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Research Abstracts

The Three Creations of Breathmaker: Race and Identity among the Florida Seminoles, 1858-1935

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During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Florida Seminoles experienced increased contact with outsiders as railroad construction and Everglade drainage drew thousands of non-Indian settlers into the state. In order to make sense of the “others” they encountered, the Seminoles developed unique constructions of race and identity based on traditional culture, historical experiences, and political goals. Determined to stay in Florida despite three wars which removed the majority of the tribe west, the Seminoles created a mutual foreign policy of passive-aggression. Although they no longer confronted Americans militarily, the Seminoles nevertheless refused to leave their homeland. By living in scattered settlements, remaining politically decentralized, and rejecting white culture, the Seminoles protected and projected their separate identity as Florida Natives. They maintained a sense of community through shared ceremonies and the bonds of kinship. Initially rejecting whites and tolerating blacks, Seminole attitudes gradually shifted over time. Although they became more accepting of “outsiders,” the Seminoles maintained a strong sense of their unique cultural identity which continues to serve them in the twenty-first century.

A Colorful Spectacle: Contrasting Indians and Modernity at the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition

Natalie J.K. Baloy, *University of British Columbia*

This paper argues that organizers of Chicago’s 1933 Century of Progress Exposition deliberately contrasted their display of American ethos of progress, modernity, and civilization with presentations of ‘vanishing,’ ‘primitive’ Indians in an Indian Village designed as part of a social evolution exhibit. Fair organizers tried to create an image of progress that did not include Indians, while still appeasing fairgoers who anticipated the presence of Indians at the fair, a precedent established at nearly all prior expositions. By setting Indians apart from progress and modernity, Indians were imagined as vanishing peoples of the past, whose static and primitive existence exemplified non-modern lifeways. This paper draws on archival materials from fair organizers, letters from American Indians seeking performance contracts at the fair, and newspaper accounts of the Indian ceremonials at the fair. Exploring multiple forms of representation, this paper examines how Indians are remembered and forgotten in historical accounts of the 1933 World’s Fair and within the meta-narrative of American progress and modernity. This paper is thus about not only the representational processes in the planning and staging of the Fair, but also about the representation of the past itself and the implications of these representations for the present. American Indians were marginalized on the fairgrounds and in historical accounts of the fair, reflecting a wider pattern of marginalization within the teleological story of American history and progress.

Charles Alexander Eastman

Kate Beane, *University of Minnesota*

The Dakota writer, lecturer, and physician Ohiyesa (“The Perpetual Winner”), is best known to the world by his Christian name, Charles Alexander Eastman (1858-1939). The complexities of Eastman’s views on nationhood, citizenship, and assimilation of America’s Indigenous peoples are often easily misconstrued. This process occurs by not taking into account the era in which he lived and worked, and the struggles that were particular to his tribe, family, and personal story. Often represented as a man who lived on the margins of two worlds – Indian and white – Eastman is forever situated as an outsider. This status is central in the binary illusion of two worlds rather than one reality (or multiple realities) for American Indian peoples. Rather than looking at Eastman as a man stuck, straddling two separate worlds, a nation within what he felt he should be able to call his own country, with all that complications this notion contains, it is more accurate to view him as a man of one world, and one identity, wrongly determined separate by others. While living amidst a time of immense change, his activism on behalf of all Indian people of North America was extremely controversial. His legacy, which was born out of his own words written to paper, was carried forth historically as both assumption and rumor, and his life and legacy continue to be challenged. By looking closely at Eastman’s life, we can better understand what occurred when multiple worlds collided during the early twentieth century. The mission Eastman was working for, at that time, was as simple as it was devastating – he was trying to envision a way for Indigenous peoples to survive the effects of colonization.

Fighting for Survival: The Mi’kmaq at the Battle of Grand Pré

Christina Marie Dickerson, *Vanderbilt University*

The Battle of Grand Pré occurred in Nova Scotia on February 11, 1747 within the context of King George’s War. For this action, the Mi’kmaq and the French had combined forces. They ambushed the British in the early hours of the morning and handily conquered them. The Mi’kmaq had joined the French not because of blind loyalty, but because they had much to gain by a British defeat. The Mi’kmaq had been in conflict with the British since 1713 when these Europeans “acquired” Nova Scotia. The English-speaking settlers who immigrated to the colony took Mi’kmaq land; violent interactions continued for decades. With the British threatening their survival, the Mi’kmaq sought opportunities to weaken these foes. Participating in the Battle of Grand Pré offered them that option.

Reclamation Through History: George Copway's De-Mythification of Indian History

Parween Ebrahim, *Princeton University*

My paper examines George Copway's representation of his tribal history in his *Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* (1850). Copway who was catapulted to fame with the publication of his autobiography in 1847 wrote his *History* in response to the removal policy that the U.S. federal government pursued during the late 1840s in the great lakes region, where his tribe lived. I argue that Copway's *History* deploys a "poetics of place" rather than a "poetics of nature" which had become part and parcel of the repertoire of mainstream Indian representations in the antebellum period. The emphasis on place rather than nature not only shifts the paradigm of history-writing from time to space but also roots Indians in history, in reality, and in their land. Through this

discursive move, Copway not only debunks Anglo-American mythologies of Indians, he also bolsters the case for a proposal he submitted to Congress (and which he appends to his history) to end Indian removal and relocate all Indian tribes to the great lakes region. His history thus straddles the line between a tribal/local history and a national one with Pan-Indian claims. Importantly, Copway's history was published first in London -- and later in Boston and New York -- to coincide with his tour to England and to continental Europe to gain international public support for his proposal.

Representation and Existence in the Pacific Northwest

John Robinson, *University of Montana*

The Chinook Nation is a federally unrecognized Indian tribe. The United States government denied their petition for federal acknowledgment in 2002. They are perhaps the most historically familiar tribe of the region, considering their significant interactions with Lewis and Clark's corps of discovery as well as their role in the international trade along the Lower Columbia River. Additionally, the Chinook name is co-opted throughout the region and beyond for such things as casinos, weather patterns, salmon, businesses, towns and helicopters. Euro-Americans representations of Indians throughout the Pacific Northwest from the time of contact until the present continue to affect Chinook existence. Historically pervasive attitudes of Indian as "other," "savage," "heathen," or "barbarian," to name but a few, contribute to a system whereby historically verifiable Indian nations must continually fight to prove their existence and tribal status in the modern world.

Devils and Giants in New England: The Appropriation of Native Sites by the English Calvinists

Rachel Sayet, *Harvard University*

Native traditions tend to focus around a particular place, which is central to a tribe's identity. Such is the case with stories surrounding Moshup, the giant, who is always connected to the landscape and weather of Southern New England. Mohegan-Pequot people as well as Aquinnah (Gay Head) and Mashpee Wampanoags have many traditional stories and sites regarding Moshup, which have been passed down for hundreds of years. When the English Calvinists came to the New World, they considered Native American religious beliefs to be diabolical, and therefore denigrated them. Because Moshup was seen as a powerful culture hero figure for Native people, the English Calvinists renamed traditional places related to Moshup after of the devil in order to demonize them. This article explores four sites in Connecticut and Massachusetts: the Devil's Bridge, Devil's Den, Devil's Footprint, and Devil's Hopyard. Through a discussion of these sites, I argue that because the English Calvinists misunderstood and demonized Native traditions as a whole, they appropriated these traditional sites, and effectively reduced the Natives' inscription on the landscape by displacing their traditional systems of knowledge.

Abstract for "Artful Literacy: The Plains Indian Ledger Art Tradition During the Early Reservation Period 1875-1910."

Ann Updike, *Miami University*

Sitting within a larger project that seeks to broaden the predominate view of writing beyond the Western paradigm of alphabetic texts, this paper explores the innovative ways in which late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Plains Indian author-artists employed their pictographic

literacy practice for their own or their tribe's advantage during the cultural upheaval of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The larger project explores the work of Plain Indian prisoners at Fort Marion, Florida, while the current paper moves slightly forward in history to examine the drawings and paintings of Silver Horn (Kiowa) who worked as an artist, both for his tribe and for white ethnographers, during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reservation period in Oklahoma. A set of Silver Horn drawings held at the Newberry were a short-term experiment in Western styles of portrait painting. Being very much a traditionalist, however, Silver Horn returned to the traditional style that was more narrative than static, in order to document his native culture. He also expanded the traditional genre by illustrating religious practices and creation and trickster stories that had not been documented pictorially before.

While the Fort Marion artists were focused outwardly toward their white audience, Silver Horn turned his energies inward toward the tribe and cultural survival. Seeing firsthand the pressures on his tribal language and culture, Silver Horn used his literacy practice to keep traditional customs, histories, and rituals alive by documenting them through modifications to the Plains pictographic tradition, even attempting to make the literacy practice do other kinds of cultural work by recording treasured stories. An upholder of tradition, yet using that tradition in new and creative ways, Silver Horn adapted his literacy practice to document and record elements of his culture for future Kiowa generations.

The Importance of Maple Products to American Indians in the Upper Great Lakes from the Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century

Susan Wade, *University of Wisconsin Milwaukee*

An analysis of six ethnographies reveals production techniques of maple products, the use of maple products in American Indian cultures of the Great Lakes, and a gendered labor in maple sugar camps. The ethnographies included studies of the Menominee and Ojibway and spanned from the 1820s to the 1930s. The ethnographic accounts show Native women were responsible for maple sugar production. However, Native men's involvement in maple sugar production increased as demand for the product increased. This increased demand occurred because maple sugar was a provision and commodity for fur trade companies and was consumed by the increasing Euro-American immigrant population. The ethnographies also show the continued importance of maple sugar to American Indian cultures in the Great Lakes region. Maple sugar was used as a seasoning for meat, fish, vegetables, and fruit dishes, and as a medium to administer medicines. Furthermore, maple products were important in social interactions as gifts for family and friends, and for establishing trade relations. Maple sugar was an important foodstuff in the seasonal round for Native groups in the Great Lakes region. Native women produced these products as a foodstuff, as a trade item, and as gifts to strengthen familial and fictive kin ties.