an artist, if you look at his painting, there are messages within his painting.

ONJ: So it's like writing, Ernie. If you write a word, if you write a sentence, if you write a paragraph, it's the flat print on the page, but the reader brings a set of experiences to the word and, imaginatively, should go beyond the word. But that's a general concept about writing. So you're saying it's the same thing with visual arts. You're making a connection with visual arts and writing. Is writing visual arts? The letter is visual; the sentence is visual; the paragraph is visual.

EW: That aspect of it is visual, yeah.

ONJ: So can that relate to visual arts in the sense that you just described it?

EW: Well, in the sense of it being a visual process, and painting is a visual process. They are connected in that sense. But the difference is that when I paint I am creating messages that are not of any alphabet form. I'm not using a process. My hand is the tool that I utilize; my mind is a tool that I utilize to convey this visual alphabet.

ONJ: OK, so a writer writes a poem down. He enlarges the poem, makes a poster out of it, puts it in a frame, and puts it up on the wall. And then you look at the written poem. Is that visual arts, because it's interpreted the way you're interpreting art?

EW: It is visual art in the sense that you have collaborated two forms together, utilizing art for this poster and this poem. Bobby and I have talked about doing this, working together in collaboration, doing imagery and poetry together. And then we said, "Where do the two merge? Where is the line?" It's clear to me that when you combine them there is this collaboration, this unity, that works together.

ONJ: *So if you type out the poem in the shape of a vase—*

EW: That would make it fine art; that would make it visual art.

ONJ: *And it would be a written, literary art.*

EW: That depends on your audience. Your audience would be the judge of that. For example, you look at Andy Warhol. He took the tomato soup can. That was a household image everyone could associate with, a tomato soup can, a Campbell's soup can. He duplicated it, silkscreened it, enlarged it. That was fine art.

ONJ: *But how does that relate to Native visual art? Does that mean that a Native artist can just pick out a popular image and then enlarge it? Does that become Native visual art, or does it become just popular art? Is that assimilation "art?" I'm trying to find out the difference between one and the other.*

EW: There will be a variety of answers that will come into play here with different artists. But one of the things is that every time an Indian artist sets out to accomplish something, he runs into barriers and conflicts about categorizing this and that. So then he begins to sit back and he says, "Well, what am I going to paint? Do I want to paint realistic-looking Indian people in a genre setting of 1990?" We have a group of Indian people

eating at McDonald's. "Do I want to portray my ancestors sitting around outdoors, eating a wild animal they have just killed and the women are cooking?" Also a genre setting with their wigwam or whatever in the back.

ONJ: *Which one is Indian art?*

EW: People would say, "Well, Indians going into McDonald's is not really Indian art." People would say, "This is Indian art" where these Indian people are sitting outside around their—

ONJ: *— a natural setting.*

EW: A natural setting. That's Indian art. And a guy would say "OK, what makes that Indian art?" And they would say, "Well, there's Indian people sitting there, they made the houses." "OK, say this McDonald's over there, they hired a crew of Mohawk Indians ironworkers to build it." This guy says, "OK, Indians built that structure; they made that building. This Indian man and his family paid money for someone to kill the animal." And people would say, "Well, this is more Indian art." Why is it more Indian art? Because people are more used to looking at those images and associating them to the culture.

ONJ: *Is that part of the stereotyping?*

EW: That's the stereotyping, exactly. It's the audience that does a lot of the determining what is and what isn't [Indian art].

ONJ: *But it's the artist, too.*

EW: The artist? He can, but see a lot of people won't accept this. That's the problem. They do not read what he is doing or what he is trying to convey, so he keeps trying. He keeps doing it.

ONJ: *There's the intention, and then there's what actually occurs, the end product of the creative work.*

EW: Like Bob Hauses. His father was and is one of the foremost Indian sculptors in the United States. His father deals in a lot of traditional Indian imagery in the sense that he will have Indians in war bonnets and Indian women in their traditional attire. It looks very much as an Indian of the past. You look at his son's work, and it's totally different. This guy's using contemporary material. He's using chrome-plated steel, huge mammoth cut-outs of animals, cowboys, but he has a lot of his culture in that. You have to be able to read it. He would actually take his works and shoot holes in them with a gun.

ONJ: *So the only distinction is contemporary art and traditional art, contemporary Indian art and traditional Indian art. Is that all you're talking about?*

EW: That's an issue in itself, because you have a lot of Indian people that cannot even accept a lot of the contemporary Indian work. They have a hard time with that. It's not that they can't accept it; it's that they have been brainwashed by the system and told what it is Indian art.

ONJ: *Like what is an Indian, period.*

EW: What is an Indian? Enrollment.

ONJ: *Numbers.*

EW: How much blood you have. Somebody once said that we have to quit thinking about all these stereotypes that have been given to us and quit living them.

ONJ: *Vine Deloria opens Custer Died for Your Sins like that, that somehow Native people are always trying to live up to what other people think of them as, and it's impossible because Hollywood, for example, has images that are so unreal that you can't even live up to them. So Native visual artists have the same struggle? That is, to try to define what is art in their own minds but also to try to project it and to connect the audience to the art?*

Anthony White: I had that problem about eight years ago. A gallery bought some of my work in a show in Sante Fe and told me to bring some more of my work down. I was doing some pottery, and I brought in one piece that didn't have anything to do with Southwest art or the Southwest in general. He said "Well, can't you make it more like what you see in the gallery here?" It was all Southwest pottery. And I said "What do you mean?" And he said, "Well, can't you make it more Indian?" So I never dealt with him after that even though it was a good opportunity. So I took the same pieces to Alan Hauser and he said, "Why does it have to be Indian? You're an artist."

ONJ: *Doesn't it have to be Native but not the way Indian is defined to us? Your argument would have been, "Look, this may be Ojibwe, not necessarily Navajo or from the Southwest. This may be Arapaho not necessarily Zuni. So what you have in your gallery is Zuni and Navajo, but I'm Ojibwe, or I'm Arapaho, or I'm Dakotah, so my art is different. It's still Indian." Isn't that the argument?*

AW: Kind of, yeah. That made me think; for a while I couldn't paint because I was drawing a blank. After that, I didn't want to do what I was doing anymore. I wanted to do something new, different. So I quit painting and got into sculpture, and I noticed that all my sculptures were beginning to look like what I was around. I hung around with Alan Houser a lot, and we used to work on waxes. So it looked like that, working with

form and figure. With this last bunch that I did, I was trying to move farther away from that and do something even more different, or even contemporary. The big argument there was that when I presented it as Indian art, people couldn't see it as Indian art. So it gets right back to that: "Why does it have to be Indian?"

EW: One of the problems confronting a lot of the Indian artists today is the fact that we run into a point in time when labels become no longer important to us because you just want to do your work regardless of what it is. If it looks traditional, fine; if it looks contemporary, fine. If you want to do whatever you want to do, that's the hard part, like he was saying that he stopped — he couldn't create.

ONJ: *Almost like a writer's block. An artist's block?*

EW: Right. You look within yourself. Who am I and what am I trying to do and why do I do it?

ONJ: *Why do you do it?*

EW: Certainly not for the money. I like to think of it as a way of sharing a gift, something that was given to me or something that was directed through me, in a way almost channeled through me. I am like the instrument. I am like the receptor. Even though I go out and think, a bolt of lightning doesn't hit me and — boom! — I'm there working. I have a lot of processes that I have to go through, too, but I feel that I have to share this talent. I have to utilize it.

ONJ: *What about the spectator? For example, Scott Momaday says when he writes he expects the reader to go through changes after he reads his novel. Do you expect the person who's viewing the art to go*

through changes — he walks away, and he's not the same person anymore?

JE: You hope they would, but that's not the purpose. You don't decide you're going to create something to change people so much as it's within. That's the gift of it. It's within these individuals that have this ability. The sad part is not letting that grow and not nurturing that. What happens a lot of times is that you begin looking at the spectator and wondering what the spectator wants, and that's when you lose that person that has something to share.

ONJ: So what you're saying is that it's like fire that's already within the log? When we get fire from a log, we're not bringing fire to the log. It's already inside the log and it's coming out and warms anyone who's near the fire. so it's like that? Whatever the artist has just comes out?

EW: There's a point when you create art for people, and there's a point when you break off from that. You create for yourself.

ONJ: Do you think about people when you're creating?

EW: There is a time when you do, especially if you're in academia. You're always creating for people; you're never creating for yourself. The whole process of art education is just like anything else. You're there to make the grade. So you're going to change your art if you have to to get the grade. You accept everything in order to get through the system. You can change; you can be flexible. You don't totally throw out your ways and your ideas. You have to give a little bit; you have to bend a little bit in order to make it through that system. Once you get through it you can throw out what you don't need and keep what you need.

ONJ: *But does that corrupt the artist? All these people who try to please someone else: Those who are going to look at their art, those who are going to judge their art, those who are going to grade their art, those who are going to buy their art, those who are going to exhibit their art. Afterwhile does that corrupt the artist?*

EW: It depends on the artist's intentions. Are your intentions purely to make money? Or are your intentions through your art and making money? There's a lot of difference.

ONJ: *Well, maybe an artist has a wife and children.*

EW: This is why we're up here. There are people who are doing art and can't sell it. We're trying to help the people that want to. That's a small portion of it, to get it out. Maybe there's people who do art but don't know how to sell it. Maybe we can offer that assistance, too — help them in getting things ready so they can present it.

JE: But maybe they do it because they want to teach it. You know, some grandmas just teach it, that's all they want to do. They don't want to sell their work. They just want to teach the kids. They want to make sure it maintains itself. You find that more in elder people than you do in the younger people. But at the same time you find that there are a lot of younger people who are new on the rez now, who come back from being educated and find that that's the only piece of culture they've got that's real alive. By becoming in touch with that, they become embedded in what culture is because that leads them to circles of things, that whole self-discovery process that you don't have when you go to academia, that you don't have when you're trying to just sell art, when you just have a skill. It's bringing people back to that circle, the idea of culture, the idea of arts. When you talk about what we're up here doing,

anybody can get whatever they want out of it. It's a matter of them getting there and saying they want something and us being able to work with what that is. We're not saying we're gods. We don't have any answers. But part of what you look at when you're looking at working in the arts is letting that vision come out. And to stop that vision from coming out is what so much of society has done, yet it has all the means available to make that stuff be visible. We made stopsigns common knowledge. The guy out there who made stopsigns is very wealthy now. You have to understand where all these symbols in society came from.

ONJ: *But that's not art.*

JE: At one point it was.

ONJ: *Are you saying that art is functional?*

JE: Art has always been functional.

EW: Art is functional. It can be functional; it can be nonfunctional.

JE: It depends on what you define as function.

ONJ: *We make a cradleboard. That's to put a child in. We make other objects to be used.*

EW: But then again, you look at a different culture's perspective, and they would walk in and see this thing hanging on the wall that has no use. "What, are you hiding a hole over there?"

JE: It's reinforcing a message of this culture here, right now, where we're sitting.

ONJ: *What about the most sacred thing, like a pipe? We're saying let's not take photographs, let's not sell pipes, let's not even put pipe in the same category as, say, an oil painting as visual art. What about that? In terms of being functional, that's one of the important things in the culture.*

EW: One of the things that goes right back to what we were discussing earlier is the categorizing. You have to remember that in the Indian culture they did not categorize art. Art was not by itself. Art was not delineated from the rest of what we do. Art was what we do. Art is who we are. Art is in religion. Art is in politics. Art is in our food. I might design this cup; it might be a gourd that I painted. It's functional, but yet it's still art. This plate, I might have turned it out on my potter's wheel.

ONJ: *What about something sacred?*

EW: That's what I said. There's no separation, even in religion, politics.

ONJ: *So everything is sacred?*

EW: No, art is in everything. Art is even in politics. If you look at the longhouse people, the Iroquois tribes, they used wampum belts. These wampum belts are very beautiful, but they serve a multitude of purposes. They are an agreement amongst all these people. They have the power to draw these people together. They have the power to make these people make political decisions.

ONJ: *Treaties.*

EW: Everything. So this piece is a political piece. This pipe — we have a pipe here—is a religious piece. You cannot separate —

JE: We have no choice. The unique thing is that this guy is a carver, and part of his problem is what he's got available to carve. What you have to look at is his skill as a carver. What he's learned by working with pipes might be something that could be of value. Yet at the same time we will bring to his attention the fact that we have discussed over and over and over the concern we have with getting people to understand and interpret the meaning of respect, so that we as artists and as a community working to support that are clear with people about how you can respect something.

Part Two

JE: We have no choice. The unique thing is that this guy is a carver, and part of his problem is what he's got available to carve. What you have to look at is his skill as a carver. What he's learned by working with pipes might be something that could be of value. Yet at the same time we will bring to his attention the fact that we have discussed over and over and over the concern we have with getting people to understand and interpret the meaning of respect, so that we as artists and as a community working to support that are clear with people about how you can respect something.

ONJ: So you're not promoting making ashtrays out of pipestone for them. You're saying that if you make a pipe we need to respect it but not misuse it. We don't want to make ashtrays and earrings out of pipestone.

EW: You introduce them to alternative material.

ONJ: A wooden pipe and then paint it the color of pipestone and sell it? That's what an old man in Wisconsin used to do.

EW: If that's what he wants to do, I think that's entirely up to him. I don't think I would promote anything like that for a craft. That's what it turns to is craft, making craft. I would encourage that individual. I think one of the things is that you have tribal differences, too, in looking at the stone. There are some tribes that look at the stone and say, "It cannot be used for this" period. We have to adhere to this principle. For instance, in my tribe the pipe is very sacred. We cannot even depict it in a painting.

ONJ: Yet you're saying at the same that it's OK to bring it in as an element of art.

EW: No. No, I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that you don't...I can't make people change. If an individual has been working with pipestone for 20 or 30 years, I can talk to him about it. I can teach him some of the ways that Indian people are looking at it, how Indian people feel about it. Maybe he was never introduced to that. Maybe he was poorly introduced to the material and found that the material was a very easy material to carve. Maybe he had no connection at all to the pipe.

ONJ: OK, but here's a carver who's been carving for 30 or 40 years, a spiritual person, and he says, "I don't have a job. I don't have a way of making a living. So I'm going to sell my pipes. And on the other hand we have elders who say you're not supposed to sell pipe."

JE: And what we're saying is that you have to respect that circle. That circle says that that stuff will come back around to you. You may not have to pay for it in your mind right now when you sell it, but your family and what's around you is going to come back and make the payment because the nature of the pipe is that it has a retribution factor which has nothing to do with feeding your family. It has purely to do with the fact

that it itself has a life of its own.

EW: A lot of Indian people would not directly tell the man, but they would probably make reference to the fact that the reason that this man is not able to feed his family is because he has done that for a long time. That's part of the retribution that he is having to pay. It comes out through his family, not directly to him but through his family. The family is hungry constantly because he has violated what he knows, and so now his family is paying for it, until he changes and makes amends and starts doing something else. Then that would probably change. A lot of people would probably feel that way.

ONJ: *That's an interesting way to put it. So what you guys are doing, then, as an organization is saying just to use a metaphor, "Look, don't use that drum from the music store. You have to make your own drum. Do the work that takes time and knowledge, and do it right, and make a drum the way it's supposed to be made, and don't just go to the store and buy one."*

JE: Well, we're not saying that. See, we cannot tell people, "Don't do something." But what we can do is in as much as possible is encourage that creativity that exists within, try to build that support system so that that person has the ability to realize they can go make it themselves and not put them in the position of saying, "That's right; that's wrong."

ONJ: *Just promoting it, encouraging it. So make a drum rather than go buy one.*

JE: Right, connect the two. I don't know — you need to let people have their own minds about it, and the frustrating part in all of this is that there's a big growth that goes on here, but just having got into it the last three years, I have become so

aware of all the ramifications: Of feeding the family, of the \$5 painting that should be \$5000, and the frustration that goes on in people's minds. What concerns me more than anything is that the person's vision becomes so small by the fact that there is so much said behind his back, never with him at the table and sharing with him other options, other opportunities — those are all said to be "out there" — they're not brought to the table. They have no opportunity to know about that. This guy could very easily be teaching children in school about something — about carving, about herbs, about trees, about whatever — but no one gives him that opportunity or wants to know that he even does that.

ONJ: Or even recognizes that.

JE: Right. Yet today we're hiring 24,000 botanists a year to come in from outside. The guy could be a botanist, but it's just a little bit of working with what it's going to take to let that happen. When we worked in the career center, the biggest issue we came across was that everybody was really artistically inclined. That just frustrated us to no end — all that seemed to be available in their minds, in the people's minds, in their heart, was a trade, was picking something that they could work with their hands, so they could use that vision they had on that level, and feel done with it, and be able to feed their families. So for me the vision of our culture starts dying because those people don't get the support they need to get that other stuff out.

EW: Are you familiar with the Indian Arts and Crafts Board? It's a government-sponsored organization out of D.C. It's still in existence today, but it originated in the '20's and early '30's I believe, by a man named John Collier. Collier was very influential in many arenas at that time, so one of the things he wanted to do was to promote Indian art, not only nationally but

internationally. Keep in mind that John Collier was also looking for a few bucks for himself.

ONJ: He was working for the BIA.

EW: Right, but John Collier did not have the knowledge of the people or the knowledge of the arts, let alone the knowledge of Indian arts. There happened to be a man — I think he was from Germany — a very wealthy man, who came into a large inheritance and just spent it foolishly. He was somewhat of an artist himself, but ended up in Mexico flat broke. So he started working with some of the Mexican people down there in reviving some of the arts and crafts, some of it being metal, reviving some of the old art traditions. What happened was he was able to create a market. These people would produce things, and he would go out and sell them. Lo and behold, he started reinforcing some of the cultural ways of these people again, by introducing some of these art forms to the people. Collier went down and got this guy, and he said, "Hey, we need some help. We want an Indian arts and crafts board. We want to hire you." So they hired this guy. They started to Indianize him. It sounded good; what it did was it put food on the table for many Indian artists. But there were a lot of strings attached. One of the strings was that only a certain select few could sell their goods. Say we're all in the same tribe at this table. We all make baskets, but your basket is better than his basket and her basket and my basket, because your baskets were made to specifications. So we like your basket even though her basket is utilizing traditional material and your basket is more colorful.

ONJ: Marketable.

EW: Yours is marketable to my specifications, so what we will

do is give you the stamp. You are the only one that has the stamp of approval — the Indian Arts and Crafts board stamp. We want you to change your material; we don't want you to use this grass, this native Indian grass that you've been using. We want you to use grass from Taiwan. It's much more colorful, it takes the dye, and its cheap. So you're going to use this grass from Taiwan. You'll also have this stamp on your basket. So nobody will buy her basket, his, mine, because they don't have a stamp, and everybody knows you can't buy a basket unless it has the stamp. So that's what they started doing. They started dictating to the Indian people as to what they could use, as to what they could make, as to what material to use and what materials not to use. So you were finding Indian people in Indian country that were out there making trinkets that were marketable. They went to the Navajo. They were paying them by the foot on their weavings. A dollar a foot is what they were making at that time. So if a woman came in with a five-foot blanket, she made five dollars. What they started doing was that they were stockpiling these blankets, thinking that they were going to have this world market. They were going to corner the market. It didn't work. They started getting some of these really bizarre-looking blankets that they wanted made, and they had a stockpile of blankets that they couldn't move. So they started selling them in department stores like J.C. Penney — original pieces of work in a department store like Penney's — and the Indian people, their traditional art started slowly dwindling because they couldn't do any more. They could do it for themselves, but say I had been making canoes before the Art Board stepped in. I couldn't sell them because I didn't have the stamps because I was using an old technique and I wasn't using this new Super Glue.

ONJ: You talk about the Navajos. What about something like sand paintings, that are supposed to be therapeutic. They're supposed to be

something used to heal, to cure.

EW: Not sellable. You have to look at it —

ONJ: *But then there's an artist who says, "OK, but look, I'm hungry, I have to sell."*

EW: The people that are aware of that within the tribe, they don't kick them out of the tribe. A lot of them come to feel they should.

ONJ: *Ostracize them.*

EW: It is known in Indian country if he does. Let's put it that way. Indian country is very small.

ONJ: *That's a way of stopping artists who are abusing their rights.*

AW: The guy that gave the State of New Mexico the design for the seal —

EW: The Seal of the Sun.

AW: He got kicked out of his tribe for that.

ONJ: *Hopi, wasn't he?*

EW: See what he did was he took an ancient symbol from his people and prostituted that symbol to the state. They use it now; that's their seal for the state. But see, that's the severity of it.

JE: That kind of statement needs to be heard by other people, but where does it happen? It happens in a setting like this; it

happens when you're actually concerned about something and you talk about it. I think the frustration we have, myself, as an organizer is trying to figure out how to have that discussion without anyone saying, "Forget this. I'm not listening." which has happened for so long. So part of what we're saying is that it doesn't matter what your artis. Bring it to the table. We'll talk about that later. When it comes time for taking pictures, we'll look at it differently.

ONJ: So we do it through example, right? You shouldn't sell your art. You're not supposed to sell. That teaches the young artist, "Hey I'm not supposed to sell the sacred sand painting, I'm not supposed to sell the pipe, I'm not supposed to sell these other things that are sacred." By example?

EW: We're going to run into people who want to market their art, and a lot of them probably are not giving serious thought as to what they're trying to market, as to whether it's religious or non-religious. So those are some of the people that we have to share things with and talk about some of the things that exist today. I've known Indian people all my life who have went that way, who have done those things, and most of it is purely economical situations. It's hard when you've got a hungry family, but if they really wanted to go out, they could rely on families if they're that hungry. That's what community is all about. They would get support.

ONJ: But 70% unemployment on the rez, 90% unemployment on the rez — the guy's starving; he needs to sell something.

EW: I know it's hard. I've lived that way before. I know what it's about. There comes a point in time when you have to realize, "I cannot do this art because this art is my people." This belief that I'm trying to sell, not that I did, but I'm saying

suppose I was trying to do something that belongs to my people. I had to make that decision for myself. I could take so much from my teachings and put them into my art, and I know that I could make a bundle of money. Because we are an age-graded society, as you get older they give you more and you get more from your people because you have lived in this so-called pillar, this step in life, or completed more of the cycle, but you have to decide that these things given to you in trust belong here and not so that I can become rich and famous.

ONJ: OK, that brings me to another question. Momaday says that when he writes, he, himself, is not writing, that somehow his ancestors are speaking through him, so he has this historical voice, this historical memory that comes through him from generations and generations of orality. So when you, Ernie, or when someone does some art, does that art copyright with the ancestors or is that Ernie's art? Do most Native artists put their stamp and say, "OK, I'm going to sign this work here, but in reality the copyright goes either to some ancestor or to some dream that some ancestor had?"

EW: Again, we're getting into that category of labeling things. Indian people know and understand, if they're working with symbols, where those symbols came from. Even if I put a symbol on my painting, I will sign it. I know that I didn't create that symbol. That symbol existed long before me. What I'm doing is re-introducing it, keeping that alive so that it can go on. But I'm doing it in contemporary ways.

ONJ: You're taking responsibility for it.

EW: I'm using acrylic paints, I'm putting it on canvas, where traditionally my people would put them on buckskin. I'm using new materials, but I'm not really doing anything new. I'm putting it in a different context so that it's probably more

acceptable to Indian society today. The younger kids can look at that and associate to that, yet you make them aware of the traditional ways, where that came from. That's where your storytelling comes in; you reinforce those things. So what I do is I re-introduce. I don't do a lot of things that I would say were new, in a sense that it's right out of here and no one else has ever seen that —

JE: But you're a prophet.

EW: In a way — I do things that are new.

ONJ: So the ancestors are talking through you right now. Everything you just said is the ancestors talking through you. It's in your blood, so everything that's said or done or created actually comes down. It comes down.

EW: I've been doing these rock writings in ancient symbols, but I'm not responsible for them. I didn't do them. I'm only responsible in the sense that I'm re-introducing them with power. Now that's the difference between Euro-American and Indian, that our symbols are power. Symbols in Euro-American culture do not have the same type of power. If they do, it's not a spiritual, or a power that we associate with. It's a different kind of power. So when I do these symbols, I have to reintroduce them with the power and dignity that they deserve. I can't just put it out there.

JE: Neon.

ONJ: Yeah, neon art.

EW: That's what I'm using.

ONJ: *You're using neon?*

EW: I've got some drawings I'll show you. I'm using contemporary materials to enhance these symbols, to re-introduce these symbols. I'm not making them a cheap object.

ONJ: *So what does the neon art look like?*

JE: Whatever you want it to look like, as an artist.

ONJ: *I mean, an eagle out of neon? A hawk made out of neon?*

EW: I'm using ancient symbols.

JE: The neon just highlights it.

ONJ: *The material changes, but the content remains.*

EW: Right.

ONJ: *The symbol remains.*

EW: We use neon for backlighting, so it gives it an aura.

JE: But not only does it create that aura. When you talk about categories, his art fits one of the modern categories just by that element. It's a mixed media.

ONJ: *Actually, it's a post-contemporary art.*

EW: I don't take responsibility for those symbols because I can't. They're not mine. They belong to all the people, but I am reintroducing them and reinforcing that symbol again, so that it doesn't die. I'm keeping a culture and tradition alive. And

I think that it's really difficult today for Indian people to do that, because you can walk down here in the mall and I can walk into over 50% of the stores, and I can find some clothing article that has Indian symbols on it. They have expropriated these symbols and incorporated them and made a commodity out of them. What that does is that it cheapens them. That's not what I am doing. I am enhancing these symbols and giving them power, whereas these examples have become a commodity. You can even find ancient rock writings now on clothing, on jewelry, on bandanas. What that does is suppress that culture, because they have made something of power into a commodity. The mass majority begins to accept that as a commodity, and it's not accepted then as an image or symbol the way the minority people once utilized it. So the masses then do not give it all the respect that it deserves. It becomes a commodity item that is wearable.

ONJ: *I have a question, though. What you're talking about is what Leslie Silko has been criticized about. She's saying, "Look, we don't only need to preserve the old stories, we need to make new stories." So in her novel Ceremony, she has a medicine man character who is a Navajo, but the Navajos criticize him because he wants to change the traditions a little bit, stretch them. He says there's a new element in our society now and we have to deal with the new element. Therefore, our stories have to change. We need old stories, but we need new ones. So he's being criticized for that. So is somebody going to criticize you and say, "Now wait a minute, Ernie. You're getting the old art and making a new art out of it, so you're violating tradition?"*

EW: I might step on some toes. I might have some people who are offended by that. But then again, I will have other people that will look at that and not be offended.

JE: I think you're talking about a difference though, too, when

you're talking about Leslie Silko and creating a story and that stretch. There's a different element when you put something on paper, a story. It's like plagiarizing an old story and trying to enhance it so it's acceptable, like the Catholic Church now makes it OK for certain things whereas at a certain time they didn't. It gives this stamp of approval. The culture in itself had a reason for that statement. Yes, we have change, and, yes, we have new people with the same blood. But we still have to understand that history is on-going and the way the story is told will change. You can see that, but that doesn't necessarily make it all OK. There is a reason why we had that story that way. There is a reason why we always said you go to the seventh generation. There is a reason why they had wampum belts. That never changed. You don't take that wampum belt and put one bead out of place and that changes it, just like the whole treaty concept. You don't change it if that is redoing it. The treaties now have a lot of fine print that you don't see until you challenge it. It shouldn't be the "plagiarized" story. It shouldn't be tainting the culture in that way when you take an old story and change it that much.

ONJ: Here's how Silko defends it through the Medicine Man character in the novel: He says, "Look, even a thousand years ago, for example, you made a pouch and you hung the tobacco pouch up on the wall. That skin itself is going through changes. It doesn't remain the same; it changes. We've always had change, and they're lying to us when they tell us that we need to petrify our culture, because even before the European came here the culture was already changing."

JE: It may change, but the fact remains that when it was made it was made a pouch, to hang tobacco in. We cannot petrify that. We know that it was material that goes back to whatever it was, but the new pouch is going to be made out of different material. It's going to have a different life span. It's going to come in

contact with different things. It's going to have different ways of looking at—

EW: There's a biological change that occurs with everything.

ONJ: *So culture is organic?*

EW: Well, no, we were talking about the pouch. That goes through an chemical change, but the idea of the tobacco, the idea of the pouch, the respect that it has hanging on the north wall or the south wall or wherever, that remains the same. Now this person in 1990 may design a pouch made of something else — a steel pouch — and put tobacco in it, but that concept is still there. He has changed the material. Biologically, he has been able to change that, but the idea remains the same. The essence isn't changed.

ONJ: *The spirit of it.*

EW: The spirit of it is still there.

ONJ: *So are you going to make a tobacco pouch out of neon lights, and the essence of the tobacco pouch is in that neon light?*

EW: I don't do tobacco and pouches. And I would not incorporate neon. I probably could, but I'd be very cautious in the way I presented it. I do tobacco pouches in drawings and tobacco in drawings, but what I have done is created an image made out of drawing that is petrified, so to speak, in time.

ONJ: *So if someone can make a pipe, for example, out of neon lights, that image of the pipe in neon lights would have the essence of what the original idea was?*

EW: No, it wouldn't. See, what we're talking about is the material again, so I would not do it with that interpretation at all. I would not even attempt to think about it. I created an ancient symbol from a rock writing of a human-like figure —

ONJ: But that material is organic. People take artwork out of that. That's not new. But what about neon lights?

EW: The way I utilize them, to get back to neon lights, is that I'm helping to enhance my figures. I don't have the neon as a dominant art form. It's hidden. You don't even see the neon. All you see is a glow emitted from the neon. The rest of the neon is totally hidden.

ONJ: So it's for effect.

EW: It's for effect. I didn't make these figures out of neon.

JE: It's the idea of using that stretch — this new material being a contemporary material, bringing that element of knowledge that's from the blood, from what you know, what you feel in here. That's the idea.

ONJ: Combining them

EW: You could do that, if you wanted to, make a pipe like that, but Indian people would look at that and say —

ONJ: — psychedelic — neon tribes —

EW: You run a lot, don't you? This is one of the ways that I can really explain it to people that are not visual artists. We're all artists, everyone, whether we realize it or not. We all have artistic talents in some form. Some people just don't work at

those. It's like running. You have to work at it to maintain. We're all capable of running, everyone of us. Some of us just don't. It's the same way with art.

ONJ: A run can be just jogging; a run can be spiritual. You can run spiritually; you can run just to lose weight. Like that?

EW: With art it becomes almost a sacred thing after a while, especially to a lot of Indian artists.

ONJ: Becomes or it is sacred?

EW: Some people do not look at it that way to begin, because they're learning a lot of basics. Some do right from the beginning if they're introduced properly, say by an elder. If an elder introduces them to a traditional way of working, he will introduce the sacredness of that art to them. Whereas, for example, I went to art school, and I started learning techniques and material. Then it became incorporated into my culture, and, to me, it became a sacred way of working, like a modern day medicine man but—

ONJ: Who introduced you to art?

EW: I guess it was probably my family. I had an uncle who was very artistic. My mother used to paint when she was younger. They always encouraged art in our family, even though no one was a working artist. I guess my uncle was a working artist. He was more traditional in the sense that he made dance costumes. He worked with feathers, quills, hides. He would always encourage us to do things, whatever he did that was artistic. But there comes a point in time when you're so devoted to your art that it becomes a euphoria. It's like that running high. You reach a stage when you're making something where all this

doesn't exist. I'm here with this painting, and I don't get hungry, I don't get tired. I feel nothing except the euphoria of this creation.

ONJ: A spiritual sense.

EW: You've probably gone through that. You're there, locked into what you're doing. Once you've stopped, "Oh, my feet hurt! Oh I'm so hungry!"

ONJ: How often does that happen, though?

EW: As often as I want. I could do it every night if I had to, if I had the time. If I could support myself and if I had the space, I'd be doing it every night. It's like running every day.

JE: The element in being able to do that is that juice of interaction with other people, with other things. The idea of artists and writers in this lonely little cabin of creation — that would be an ideal dream. I think that part of it is getting that juice and using that stretch.

ONJ: So artists need people?

EW: I think so, very much so in this society, and I think it always has been. I was telling somebody that families of people are all artists. You know, if we were all family here, which we are in a sense, but by blood, we would all have talents in here that were different. You might be a fantastic storyteller; Anthony might be a fantastic bowmaker; I might be able to make canoes; Juanita could probably make fantastic baskets; David could make a mess of everything (laughter). We all had skills that we all would share. Even though you could do my skill, she could do his skill, we'd all have one we could do just a little better, like

the arrowmakers that worked in the stone. They were an elitist group of people, yet there were other people who could do that. It wasn't if they died, we're lost.

ONJ: There's a story that Scott Momaday talks about where the arrowmaker is sitting in a tent making an arrow using his teeth and so on. And afterward he points it around to see if it's straight. Then he sees a shadow outside the teepee and wonders if it's an enemy or a friend, so he says in Kiowa, "Who are you? What do you want? And if you don't understand what I'm saying..." When he doesn't answer, the arrowmaker assumes that he's an enemy and lets the arrow fly, and he gets the enemy. So then art becomes associated with language, language becomes associated with survival and life. Is that what we're talking about?

E: I was going to say "What if that person was deaf and was a tribal member" (laughter).

The Dispute of the New World

JOSEPH R. JOURDAIN

The New World has often been criticized as immature or degenerate. The arguments continue and are seen in Antonello Gerbi's *The Dispute of the New World* as including American plant life, animals, and human inhabitants. Much of this thinking was formulated by natural scientist George Louis Leclerc Buffon who characterized the new continent as deficient in life forms and yet plentiful with the wrong types. "Reptiles and insects abound. . .in gigantic size," he says, "toads, frogs, and other beasts of this kind are also very sizable in America." Predominant thinkers, at the time, took it for granted that larger was somehow always better. It was speculated that the harsh climate limited the ability of plants and animals to reach epic proportions, such as the elephant of the Old World. Caught in the middle of this continental denigration was the inhabitants of America who were variously referred to as animals, savages, and Indians. Following Aristotelian "slavery by nature," men such as Cornelius dePauw set out to justify the inferiority of the men of America. He referred to the Indians as "worse off then the animals" and, "holding in abhorrence the laws of society...living each one for himself, in a state of indolence, inertia, complete dejection." In modern times, the outlook towards the Indian is not much improved, so

Joseph R. Jourdain, English major, is completing his studies at Bemidji State University.

it isn't too surprising that Native American writers should engage in polemical literature. However, this is done with tremendous skill, a skill which often surpasses that of those who came to teach literacy to Indians.

Scott Momaday, in *House Made of Dawn*, and Leslie Silko, in *Ceremony* engage themselves admirably in the art of disputation or controversy to refute the principles and opinions of American society towards the Native American. Scott Momaday seems not to think that America is populated with the wrong kinds of animals. Instead, he proposes that "these - and the innumerable meaner creatures, the lizard and the worm - have tenure in the land. The other, latecoming things - the beasts of burden and of trade, the horse and the sheep, the dog and the cat - these have an alien and inferior aspect, a poverty of vision and instinct, by which they are estranged from the wild land, and made tentative. They are born and die upon the land, but then they are gone away from it as if they had never been." The lowly beasts belong here, Momaday seems to say, but what are his thoughts about invading peoples? Later, he goes on to clarify that "Man, too, has tenure in the land; he dwelt upon the land twenty five thousand years ago, and his gods before him." Momaday is a little ambiguous here, but soon refers to the invaders as "enemies" of the Indian people. Is the reader to assume that the invaders also have a poverty of vision and instinct, that they too are estranged from the wild land and made tentative? One could argue for that. After all, reasons Momaday, the Indians have only taken from the invaders "the luxury of example." While taking on the names and gestures of the "enemies," they have held on to their own secret souls. In this, there is a "resistance" to dominant ways, a method of identity survival. Oral tradition, tribal memory, and language play inseparable roles in the preservation of cultural identity, Momaday argues.

Language is exclusive of others, and Momaday uses it as an

excellent tool for outstanding polemics regarding the use of language as mere rhetoric. He speaks through the character of Tosamah, the Priest of the Sun, who views the white man as possessing a proclivity for distorting the truth: "and the white man has his ways...He talks about the Word...through it and around it...builds upon it with syllables...prefixes and suffixes and hyphens and accents. He adds and divides and multiplies the Word. And in all of this he subtracts the Truth...the white man deals in words...with grace and sleight of hand." Momaday underscores the devious nature of rhetoric with the simplicity of children who can listen and learn. He says, "the Word is sacred to a child." Language is sacred and therefore important to Indians, as Momaday points out. This can be seen in the character of Tosamah whose grandmother was a storyteller. Although she couldn't read or write, she knew the importance of words, says Tosamah. "When she told me those old stories, something strange and powerful was going on. I was a child, and that old woman was asking me to come into the presence of her mind and spirit." Momaday proposes that language, for Indians, is much more than a means of deception; it can and should be the vehicle for relating the truth of tradition, that part of us which possesses the genetic imprint of our existence, that which tells us the Truth. The white man, Momaday argues, is diluted and has become insensitive with his rhetoric; with his mountains of pamphlets and literature, the white man may well perish by the Word. In the struggle for survival, oral tradition plays as just as important a part as language.

Dependence on the written word contrasts with the important function of tribal memory in tribal identity survival. Tribal histories are rich with unwritten literatures, and because they are unwritten are "always but one generation from extinction. But for the same reason it was cherished and revered." Because stories handed down through oral tradition have survived for hundreds of years or longer, they have acquired a validity that

the written word cannot match; that is, at least to the Indian peoples. Tradition stands in jeopardy under the weight of oppression. When tradition is destroyed, Truth is also subject to destruction. Scott Momaday quietly passes on the message.

House Made of Dawn is quietly polemic in that it refutes many misconceptions about the Native people of America. If, as Cornelius dePauw insinuates, the men of the new continent were weak, how have they survived the onslaught of cultural genocide for five hundred years? Native American literature is rarely mentioned as polemic, but maybe it is because the polemic element is so skillfully hidden within the text of Native novels. Regardless, Native writers skillfully fend off the asinine proposals that Indians are inferior beings, little more than animals, or that Indians are naturally slaves who can be subjugated and held in perpetual bondage. One can imply from this the reason for the rejection of Native American literature as valid. The truth, inherent in *House Made of Dawn* has been assigned to the literary genre of fiction.

In *The Dispute of the New World*, author Gerbi tells of another view of the American Native as a "Noble Savage" that many regarded as awesome and as articulate and eloquent as any find statesman. But, Cornelius dePauw even denigrated the portrayals of Indians in The Jesuit Relations as the attempts of that religious order was to pacify the feelings of their financiers. Leslie Silko, in *Ceremony*, takes up the issue of missionary encroachment and the results of their proselytizing.

Silko appears much more forceful than Momaday in her polemic element. She accurately describes the religious dilemma of the Native people who suffer from confusion: "Christianity separated the people from themselves; it tried to crush the single clan name, encouraging each person to stand alone, because Jesus Christ would save only the individual soul; Jesus Christ was not like the Mother who loved and cared for them as her children, as her family." This modern confusion is

readily apparent when inequalities and injustice are served on the Indian people - the Christian proselytes are strangely quiet. Silko brings out the destruction of tribal identity by speaking with a tribal, collective voice rather than from the standpoint of a single, narrative central character. The hero, or heroine, of the novel becomes her tribe, or for that matter, any tribe of Indians anywhere. *Ceremony* vividly illustrates the cultural suppression of the novel's characters.

Within Tayo's immediate family can be observed the splitting of their cultural views. Rocky is embarrassed at the ceremonial way in which his family will take care of a slain deer. Tayo covers his eyes of the deer "out of respect." Tayo's people say this should be done before any deer is gutted, but Rocky is an A-student in school, an all-state athlete in football and track. He wanted to be a winner so he listened to his coaches who told him, "Nothing can stop you now except one thing: don't let the people at home hold you back." Rocky is feeling the barrages of constant attempts to assimilate the Indian into the larger society. He deliberately avoids the old-time ways and his Auntie approves, as she sees this as his only hope for success. Old Grandma disapproves of Rocky's attitude, and so we observe in the family the insidious nature of cultural conflict; religion too has its severe limitations, contrary to its professed purpose.

Leslie Silko further espouses tribalism, in preference to the individualism imposed upon the Indian, in her approach to the well-being of the Native characters of her novel. The new learning for Tayo's mother had resulted in shame for herself and for the deplorable ways of her people, while the priest "shook his finger at the drunkenness and lust, but the people felt something deeper: they were losing her, they were losing part of themselves...but the white men smiled at her...the people wanted her back...it was that simple, and when they failed, the humiliation fell on all of them: what happened to the

girl did not happen to her alon, it happened to all of them." Tayo's family bore the brunt of shame for what his mother had allowed to happen to herself. But, Tayo is also mixed up and needs the strength of more than just individual help - his grandmother recognizes that he needs a medicine man. Auntie is worried what the neighbors will think, but Grandma is unconcerned about judgments leveled against her family. Tayo's recuperation must depend on the things that his brother Rocky had learned not to believe in. His grandmother knows he needs a holistic approach for his recovery. Because of tribalism Tayo recovers, and because of lack of tribalism Pinkie loses his life - his wild life had gotten that way as the result of not following his traditional ways. All his army buddies were just as messed up as Pinkie. Leslie Silko presents a good argument for tribal living and group well-being, which is contrary to the misconception that Indians worry only about themselves and never for their neighbors.

Native American literature is largely ignored, even when it is presented in its finest forms, but Scott Momaday's Pulitzer-Prize winning *House Made of Dawn* and Leslie Silko's *Ceremony* cannot help but be noticed for their excellence. But few will notice, or admit to, the polemic nature of both novels. Both novels are examples of what fine writing might do to refute misconceptions of Native people and advance arguments for the peoples' legitimacy.

An Elder's Last Words

KATHLEEN THORNES

Editor's Note: George Aubid, Sr. was considered by many to be a cultural bearer; his clan mark was the Awasii, a member of the Midewiwin, 4th degree, including the International Council, the Liberation of Indian people, Honor Indian Treaties, Trail of Broken Treaties; He was awarded Highest Honor, Ojibwe Warrior Society. He worked with the Anti-Nuke, Toxic and Hazardous Waste Program, and was a former Chief Justice of the Mille Lacs Reservation, 1984-88. He earned a B.S. degree in Social Studies. This interview was recorded July 15, 1989. Mr. Aubid passed away in 1990.

Kathy Thornes: Who was Oshkaabewis ?

George Aubid Sr.: Oshkaabewis - he came down and looked at the land. He had a backpack - wandered around. While he was wandering around, there were reptiles and dinosaurs. He was an intruder - they thought he was an intruder - so they tried to catch him, find out what he had in his backpack, but they couldn't catch him. He was messenger of the Great Spirit - Oshkabewis - but that doesn't describe him either as a messenger - or any English word - but I can tell you later, it'll take a long time to describe it. He ran through the swamp, forest, through the prairie, up the hill, up the mountain; they couldn't catch him. So when he got done he told the Great Spirit that he'd done his job. He said that there was a lot of dinosaurs here.

Kathleen Thornes is completing her studies in English at Bemidji State University, and is a free lance writer.

K: Was he a spirit?

G: A Supreme Being. Oshkaabewis said there were a lot of dinosaurs, life threatening. So the Great Spirit said he will fix that - cause something to happen like a flood - drown them out; they disappeared. They'd been here 200 million years, then they disappeared. Then they put the Anishinabe here - four men, four women.

Let me go back to another part. There were four Supreme Beings in four directions.

They pay respects to the North; the Supreme Being there is in charge of the cold. Cold could mean that area beyond Pluto - absolute Zero - 440 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. It wouldn't get any colder, but that's absolute cold out there in the universe. You take a block of steel like this, and you hit it with a hammer, it'll shatter - because the molecules won't hold it together anymore. He's in charge of the cold, that one in the north - so we pay respects to him. His name is Gaabiboonoke.

Then we pay respects to the Supreme Being in the East; his name is Neshakawasken. We pay respects to him.

Then they put the flora and the fauna, you know what grows - weeds, trees, everything - and then, after all the plants were in place - then they put the animals - coons, buffalo, beaver, every kind of animal.

K: The Anishinaabe came before them?

G: Yeh. Then after that, they stocked the rivers, lakes, streams with northerns, walleyes, every kind of fish; then they put birds here, like migratory waterfowl; they put wild rice here for the Anishinaabe to eat - blueberries, strawberries, blackberries - so it was really good. And then the Supreme Being said, we created a beautiful place here. I'm going to stay here and enjoy it with the Anishinaabe people. The Supreme Being of the East said, but, they said you cannot be here, because nobody with supernatural powers should be here when they put the Indian

people here. So you have to go. Okay, he said, I'll leave but under one condition; if anybody ever comes and destroys what we make here, the spiritual land, I'm going to come back and punish them. So he left. You know, we hear about the thunderbirds - interplanetary beings - when you say thunderbird, it represents a lot of power.

K: It represents the power of all four directions?

G: Each one of the four directions has power; like, a lightning bolt will hit a tree, it'll split it up in seconds - tornados, hurricanes, tremendous force - but if you and I went up there about 20 miles up, because of less air pressure, just the temperature of our bodies will cause our blood to boil, our bodies will explode - unless we're in a protective capsule. But, the thunderbirds can travel out there; so when the Indians find his feather, they use it for different purposes, like in dance costumes - the healing arts, awards for bravery - it has high value. So the Indians have a lot of respect for the eagle feather.

K: It's a gift from the eagle, isn't it?

G: From the thunderbird - when they dance, they have their feathers on. Just like they're waiting for the return of the Messiah from the East - okay, so what he said was, whoever ruins this beautiful land we created, I'm going to come back and destroy them, if anybody ruins the land.

K: The one from the East?

G: The one from the East said that. Let me leave that right now. So the land right now is being polluted - tons and tons of toxic, hazardous garbage is thrown in the lakes - and all kinds of hazardous, toxic pollutants are going to contaminate the air - like acid rain - like automobiles will generate exhaust gas - millions of factories spew carbon monoxide - planes, trucks - tons and tons into the atmosphere - then the water is being

continually polluted by paper companies - PCB and dioxins - even these rivers are being polluted and fish get that mercury and other heavy metals - so he might come back. We don't know what he'll use; he might come back in fire - like a nuclear holocaust - or he might come back a disease, like AIDs, goes out of control. The epidemiologist hasn't got the answer to stop Aids - nothing will stop it - or some other way. But people are destroying his creation - that's what he said.

They had no highway patrol, no national guard, no army, navy, air force; they had to have people that policed the villages - the Ogichidaa

K: Are there Ogichidaa now?

G: Yeh.

K: They're the defenders? That's the highest honor?

G: Ogichidaa.

K: They're the defenders of the traditions?

G: Defenders of the people, the nation, just like the army, navy, marines, air force, state patrol, county police - they protect the people, Ogichidaa. But these people who became mercenaries in the United States army - it's one nation's people fighting under the flag of another nation. That's what these veterans' arms and their powerhouse represent. Say, for example, Indians were put into the military; some of them fought other Indian tribes - like Wounded Knee - when these Indians in these armed forces are told to shoot their own people, they have to do it; they have to obey the order - so our own young people are killing the people of our nation. So that's why we should not recognize this sort of thing; only the Ogichidaa should be recognized - because we, the Ogichidaa, we protect the people, from the babies to the elders. Not only do we protect the people, but we protect their traditions - their social customs,

their ceremonials, their language.

K: How many Ogichidaa are there?

G: Only those who want to serve.

K: Only those who understand what it means?

G: Yeh, who knows what it means - like when we have a ceremonial powwow, we do not allow the English language to be spoken there; so that way we protect our language - and we don't use any European, mechanized culture - just the true Indian culture prevails. And so we are defenders of the nation.

K: Do you hold one of these ceremonies at East Lake here?

G: Only the true ways are done here - in fact, Mille Lacs seems to be the only area where these practices are almost only done.

K: That's why your language survived, and the tradition survived, by the people who went underground?

G: Right - like this little girl, I teach her nothing but Ojibwe - but with the other members of the family she uses English. So the little girl's bilingual; she comprehends everything I say in Ojibwe.

K: What's her name?

G: Her name is Tarea, and her Indian name is Bedobonokwe.

K: You were taught Ojibwe through phonetics?

G: Yeh, but they used the international phonetic system - then there's the English, that has a different sound to it, too, but the international system that's what we used - when writing down the Ojibwe language. That's what I favor is the international system - but now in these schools, where the Indian kids go to school, they try to read this Indian writing and say "e" instead of "a", it confuses everybody.

K: So the way they teach Ojibwe in the colleges, they don't use the right phonetics?

G: Starting with Earl Nyholm, they started using double aa, double oo, and double ii - in order to get that sound.

The one that's in charge of the East - begins to warm up and then everything grows, like wild rice, trees, cut wood for heat in winter - then the baby ducks, the baby geese, bear - increased the food supply - then without the sun we wouldn't be here; so we pay respect to the one in charge of the East.

Then the one in the West, the spiritual trail - everybody who dies goes to the Spirit Land in the West - that's a long story, too. But I wanted to mention about the East, what he said - he wanted to stay here, but they told him he cannot be here because no Supreme Being who possesses supernatural powers should be here. Okay, then, the Indians started to live here - they enjoy everything that was here - food, trees. Then one day one of them died; they didn't know what to do - that was the first time they'd ever seen death; they said he was sleeping; they tried to wake him up, he turned cold. So they didn't know what to do - then one of them guys said, say remember when the Great Spirit put us here? We're supposed to smoke this tobacco to open communication with the Great Spirit - that's why they put that tobacco - remember that Oshkaabewis who went around; he planted tobacco all over for the Indians to use to communicate with the Great Spirit. So that's when, they smoked the tobacco and opened communication with the Great Spirit - the Great Spirit told them about the Spirit Trail West - and everybody who lives here will die someday - that goes for you and I.

K: Then, when we die we go to the Spirit World in the West?

G: Yeh, I suppose the English or Europeans, they have this Christianity - they talk about heaven and hell - so they too have that structure, but the Indians they have the Spirit Land to the West.

Then there's other stories between there, take about a couple hours to tell you - one is the Wenabozho, ever hear of Wenabozho? - okay, he was the grand uncle of the Indian people - and when he left - he left ookomisan, his grandmother, he also had two daughters; they all went to the Spirit Land - now when little babies die among the people, kids, they go to the Spirit Land, too - say, an old person dies who is blind - so on the trail to the spirit land, they lose those infirmities - they get over there, they're like in their 30s, even when they were real old ; so when they get over there they are forever young - they no longer have these physical deformities like blindness.

K: Do they have physical bodies, though ?

G: No.

K: They're spirits?

G: Right, their bodies stay here - wherever the graves are, that's where the bodies are - like if we have a ceremonial feast - like during some other ceremony, or to go on a vision quest - we put on a feast; they cook wild rice, buffalo meat, corn, blueberries; then they say a prayer, which is the only word we can use they can understand - then this tobacco carries the spirit of the food to the Spirit Land; we join this feast for people who die. Years ago - say, if your parents, died, your brothers and sisters, you carry their spirit, because even these plants have souls.

We pay respects to the Supreme Being in the South because he's in charge of the heat -because that's when everything grows - the sun comes back - without the sun we wouldn't be here, that's why we pay respects to the South.

Part 2

G: Years ago-so you know in order to have fun - they didn't have money, but everyone had fun. Now in order to have fun,

you gotta have money to go roller-skating, go to a movie, play pinball machines, video games. It takes money now just to have fun, but at one time they didn't have money but they still had fun. They still got where they were going. They still had something to eat, a place to sleep. We could revive that culture. We might have to do it pretty soon too because the way things are going - say like, Bush, he's saying I want 25% raise for all federal staff people. Anybody whose getting a hundred thousand now will automatically get \$125,000. Then Congress says, oh no, well we want our 25% too - that's maybe the medium range salary, let's say it that way. Then, as soon as they get their raise the people who are renting out to them say, you just got a \$25,000 raise on top of you \$100,000, we're gonna raise your rent another \$1000. Then they raise the gas, they raise food. I wonder what happens. Ok, then, there's a lot of raises - except for people like me who get Social Security, pension - which is not much. I get behind on the heat, light and water, rent, fuel oil; I have to drop the telephone, then I have to drop electricity, because your income can't meet that, in order to eat, for the kids to eat to go to school. Instead of burning fuel oil, you might have to put in wood. Then, these kinds of homes are inefficient. Even though they're insulated, they still leak heat. So you might have to go into the Mandan style dirt homes, where you dig down the ground four feet, then you put your superstructure, then you put more dirt there. You only need a few sticks of wood to warm it up in cold weather because heat comes from the bottom. In the summertime, they're cooler. Survival. We might have to go to that - and the kids can no longer take money to have fun; they'll have to devise ways like the Indians did a long time ago - play games, the way they do games now; let's say the Vikings play the Seahawks. They're out there to beat 'em. Then one group loses, and one group wins; you kinda humiliate the people you beat. They feel sad.

K: Back in the old days there wasn't that competition, everybody won?

G: Yeh, everybody was happy, the games were friendly.

But, what I wanted to explain was about the healing arts. They say years ago, they give you some plant. Say, this has medicinal properties; you look at it, and they give you another one, say marijuana. There is some property where people get high. Then you go someplace out there and you get poison ivy. - You go and eat the deadly nitrate mushrooms, poisonous mushrooms - and it kills you - so each one of those things that grow out there have different medicinal properties.

K: What's in marijuana, does that have a medicinal property?

G: Whatever you want to do with it - say like Jacques Cartier, early French explorer, came by here and him and his party got sick. They were brought into the Indian village. When they got sick they were suffering from scurvy - scurvy is almost lethal in all cases - people died from lack of Vitamin C. They gave them limes and oranges. They were able to survive the long sea voyages. That's why they called these British sailors limies. After they introduced Vitamin C all spirits survived every voyage. So when Jacques Cartier and his group got sick, the Indians said these rose hips will help you, bring water to an almost boiling point, and you put these in. Then all the soluble vitamins and minerals will dissolve in that water. It wasn't too many days that Jacques Cartier and his men got well and went on his way again, because those rose hips contain a high amount of Vitamin C. And to understand the use of medicine, the Indians just about eradicated every disease known to mankind; so their blood was running pure when the Europeans got here. The European had all kinds of killing diseases, and the Indians caught it right away 'cause there's no immunity; they had already eradicated all the diseases. But in Europe they were living in these wild cities - and their urine, feces and

other garbage - then these rats had diseases - they had the black plague - fleas would bite the rats - then they bite the human, the germs enter the system - so those plagues were killing millions in Europe. It created bad health conditions here. But then, they got kinda used to some of them. Even cows had something in their urinary system. That's why they were able to survive small pox. But the Indians didn't have that; they died by the millions. Say your body, when you have a harmful micro-organism in your body, the white corpuscles begin to attack; then they get killed until they come up with the right defenders. Then they're able to overcome the invaders of your body and make you sick; then when they destroy it you're able to get better again - that's the way it works in the body - with these powerful micro-organisms in the body they didn't have time to retool -that's why you can get small pox vaccinations and others - defenders in the body - so anyway, the healing arts were fine. They were good.

Then we get to the code of conduct. We usually want to be civil to people, be polite - rather than being insulting, using abusive language and other ill-mannered actions toward other people. There was a code of conduct. One was eagle. Do not kill eagles, because a long time ago they had a tribal law. If a man kills another person, there's no law against killing that person, but then there were his brothers, sisters, uncle, father, other relatives. There's something about Amorate's Law - a life for a life, a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye. That was tribal justice. So don't kill anybody unless you're an Ogichidaa and attackers come. But your own people you don't kill.

K: Unless you're the Ogichidaa, the defenders?

G: That's the same ones. Then the other one is do not lie. People don't like anybody lying about them. I suppose a good example of that is the National Enquirer. They sometimes lie about celebrities and then they get sued for multi-million dollars. So

do not lie. It's easy to catch somebody that's lying; they see you coming and say, "Well that's a liar coming." Then the other one is do not steal. Have you ever got anything stolen, how angry your get, you'd like to kill that person? Let's say you and I go rob a bank in Minneapolis. Somebody presses a button, a robbery is taking place - right away there's the Minneapolis police, Hennipen County Sheriff, Highway Patrol - all on the look out. We make a getaway with a half a million dollars in a bag. We get pursued. Then all of a sudden, there's a roadblock up ahead and we have a shoot-out and get killed. So robbery is not good. Each code of conduct is detailed on this Midewiwin.

There's four things on the Midewiwin; the history of the people is all in there - American history. Say the Ojibwe are migrating from the Atlantic Coast coming this way because the Europeans are pushing them; because they're occupying their land. That's not so because Ojibwe lived here at one time on this land; they just went eastward - they came back again. But there's another place, like Alaska, they've been to Siberia, they've been to Mongolia. Now in the Midewiwin, we have what they call medicine bags - the ermin, sable, weasel, otter, fisher - take it and they give you a medicine bag for the 1st degree. The second degree is some kind of a bird of prey - the owl, hawk, eagle, that's your medicine bag. Then the fourth degree, bear, baby cubs, bear paw, that's your medicine bag. When I was young I asked these holy men, please, why do we have to have these? Can you tell me why these medicine bags? Since I was a member of the Midewiwin society, they had to answer my question. Well, grandson, they said, these animals that I depicted here, wherever they are, the Indian people can survive. Wherever the measel, the mink are, they can survive. - even these owls, partridge, hawks. When you see them going that way, then they get the berries. Even the polar bear in the Arctic Circle, seals, wherever they can survive, the Indian people can survive. Grizzly bear in the Rocky Mountains, the

black bear, I asked them one time. Well, why didn't the Indians stay in Europe when they were out there? Because there was too much cruelty out there.

I suppose you might know the Vikings raided - and how the vandals destroyed. The Mongolians they challenged the soldiers of the Roman Empire. And the legionnaires they fought them and beat them. The small pox they introduced here - 150 million Indians died - wars, killings. So it far exceeds what Hitler did in Germany - just about wiped the Indians out. So they were extreme on those Mide scrolls.

They were living on the Atlantic Coast when the first Viking ship arrived. It's quoted in there. When the Vikings came they layed out the red carpet, like the way Bush would do when the Queen of England arrived. They gave them accomodations, good food, entertainment - the Indian people did by their code of conduct - Ogichidaa. After so many days, their food supply is going down, and water supply. Then the crew began to get scared - thought about turning back, and the captain's going mad. They thought, how about if we give them four days to turn back, we'll kill them, we'll have just enough food, just enough water to get back where we come from. On the fourth day, they saw something floating out there; it was a tree limb with a vine wrapped around it in the ocean. He yelled; they didn't think there was any land there. So they didn't kill their captain; they kept coming west. Then they spotted the land; they came ashore. That might be why they call it Vineland, if you look in history books. They came ashore and they found the Ojibwe Indians living there. They got together. We know the history of the people; we know the healing arts; we know the code of conduct - so it was a well-trained society.

Now we have these treaties with the United States - we sent our finest men out there - somebody who won't resort to killing, somebody who won't cheat, lie, steal. But they practiced this Machavalian law - do you know who Machavalian

is? - he was a perfect communist.

The Indian territorial concept was different from the European. The European style of warfare was to subjugate the people you conquer - through torture and slavery. Indians used punitive war, not conquering, just punish those that wronged them.

There were 44 treaties with the Ojibwe Nation. A nation, according to International Law, is a group of people who have land, territorial domain, and must have a system of government. - four requirements - people, land, government, system of writing (birch bark scrolls). De facto recognition is one that's already in place - in contrast to de jure recognition, which is a nation like Israel, it comes into existence. So according to treaties, the Ojibwe Nation is already recognized. The treaty understandings - they told the Indians we want to lease this land from you. Indians said if you lease it, someday in the future we'll want it back, is that what you want? White man said yes, but the document said cede instead of lease. The Indians had faith and trust and assumed they were honest. The white man said, no we can't afford to buy it. We can only afford to lease it three to five cents an acre. So then they signed the agreement - had to be ratified in the Senate.

On the Border

G. ROCKY MOUNTAIN

The Plains Art Museum of Moorhead, Minnesota has put together, over a five year period, a unique exhibit of American Indian Art and History entitled, "On the Border: Native American Weaving Traditions of the Great Lakes and Prairie." The show has an historic component (1700-1900) and a companion exhibit of contemporary weaving (1900-1990). This exhibit features woven fiber, woven beadwork and other contemporary textiles. With the contemporary exhibit and over 200 woven fiber objects in the historical exhibit, the show examines the changes that have occurred in the weaving traditions because of European influences, and also provides insight into the continuity and revival of these crafts by living American Indian artists.

Accompanying the multi-faceted exhibit is a video documentary entitled, "On The Border." The twenty-eight minute video has two main parts. The first parallels the other aspects of the show and features Dave Wooley of the Plains Art Museum. Wooley explains the purpose of the show as he points out several examples of the art work which underscores the points he makes. In one example he uses a quilled round basket with lift-up twin lids and a handle. Wooley explains that this 'purse' as Josie Ryan of Bena calls it, and which was made

G. Rocky Mountain, Crafts Coordinator, Indian Studies, Bemidji State University

by Melvin Losh of Bena, exemplifies how today's craft art has crossed boundaries with several variations of different tribal art influences.

Another example Wooley uses is a pair of men's garters. Although the garters are similar in weaving technique and use the same design motif, one was made in the 1870's while the other was made in the 1980's. This continuation of tradition and design shows the revival of the art.

The second main part of the video is a closer look at individual artists. Focusing on the lives and works of three Ojibwe artists is featured in this segment. They are Josie Ryan of Bena, Minnesota, Melvin Losh also of Bena, and Frances Keahna of Naytahwaush, Minnesota.

Focusing on their lives and their work, this segment gives not only a personalized insight to the artist but also shows these artists demonstrating their crafts.

Born and raised on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation, Josie Ryan demonstrates how through adversity, anyone can help themselves. "There are all kinds of things you can make. Nobody has to be needy or poor if you work, that is what I tell my students. There is nothing you can't do if you try, you can do it. You see, I did it." Mastering such traditional art forms such as finger weaving, rug braiding, hide tanning, quilt making and bead working, Josie uses these skills along with the more traditional seasonal skills of making maple syrup, netting and smoking white fish, and harvesting wild rice, to support her family. As a teacher, Josie exemplifies the elder artist and is justifiably proud at what she calls, "making something from nothing." This segment of the video shows how Josie has been a legacy for her people and how she has not only taught people valuable skills but more importantly she has imparted in them a spirit to succeed.

The second artist featured is Melvin Losh of Bena, Minnesota. Melvin is a porcupine quill worker. Examples of his work

range from traditional uses of quills to more contemporary ideas such as quilled chairs. It is, however, his quilled boxes which are the mainstay of his artistry. Melvin talks of how he became involved with Indian art and how his original teacher was Josie Ryan. He also describes the events which led to his interest in porcupine quilled basketry. Melvin illustrates how events such as watching a woman at a pow wow in Michigan make a quilled box with an eagle on it, and how this impressed him. Melvin also relates how his association with Josie grew after he started making the boxes and she started buying them. From here Melvin shows how he makes a box. This interesting segment is characterized by detailed explanations of how materials are collected and prepared and eventually the process of completing a finished quilled box. While Melvin works in his studio the audience is able to view this artist at work. Interesting to those not familiar with porcupine quill work is the sight of Melvin putting the quills in his mouth. When asked whether they taste or hurt, Melvin shrugs it off saying, "They use to but you get use to it and my tongue gets really sore." It is apparent that it is more important for the product to be of the highest quality than settling for less. As Melvin eases through the steps necessary to produce a box, it is easy to gain an appreciation for the artist and his finely crafted quilled boxes.

In the final segment of the artist series, Frances Keahna is featured. She is one of the premier splint basketry artists known today. Frances tells us how she came to work with black ash, the wood used to make her baskets. Frances relates to when she was young and her mother was introduced to making black ash baskets. She tells how a woman came to Nayahwaush from Michigan for the Episcopalian Church, and at guild meetings, taught her mother. With infectious laughter, Frances remembers when all she did was to bind off the baskets. "I couldn't weave straight if I wanted to."

At eighty five, Frances still produces many baskets with

many variations. The video shows Frances at home teaching a student while she relates to how her cousin Sonny helps her pound the log in order to remove the splint. Frances use to do this task by herself and the image of this elderly lady carrying around a five foot log and pounding on it with an ax is a powerful one and shows the dedication of this artist toward her work. While at her home, the video also shows Frances demonstrating how a basket is made. During the various steps, Frances shows some of the well worn knives she uses to cut and to scrape the splints. She also gives some of her secret hints which results in such a finely crafted item.

In another segment, Frances is shown teaching a craft class at Bemidji State University. As the students struggle with their attempts to make a basket, they marvel at the ease with which Frances goes through the various steps. "You made these last night?" one student blurts out in astonishment. With the majority of the class being non-Indian, Frances' charm creates an atmosphere of ease and respect. To the Indian students in the class the power of this elder is indeed heartening.

In the final moment during the class, Frances shares a very special memory of an item her mother made, not a basket but a rattle, which is made somewhat like a basket. Frances Keahna, like the other artists, Melvin Losh and Josie Ryan, demonstrate more than their art during this video. The qualities these three special people share are wonderful examples of the Indian artist. The video portrays the weaving techniques of these artists in a manner which underscores not only their talent but also their sensitivity and humor. A very powerful addition to the traveling exhibit, "On The Border" is a must to see. The show has traveled extensively and is currently on display in Washington, D.C. The video has also been shown at the Smithsonian Institute and in over fifty cities throughout the United States. The video was produced by KAWE-TV of Bemidji, Minnesota and was also made possible, in part, with the Indian Studies Department at Bemidji State University.

Fire From the Soul

JOHN TRUDELL

Horizons wait with patience to teach of meaning
all the lessons are there wanting to give
the direction through the haze has a path
there is a clearing where power can show

At times broken memory trades laughter for tears
uncontrollable as though time has its own mind
burning cedar sweetsmells the air it can't clear
need for good thought stands off dark thought

Somewhere burning night burns again everyday
in the distance anybody's life hangs on a wall
worlds in warmakers war hang by a thread
sanitized blind helping weave hangman's noose
civilized rage breeds polite and impolite lies
pecking order lines can't climb without them
material wealth and poverty are blood brothers
racism and sexism are their whiskey and hate

Women and children are the memory of life
in a room in a city in a babylon in a cage
a cry that was not heard damns the silence
a tear is a river is a fire from the soul.

John Trudell's poetry has been recorded in *Aka Grafitti Man, Fables and Realities, But This Isn't El Salvador*.

Messages left behind tell stories of the future
races race like long distance runners to the edge
aggression charged atmospheres are starters guns
winners and losers are the distorted finish line
used religions, narcotics drugging the soul
comedy and tragedys two sided faces multiply
the vengeful god dominates the caring God
no room in praying to one god or the other

Fear becomes some ones trusted incestuous lover
the image keeps repeating itself over and over
paying any price not to see and not to be seen
control becomes the craving need is its needle

Horizons wait with patience to teach of meaning
all the lessons are there wanting to give
the direction through the haze has a path
there is a clearing where power can show.

The Age of Ages

JOHN TRUDELL

The Age of ages old eyes
day of rage has vivid memories predator wars seize
the times
new worlds order issues minds

As soldiers of war are soldiers of war
each talks with gods urging them along
loyalty and illusion mixed into paint
mixing up blood and pain stained taint

Being divided supporters troops but not war
two sided fence pretending to be a middle tries at
compassions are missing the point
obvious contradictions part of the riddle

Profiteer faces and mass consumptive greed
tech no logic war grows from material seed
demonstrating for peace had its own glories
understanding peace has a difference story

Somewhere every day the killing goes on
plunder in the forest listen to a tree
there's violated water and violated air
greed's at the table greed doesn't care

Good citizen's obey as slaves way its done
buying and selling their ways to freedoms
ignoring altered senses relating to worth
all aggression is an attack against earth

Peace does not elude man man eludes peace
mother earthwoman can't take the abuse
living right now is living for tomorrow
time is saying there's no more time to borrow.

Tikaan

JOHN TRUDELL

The Licorice wolf with neon eyes
and the wolf in wolf's clothing
appeared in night of the blue moon

Traveling from the other side of time
they took him beyond self reflection
into realities of light as it really is

Dreaming wolf welcomed him
a place of no separation by perception
into the land where all are people

We are the wolf, you are the wolf
we are the tree, you are the tree
we are the living, you are the living

Mother Earth called to her children
you're all related is the ingredient
without it you won't know who you are

Hunted wolf took him by the hand
a little kindness never hurt anyone
a lot of kindness does so much more

Vanishing wolf sang in the sun
there's a lot more to what's going on
then what's going on

Ghost wolf laughed in ghost wolf way
your craving shadows are your demise
listen to sound of crying when crying cries

Spirit wold knows lessons of beauty
beauty's in eyes of the beholder
reality's in reach of those beholding eyes

Look into our eyes
we are the past
visiting the future
look into your mind
what kind of meaning
do you find

The licorice wolf with neon eyes
and the wolf in wolf's clothing
appeared in night of the blue moon

Speaking wolf spoke in words
distortion plagues from minds of man
you call us predator then make us the prey.

I've Seen The Destruction

TRACY ISHAM

I've seen the destruction
of the mighty.
I've watched the corruption
of the meek.
I've heard the crumbling
of glass houses.
All within a single week.

A mother's trials and tribulations,
never ending jubilation.
Walking forward with fear
undinting.
And yet our houses fill with haunting,
Laughter from our children's hearts.

What monsters do we slay
today?
What villains do we chase
away?
Oh, G.I. Joe now do we
play?
No, but will you teach me how to
say,
I love you?

And so the days pass on to years,
followed by our falling tears.
Yet we manage to find joy
in putting away our baby's
toys.

These little treasures all
grown up now.
We nursed them through many a
fevered brow.
And now it is my time to go
Did time pass by me
fast, or slow?

A mother's trials and tribulations
a gentle swelling
of the heart.
And yet as we sit here dwelling,
our grandson says,
oops, excuse me, I let a fart!

The Lynx, the Fox, and the Fisher

WEWONDING

The story is one of three told by Wewonding of the Red Lake Reservation to J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong in 1911. Josselin de Jong, a Dutch linguist, wrote the stories in Ojibwe and English and published them in 1913 in Original Odžibwe Texts (Baessler-Archiv. 5. Leipzig: B. B. Teubner). This one has been rewritten in the modern Ojibwe orthography used at Bemidji State University by John Nichols of the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba.

Miinawaa bezhig inini dagwaagininig babaamosed, anishinaabe go a'aw, ziibiinsing ani-bimosed bizhiwan ogii-okawi 'aan. Mii dash igo iniw gaa-izhi-bima 'anaad bizhiwan. Megwaa bima'anaad gaa-izhi-gaazonid iniw bizhiwan. Mii dashi'iw gii-okawi'aad mewine'igenid. Mii dash gii-okawi'aad iw miigaadinid iniw bizhiwan gaye iniw waagoshan. Iniw waagoshan a'aw bizhiw ogii-ningwaagone'waan. Aw dash anishinaabe ogii-omboomaan iniw waagoshan.

Miish miinawaa gaa-onji-maajjikawed a'aw bizhiw. Mii dash imaa miinawaa gaa-onji-maada'anaad a'aw anishinaabe iniw bizhiwan. Miinawaa ogii-okawi'aan miigaazonid iniw bizhiwan. Niibiwa gii-nametoowan gaa-izhi-dazhi-miigaadinid. Miish imaa ayinaabid a'aw inini, mii imaa gii-waabandang magwaagoneshininig gegoo. Mii dash gaa-izhi-naazikang. Mii dash imaa gaa-ani-onji-maajjikawed a'aw ojiig. Mii iniw gaa-nisigojin a'aw bizhiw. Mii dash gaa-izhi-ombiwaned a'aw inini, gii-bwaawane dash.

Looking With Ben

JIM NORTHRUP, JR.

"Rinnnnng!" The telephone noise shattered the middle of the quiet night.

Luke Warmwater woke up. He rolled out of bed and went to the living room to find the phone. He knew if he could find it he could make it stop ringing.

"Rinnnnng!"

Since it was the middle of the night it meant bad news, Luke thought. He homed in on the noise in the dark living room. On the other end of the plastic and wire was Ben Looking Back.

As soon as Luke figured out who it was, he knew it wasn't bad news. A call from his first cousin always meant a good story.

"Booshu neej, did I wake you up?" asked Ben.

"No, I had to get up to answer the phone anyway," mumbled Luke.

"Can you pick me up at the airport tomorrow?"

"Sure, what time?"

"Flight 276, supposed to get in at 10:42 in the morning. Are you going to be busy?"

"I won't be busy, I'll be there."

"See you."

"Yeh, see you in the A.M."

Luke went back to the bedroom and got under the Pendleton blanket. Paneque rolled over and said, "Was that Ben? You always laugh like that when you talk to him."

"Yeh, he wants me to pick him up at the airport tomorrow."

"Where was he this time?"

"He didn't say, but I think he was in Washington D. C. again. Someone told me he took his big bingo win and went traveling."

"I suppose he was playing tourist again."

"Must have been. It's one of his favorite games next to hanging out at the tanning salon."

"He always shows up at the funniest places, doesn't he?"

"Yes he does. Did I tell you about the time I ran into him way out in the woods. It was on the other side of Perch Lake. I was just out there walking around, you know, looking at spring. I had just crossed that crick and when I turned the corner in the trail, there he was. He was just sitting on a log having a smoke. He must have been out in the woods looking at spring too."

Paneque fluffed up her pillow as she talked with her husband in the dark bedroom. It was warm and quiet in the room.

"Remember that time we had to leave real early for that meeting in Minneapolis? Ben was over by the Catholic church in the morning and he was just hanging out at the corner. When we got to that meeting, there he was again. He was just standing on the corner telling stories with the city Indians. I wonder how he got down there so fast. He must have passed us when we stopped to eat in Pine City. He's got good hitchhiking medicine or something."

Luke laughed as he remembered the day he met Ben twice.

"I wonder what he brought back from Washington?"

"I guess we'll find out in the morning."

The next morning, Luke sat in the Duluth airport waiting room. He had just watched Ben's plane land on the runway.

The deplaning and departing passengers were coming off. They herded up and hurried off, anxious to rejoin their luggage. Luke scanned the herd. No Ben yet.

Ben Looking Back was one of the last to leave the plane. He was walking down the long skinny hall laughing with the flight attendants. The pilots with their briefcases were walking behind laughing at something Ben had said.

He separated himself from the flight crew and walked towards Luke. Their eyes caught and both gave an almost imperceptible nod. The nod said alot. It meant - I recognize you as another Indian, another relative.

Ben was what they call a BFI, a big fucken Indian. Macaroni had sculpted that body. He was built like a dark Frosty the Snowman. A red headband held his black straight hair under control. Ben's black marble eyes always looked like they were on the verge of a smile. His round face easily relaxed into a half grin.

Ben shook hands with his cousin softly. They went to the coffee shop to wait for the herd to leave. As they sipped hot coffee, Luke asked, "How was your airplane ride?"

"This one wasn't too bad but the one going to Washington was kind of fun," Ben said.

"What happened?" asked Luke, putting on his listening face.

"The plane made a turn away from the White House to land at National Airport," said Ben, flying his hand in a banking maneuver and then down towards the table.

"The guy sitting next to me said there are Secret Service Agents armed with missles on the roof of the White House. They will shoot down any plane that gets too close," Ben continued.

"We dropped down pretty fast after we lined up with the runway. The plane hit the ground hard," said Ben, as he flew his hand towards the table. He slapped his hand down hard to

show Luke how hard they landed.

"We hit the ground so hard that my oxygen mask popped out and fell in front of me. I had just been through the drill so I knew what to do. I slapped that sucker on. I was just getting the elastic around my head when the flight attendant poked me in the shoulder. Above the roar of the reversing engines, she said,

"Take that off. We're at ground level!"

I shook my head no because I wanted to show her I was paying attention when they did the safety drill. The yellow rubber mask was collapsing against my face because the oxygen wasn't turned on. I finally took that sucker off so I could breathe," laughed Ben.

"Yup, we hit the ground pretty hard."

"Oh, yeh, before I forget, I brought you a present from D. and C." Ben dug in his Levi jacket pocket and handed Luke a dull, brownish-red piece of rock. One side was smooth and the other was rough. Luke accepted it and put it in his jacket pocket.

"The Smithsonian Institute has a collection of Indian remains. They have over 18,000 bodies there, all tribes. I read about it in that Indian newspaper in Hayward. Since they collect Indians, I decided to collect Smithsonians. That rock I gave you comes from that castle-looking building on the Mall. If every Indian who goes to Washington brings back a little piece, we can build our own Smithsonian right here on the Rez," said Ben.

Luke patted his pocket to let Ben know the first piece of the Smithsonian collection was safe. He took it out and looked at it real close. He put it back in his pocket and signaled the waitress.

The waitress smiled at Ben as she brought the check. Ben tipped her handsomely. The two skins got up to go down to get Ben's duffle bag. She watched them walk away and said, "See

you next time, Ben.”

“I’ll see you the time after next,” he said.

Luke paid the ransom for his car and they left the parking lot. As they headed towards the Reservation, Ben picked up where he left off.

“Washington is sure a funny place. The tourists would come up and ask if they could take my picture. Some of them sent their kids to stand next to me. Most of them sounded like Americans.”

“After the first dozen, I started charging five bucks a pose. I made two hundred bucks in a little over an hour. I got tired of the dumb questions about Indians. Just for the hell of it, I changed tribes. With some of them I was a Chippewa, with others I was a Sioux. Sometimes I’d be a Commanche, and right at the end there, I was telling them I was half Chippewa, half Ojibway and the rest of me was Anishinabe. Some of the tourists were writing this stuff down as I talked. I had a good time with the tourists,” Ben concluded.

“I’m gonna go with you next time. I like having my picture taken,” said Luke. “I had the most fun in one of those museums at the Smithsonian. I found the one that has Indian history. It was a big hall. They had a lot of displays of Indian stuff. One of the display spaces was empty. They must have been changin the thing or something. Just for the hell of it, I made a sign out of a piece of cardboard. I wrote ‘Contemporary Chippewa’ and propped it up,” said Ben as he showed Luke the size of the sign with his hands. “I stepped over that velvet rope, turned around and just stood there. Pretty soon some tourists came by. They read the sign and looked at me. I was standing there as still as I could. They looked at me a long time before they went on to the next display. I relaxed a little until I heard some more coming. I got some strange looks from them. One guy was looking back and forth, first at the sign then at me,” said Ben, showing Luke how the tourists were looking.

By this time, Luke was laughing so hard that he had to pull the car over on the side of the road. After he settled down and wiped his eyes, he was ready to continue the ride home to the Rez.

Luke dropped Ben off at his house. He then went home. He and Paneque were going shopping at the mall.

Paneque poured a couple of cups of coffee and sat at the kitchen table. Luke came in, sat down and thanked her for the coffee. She put on her listening face. Luke told her the Ben Looking Back stories of the trip to D.C. She laughed just hard and said,

"I can just see him stepping over that velvet rope." She stood up, stepped over an imaginary rope and struck up a 'Contemporary Chippewa' pose. She giggled her way out of the pose.

Luke tried it. He stood up and stepped over the rope. He stuck his hands in his jacket pocket and tilted his head back slightly. He glazed his eyes and stared off in the distance. Luke held the pose until she poked him in the ribs. They finished their coffee and went out to the car.

"Remember that time he was on a media kick?" she asked.

"Yeh, every time I turned on the TV, there he was. He somehow got in the background of all those news stories. If they were showing a car crash story, there he was, looking at the wreckage, maybe reconstructing the accident. I saw him at the reception they had for the Governor. He was just there, watching the doings. On that Bike-a-Thon story from Sawyer, he was there to see them off and welcome them to the finish line. Ben was everywhere. He must have a media magnet in his pocket. He always seems to be in the wrong place at the right time."

"I used to be surprised about the way he turned up everywhere. Not anymore," she said.

Luke and Paneque walked into the mall. As they turned the

corner by the tanning salon, they saw Ben. Luke remembered that Ben liked to hang around at the artificial sun place. He didn't openly laugh at the frog belly white people that went in. He just sat outside, offering his brown skin as a standard. Almost like saying, "this is what you're supposed to look like."

After the nod both gave, Ben said, "She's been in there too long," pointing with his lips at a lobster red white woman.

"I bet she'll peel in big sheets," said Luke.

"Why do they do that? They hate Indians, but try to look like them," said Paneque.

"I don't know, they always want something they can't have."

Just then, a local TV crew arrived. After asking, Ben found out they were there to do a story on tanning salons. Ben was in his glory. He was going to be on TV at the tanning salon.

Luke and Paneque slipped away to buy groceries. They shopped and went home. After supper, Luke turned on the TV to watch the evening news. They saw Ben Looking Back looking back at them on the TV. His brown skin was a sharp contrast from the white people in the story.

"Rinnnnng!"

It was Ben on the phone asking for a ride to the airport.

"I'm going to San Diego. I got some of that bing money left. I heard there is a nude beach by La Jolla, Black Beach or Bart Beach, something like that. They must get good tans there," said Ben.

"San Diego?"

"Yup, the plane leaves at two in the afternoon."

"Okay," Luke laughed. He was already looking forward to the California nude beach stories. Paneque smiled.

Assimilation

LISA MOUNTAIN

There was a point when he thought he could still see home. The train, running rhythmically on its tracks, moved farther and farther from the station until the little house, the edge of town, and later the edge of his memories blurred with the motion. To look out the window was to remember, he thought. But then as the lights near Alberta faded, he wasn't so sure that what his grandfather said was true. That time would stand still for him until he returned.

The night he'd said that, the boy had been back there at the house in the woods. Only the late summer wind in the trees gave sound, and a few crickets lighting up the air with soft violin legs. It was time, they had said, for all the children seven and over to go. What his grandfather said was different. The children should never go; they should stay with the pines and the ash, the deer trails and the familiar smells. His grandfather said they could learn more there than at any old white boarding school 150 miles from home.

The train slowed and then stopped. He felt like a million butterflies were inside of him. His palms were slick with sweat and his bag slipped from his hand. It didn't matter because he didn't own much. He picked up his bag and looked around. There was not one familiar face in the crowd that stood below on the platform. A man rushing to embrace his wife. An elderly

woman and a child standing by a large brass trunk. A field of white faces, and so few like his own. He wondered who would meet him.

He got off the train. Suddenly a tall man walked up to him. The man said, "Please come with me." The boy looked up and in his mind there was a blank spot: no words, no sound that could tell the man how he was feeling or answer the questions circling in his head. There was no one here who spoke his language and none to tell him what the man's words had meant.

The place the man took him was very different from what he was used to. He was assigned a room. He wanted to unpack and get some rest. But, he sat down on the small bed, and stared at the barren white walls, noticing a strange pungent smell, seeping through the overlying aroma of disinfectants, and wondered what it was; he was used to the smell of fire and of home; *oh how he missed home.*

He looked around and noticed that everything was different — cold; he felt empty inside. He would have his own bed, that was something he never had, for he was used to sharing a bed with his younger brother. Even though he finally had his own space, he missed the closeness of his family. He kept trying to swallow the lump that was in his throat.

He took what little that he owned and placed the items in a small wooden dresser. Then he decided to lie down and rest. It seemed that he could hear every sound. He finally dozed off. Suddenly he awoke and he felt disoriented. He couldn't remember where he was and sat up and looked around and remembered; the lump was back in his throat. Then there was a knock, and he jumped. Slowly, he got up and opened the door and was overcome with joy. One of his friends from back home was standing there smiling at him! He embraced his friend and at the same time asked him several questions. Do you like it here? How do the people treat you? His friend sat down and

said he didn't like it up until now because he couldn't talk to or understand anyone. Now that he knew someone, it would be easier to adjust to the new environment. They talked for a long while and then a bell rang. The little boy's friend said it was time to eat. As they walked down a hall, the little boy thought to himself, it won't be so bad after all.

A Deeper Understanding

DEVERY FAIRBANKS

Ma'iingaans Standstall was smoldering — not quite fuming, but smoldering. He was sitting in a motel room with many thoughts swirling through his consciousness. He had just returned from the movie hall after seeing that epic new Indian movie 'Sings With Meadowlarks'. It wasn't necessarily the movie that shook him up but where he watched it. Granted, it was an excellent show and could possibly begin a new genre in film depiction of Indian people. But he sat in a theater in the small college town of Manifest Destiny, Minnesota, which is located smack-dab in the middle of three reservations. The audience was made up of mostly middle-aged white people and as they sat quietly Ma'iingaans wanted to stand up and say "are you learning anything? for God's sake are you finally getting the picture?" Because this is the controversial town of extreme racism that's been in the news lately, a town where college professors publicly label Indians as savages and the usual stereotypes.

As the U. S. Cavalry lied, stole, and murdered it's way through the film, he just wanted to address these folks, the voting majority, as they are everywhere. Since we're a world at war right now in the Persian Gulf, he wondered if they ever really learned from history. As the Union soldiers butchered

Devery Fairbanks works for the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Office of Admissions, American Indian Recruitment.

the environment, the Indians, and the Buffalo, all in the name of progress, he wanted to ask them who they thought the real savages were. But, of course, they always have an answer for everything, rationalizing their actions in the name civilization and Christianity, blah, blah, blah. But, Ma'iingaans thought, if they aren't careful they'll rationalize us all to smithereens.

Ma'iingaans wanted to do something with these thoughts of his, this energy; maybe he could write to the local newspaper? Nah, they'd never print it, or if they did, they'd edit it down to nothing. Maybe he could send it to an Indian paper, or a big city paper, yeah. He would begin by saying that if Indians were really as savage as they're made out to be, the white man may have never gotten started here. If the gentle natives who met the Mayflower were truly savage heathens, they would've made quick work of Columbus and his starving and delirious Puritan Boat-people, wouldn't you think? This big mess they've made out of the world could've been nipped in the bud right there and the phrase "there goes the neighborhood" would've never been coined. But instead those gentle natives fed them and nurtured them back to health; never dreaming that their new friends couldn't wait to stab them in the back.

Ma'iingaans just hoped that the movie would help erase the unjust and very damaging stereotypes Indian people have had to live with. His main message would be this: Indian people are not and never were savages. Any man would fight for his family and his human dignity. Indian fighting men were not savages; they just didn't have the sophisticated weapons that the enemy did. What the Indians had was a much deeper understanding of nature and all living things. The cost of producing sophisticated weaponry was too steep a price for the Indians to pay — mother earth would have to be raped to provide steel and hardwood for artillery. Ma'iingaans could make a point by saying that it wasn't the Indians who strip-

mined, built power dams, and cut down trees in order to “tame the wild frontier”. It wasn’t us who polluted the atmosphere with garbage. We didn’t carve up the earth in a frenzy for gold and oil. It would be against our religion to do so, even if we knew how to do it.

Because our God didn’t come from a book, Nature itself was our religion, our God came from nature, and when they started breaking up the ground, a big part of our spirit went with it. No, the frontier was never “wild”, and Indians were never savages, they just had a deeper understanding.

Ma’iingaans sighed and turned on the little motel TV in time to see a news flash of a little girl horribly burned and paralyzed by a chemical bombing in the Middle East war. When will they ever learn, he wondered. When will they ever learn.

Well, he thought, he better get busy writing while it’s still fresh in his mind. This time he was determined to take action.

Trying to Get Back to the Rez

DAVE GONZALES

It was night in the city and Minneapolis' streets shined with rainy puddles, and cars splashed as they passed the young *Anishinaabe* woman. The bus was slower at night, she thought, and glanced at her Timex watch under the dim post light. She had twenty minutes to get to her temporary employment. It was almost midnight, and she was already getting tired. She realized how she couldn't continue doing it for more than a few more days, even though she needed the money for her children. Her long black hair seemed glossy in the dimness of the street light. She had dried it with a hair dryer, but she couldn't get all of the waviness out of it. Then, the city bus came, stopped, doors opened, a sound of them closing as she climbed the steps and dropped her money. The bus was empty, except for an old *Anishinaabe* man. He nodded. They always do, she thought, acknowledge each other. City aborigines, holding on to unmodified tribal laws. She sat behind the Afro-American bus driver, and saw her reflection in the window across from her. So much had happened since her mother died of cancer. The neon lights dotted the window and reframed her profile as she turned to see cars pass the bus. She wished for one, not for the ownership, just for transportation. Then it would be an Indian car, she imagined, with an eagle feather on the rearview mirror,

Dave Gonzales is a writer, editor, and professor of English at Bemidji State University, Bemidji, MN.

and she would take the kids to the White Earth Pow Wow in the summertime.

The bus stopped, and she was self-conscious of walking alone toward the jaded building, worn with time and Minnesota below zero winters. The paint was completely off the building and it had no color in the darkness. She lit a cigarette as if she had done it a million times and dropped the match on the ground. The bus ride made her nauseated and she felt sick for a second. Her steps were unsure and overcautious. The darkness reminded her of how tired she felt. The property was fenced, and old cars came in and parked, unloaded mostly Indians, men and women. Some moved idly, and they stood near the door, where the light came from. She didn't go there and sat on the edges of the dock. The ground, she noticed, was covered with cigarette butts, as though countless people once sat or stood there. Her eyes glanced at the next car that pulled up and shone its headlights on the people waiting by the door, and they turned to look at the persons coming out of the car.

She puffed hard on her cigarette and became angry at the thought of being there, at night, away from her children. They paid her by the day, she reminded herself, and twenty four dollars went a long way two weeks before welfare. She wasn't receiving food stamps and it was always difficult to feed the kids, buy pampers, cigarettes. Her thoughts made her sad and she dragged hard, again, on the cigarette before throwing it down and putting her tennis shoe on it to make sure it was completely out. It seemed to take her mind off her thoughts. She touched the pocket of her Levi jacket. The tobacco pouch was still there. It was for praying. Her lips were full and her skin was brown. Her blueberry-colored eyes reflected place rather than time. She blinked, and felt bloated with memories and coffee. There was a nicotinic taste in her mouth.

When they went inside, she moved to the back and began packing the cheap items into boxes to be shipped off somewhere.

She wasn't curious about where they went. The job was mechanical and all night it consisted of packing cheap items.

Some of the Indian workers began to fall asleep, and she saw the foreman, actually a black woman, come by and yell at them to wake up or go home. It was the hardest thing for her to get used to - the standing. All night she stood for twenty four dollars a day. The morning came, finally, she thought, and she started to walk home. She knew there was a sunrise ceremony, and that the dawn was spiritual, and squinted at the rising sun turning the eastern sky rosy, and imagined what it must have looked like when there wasn't but trees and Indians here. It felt as if these buildings and cars arrived only twenty minutes ago. She had never been out of Minnesota, but she imagined other Indians thinking the same thing. She didn't have bus fare. The morning was cool and she enjoyed the first contact with it. She looked up and said, "Good morning, Sun." She lit another cigarette and walked south. The kids would be up, she thought, and she walked faster. Her levis jacket was faded and it matched her levis pants.

When she got to her sister's house, everyone was asleep, except for the baby. He was sitting up on the bed and smiled at her. "Oh," she said, and hugged him. Anxiously, she changed his pamper. Then, she looked at the wall clock: it was almost eight. There were boy shoes and kid clothes on the worn rug, some red and yellow plastic toys under the old ivory-colored chair. The paint was chipped. The tv was off. She wondered if she should open the curtains and let some light in. It was a basement apartment and it was darkly lit down there, and she didn't like basement apartments. She had lost the freedom of choosing, where to live, where to move to. She thought about the Indian trails from White Earth to what is now Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

She wanted to move "up north," and have a nice cedarhouse in the woods, on the reservation. But it seemed impossible

sometimes. Nonetheless, she was determined to get out of Minneapolis, *somehow*, in the near future. She began to wonder if she would. Sometimes, it was dreamlike, this idea of hers to return "up north." There were no jobs, she always told herself. The kids woke up, and so did her sister. The radio went on in the kitchen and so did the tv in the front room. Thoughts of looking out of a window and seeing autumn oak trees and tall evergreen pine trees towering up to the blue sky preoccupied her mind momentarily. She wasn't giving up, she said in an internal dialogue with herself. She moved into the kitchen and gave the kids breakfast.

The American English Dictionary was on the kitchen table. It was ripped and used and the corners of the front page were worn off by usage. She had studied it as if it were a novel. She thought about college, and how difficult it would be for a woman with three kids. She dropped her head and stared at the table, then the clock. November was here, and her birthday came on All Souls Day, and it seemed to mean something to her.

She thought about how he sold the baby's Ojibwa cradleboard for a car payment. She didn't want him to sell the tobacco pouches either. But, he said, "I have to make a car payment." And he sold it to the Mille Lacs Museum and promised to buy it back. He was an artist, but he didn't know it. He carved cradleboards from white ash and cedar wood and pipes from pipestone. But he never really saw himself as an artist. All Indians were artists, he thought. They did beadwork and featherwork, and danced, and painted. He wrote too. He had made a family pipe for his son. No one could smoke it, except family. They were without money that summer because he refused to sell his pipes. And he felt guilty for having sold the cradleboard.

She told him never to sell the pipes he made. "I won't," he replied. "I'll never sell my pipes - no matter what," he reminded her. She didn't say anything about it; the disapproval was in

her dark eyes. He respected her for saying what she said. He had a lot of respect for her traditional ideas. They were good ideas, he thought. She was angry at him now, and went to live with her sister, the one that didn't like him. He never gave her a reason to dislike him, he believed.

His concerns were with his son. She just seemed to 'disappear' often and now it occurred again. He could not go look for her, so he prayed for his son with his pipe. And he honestly believed in it. He knew he wasn't perfect, who was?

When Friday came around, she was happy that she wouldn't have to work on her feet all night for twenty four dollars. She was going to do something about it. She would return to college in the spring. Winter was coming and she had to be settled in a warm place with her children before next month, she thought. The icy images came to her and she knew it was coming. But right now, autumn thoughts filled her mind and the autumn colors of gold, red and yellow enveloped her mind. She would go to the last big pow wow in the city. And she would worry about the details of school, then work, later. Now she wanted to play with her baby, for he was growing tall, walking, a manchild. She knew his father loved him, and she was sure that he would provide for his son. And she smiled and tossed him and he laughed.

Nenabozho Miinawaa Onibwaakaaminensan

Gaa-kiikinaajimod ZHAAWANOOWININI
(COLLINS OAKGROVE)

This popular Nenabozho (Wenabozho) story appeared in print in Southwestern Chippewa, A Teaching Grammar by Giles L. Delisle, Department of American Indian Studies, University of Minnesota, 1970. It is retold here by Zhaawanoowinini (Collins Oakgrove).

Megwaa giuwenh Nenabozho babaamaazhagaamed gaa-izhi-nagishkawaad owiijanishinaaben. Mii sa gaa-izhi-gagwejimigod, "Nenabozh, giwii-kagwejimin gegoo. Aaniindanaa giin wenji-nibwaakaayan?" Mii sa Nenabozho gaa-izhi-nakwetawaad, "Aananaa nibwaakaaminensan isa niin apane nimiijanan."

Mii sa gaa-izhi-igod iniw owiijanishinaaben, "Aaniindi dash igo wendinaman nibwaakaaminensan? Gayeniin indaagii-miijiinan." Mii sa Nenabozho gaa-izhi-nakomaad, "Ambe, bi-wiijiwishin. Giga-o-waabanda'in wendinamaan."

Mii sa gaa-izhi-nakomigod, "Ahaaw, giga-babaa-wiijiwin." Mii sa gaa-izhi-izhaawaad imaa megwekob gii-o-waabanda'aad ayamagadinig iniw nibwaakaaminensan.

Mii dash gegapii Nenabozho gaa-izhi-gaagiigidod, "Mii sa

Zhaawanoowinini (Collins Oakgrove) teaches Ojibwe at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

o'ow waaboozoomiikanensing, mii omaa ji-mikamang iniw nibwaakaaminensan." "Oonh, mii na omaa?", gii-kagwedwenid owiijanishinaaben.

Mii sa Nenabozho gaa-izhi-maamiginang iniw waaboozoomoowensan, gaa-izhi-ininamawaad iniw owiijiwaaganan. Mii sa gaa-izhi-mamood a'aw bebaagikinoo'amawind, gaa-izhi-zhakamod bezhig. "Tshte", gii-piibaaginid owiijanishinaaben. "Waaboozoomoowensan isa wiin onow. Gaawiin nibwaakaaminensan aawanzinooon."

Nenabozho gaa-izhi-nakwetawaad, "Enh, mii gwayak, mii gaawiin nibwaakaaminensan aawanzinooon iniw. Mii azhigwa gayegin gii-nibwaakaayan." Mii iw.

Suicide

JIM NORTHRUP, JR.

When talking about suicide among American Indians, it is easier to talk statistics and philosophical reasons than it is to talk about a real event.

My son was 18 when he shot himself in the head. The suicide signals were ignored and overlooked by the family members. In retrospect, we should have noticed something was wrong when he cut his long hair and gave his clothes away. He didn't talk about it but I knew he was bothered when a friend killed himself. A heavy pattern of alcohol is a depressant. He didn't know that, all he knew was that he felt rotten.

We had an argument about his alcohol use and I kicked him out of the house when he couldn't or wouldn't stop drinking. He resisted suggestions of an alcohol treatment program. We could see him around town but he seemed ashamed to talk with us.

It was a normal evening. I was home from work. We had just finished supper when my boy came to the house. We offered him food but he refused. He didn't appear drunk and went downstairs to his former bedroom. After a few minutes he came upstairs and went outside. We were watching the evening news when I heard him call me.

"Dad," I heard him say. I looked out in the front yard and couldn't see him. I looked out the side windows and didn't see

him. I thought I was hearing things so I went back to watch the news on TV.

"Dad," I heard again. I went out the back door. I saw him. He was standing in the back yard near the clothesline. He was facing the back door holding his rifle. He held it in front of himself, almost like the military position called port arms. The death end of the barrel was stuck under his chin.

He looked up as I came out the back door. He said, "I'm ready to do it, Dad." He was standing about 20 feet away from me.

He closed his eyes and pulled the trigger. His head was thrown violently up and to one side. As I ran down the stairs, I was glad it was the .22 and not the shotgun. I am a combat veteran from Vietnam and I immediately had a flashback about other gunshots I have seen. I ran across the lawn to him. He was just starting to sag towards the ground by the time I got to him. I was functioning on two levels. One, I was back in Vietnam again. I scanned the treeline looking for the sniper. On the other level, I knocked the rifle out of his hands and eased him down to the ground.

I could tell he was still alive. The smell of the gunpowder, the bright red blood on the grass, and the confused state of the victim all added to the flashback I was having.

I went on automatic pilot. I could hear that he was having trouble breathing. I rolled him around so his head was downhill so the blood would drain and not choke him. The entry wound was under his chin. It was bleeding, but not too bad. I dreaded doing it but I knew I had to. I cautiously looked through my son's hair feeling for the exit wound. I couldn't find it. I felt through his hair again. I couldn't find it. No exit wound.

My wife came to the back door. I told her that he shot himself and to call an ambulance. While she was calling, I decided I could get him to the hospital faster. It is ten miles one way to the nearest ambulance. I told my wife to cancel the

ambulance and to tell the dispatcher that we were bringing him in. She brought a towel for the wound and we got him in the truck. She comforted him and held the towel against the wound.

I broke a few traffic laws getting him to the hospital. The doctor and nurses took over once I got him inside the emergency room. After being stabilized, he was transferred to the trauma center 35 miles away. He would survive.

After about two weeks he was released from the hospital. He had a fractured jaw. The .22 round lodged near his left ear. My boy has had extensive counseling and treatment for alcohol. He is on the road to recovery from his brush with death. He considers himself lucky to be alive, as we all do.

As for us, I still get a chill once in a while when I go out the back door. One question still bothers me. Why did he call me out to watch? I figured he was really mad at me or he knew I would be able to help during this very difficult time. When I ask him about it today, he just says, "I don't know."

Suicide is much more than statistics. It is devastating for the family members. It is a deadly problem on the Reservations. Since my son's attempt, I have heard of two others who shot themselves. One survived and the other was successful in his attempt. He used a deer rifle.

I don't know what causes suicide and I don't know the numbers. I feel it is a major problem on the Reservations. We need to save our children. - *megwetch*

Mean Spirit

By Linda Hogan. Atheneum, New York, 1990

\$19.95 pp.374

I read Linda Hogan's recently published first novel, *Mean Spirit*, in four gripping, page-turning days. As I contemplated afterwards just what I could say about it, the image of one of her characters, "the hog priest," leapt to my mind. The hog priest starts out as a fairly conservative Catholic minister, but gradually changes over the course of the story until he ends up living more by traditional Native philosophies than by Christian ones. The hog priest starts listening to the voices of his dreams, and eventually figures out that the voices are the earth speaking. He comes to the realization that all living things have spirits and he begins blessing his neighbors' chickens and pigs. Because of this, the local Indians begin calling him the hog priest, "and they said it was the year the priest went sane" (187). The hog priest has several more revelations throughout the novel. At one point, he comes to his Indian friends very excited, wanting to share his newest insight with them. He was bitten by a rattlesnake, he explains, and thought he would surely die:

"...but then I tried to think like a snake and see things from its point of view, and in that effort I merged with the snake...I knew this: that the snake is my sister. And when I knew that, the sting and burn of venom went away from my leg."

"...[The people] watched him, waiting to hear the important new thing he had to say..."The snake is our sister," he repeated. They waited. "Yes, so what new thing did you learn?" asked one of the children (258-9).

This scene made me laugh, but I was also afraid I would

sound like the hog priest when I tried to say something about Hogan's wonderful book. What could I possibly "add" to it; what could I say that Hogan hasn't?

But, of course, even her story is not new. *Mean Spirit* looks at the destructive forces that humans can release - greed, abuse of the earth, loss of faith, loss of connection with and caring for one another - and at how to survive, even act responsibly and lovingly, in such a world. This is an old story, but it keeps needing to be told. Until we have all learned such stories by heart, until our actions start following our wise words, these stories can't be stopped. We are still destroying, so the storytellers must keep on recreating with their stories, keep showing us ways to stop destroying and be creators ourselves.

In *Mean Spirit*, Hogan builds a powerful picture of a world out of balance. She weaves together the many strands of a small Oklahoma town gone haywire with greed over land and oil, following the violent havoc this wreaks on individual white and Native lives and on their communities. She also explores the different ways these people attempt to cope with this world "turned upside down."

Hogan doesn't focus on pointing fingers and placing blame, though. The novel ends with a trial, but you don't learn what punishment the convicted ones get; moreover, some of the wrongdoers remain at large and unidentified. After the trial, a shadowy man blows up the house of one of the main families. The man is shot and killed in the scene, but he is never named, the stories and active efforts at healing this world must continue.

Hogan implicates both white and Native people in this destruction, so both must also take part in its solution. There are several white characters (like the hog priest) who move away from damaging aspects of their world view, coming to a more harmonious way of living. These people are accepted by the Indians in the book who are also trying to take the healing

path, emphasizing the importance of working together.

We cannot erase or ignore damaging stories, *Mean Spirit* suggests, but we can work at telling better ones. Michael Horse, an old Native healer, tackles this by writing his own addition to the Bible called "The Book of Horse." Some important things have been left out or gotten wrong, he explains, such as:

Take care of the earth and all her creatures. Do not be too afraid. Do not be too sad. Do not be too angry...We are one with the land. We are part of everything in our world, part of the roundness and cycles of life. The world does not belong to us. We belong to the world. And all life is sacred...Restore your self and voice. Remake your spirit so that it is in harmony with the rest of nature and the universe (355, 357).

Horse tells the others who are listening, others who are also walking the healing path: "You know all this. It's very simple. That's why it took me so long to write it" (357).

Horse's words may be "simple," but that does not mean they are not powerful or that they are easy to live by in this world. We all know stories of good and evil like those at the heart of *Mean Spirit*. However, Hogan retells this old theme with a beauty and urgency which calls readers to reflect on the way they are living their lives and act to make it a life of greater harmony.

Kara Provost
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Forgotten Sister to the Dakota

Elaine Goodale Eastman, 1885-91. Graber, Kay, editor.
LC 77-25018. (*Pioneer Heritage Ser.: Vol. VII*). (Illus.). xvi, 183 p.
1978. Paper. \$5.98. University of Nebraska Press.

This is a book review. It is a re-viewing of a book that has not yet received the attention it deserves nor found its place among the significant works that give us the stories of our American heritage, particularly those of late nineteenth century contact between native and non-native people. And it is a re-viewing of the life of a woman whose story has remained in the margins for far too long.

Her sun-bleached hair hung down her back in a long braid. She wore a calico frock and moccasins and carried with her the New Testament in Dakota and her diary. It was the summer of 1889 and she was on a hunting trip with a Sioux family, travelling through what we now know as North and South Dakota.

She wore a "platform frock" of brown brocaded silk. It was the autumn of 1889 and she was traveling to New York, Philadelphia, Hartford and other eastern cities to tell stories about her three years of teaching at the White Pine Camp Indian school. She argued for the reform of a school system that she had found to be disorderly and inefficient, championing the cause of community day schools for the Sioux. The Indian Commissioner, General Thomas J. Morgan, appointed her as the first Supervisor of Education for the two Dakotas. She was twenty-six years old.

Elaine Goodale Eastman (1863-1953) was a poet, teacher,

journalist, lecturer, school supervisor and reformer. For seventy years she kept as her cause engendering conversation and education between native and non-native people. She, like others involved in Indian reform at the time, operated under the general premise that Native culture as it was once known had been changed irreparably by the increased expansion and domination of Euro-American people. Education and assimilation into the "higher culture" were then pushed by these liberal reformers as the most viable means of survival for Indian people. While this framework of Indian reform in which Eastman worked is rightly challenged today, to discredit Eastman's work because of the limits of the system in which she worked is to miss a rich and complex portrayal of cultural exchange between native and non-native people. Eastman's insight into the volatile period of the late 1880s enhances our collective American heritage and history.

But if Elaine Goodale Eastman is noticed today, it is most likely not for her own story but in the context of her life and work with her husband, Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa). The Eastmans worked together on a number of books all of which, except *Wigwam Evenings* (1909), were published under Charles Eastman's name. Many of these books, notably *Indian Boyhood* (1902), *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (1916), and *The Soul of the Indian, An Interpretation* (1911), continue to be viewed as authoritative texts on Sioux life and tradition at the turn of the century. While the narrative voice and biographical focus of these collaborative works are primarily that of Charles, Elaine's influence can be read in the style and presentation of the material, in the history of the publication, and in the gaps and silences. But to begin to truly value Elaine Eastman's story and her commitment to the Sioux, we need to give a close reading to her own presentation of her life. In the late 1930s Eastman wrote her memoirs, using as her base the journalistic pieces she had written about the condition of Sioux reservation

life as she had seen it in her work and travels. Fifteen years after her death, Eastman's story was finally published as *Sister to the Sioux, The Memoirs of Elaine Goodale Eastman, 1885-1891* (Bison Books, 1978).

Although the memoirs begin with three chapters on Eastman's early family life and her initial teaching position at the Hampton Institute, a missionary school in Virginia, they are dated in the title as being from 1885-1891. Recognizing the significance of these dates provides a framework for understanding the focus of Eastman's life during that period.

It was in the autumn of 1885 that Elaine, "burning with an intensity to see the much discussed and little-known 'Indian Country' with her own eyes" (83), the land from which many of her students at Hampton had come, first toured the Dakota territory. She recognized the historic moment that impinged upon the land on which she travelled and upon the people who had once freely lived with it. She writes: It was a critical moment in the history of the West. The pressure of a great immigrant population upon millions of as yet untilled acres—acres which government experts now tell us should never have been broken—had once more brought about an irresistible demand for the eviction of the Indians. (28) And she also recognized that it was a critical moment in the history of education in the west. The U.S. government had pledged a school for every thirty children on the reservations; this pledge, like so many others, was not being met. The trip west had clarified Eastman's "call." She would "open the inhospitable doors of the waiting schoolhouse and ring the silent bell" (26). Taking her plans for an industrial day school to the Indian Commissioner in Washington, she proposed "teaching cooking, sewing, and gardening, as well as English and arithmetic" (31). Within a year Eastman became the first governmental teacher at White River camp.

The memoirs end, significantly, in January of 1891. In the

only scholarly article on Sister to the Sioux that I was able to find, Ruth Ann Alexander traces Eastman's role as a teacher and as a writer in the context of her involvement with her husband, Charles Eastman. Alexander notes that the entries end when Elaine marries Charles, interpreting this as "indicating that Eastman saw her life as over" with the marriage. "Marriage meant subordinating her life to that of her husband" (Alexander, 92).

But the chapter from which Alexander draws the base for her argument, the Epilogue, was not part of the original memoirs. It was published initially as the introduction to Eastman's collection of poetry, *The Voice at Eve* (1930) and was added to the memoirs in the 1978 compilation by Kay Graber. This is an important piece of Eastman's writing in which it is indeed clear that her vision of marriage was more complex than originally imagined.

"When, only a few weeks after our first meeting, I promised to marry Dr. Eastman, it was with a thrilling sense of two-fold consecration. I gave myself wholly in that hour to the traditional duties of wife and mother, abruptly relinquishing all thought of independent career for the making of a home. At the same time, I embraced with a new and deeper zeal the conception of life-long service to my husband's people. How simple it all seemed to me then—how far from simple the event!" (172) Eastman then traces her unsung contributions to the public life of her husband, filling in many of the gaps that exist in the couple's history as presented in their collaborative works. This is an important claiming of historical space for Elaine Eastman and I do not want to belittle its significance. (I will return to this chapter to discuss current representations of the Eastman's roles in their collective writing). But Alexander's focus on the politics of gender and representation—principle issues raised within the Epilogue—leads us too quickly away from the force of cultural politics that shapes the body of the memoirs. It is

only in the final few pages of the original memoirs that Eastman focuses her story on the courtship with her eventual husband. The crux of her remembrance within the final chapters is of issues of greater historical significance during the winter of 1890-1891—the massacre at Wounded Knee.

Eastman began her work as Supervisor of Education for the two Dakotas in the summer of 1890 and by early October had covered five of the seven territories for which she was responsible. With such a wide range of contact with native people throughout the Great Sioux Reservation, Eastman became an outsider with an “in” to the mood in the months preceding the massacre. While many white settlers and military officials panicked with the supposed threat of the Ghost Dance Craze, Eastman and others had trust in the people with whom they lived and worked. She writes: “None of the missionaries, speaking the language and knowing the people as they did, had the least fear of an uprising” (145).

Throughout her account Eastman is bold and direct in her critique of the government’s role in escalating the tension. She also recognizes the complexity of the situation, consistently noting the multiple issues involved. The following is an example of the depth and tone that characterizes Eastman’s writing: The Sioux had naturally hoped for immediate benefit from the reluctant sale of more than nine million acres to which they had clung from sentiment and tradition, although as a matter of fact it was of little use to them without bison herds that had once covered it. They expected to receive cows, farm tools, and (more pressing at the moment) an increased beef ration. Instead, the issue of beef the two western-most agencies was cut from one to two million pounds, causing real privation. The men whose consent to the act had been so lately courted with fair words were ignored and snubbed. To make matters worse, that summer of 1890 was one of a cycle of dry years, so familiar today. A veritable “Dust Bowl” extended from the

Missouri River almost to the Black Hills. In the persistent hot winds the pitiful little gardens of the Indians curled up and died. Even the native hay crop was a failure. "I had never before seen so much sickness. Lean and wiry in health, with glowing skin and a look of mettle, many now displayed gaunt forms, lack luster faces, and sad, deep-sunken eyes." (137)

Eastman was a journalist, intent on reporting the facts rather than creating an analysis. Her commitment to reporting the Sioux perspective of the story, however, gives her accounts a political charge.

Even as the tension with the government mounted, Eastman felt no change in the familiar kindness with which she was received by the Sioux. Because of this good rapport and the quiet boldness with which she placed herself in the community, Eastman was present for and so, wrote about, significant historical events. The following is her account of the Ghost Dance: There was no secrecy about the dance which had caused such frantic alarm. It was held in the open, with neither fire nor light, after the participants had fasted for a day or two and passed through the purifying ordeal of the sweat-lodge. Anyone might look on, and on a bright November night I joined a crowd of spectators near Porcupine Tail Butte—the only person who was a Sioux.

Under the soft glow of the hunter's moon perhaps a hundred men, women, and children with clasped hands and fingers interlocked, swung in a great circle about their "sacred tree," chanting together the monotonous Ghost Dance songs. The hypnotic repetition of the words: "Once more we shall hunt the buffalo—Our Father has said it!" alternated with short invocations by prophet or priest and occasional intervals of wailing by the women—that musical heart-piercing sound which, once heard, is never forgotten. No one with imagination could fail to see in the rite a genuine religious ceremony, a faith which, illusory as it was, deserved to be treated with

respect. (148) Committed to her belief that Christianity was the highest and best vision of spirituality, a gift that she was to help share with the "heathens," Eastman never fully recognizes the validity of spiritual expression outside of the Christian framework. She leans, however, toward a more inclusive vision with her unwillingness to categorize the spiritual event that she has just seen. After listening to this strange litany for half the night, I lay down in my tent quite worn out with sympathetic excitement that infuses Eastman's writing with lively description, pushing the account beyond the limits of what Eastman herself can understand or accept.

Eastman continued to work and travel until she was called in to Pine Ridge by the agency officials. She was there, then, when the first accounts of the massacre at Wounded Knee were heard. Outraged at the atrocities, Eastman worked for days afterwards nursing the sick and wounded and helping the panicked Sioux who remained at the agency. Her report to the people back East was blunt and direct, appearing in New York papers under the heading: "Miss Goodale Blames the Troops for the Killing of Women and Children" (163). Basing her account on "personal interviews with survivors, the reports of eye-witnesses, and Dr. Eastman's account of the visit to the field on January first to look for any wounded who might still be alive" (163). Eastman gave a strong and immediate voice for the Sioux perspective of the event. Looking back to the time in which she wrote the letter, Eastman places herself within the history of the representation of the event: "I think the Sioux story of Wounded Knee is now generally accepted, but at the time it was strongly resented by the military authorities and every effort was made to suppress or discredit it. I was myself censured for putting it into circulation" (164).

1885-1891. The memoirs are dated within the chronological time frame of Elaine Eastman's most intense and direct personal involvement with the Sioux. She had arrived to their land

waving the banner of her "higher" civilization, eager to educate the native people to the wealth and richness of the Euro-American culture. By January of 1891, shocked and disillusioned by her government's continued abuse of the native people, culminating in the horrors of the Wounded Knee massacre, she had learned that the "civilizing" of the west had as much to do with educating the people of the dominant white culture as setting up schools for the natives.

With this, then, as our framework, how can we delve further into the complexities of Eastman's story?

Calico or brocaded silk. Moccasins. Pretty hats. Eastman notices clothing. The cultural exchange that took place on the Dakota plains and elsewhere between native people and those who set out to "civilize" them is intricate and complex. By tracing this exchange with the specifics of clothing as a focus, we can get to the multiple perspectives that are found in Eastman's text.

She first writes of clothing in the context of the culture from which she comes. The Goodale family farm, never agriculturally productive, was a place of artistic expression. The children, whose education was "overwhelmingly literary and humanistic" (3), relied on each other for company and amusement. It was when Elaine was eighteen years old that she moved outside of the comfortable family environment for her education. Writing of her year experience at a boarding school in New York City, Eastman claims it was there that she first encountered the rigidity of the social structure of the time, particularly for women. Eastman writes of her rebellion in terms of clothing fashion.

The truth is that I had grown up a nonconformist, indifferent to fashion and disliking the prescribed figure, firmly molded of steel and whalebone, upon which alone the costume of the period could successfully be created. An ardent votary of "dress reform" long before that movement had any general

support, I insisted upon loose frocks and low-heeled shoes and rebelled against turning out my toes in the perscribed manner. (13-14).

Critical of the restrictions of dress in her own society, Eastman asserts aspects of freedom of expression through her choice of her clothing.

But what happens to dress reform in Eastman's Indian day school classroom? She writes of what she considers to be her first success in her teaching venture at the White River day school: "Within a few weeks we had all our little folks neatly clad and reasonably clean" (40).

The first lessons for any new student are those of proper hygiene and attire. Used clothing arrives in boxes and barrels from the East. Girls were taught to sew their own dresses.

Eastman gives few examples of the academic lessons she taught but relates with excitement and pride the details of the clothing exchange. She quotes from a letter her co-worker, Laura Tileston, wrote home to her mother: Miss G. had on a farmer's hat with no trimming, just purchased to keep off the blazing sun which we faced. Can you see us? Well, then, get home with us as fast as you can and open the barrel and find—fifty hats! So on Sunday, after church, I said to the children: 'Now all who want to throw away shawls and wear hats go into the house.' Down went the shawls and in they flocked like so many chickens, and on went the hats right and left, exactly the right hats turning up for the right chicks, until it seemed as if someone must have seen them all and fitted each. The old people stood about laughing and comment-ing happily. Then out marched our procession, shawls neatly folded over their arms and the pretty hats shading their eyes. I do not think I was ever happier. (40)

People taking off their shawls and replacing them with the hats of another culture. This is not murder or imprisonment. It is not taking children from their homes and families to edu-

cated them in dismal, militaristic boarding schools. Its holding up a pretty hat and saying, "Here, would you like one? Take it." This is a symbolically important moment and Eastman knows it. With the following story, she links the exchange of clothing to what is, for her, the more primary issue, education.

Most of the parents were cooperative. However, I recall on man who raised more corn than any other two in the village, yet would not send his attractive daughter to school. "I put seed in the ground," he remarked, "and I see something come of it. You waste much time in play. I do not see anything grow." However, one day the pretty little Scarlet Ball appeared in a soiled calico frock and attached herself to the school picnic about to set out in two farm wagons, armed with bells, whistles, and baskets of inviting food, for a flower-strewn meadow not far away. After that she took matters into her own hands, and turned up next morning ready to accept a new name and the trig summer uniform of blue and white checked gingham. Within two years our Florence read fluently in a Second Reader, sang sweetly, made good bread, her own dresses, and even her father's shirts. Now, admitted the one-time skeptic, "I can see that seed grow." (42-43)

The girl was ready to accept the trig summer dress and, by extension, was ready to accept the schooling that Eastman offered.

What is important here is that Eastman believes firmly that she is filling a need for the community and that the people want what she has to offer. In her narrative, she focuses on those who want her teaching and who see themselves as benefiting from the new system. "Nearly all the boys consented to have their long hair cut on donning becoming new suits" (40). Nearly all. Who did not consent and why didn't they? Eastman leaves the stories of resistance out, giving us instead, those of the people who willingly exchanged their shawls for pretty hats, those who symbolically presented themselves as ready to accept the

education she offered.

But Eastman was ready to accept what the native people offered to her as well. Rather than going back east during her summer vacations, Eastman chose to travel through the reservation, meeting people in a less formal role than she could fill as a school teacher. She writes of the clothing worn on such a trip.

"At every stream or pond we bathed and washed our clothes—with soap, if we had it. The loose Dakota dress permits of dressing and undressing in the open without exposure, since a dry frock is simply put over the wet one on coming out of the water, and the latter slipped off underneath...This Dakota dress—which I myself wore much of the time on the trip—is, I believe, the most modest ever devised." (100)

She is aware of the impact the external acceptance of Sioux customs can have on her relations with them. "There was implied compliment to the Sioux in the very fact of my choosing to speak their tongue although it was not required of me, in my frank enjoyment of their company, my habitual wearing of moccasins, and my choice of the Dakota lodge over every other form of canvas house" (123). Eastman makes the same symbolic move her students had of physically representing herself as in a position of compromise and exchange. This becomes particularly important when she takes her role as Supervisor of Education. As a government official, she was in a position to be met with distrust. To establish herself as someone committed to more than just her government paycheck, she consciously shaped her image, "adopting a simple one-piece dress, made in gingham or flannel, according to the weather, and worn with a soft hat and moccasins" (122).

Eastman is not alone in her recognition of the significance of dress. She tells a story of Whirling Hawk, a man of the family with whom she traveled, who turned the conven-

tions of clothing to make a mockery of them and the people who impose them. Wearing cut up old trousers, a calico shirt, and cotton bandana, he poses as a destitute wanderer, "on the theory that he was collecting a debt from the greedy white man on the installment plan, and had no hesitation at all, after enjoying two hearty breakfast at his own and another's fireside, in asserting that he hadn't tasted a mouthful in days." (107). Again, Eastman notes the giving and receiving of hats, this time from another perspective. Whirling Hawk "came home proudly wearing the third hat that had been given him since we started, none of which he ever thought of wearing" (106). She is there with Whirling Hawk with the humor and the critique even though she is of the system that he mocks.

Eastman's story is rich with complexities and subtle issues. There is much we can learn from her memoirs, *Sister to the Sioux*, that will enhance the already listened to stories of the time in which she lived. It will take more than one re-viewing, however, to understand the importance of her involvement with the Sioux people from 1885-1891 and even more work to learn to find her voice within the Eastman collaborative texts.

Even today, people continue to write Eastman out of the stories in which she was an integral part. I conclude with an example of such poor representation that I cannot let go unchallenged.

Wigwam Evenings is the only one of the Eastman's collective works that has carried both Elaine and Charles' names as authors since its original publication in 1909. In 1990, Bison Books released a new edition of this text, removing the original preface and adding an introduction written by Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris. What better people to write an introduction to an Eastman text—a couple who,

since 1981, have collaborated in their writing and who are consistent in making public their mutual involvement in each other's work. Here, I thought, as I eagerly awaited the copy I had special ordered, would be the public space in which the complex issues of the Eastman's publications would be addressed by two people who have given much thought to the practice of collaborative writing.

In addition to offering no new insight or interpretation to the role of Elaine Eastman in the publication of this book and others, Dorris and Erdrich perpetuate old patterns of keeping Elaine Eastman from a validated place. With one simple sentence they make clear their vision of Elaine's position in relation to Charles. "Physician, scholar, author Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa), in collaboration with his wife, Elaine Goodale Eastman, has assembled in this collection a composite, condensed sampling of his tribes values and presents them in a language that is direct and engaging" (x). Charles is defined by three primary occupations—physician, scholar, and author—and is placed by his double naming in both the Euro-American and Native communities. What we learn of Elaine here is her family name, her married name, and her only occupation apparently worth mentioning—as wife of Charles Eastman. Further, he is the active subject of the sentence; she makes it in between comas.

The dropping of the original preface from this new edition also is an act of denying Elaine her true position. The preface is initialed by E. G. E. Elaine Goodale Eastman. It is the single piece of writing within the whole body of Eastman collaborative works that is attributed solely to Elaine Eastman, and is a valuable tool with which to read for clues to Elaine's own voice. Erdrich and Dorris take the abuse even further when, in their introduction, they write, "Half-way through the book we meet the Little Boy Man whom

Eastman in his introduction calls the Adam of the Sioux" (xi). His? Hers. One little pronoun; one big missed opportunity to bring Elaine Goodale Eastman's story back.

Rachel Anne Brown
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

The Way to Independence: Memories of a Hidatsa Indian Family, 1840-1920

Interpretive exhibition, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN. Nicholas Westbrook, project director; Carolyn Gilman, project curator; Susan Holland, curator John Palmer Low, designer. On view at the MHS through 1988, will travel nationally 1989-1991: National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismark; Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha; American Museum of Natural History in New York. Check with host institutions for exact scheduling.

Around 1840, members of the Hidatsa-Mandan community along the Missouri River, their number decimated by small-pox, an imported epidemic, journeyed north to reestablish themselves at Like-a-Fishhook, named for its location at a bend of the river. The community accommodated new elements such as a trading post and a steamboat landing. However, for this band, Like-a-Fishhook was to be the final experience of a traditional tribal society based on farming and the buffalo hunt. Coming events would include the arrival of government soldiers and Christian missionaries, the institution of the reservation system, westward relocation, allotments, boarding school, the Grass Dance, and other elements of cultural renaissance.

The Way to Independence exhibit is based on the descriptions and analyses anthropologist Gilbert White collected from

members of this community in the early 1900s. Our principal guides are two who were raised in Like-A-Fishhook: Buffalo Bird Woman and her brother Wolf Chief. Buffalo Bird Woman's son Goodbird and White himself provide additional perspectives. Direct quotations from the anthropologist's field notes and published studies are used throughout the interpretive text as well as the audio sound track.

These quotations are not merely illustrative; they do the hard work of communicating. For instance, Buffalo Bird Woman's story of the corn prize spills outward, connecting individual experience with broader historical circumstances:

As her menfolk struggled with reapers and threshers, Buffalo Bird Woman still planted her garden and it flourished. "The government has changed our way of cultivation and brought many new kinds of vegetables. But I do not think that the new way is so good as the old." When the agent organized an agricultural fair, she entered some corn in the contests. "The corn took first prize," she said. "I raised this corn exactly as in the old time."

Like so much else in *The Way to Independence* exhibit, the corn prize story also reminds us that change is rarely accomplished without conflict. However, through the inclusion of the curator's phrase "as her menfolk struggled with reapers and threshers," the corn-growing story suggests still broader connections. Historians are just beginning to appreciate how industrially - produced farm machinery altered the sexual division of labor among European-American agriculturists in the mid-to-late nineteenth century and I am delighted to see Native Americans' experience brought into this discussion. Without downplaying the importance of a "dominant culture/other" model, *Way to Independence* presents historical conditions - such as circumstances of childhood learning, technological choices, structures of institutional power - in ways that invite comparison among groups in our multicultural society.

The exhibition, an assemblage of over 500 artifacts and 200 images, is based on Gilbert White's field collections. The interpretive text is organized on three levels. The primary storyline runs across the tops of the exhibition casework in headline form. A second level, visitor-activated "light labels" identifying displayed objects, runs across the bottom of the exhibition cases. The third dimension is an audio sound track featuring several dozen narratives of roughly 3-7 minutes each. Clustered thematically, the narratives are keyed to interpretive text and objects throughout the exhibit. Like the light-labels, the audio track is visitor-activated. Private earphones eliminate the problem of unwanted ambient sound for others in the room. The audio entry works on a simple "on" button and continuous loop system; so it's a matter of waiting for a desired selection to come around. The audio stations list titles and speakers in order.

The Way to Independence installation has a figure-eight or hourglass shape. The initial loop considers traditional life in Like-a-Fishhook. Through segments entitled Seasons of Childhood, A Daughter's Duties, Hunting Like a Man, Lessons of Leadership and the like, the exhibition documents the training that Buffalo Bird Woman and Wolf Chief received and the structure of the society for which the sister and brother were prepared. This section of the exhibition is especially successful in demonstrating the complexity of this Plains Indian culture. For example, an array of arrows fashioned for every conceivable prey and condition of pursuit graphically conveys the precision and the subtlety with which the Hidatsa responded to their environment. The presentation of agricultural and domestic implements works in the same fashion. This exhibit's handling of these materials seems special because an often rhetorical respect for the tools and technologies of indigenous peoples has become so familiar as to approach cliché in recent public programming. Here, the metaphor of childhood learn-

ing, resting on the autobiographical reminiscences of Buffalo Bird Woman and Wolf Chief and anthropologist White's field notes, allows us to see the artifacts in cultural context.

The relocation journey from Like-a-Fishhook to the reservation community of Independence in 1885 literally connects the two sections. The second loop in the installation, exploring the Hidatsas' experiences on the reservation, relies heavily on two-dimensional photographs and documents. Topics developed in this section include: Wolf Chief's roles as storekeeper and vocal opponent of federal Indian policies; Goodbird's successful ranching endeavors, his vision quest, and later conversion to Christianity; and Buffalo Bird Woman's adherence to traditional ways in a rapidly changing world. Family members' experiences appear against a more general background that explores the agent's role on the reservation, Indian police, the boarding school system, the church, and acculturation mechanisms and pressures. Anthropologist Gilbert White appears as an active and catalytic visitor to the community. For Buffalo Bird Woman, White becomes a validating witness to her never-surrendered practice of the old ways. On a less happy note, White's request to buy a clan shrine of Wolf Chief provokes controversy within the extended family: does the individual charged with responsibility for the shrine have the right to sell it? When Wolf Chief does decide to sell, the transaction appears to trigger a curse: all of the principals outlive their sons.

The Way to Independence is distinctive in its exposition of multiple narrative lines within a coherent framework; I hope it will be a model for many other projects yet to be developed in this respect. The multiple perspectives within the exhibition work on several levels. One notices the absence of the authoritative exhibition text (or omniscient narrator), which so often implies through its mere presence that the forces of history are somehow divorced from everyday life and decision making.

In its place, we hear five voices playing off one another: Goodbird; Buffalo Bird Woman; Wolf Chief; Gilbert Wilson; and the exhibition curator(s).

The Indians are the principal speakers, yet the text and attributions constantly remind us. We are hearing their voices and seeing their world first through an anthropologist's field notations and later through a curator's eye. In effect, this places the act of interpretation - past and present - at the heart of the exhibition script. To understand the stories being told, we must identify time and place, characters, situations, and a point of view. As we begin to weigh these perspectives, we join the exhibition cast too, becoming active interpreters.

How does the multiple narration work? To give just one example, audio reminiscences of Buffalo Bird Woman and Wolf Chief accompany the Love and Marriage section in the Like-a- Fishhook loop. She tells of the customs and rituals surrounding her marriage to a respected warrior; it is an account of the pleasures and responsibilities attendant upon following an established path. Wolf Chief tells of the many short-term liaisons of his youth and the social provisions for "playing the field" within the Hidatsa culture. The dramatic center of his tale is of a young woman he yearned for - but did not want to marry. Love, marriage, and courtship usually appear in interpretive exhibit via genealogical charts, demographic statistics about fertility, photos of weddings and babies. Here, by way of contrast, both brother and sister talk very directly about sexual and social responsibility in their community; though the language is circumspect, Wolf Chief's subject is actually lust or infatuation. As these and other reminiscences unfold, we come to see Buffalo Bird Woman as a person who has found personal and public rewards by following these traditional ways, Wolf Chief as something of an entrepreneur, perhaps even a trickster. It is refreshing to encounter such strongly developed character sketches in an interpretive exhi-

bition.

Roger Buffalohead notes the special qualities of all three Independence narrators in the accompanying book review, and this is a proper concern. It is clear that all three are leaders in a sense, and as cultural brokers anything but representative. Yet, the general and particular are kept in fine balance. We constantly see these personally powerful, complex personalities in relation to their changing world and to active decision making about the best paths and best footings. Though based primarily upon late-life reminiscence, we have a chance to see Buffalo Bird Woman and Wolf Chief, in particular, from childhood through to old age. And they aren't just a credit to their people; we are given sufficient context to suspect that Buffalo Bird Woman might possibly be a little stiff-necked, her brother charming, mercurial and perhaps as prone on occasion to eye the path of least resistance as that of principle. I want to encourage this sort of ambitious experiment in exhibition scripting.

For all the sophistication of design and concept, exhibits still rest on basics: comfort, accessibility, easily operated mechanical devices if those are employed. Here, some shortfalls mar otherwise exemplary realization. First of all, there's no place to sit down in the Minnesota Historical Society exhibit galleries. To be fair to the Society - now in the process of building greatly expanded exhibition facilities - mounting *The Way to Independence* at all, in currently available facilities, is a triumph of commitment over material circumstances. Nonetheless, I hope that audiences for the traveling show will be able to sit and survey their options, listen to some of the audio tapes, or just think. The low light levels (due to conservation requirements), the dark walls and casework treatment of the exhibit design, and the sheer mass of material in this installation demand contemplative space. Secondly, the "light-labels" that give access to the entire second tier of identification and

analysis in the exhibition script are mounted at a tilt in the casework of the exhibition, below the display windows and below fingertip length for an adult woman of average size. Since the visitor has to hold the button in "on" position to keep the label lit and legible, visitors interested in this text wind up inching through the exhibit at a semi-stoop.

These are minor matters. In historian Michael Wallace's wonderful phrase, this is the sort of public programming that "threatens to become interesting to mature adults." How is the threat made good? The exhibition curators and designer have risen to the occasion of a great theme. Their solution is to focus on the subject of contested territory: the organization flows from a comparative view of historical experience and perspectives of multiple narrators. Using childhood learning and life-long decision making as the conduits for the interpretation keeps both human agency and the constraints of historical circumstances at the center of our attention. Also, there is no hierarchy among the narrators; all of them, even Wilson and the project curators, come before us as individuals in time.

Of equal importance, *The Way to Independence* risks drama, personality, and artfulness in its storytelling. After all, most of us know the basic outlines of this story. We follow this telling with such attention because we want to see how these people - Buffalo Bird Woman, Goodbird, Wolf Chief and even Gilbert White - fare. We also know that there is no happy ending. Yet the austerity, the dignity, and the recognition of tragedy with which *The Way to Independence* is developed allow us to have a sense of resolution about the events chronicled. In the best tradition of aesthetic resolutions, the exhibition provokes hard questions about Indian policy, past and present, not comforting commonplaces.

Joe Blatti

Contributing editor for Media Public History, St. Paul, MN.

Cultural Transition

*Edited by Carolyn Gilman and Mary Jane Schneider
Minneapolis Historical Society Press, 1988
\$40.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper, 394 pp.*

The Hidatsa Indians, who along with the Mandan and Arikara make up the Three Affiliated Tribes living on the Ft. Berthold Reservation in North Dakota, are the subject of a nationally circulating exhibition and catalog. Organized and written by Carolyn Gilman and Mary Jane Schneider for the Minnesota Historical Society, the exhibition and catalog are based upon the collections of Gilbert L. Wilson, who first came among the Hidatsa in 1906 as a Presbyterian missionary. At Independence, a small, isolated settlement on the reservation, Wilson met Buffalo Bird Woman, her brother Wolf Chief, and her son Goodbird. The family befriended Wilson and, with Goodbird as the interpreter, told him their memories of Hidatsa history and provided him with a wealth of information on the spiritual and material culture of the tribe, including extensive data on the elements of American culture adopted into Hidatsa life. Later, Wilson used some of this data to complete a doctorate in anthropology at the University of Minnesota. He also published several books and articles that made excellent use of these oral sources to reconstruct and interpret Hidatsa history.

Drawing upon Wilson collections housed in the Minnesota Historical Society, the Museum of American Indians in New York, and several other locations, Gilman and Schneider have, like Wilson before them, focused on the memories of Buffalo

Bird Woman, Wolf Chief, and Goodbird. In doing so, they have transformed personal and family history into tribal history and tribal history into a compelling and searching examination of the impact of American life and federal Indian policies on Hidatsa life and society. The result is a carefully researched, detailed, and sensitive account that provides both internal and external perspectives on Hidatsa history and culture from 1840 to 1920.

As a result of the rich and detailed information Buffalo Bird Woman, Wolf Chief, and Goodbird gave to Wilson, Gilman and Schneider have been able to examine Hidatsa acculturation with a thoroughness seldom possible for American Indian tribes. Hidatsa integrated elements and objects of American society through a "tribalization" process, which fitted the new into the old and made the adopted elements and objects part of the Hidatsa life. The patterns of the life that emerged from Hidatsa acculturation integrated Christianity, capitalism, and other features of American life, thereby creating a new and what some would call modern Indian life. In the section on farming, for example, the contrast between traditional tribal riverbed methods of cultivation and more modern horse- and steam-powered farming is dramatically presented. Gilman and Schneider deserve praise for describing this complex process without romanticizing or dehumanizing the Hidatsa people.

Nonetheless, students of Indian history will have a few concerns about this study. While Gilman and Schneider have made excellent use of the available historical resources to reconstruct Hidatsa history, the reliance upon oral traditions provided by Buffalo Bird Woman, Wolf Chief, and Goodbird shows the bias of historians for written accounts even when it is oral tradition converted to written form, i.e., Wilson's report. The authors made very little effort to gather oral accounts in the Hidatsa or Ft. Berthold communities today. Such accounts

might have extended the story of the Hidatsa acculturation beyond the first two decades of this century. For the story of this process, of course, did not end in 1920; rather the information provided by the Buffalo Bird Woman family and the Gilbert collections come to a closure at this time. The story of Hidatsa acculturation - not the limits of the Wilson collections - would have been a more appropriate parameter for this study.

Another problem with *The Way to Independence* is its focus on the lives of three family members. Buffalo Bird Woman and her family were remarkable people who integrated elements of American culture into their traditional way of life with considerable creativity, but their experiences may or may not have been representative of the majority of the Hidatsa. On many Indian reservations, the transition from tribal to American lifestyles often resulted in personal and social disorganization, poor health, poverty, and sullen, bitter people who wore dark and somber clothing as if in mourning for what was lost. Although some of this emerges in this study and piques the reader with the subtleties of tradition in interaction with change, the focus is on the more positive aspects of acculturation. While the uglier aspects of acculturation are a sensitive subject, Gilman and Schneider's study needs to be balanced with some of these harsher realities. Only then can a truthful portrait emerge.

The catalog is organized topically and places the exhibition objects in proper cultural and historical context. It has a stunning cover with a tinted photograph of Buffalo Bird Woman, Wolf Chief, and Goodbird placed on a background of quillwork in colors of pink, violet, orange, and green. It contains 595 illustrations with 16 pages of color. The illustrations and photographs are of high quality and the items shown range from the fascinating to the ordinary, although on occasion one tires of looking at frying pans and other mundane material cultural objects of Hidatsa ranching and farming life.

The Way to Independence leaves the last word to four scholars

who provide essays on the origins, religion, and natural environment of the Hidatsa, as well as on the contributions of Gilbert Wilson and his brother Frederick to Hidatsa Studies. A valuable guide to the Wilson collections by Mary Jane Schneider concludes the study. One might truthfully say about this exhibition catalog that it is a success both as a coffee table conversation piece and as an important contribution to the study of Hidatsa history during a critical period of cultural transition.

*W. Roger Buffalohead
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis*

OJIBWAY MUSIC IN MINNESOTA: A CENTURY OF SONG FOR VOICE AND DRUM

*"Ojibway Music From Minnesota:
A Century of Song for Voice and Drum"
Cassette Tape Produced by Thomas Vennum, Jr.
The Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul 55101*

Before I begin to describe my impressions of the recording "Ojibway Music from Minnesota" I would like to say something about my myself, my family, and my first experiences with Indian music.

As a child, before I could read, I often explored our library at home and pulled books down from the shelves I could reach to look at the pictures. Our library was not large, but my parents interests were diverse; my mother loved music and art and my father's hobby was history. He was an inveterate tinker, builder of small boats, and home handyman when he wasn't at his job as a salesman for the largest concrete company in Mankato, Minnesota. One of my favorite books was an illustrated history of the American Indian. There was a picture on every page, and turning the pages filled me alternatively with joy, horror, dread, yearning - all the confusions and precious emotions of pre-literate, labile, early childhood.

After the death of my father and many subsequent moves the book has long since been lost, and I have never been able to find another copy. I have often wanted to look again, as a

bespectacled adult, at the drawings of fierce and terrifying braves singing and dancing around a campfire on some shadowy northern plain; to study the faces in soft-focus daguerreotypes of aged Indian chiefs with hoary feathered caps. I retain a vivid memory of my reaction to the pictures, however, and when I see them reproduced in other books and articles while browsing in a library or bookstore, I am captured by many ineffably sweet and sad things about my childhood and for a moment time seems to stop while I relive a part of my past.

There were no Indians as far as I knew living in Mankato, Minnesota in the early 1950s, so I had nothing in real life with which to compare the pictures. In fact, the only other reference to Indians in my pre-school years that I can clearly recall (other than Western movies and the Hamm's Beer radio commercial) was a large memorial slab of dark granite at the south end of the bridge connecting North and South Mankato. The inscription on the slab, read to me by my father each and every time we crossed the bridge, was "38 Sioux Indians Were Hanged On This Spot." In spite of the fact that he enjoyed history, he was never able to explain why the Indians were hanged, or why the town should be proud enough about it to place commemorative monument in the center of downtown Mankato.

In high school my classmates were white, predominantly middle class Catholics, Presbyterians and Lutherans. There was never any question about a career for me. I wanted to play cello and teach music. I went from Mankato to Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, where I earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Violoncello Performance, and then into the United States Army. In 1971 I attended graduate school in Washington, D.C., taking another degree in 'cello performance. It would be accurate to say that during my formative years and after, when I received my training as a musician and teacher, I had never met an Indian and had never heard Indian music.

All of that changed when, in 1973, I accepted a position at

Bemidji State University, in Northern Minnesota. The town of Bemidji is an hour's drive from Red Lake Indian Reservation. The university has an Indian Studies program and there are a significant number of Chippewa students attending classes in the general education curriculum.

In 1977, I offered to teach Music 102 (Folk, Jazz, and Rock) as a substitute for a colleague on sabbatical leave. My training as a cellist was in the so-called Classical tradition, but I had grown up on rock'n'roll, and as a conservatory student I moonlighted at Baltimore's Playboy Club on upright and electric bass. Planning the course and teaching it would be fun for me, not to mention that good student evaluations and my readiness to serve might make me more attractive when I became eligible for tenure the following year. After Baltimore and Washington, I liked Bemidji. The air was clean, the lakes were pure, it was quiet, restful, and I felt close and connected to nature. I wanted to stay.

My goals for the course were simple. First and foremost, I wanted my students to learn that the world of music is filled with different but logical and viable systems - systems other than the Classic tradition of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. Isn't it possible, I theorized, that understanding our diverse musical culture might, in some small way enhance the communication between the so-called cultivated (Classic) and vernacular (Popular) traditions? I had in mind to broaden my student's musical tastes through listening and discussing the unique music which is part of just about everyone's background and experience in the United States. I wanted them to learn that, just like an arrowhead or a piece of ancient clay pot, music is an important cultural artifact, not something innocent and in the background.

Trouble came almost immediately. On the first day of the second week of class, Mitch, a tall, lanky Chippewa from the Red Lake Band approached me after class, eyes lowered re-

spectfully, with a drop slip in his hand.

"Is it a scheduling problem?" No response. "I hope you weren't offended by something I said or did in class."

"No, it's just that I don't like anything on your listening list."

He didn't seem hostile, just resolute, but in a polite way. I didn't know what to say, so I signed the chit. When I reached over to give it to him, he said, "You say in the syllabus that we shouldn't apologize for liking our own favorite music, whether it's rock or country, but my favorite music isn't even listed."

"So," I asked, "what is your favorite music?"

"Tribal music. I belong to a drum up on the reservation where I live."

"What do you mean, a drum?"

A "drum," I found out later, is a singing group accompanied by a large bass drum, turned on its side. Mitch didn't take the drop slip. I invited him to my office and we talked for a long time and worked out a deal. He would not drop class and I would go to a powwow with his family as his guest. This was the beginning of my education in Ojibway music, and it has since become not only a fascinating hobby, but also something of an obsession.

Thomas Venum's excellent accompanying notes for the cassette "Ojibway Music From Minnesota: A century of song for voice and drum," describe sights and sounds of a large powwow held at the Bemidji fairgrounds in 1988. The modern powwow is probably a reenactment of a victory or war dance celebration, but it also looks and feels like a military pass-in-review and a county fair. In addition to music, the smell of fry bread and wild rice is in the air, along with the odor of exercise. A large powwow can attract many drums, dancers, food concessions, and crafts-people. The experience stimulates all the senses and is unforgettable.

The powwow begins with a processional Grand Entry in

which a drum plays a relatively short song, followed by another drum with its song, and so on until the procession is ended. The first five songs on "Ojibway Music from Minnesota" demonstrate this process. The recorded sound is clean and has the excitement and immediacy of the highest quality location recordings. Incidentally, Vennum's notes give the order of performance of the first five selections incorrectly. The White Fish Bay Singers are followed by the Leech Lake Intertribal and the Ponemah Ramblers, not by the Red Lake Singers. The Red Lake Singers are the last of the five groups (not third) represented at the Grand Entry.

Initially, I found tribal music very challenging, especially at my first powwow, but also and after many subsequent ones. In the process of trying to appreciate and understand it, I have discovered many things about my definition of music, the way I hear music, the way I expect music to sound, and the way I use music. Trained as a performer and historical musicologist, music makes sense to me if I can play it on the piano from a score. I taped music at powwows and tried to transcribe it into modern notation. I quickly discovered that it is difficult, if not impossible, to notate Native American music using the system of the "cultivated" tradition, that is, clef signs, time signatures, lines and spaces. The ornamentation, slides, glottal sounds, and microtones (intervals of less than the distance between a black and a white key on the piano) can't be expressed in the standard system.

Other striking differences further distanced me from Indian music: Unlike the long, interestingly contoured melodies of folk or "art" music, Indian melodies are made from small, simple, concentrated fragments, repeated over and over. Lacking the familiar contour landmarks, Indian music is hard to follow. You don't walk out of a powwow singing the melodies. Most tribal music uses vocables (nonsense syllables - probably a stylized imitation of bird or animal sounds) rather than text,

so it is difficult to identify structure or phrasing. The last difference was for me one of the hardest to swallow. The vocal quality of most tribal singers is a high, rapidly undulating combination of chest voice strained to its highest range, and occasional use of head voice (falsetto). Close up, the singing has an almost painful intensity, a marked contrast to the vocal quality of more traditional operatic or folk singers. Vennum describes it as "extremely loud, forceful, sometimes even shrill. Singing also includes vehement vocal attacks of tones, which produce almost a barking effect."

In fact, tribal music has never "caught on" the way slave music or music from Northern India has, and there are several reasons for this sad fact. Tribal music has more in common with Asian and African cultures than it has with the Western tradition. The sound certainly supports the idea that the distant ancestors of the Plains Indians were once of Asian or Mongol descent. Tribal music is monophonic, just like all the music in Asia, and lacks the color and contrast produced by harmony and counterpoint. This is one reason why it has been so difficult for Americans to accept Indian music as a logical and viable system.

The early Puritans and Pilgrims had moral, ethical and spiritual objections to Indian music. Right from the start, they believed Indians were savages, calling them "pagan devils." Indians did not know Jesus, could not read the Bible, therefore were condemned to Hell, along with their "wild and uncivilized" music, which was frequently characterized by white settlers as "devil music." When Indians were converted to Christianity (sometimes forcibly), they learned new songs, usually psalms and hymns in English. Over the years, texts to tribal songs and Indian languages in general were forgotten. The use of vocables as a substitute for text made the Native American music system less viable, less logical to non-Indian ears.

In American and European culture, music is used primarily for entertainment. In Indian culture, music rarely serves this purpose (perhaps songs at a powwow are the exception). This is another objection to Indian music - it demands our complete attention. It doesn't work very well in elevators or at food stores. Music in Indian culture is functional and utilitarian, and in a way more "serious" than Western music.

"Ojibway Music From Minnesota" does an excellent job of demonstrating almost all the types/functions of Ojibway music, including dream songs, songs for gambling, courting, and teaching. Missing from the recording are sacred songs, and song types that no longer exist because their functions have ceased to exist. In most cases the songs are wonderfully evocative, and the recordings, made in studio-like conditions, are clear and noise free.

Of considerable historical interest are the cylinder recordings of a dream song (selection 6) and a moccasin game song (selection 8) made by the pioneer of Indian music research, Frances Densmore (1867-1954). Her recordings of over 500 Ojibway songs provide a rich and comprehensive beginning for the comparative study of tribal music in the United States. I wish someone would do a digital clean up and "sweetening" of these wax cylinders and reissue them in compact disk format. The noise level is often louder than the singing.

In 1910, Densmore recorded Kimiwun (selection 6), a singer and composer of dream songs from the little village of Ponemah, adjacent to the town of Red Lake. Ponemah still exists today, and the people of the village have made every effort to retain Ojibway as the language of the community. The Ponemah Singers (selection 7) do a "cover," or a new version of the 1910 recording, making it possible for the listener to compare the two songs. In the new version the small melodic "pieces" are more decorated, the texted section has been moved forward to the beginning of the second part (where all the

repetitions take place), and the song has been extend through the use of a coda (Italian for "tail"). In spite of these changes, the close correlation between the two versions demonstrates the accuracy and persistence of Ojibway oral tradition.

Game songs, especially gambling songs, are an example of music whose function has nearly been lost. One of the favorite Ojibway games of chance was the moccasin game, in which specially marked bullets were placed under moccasins. Rather up-tempo music was played throughout the entire game, which often lasted several days, and it served the purpose of distracting the guessers. The person hiding the bullets would use the music to accompany his wild gyrations, misdirecting the guessers with his hands and feet so they couldn't follow the bullets. Gambling had a devastating effect on Indians in the early reservation days. The federal government banned the moccasin game, and as a result singers begin to forget their repertoire of game songs. The Densmore recording of "ninga-wiidabimaa netaabimadang" (I will sit with one who knows how to score), sung by Swift Flying Feather in 1910 is of historical interest, but is too noisy to be of much use for listening. Fred Benjamin's songs and drumming, however, are infectious, full of personality and warmth, and they are reproduced here with accuracy and detail (selection 9). It is possible to hear the slapping of the placards or covers (used now instead of moccasins) to hide the markers, chairs creaking, and players keeping time to the drumming.

As a non-Indian listener, I especially appreciated Vennem's illuminating discussion of the last three genres of traditional music on the recording. Having the text in Ojibway and the English translation of each song makes it more fun and more interesting to absorb and appreciate not only the function of this music, but the style and personality of the singers.

The perversity and humor characteristic of Ojibway myths is captured perfectly in James Littlewolf's rendition of how

Wenabozho gave the Grebe red eyes and a flat rump (selection 10). Littlewolf tells the first part of the story without singing. Wenabozho is a powerful but bumbling folk character who convinces ducks to swim to the riverbank in exchange for songs which he is carrying in his pack. As soon as they are in his tent he teaches the ducks to sing and dance, but he orders them to keep their eyes closed. This part of the story is sung: "Gego inaabikegon gego inaabikegon. Giga-mamiskoshkiinzhigwem inaabiyeg" (Don't peek! Don't peek! You'll have red eyes if you peek). The narration continues (without singing): Wenabozho grabs each duck as it comes around the circle near him and wrings its neck. One duck catches on, opens his eyes, sounds the alarm, and all rest escape. As the last duck runs from the tent (the story concludes) Wenabozho kicks him in the rump.

Ojibway love songs were originally conceived for the courting flute, a melodic instrument that is now almost never heard in the music of the Plains Indians. Flutes were made from redwood or cedar in two pieces, hollowed out, glued together with sap or tied with bark. They had cylindrical bores and were end blown, like the European recorder, with six open holes for the fingers. The body was plain, but Ojibway flutes have a carved animal, usually a serpent, wolf, or bear, tied to the top at the vent near the point where the air stream is split to create a vibrating column. The sound is intimate, breathy, and poignantly expressive.

Densmore's recording of a love song by Swift Flying Feather still retains the languid, drawling influence of the courting flute (selection 11). If the listener can penetrate the noise barrier, it is even possible to discern the short pitch lifts or appoggiaturas at the end of each long tone in the melody. This is a conscious ornamentation done by the singer in imitation of a similar effect as the finger is lifted from a note on the courting flute (sometimes referred to as a 'release tone'). The other two courting

songs, performed by James Littlewolf, are similar in style to the Densmore recording (without the release tones), but are much clearer and easier to follow, thanks to modern recording technology and Vennum's superb notes (selection 12 and 13). Littlewolf's voice, at the age of 76 when this recording was made, is vibrant and supple. It has a patina of age and experience that make these songs and his singing irresistible.

Traditional Native American music has never been popular with non-Indians. Unlike the music of the slaves in the Colonies, Indian music has spawned no uniquely American musical forms, nor has its influence been significant in the development of new trends in popular music. The white man's early contempt for Indian music struck at the heart of "Indianness," and the destruction of Indian culture, land, and language made more conservative Indians equally scornful of the Euro-American cultural and musical traditions. At the same time, many younger, more progressive Indian musicians have embraced American popular culture without letting go entirely of their Indianness. Navaho musicians were perhaps some of the first to bring their musical culture forward and into synthesis with popular music. "Folsom Prison Blues," with words and music by Johnny Cash, became an important Country and Western hit in the 1950s for a Navaho group called the Fenders. The Chinle Galileans were an important Navaho Gospel group whose "Clinging to a Saving Hand" had considerable success in the Southwest, also in the 1950s.

"Ojibway Music From Minnesota" includes two "cross-over" or syncretic pieces by Ojibway composer Kieth Secola. The first of these songs, "Zigipoon," is a courting song, with the usual references to nature and unrequited love (selection 14). The melodic shape is broken, and like other traditional Ojibway music on the recording, the melody is made from short fragments that are repeated. Secola, who was born on Minnesota's Iron Range, sings the song in Ojibway, and Vennum tells us

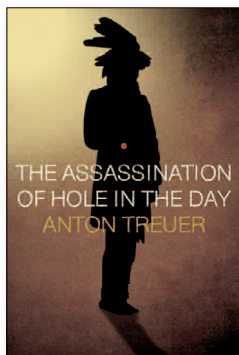
that the composer created the song to satisfy a Native American Studies language requirement at the University of Minnesota. The style is reminiscent of Bob Dylan (also from the Iron Range) with steel guitar and harmonica, but the melancholy mood and the slow delivery of the text give this song the unmistakable sound of a traditional Ojibway courting song.

The second syncretic piece, and the final selection on "Ojibway Music From Minnesota" is an intertribal "49" song with an English text. After a powwow, sometimes a band is hired to perform music for "western" dancing, and the songs the band plays are referred to as "49" songs. The subject of this song, an "Indian Car," is significant in several interesting ways. The Indian car, which Indian people often call a "rez(ervation) car" is, Vennum tells us, "an ironic commentary on their general impoverished economic situation." The rez car is typically "a battered and rusty early 1950s General Motors product, barely running and held together through improvised means." It has replaced the Indian pony as the primary mode of transportation on the reservation. The car in this song, while only a machine, is given as much personality and is as well loved by the singer as a pony might have been several generations in the past. Indian cars are not always very road-worthy, and there is a suggestion early in the first chorus that the predominantly white highway patrol discriminates against Indian cars (and Indians). This song and others like it (including "Folsom Prison Blues") say much about the contemporary Indian way of life.

Tribal music today, as "Ojibway Music from Minnesota" so aptly demonstrates, includes an impressive diversity of styles, functions, and master performers. The oral tradition of tribal repertoires clearly creates a bridge between the past and present. While much has been lost in the acculturation process, much has been gained. "Ojibway Music from Minnesota," represents a celebration, a concern, and a hope: It celebrates the amazing

diversity of American culture; it expresses a concern for the preservation of Indian cultures. But, and this is the most important part for me, it is hopeful and optimistic that a more complete appreciation of the beauty, simplicity, and power of Indian music may teach us something about ourselves. How can we ignore that opportunity?

Pat Riley
Bemidji State University



THE ASSASSINATION OF HOLE IN THE DAY

ANTON TREUER

Explores the murder of the controversial Ojibwe chief who led his people through the first difficult years of dispossession by white invaders—and created a new kind of leadership for the Ojibwe.

On June 27, 1868, Hole in the Day (Bagone-giizhig) the Younger left Crow Wing, Minnesota, for Washington, DC, to fight the planned removal of the Mississippi Ojibwe to a reservation at White Earth. Several miles from his home, the self-styled leader of all the Ojibwe was stopped by at least twelve Ojibwe men and fatally shot.

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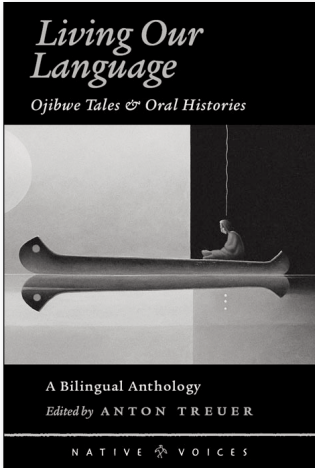
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Based on interviews Treuer conducted with ten elders--Archie Mosay, Jim Clark, Melvin Eagle, Joe Auginaush, Collins Oakgrove, Emma Fisher, Scott Headbird, Susan Jackson, Hartley White, and Porky White--this anthology presents the elders' stories transcribed in Ojibwe with English translation on facing pages. These stories contain a wealth of information, including oral histories of the Anishinaabe people and personal reminiscences, educational tales, and humorous anecdotes.

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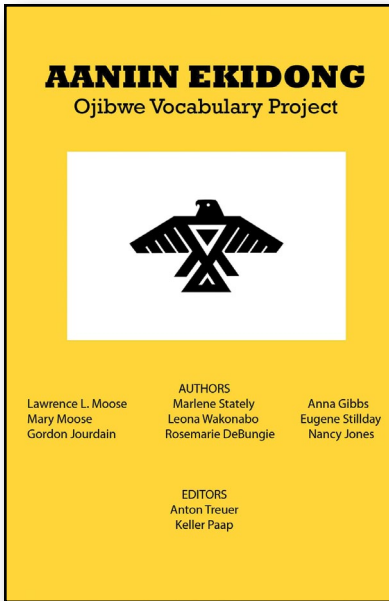
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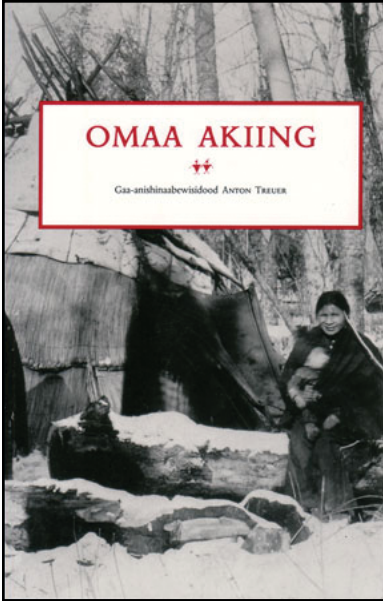
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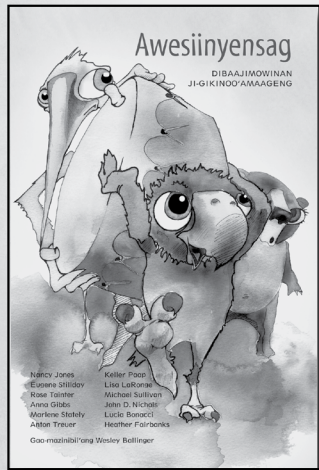
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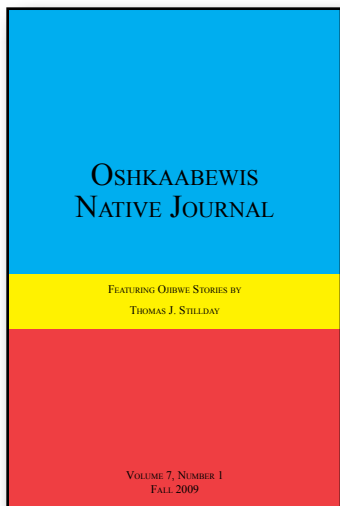
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