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Author

Talbot, Steve

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Academic Indianismo: Social Scientific Research in American Indian Studies

STEVE TALBOT

The struggle for the validity of indigenous knowledges may no longer be over the recognition that indigenous peoples have ways of viewing the world which are unique, but over proving the authenticity of, and control over, our own forms of knowledge.

-Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodology

American Indian Studies (AIS), or Native American studies (NAS), arose as a field in the late 1960s and 1970s as part of the "new Indian" movement and the revitalization of Indian culture and identity. By 1999 there were many colleges and universities offering programs or majors in AIS/NAS, thirteen with graduate degrees, and at least four with Ph.D. programs.¹ Although multidisciplinary in nature, and drawing from the humanities, history and the social sciences, AIS/NAS is informed by its own paradigm. Thus, the question remains: Is the whole greater than the sum of its parts? Is American Indian studies a legitimate discipline, with its own unique perspective and methodological concerns? Or is it solely an area of concentration within the established disciplines? I subscribe to the first view, that AIS/NAS has its own perspective or paradigm.² I term this "academic Indianismo."

Alexander Ewen (Perepeche) has coined the term *Indianismo* as a counterpoint to *indigenismo*, a concept promoted by Lazaro Cardenas, the Mexican proponent of Indian rights.³ Cardenas, however, despite his humanistic concerns, saw *indigenismo* as a means of assimilating Indians into the body politic

Steve Talbot received his Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley (1974). He was one of the founders of the Native American Studies program on that campus where he also taught from 1971 to 1974. He is the coeditor with Susan Lobo of *Native American Voices: A Reader* (Prentice Hall, 2001) and the author of the introductory textbook *Contemporary Indian Nations of North America: An Indigenous Perspective*, which is forthcoming from Prentice Hall. He "retired" from the California community college system in 1999, but remains an active scholar in American Indian Studies. Currently, he is an adjunct professor of anthropology at Oregon State University and he also teaches part-time for Laney Community College.

of Mexico with its mixed-blood population and mestizo culture. Thus, *indigenismo* and its ethos of *mestizaje* became a means for reducing the political power of Native peoples and even of denying their ethnic existence altogether. *Indianismo*, on the other hand, is defined as "the Indian way," an indigenous perspective. It supports Indian ethnic identity and the struggle for indigenous rights as exemplified by the Zapatista-Maya rebellion and the many other Indian struggles now taking place throughout Latin America. In a similar vein, I call the distinctive research contributions made by scholars in American Indian Studies "academic *Indianisma*," in order to differentiate AIS/NAS from the theoretical and methodological formulations of mainstream, predominately non-Indian academicians, whose respective disciplines, while important, were nonetheless forged in the crucible of Western imperialism.

Two recent publications that discuss research and writing in American Indian and indigenous studies illustrate the concept of *academic Indianismo*. They are *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians*, edited by Devon A. Mihesuah, and the volume by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*.⁴ Mihesuah, an Oklahoma Choctaw, is associate professor of history at Northern Arizona University. Tuhiwai Smith is an indigenous Maori researcher at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, where she is associate professor in education and director of the International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education.

The basis for *Natives and Academics* was a Winter 1996 special issue of the *American Indian Quarterly* of which historian Mihesuah was the editor. In her introduction, Mihesuah recommended using "the Indian voice" in historical research. She writes that "the problem with many books and articles about Indians is not with what is included but with what is omitted," and also that many non-Indian scholars write as if they have a monopoly on the truth.⁵ Among the twelve contributors to the Mihesuah volume are articles and critiques by Duane Champagne (Chippewa), Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux), Donald L. Fixico (Shawnee, Sac and Fox, Seminole, and Muscogee Creek), and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (Crow Creek Sioux).

In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Tuhiwai Smith urges research that utilizes the indigenous paradigm, which is defined as culturally appropriate research protocols and methodologies, and an indigenous research agenda.⁶ In the first part of her book, she critically examines the historical and philosophical basis for Western, mainstream research. She critiques the rise of social scientific research of indigenous peoples that has historically occurred under the aegis of Western imperialism and colonialism, and writes:

It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of indigenous peoples' claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right of selfdetermination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our natural resources and systems for living within our environments.⁷ Smith also urges indigenous peoples to develop their own research goals and methodologies in order to reclaim control over indigenous ways of knowing and being. She admits that this makes indigenous research "a highly political activity" and may be perceived by non-Native researchers as "a threatening activity. . . . There are powerful groups of researchers who resent indigenous people asking questions about their research and whose research paradigms constantly permit them to exploit indigenous peoples and their knowledges."⁸ What happens to research when the researched become the researchers, she asks? She details twenty-five projects currently being pursued by indigenous researchers and their communities around themes such as cultural survival, self-determination, healing, restoration, and social justice. Tuhiwai Smith ends her book with a description of a research paradigm based on an indigenous worldview, the Kaupapa Maori research.

I contend that AIS/NAS is making important contributions to scientific research and methodology in areas other than those of the mainstream social sciences and historical spectrums, and that there is a distinct indigenous paradigm that structures the new research. This paradigm has its own theoretical premises and methodological approaches. It can be described as a partisan, insider view that tackles different research issues and asks new questions. It is "researching back" in the sense of "talking back" in order to decolonize Westernbased research. Although drawing upon the established social scientific disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology and history, it nevertheless takes a fresh approach that includes oral traditions and ethnohistorical sources.

Below, I describe several of these theoretical and methodological contributions in detail. By methodology I mean a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed. A research method, on the other hand, is a technique for gathering data or evidence. By theory I mean an explanation for which there is evidence that illuminates the question, problem, or topic addressed. The examples summarized below are from criminology, ethnohistory, and sociology: Luana Ross's personalizing methodology and criminalization of the Indian; Donald Grinde and Bruce Johansen's Iroquois influence theory; and Duane Champagne's organizational analysis to explain the differential responses of US Indian nations to Euro-American conquest and expansion.

PERSONALIZING METHODOLOGY AND LOSS OF SOVEREIGNTY THEORY

Luana Ross (Salish), sociologist and professor of women's studies and American Indian Studies at the University of Washington, has been uniquely innovative in research methodology and theory. In "Personalizing Methodology: Narratives of Imprisoned Women," Ross projects the notion of using what some researchers are terming "insider methodology."⁹ Most research methodologies assume that the researcher is:

an outsider, able to observe without being implicated in the scene. . . . Feminist research and other more critical approaches have made the

insider methodology much more acceptable in qualitative research. Indigenous research approaches problematize the insider model in different ways because there are multiple ways of both being an insider and an outsider in indigenous contexts. The critical issue with insider research is the constant need for reflexivity.¹⁰

Ross's personalizing methodology perspective arose out of her qualitative research with Indian and white women in a Montana correctional facility. The culmination of this research is found in *Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality*.¹¹ In this comparative study she tape-recorded in-depth interviews with twenty-seven imprisoned women, fourteen Indian and thirteen white, and supplemented the interviews with non-participation observation. By comparing the experiences of the women, she was able to gain insight into the social structure of Montana's criminal justice system. It also enabled her to understand how the women's personal biographies are tied to the larger social stratification systems of class, race, and gender. In addition, Ross found that she had to modify her research methodology because she is a Native woman researcher.

The role of a Native American researcher conducting in-depth interviews is vastly different from that of a non-Native academic. In *Personalizing Methodology* Ross points out that as an Indian woman:

I am no stranger to jails, prisons, and violence when I begin the interviews. I am not, however, prepared for what I find. To visit a friend or relative in prison is very different from experiencing what incarcerated people confront. My relatives who have been imprisoned, similar to my relatives who served in the Armed Forces during the wartime, do not talk about their suffering. We do not ask them to tell us about these things — to do so is considered impolite. The rule is, if someone freely reveals their experiences, then you listen intently. Otherwise, one does not ask curious questions because others may not be emotionally prepared to talk about them.¹²

She also writes that "we need to deconstruct old, tired methodologies."¹³ "As Native women we can define experiences of oppression emotionally and intellectually."¹⁴ "When I interview imprisoned women, I am mindful that I could be in their prison and they in mine. As Native women we live life precarious-ly."¹⁵

Ross emphasizes in *Inventing the Savage* that imprisoned Indian women have been both racialized and genderized by an institution of violence, the prison system. In this way her methodological research also reflects the decolonizing concept of "researching back." Researching back is "in the same tradition of 'writing back' or 'talking back,' that characterizes much of the post-colonial or anti-colonial literature."¹⁶

Personalizing methodology is thus a feature of decolonizing methodology and is in line with the work of Patricia Hill Collins and other feminist researchers.¹⁷ Ross contends that "Native people are not free: they are colo-

nized people seeking to decolonize themselves," and the particular kind of racism experienced by Native Americans is termed *neocolonial racism*.¹⁸

In Inventing the Savage, Ross proposes that "Native American criminality is tied in a complex and historical way, to the loss of sovereignty."¹⁹ In Part I of this work, "Colonization and the Social Construction of Deviance," she reminds the reader that "Native groups all exercised legal systems founded upon their own traditional philosophies," and there were no prisons.²⁰ An example is the traditional Chevenne justice system.²¹ "Pre-contact Native criminal justice was primarily a system of restitution-mediation between families, of compensation, of recuperation."22 The subsequent destruction of Native justice systems and controlling of Indian people through Anglo-American law is inherently a product of colonialism. Westward migration, the greed for gold, and land speculation by the dominant society provided the motives for the criminalization of the American Indian. "Criminal meant to be other than Euro-American."23 "Many traditional tribal codes instantly became criminal when the United States imposed their laws and culture on Native people. New laws were created that defined many usual, everyday behaviors of Natives as 'offenses'."24 Ross is not saying that all law breaking by Indian people is due to the loss of sovereignty. Rather, she contends that US society itself, by suppressing indigenous systems of criminal justice and promulgating racist laws and control policies, has created much of what has come to be defined officially as criminality among Native people. "History reveals the process of how the 'savage' was invented."25

Conflict theorists in sociology will recognize Ross's loss of sovereignty proposition as a variant of colonial theory to explain the particular kind of structural racism that has historically been directed towards people of color in the United States. Colonial theory incorporates race, class, and historical processes to address the question of why white ethnic groups have overcome their original disadvantaged status as immigrant populations, whereas American Indians, Puerto Ricans, Latinos, African Americans, and even Asians have not. The theory contends that there is a fundamental difference between the experience of racial ethnics in the United States and that of European ethnics. Racial ethnics have been treated much like colonial subjects, and this gives the lie to the myth that the United States is a melting pot.²⁶ In fact, one can say that American Indians and Alaska Natives have been subjected to internal colonialism, and one consequence of this fact is that Indians are over-represented in the US criminal justice system. Referring to data from The Correctional Year Book of 1995, Ross points out:

In 1994, Native people comprised 2.9 percent of both federal and state prisons, although they were only 0.6 percent of the total U.S. population. This disparity is more clearly seen at the state level where Natives are 33.2 percent of the total prisoner population in Alaska, 23.6 percent in South Dakota, 16.9 percent in North Dakota, and 17.3 percent in Montana.²⁷

These incarceration rates exceed the percentages of Native Americans in the general populations of these states. For example, American Indians in

Montana are approximately 6 percent of the state's population, while the incarceration rate is 17.3 percent.

When it comes to the incarceration of Indian women, the rate, at least in Montana, is even higher. Thus, as Ross explains, Indian criminalization is both racialized and genderized. In a chapter entitled "Racializing Montana," Ross substantiates this proposition by reviewing Montana's history in the discriminatory treatment of Indian people. She reviews, for example, the land thefts that led to today's landless Indians, segregation on the reservations under the "pass system," the prosecution of destitute Indians for "vagrancy," the outlawing of Native spiritual practices and other cultural customs, and the arrest of starving Indians for "stealing cattle" or "hunting out of season."²⁸

Although the book is based on the narratives of imprisoned Indian and white women in Montana, statistics reveal that Indian women are more likely to be imprisoned than either Indian men or white women. Native women are approximately 25 percent of the total female prisoner population, although Indian men and women taken together constitute only 6 percent of the state's population. Ross's book documents both the racism and sexism directed towards Indian women prisoners and is an indictment of the bias inherent in the US criminal justice system.

It is in Chapter One, "Worlds Collide," that Ross lays out her loss of sovereignty theory. However, this proposition first came to my attention earlier, in the late 1980s, when I served on her comprehensive exam committee for sociology at the University of Oregon. I can only briefly touch upon the highlights of her thesis here as laid out in her book, but in an exam paper for sociology, she first proposed the thesis that Indian criminality developed as the conquering nation criminalized Indian language, custom, tradition, and religion.²⁹ This is demonstrated by the series of unfavorable Supreme Court decisions and laws passed by the US Congress during the last two centuries that have negated Indian traditional criminal justice systems and replaced them with the Anglo-American system that is inherently anti-Indian. This took place within the crucible of racist and cultural oppression that dispossessed American Indians of both lands and resources.

Two early Supreme Court decisions, Cherokee Nation v. Georgia (1831), and Worcester v. Georgia (1832), reduced Indian peoples to the status of domestic, dependent nations rather than as independent sovereignties under treaty relationship with the United States. However, Ross fails to mention another important Supreme Court decision, Johnson v. McIntosh (1832). In this decision, the right of discovery by European, Christian nations was given precedence over the Indians' right to the soil, or aboriginal rights. This has been termed the Theory of Christian Nations (or Doctrine of Christian Discovery) traditional Indian elders researcher Steven bv and Newcomb (Shawnee/Delaware), and is linked to the concept of manifest destiny.³⁰ Based on this doctrine, Indian peoples are denied their rights to sovereignty simply because they were not Christian at the time of European conquest. The inception of this doctrine can be traced to the papal bulls of 1452 and 1493, and it continues forward into the present as recently as the 1950s. In Tee-Hit-Ton v. United States (1955) the court held that there is no particular form of congressional recognition of the Indian right of permanent occupancy of land, such as will entitle Indians to compensation for the subsequent annexation of Indian land by the American government. This Christian/heathen distinction which places the rights of the white majority over the rights of Native Americans is still the law of the land and provides further evidence for Ross's thesis linking Indian criminality to a loss of sovereignty.

Ross explains that the specific Anglo-American attempt to gain legal and judicial control over Indian peoples as independent nations first occurred with the passage of the General Crimes Act in 1817. This Act limited the various Indian nations to criminal jurisdiction over crimes in which both the offender and the victim were Indian. In all other cases, concurrent jurisdiction was to be held with the federal government. This process was further advanced with the creation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a colonial office for Native peoples, first in 1824 within the War Department, and then under the Department of the Interior in 1849. Placing the Indian nations in the Interior Department rather than in the Department of State meant that they would be dealt with in terms of lands and resources rather than in a state-tostate relationship as sovereign nations under treaties.

By the late nineteenth century, Indian resistance to white aggression was effectively ended, treaties broken, and sovereignty weakened. Thus, in 1883 an all-powerful federal government framed a special criminal code for American Indians, the Court of Indian Offenses, to do away with "demoralizing and barbarous customs." Indian traditions and religious practices were termed "Indian offenses" and punished as crimes, with the reservation Indian agent acting as prosecutor, judge, and jury. The reservations were run like centers of apartheid rather than as autonomous national areas governed by treaties. The Bureau of Indian Affairs outlawed plural or polygamous marriages, "immorality," intoxication, various Indian mourning customs, Indian dancing, religious ceremonies, curing by medicine men and women, and other cultural practices. The ban on alcohol, applied only to Indians, was not lifted until 1955. Furthermore, failure to follow the Protestant work ethic, such as to be gainfully employed on reservation tasks set by the Indian superintendent, brought swift punishment.

This was followed in 1885 by the Major Crimes Act that unilaterally gave federal courts jurisdiction in Indian country over seven major crimes, later amended to include fourteen felonies when the offenders are Indians. As Ross notes, "By taking jurisdiction over crimes, the federal government also assumed the power to punish."³¹

In a Supreme Court decision, *Elk v. Wlkins* (1884), Indians were denied the right to vote in Nebraska on the grounds that they were no more entitled to citizenship than the children of foreign visitors. A few years later, in 1886, Indians were formally denied citizenship when Congress gave equal rights to all persons born in the United States *except* Indians. Native people were deemed subject or colonized people, and attempting to vote became a criminal offense.

In 1887, in direct violation of treaties, the General Allotment (Dawes) Act was enacted "to break up the tribal mass." Communal lands were broken up into 160-acre individual plots, and the "surplus lands" opened to white settle-

ment. The Indian nations lost over half of their land base through allotment. Allotment also left a tangled web of individual land ownership (the heirship problem) that continues to pauperize many Indian people to this day. The Assimilative Crimes Act followed in 1889. As Ross explains, "this expanded the number of crimes which could be tried by federal courts," but, significantly, it is "limited to interracial crimes and does not apply if a crime is committed by and between two Indians on the reservations."³²

In the early twentieth century, Indian dancing and other religious practices were still prohibited. Indian Commissioner W. A. Jones issued his "short hair" order in 1902, which was directed against the practice of Indian men wearing long hair, but was also against body painting by both sexes, Indian clothing, religious dances, and "give-away" ceremonies, the custom of giving away goods and possessions on important ceremonial occasions. As Ross notes, "To the federal government, long hair signified a primitive culture. All Native men who refused to cut their hair were refused rations, and those working for the government were released from their duties."³³

The power to criminalize was further advanced with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) in 1934. Usually hailed by anthropologists as a humanitarian reform because it halted the worst aspects of land alienation under the 1887 Allotment Act and authorized tribes to establish their own Indian governing bodies, it nonetheless signified a shift from direct rule to indirect rule. As Ross points out, "Indians were hired to rule other Indians, incredibly complicating reservation life when traditional tribal leaders [and their criminal justice practices] were usurped by Tribal Councils."³⁴ Furthermore, the tribal courts set up under the Indian Reorganization Act are subject to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, with tribal criminal codes modeled after the Anglo-American justice system. It is problematic whether tribal courts can ever successfully incorporate traditional practices into their criminal justice structures.

Starting in the early 1950s under the termination policy, Congress unilaterally ended the reservation status of 109 tribes and bands. A component of this policy was the passage of P.L. 280 in 1953. It directed the states of California, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, and Wisconsin to assume law and order jurisdiction over most reservations within their borders. It also authorized any other state to similarly take over legal jurisdiction. At first, states were allowed to exercise this option without the consent of the tribes within their borders, but the Act was later amended by the 1968 Civil Rights Act to require tribal consent. Conversely, the Civil Rights Act bolstered the rights of individual Indians at the expense of tribal jurisdiction over the affairs of its citizens, thereby reducing tribal sovereignty. It also reduced Indian tribal court jurisdiction to the status of handling misdemeanors by limiting the penalties that tribal courts could apply to six months' imprisonment and/or a fine of five hundred dollars.

Today, most Native people who commit felonies in Indian country are tried in Anglo-dominated courts by all-white juries rather than by a jury of their peers. This explains, in part, their over-representation in terms of incarceration rates. Furthermore, the states' refusal to cross-deputize Indian law enforcement personnel has resulted in a racial double standard whereby Anglo police steadily supply Indians to Anglo courts and jails, while Indian police can only *observe* Anglo criminal behavior committed on the reservations. Furthermore, as Ross explains, crimes committed by Indians against whites are usually punished more severely than are crimes against Indians. Yet the fact that not all states have chosen to take over legal jurisdiction on Indian reservations, or have selectively applied the policy, creates a confusing jurisdictional maze for Indian law and order. Ross reports that of the seven Indian reservations in Montana, only on the Flathead Reservation has Anglo jurisdiction extended through P.L. 280.³⁵ That is because Flathead includes a large Anglo population as a result of homesteading at the turn of the century.

Ross summarizes her thesis by concluding that five statutory enactments of the US Congress—the General Crimes Act, Major Crimes Act, Assimilative Crimes Act, P.L. 280, and the Indian Civil Rights Act, in addition to certain negative court rulings—have all infringed upon tribal powers to deal with crime on the reservations.³⁶ The result is a labyrinth of jurisdictional layers, federal, state, and tribal, with perhaps some still surviving traditional understandings and practices. This jurisdictional maze has all but eliminated Indian tribal sovereignty in the area of criminal justice. As Ross points out, "The reservations continue to be the only places within the United States boundaries where the criminality of an act depends entirely on the race of the offender and their victims."³⁷

As part of her comprehensive exam in sociology, Ross also examines and critiques the main functionalist theories of deviance with respect to the American Indian case and finds them lacking.³⁸ She rejects a functionalist analysis with its normative (victim-blaming) theories on which so much of contemporary US criminal law is based. While labeling theory is more promising, its micro-level focus on individual deviants rather than on institutional factors limits its application to society-wide phenomena. Her loss of sovereignty thesis, on the other hand, falls within the conflict paradigm in sociology and is related to both interest group and Marxist theories of deviance. Ross then discusses the Marxist theory of economic marginalization, and also the interest group theories of Joseph Gusfield (status politics), Austin Turk (acquisition of criminal status), William Chambliss (law in the books versus law in action), and Richard Quinney (the social reality of crime).³⁹ In each case she shows how these explanations might also apply to the question of Indian criminality.

Conflict theories can be divided into "interest group" and Marxist (or neo-Marxist) subgroups. Both focus on inequality and conflict in social relationships. While Marxists are mainly concerned with conflict arising from the inequality of competing economic interests (class struggle), interest group theorists consider inequality also on the basis of status, such as race, ethnicity, region, and religion.⁴⁰ Although I cannot summarize Ross's review of all of these conflict theories here, a brief discussion of Gusfield's theory of status politics will serve to illustrate the relevance of interest group theory to the American Indian case and Ross's loss of sovereignty proposition.

In *Symbolic Crusade*, Joseph Gusfield analyzes the temperance movement or Prohibition, which led to the Eighteenth Amendment.⁴¹ According to Gusfield, the driving force behind the temperance movement was not so much the moral issue of drinking as it was a cultural conflict between rural, Protestant, native-born Americans and the new wave of urban Catholic immigrants from Europe. The prohibition of alcohol was an attempt by the older middle class among native-born Americans to preserve its social and economic status. The wine-drinking foreign-born were stereotyped as alcoholic, and xenophobia resulted in the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment, ushering in the era of prohibition.

Although Native Americans clearly are not immigrants, they do have a similar status as colonized peoples.⁴² As Ross explains:

Indians can be considered an ethnic/racial group which threatened the status of incoming Euro-American settlers, who had to justify the expropriation of Indian lands and the genocide of Indian peoples both ideologically and in terms of the law.... The laws and regulations against Indian religions and custom in force until 1934, the prohibition against drinking, and the denial of voting rights may be seen as analogous to the Temperance movement directed against Catholic immigrants at the beginning of the century.⁴³

Ross also suggests that sociological conflict theory might explain the case of Leonard Peltier (Ojibway/Lakota), who is currently serving two consecutive life sentences for allegedly aiding and abetting the deaths of two Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents in a 1975 shoot-out on the Pine Ridge (Oglala) Reservation in South Dakota.⁴⁴ There is no credible evidence that Peltier fired the fatal shots, and the FBI has been forced to admit in court that it both manufactured false evidence and withheld other evidence that could have exonerated Peltier. Ross suggests using conflict theorist Chamblis's concept of the "reality of the law," where the law in the books is at variance with the law in action. Peltier has been denied a new (fair) trial, and the case has all the earmarks of a political frame-up.⁴⁵ President Clinton upon leaving office in February 2001 refused to pardon him, although he granted one hundred forty pardons to others (including financier Marc Richland, a fugitive from justice), and thirty-six sentence commutations. Ross quotes Matthiessen who is an authority on the Peltier case:

Whatever the nature and degree of his participation at Oglala, the ruthless persecution of Leonard Peltier had less to do with his own actions than with underlying issues of history, racism, and economics, *in particular Indian sovereignty claims and growing opposition to massive energy development on treaty lands and the dwindling reservations* [emphasis added].⁴⁶

THE IROQUOIS INFLUENCE DEBATE: JOHANSEN AND GRINDE

Why has the Indian story and heritage hitherto been written out of US history? It is a puzzling facet of Eurocentric historiography that "American" history does not seem to commence in North America until the arrival of the white colonists from England. A major history text, for example, adopted in California schools and colleges a few years ago devoted only a page and a half to America before Columbus. As Indian scholar Jack D. Forbes once observed, this reasoning would be the same as saying that English history does not begin until 1066 with the Normandy invasion. In point of fact, many years before the arrival of Europeans in the America and Andean South America, but also in what is now eastern United States, the incredible Mound Builder civilization. Furthermore, as Susan Lobo and I contend in a contemporary Indian college text:

An accurate understanding of the history and culture of the entire hemisphere includes a consideration of the role of the Indian nations in colonial history and their decisive influence on the course of subsequent historical developments: the fact that the Spanish based much of their colonial organization on existing Incan, Aztec, and Mayan social organization; the importance of the eastern Indian confederacies in the United States, which were co-equal if not superior in power and influence in the thirteen English colonies; the fact that the U.S. Constitution and governmental structure were modeled, at least in part, on the League of the Iroquois; the fact that Rousseau and other philosophers who inspired Europeans to oppose feudal tyranny and oppression based their views on the personal freedom they found in North American Indian societies; the fact that many outstanding statesmen, generals, and religious leaders throughout the hemisphere were Native American.⁴⁷

Not only have American Indians been written out of North American history generally, their role in US colonial history is especially ignored by mainstream historians. This changed when the bicentennial of the US Constitution in 1987 began to spark scholarly interest in the question. It was at this time that Jose Barreiro (Guajiro/Taino), editor-in-chief of *Awe:kon Press/Native Americas Journal*, organized an important conference at Cornell University entitled "Cultural Encounter: The Iroquois Great Law of Peace and the U.S. Constitution," that combined traditional Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) speakers and academics. Then, in late 1991, the country celebrated the 200th anniversary of the writing of the Bill of Rights, and, finally, a year later, the quincentennial of Christopher Columbus's "discovery" of America.⁴⁸ The highly Eurocentric quincentennial plans of the United States and other Western nations generated broad reaction among the indigenous peoples of the Americas who viewed 1492 as the beginning of an American holocaust.

In the United States, traditional Indians, Native American scholars, revisionist historians, and activist anthropologists joined forces in their efforts to correct the historical record. An important collective work, *Exiled in the Land* of the Free, by Oren Lyons (Onondaga), John Mohawk (Seneca), and others, came out in 1992.⁴⁹ Also in the same year, the UCLA American Indian Studies Center sponsored an important conference on the Columbian Quincentenary. The conference papers were later published as *The Unheard Voices*.⁵⁰ Eurocentric history, including ethnohistory, anthropology, and demography, were all reexamined through the lens of an indigenist perspective. Of course, there were, also, many demonstrations throughout the hemisphere by a broad spectrum of Native American peoples and their supporters against the quincentenary "celebrations" that made the scholarly critiques especially relevant to the Indian experience.

In the late 1960s I first learned about the influence that the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy had on the founding fathers and the origin of the US constitutional form of government. It was from the White Roots of Peace, an Iroquois travelling college that visited my university. I was an acting assistant professor in the new Native American studies program at the University of California, Berkeley, at the time. In any case, it was common knowledge among many traditional Indian leaders who lectured to our classes. It was therefore not a surprise to those of us in Native American studies when historians Donald Grinde (Yamasee) and Bruce Johansen began documenting this important facet of the Native American heritage in academic books and articles. The surprise, instead, was to witness the vehement backlash by mainstream ethnohistorians and anthropologists who sought to discredit what has come to be known as "the influence theory."

The research by Johansen and Grinde had convinced them "that it is not a question of *whether* native societies helped shape the evolution of democracy in the colonies and early United States. It is a question of *how* this influence was conveyed and how *pervasive* it was."⁵¹ The two scholars had been documenting it for fifteen years before a handful of Iroquoian "experts" mounted a backlash attack following the 1987 Cornell University conference. Grinde had already published *The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation* in 1977, and Johansen had revised and published his Ph.D. dissertation as a book, *Forgotten Founders: Benjamin Franklin, the Iroquois and the Rationale for the American Revolution* in 1982.⁵²

Elizabeth Tooker, an anthropology professor at Temple University, initiated the backlash by strongly rejecting the influence theory in *Ethnohistory*.⁵³ She categorically stated that "a review of the evidence in the historical and ethnographic documents offers virtually no support for this contention."⁵⁴ Michael Newman joined the attack in a *New Republic* article by mocking the idea, as he put it, that the Iroquois ancestors "guided Madison's hand in writing the Constitution."⁵⁵ Both Tooker and Newman limited their anti-influence position to previously published research within the narrow confines of their related disciplines. They oversimplified the problems of American unity and the evolution of democracy idea that became the foundation of the US Constitution. For example, Johansen and Grinde contend that Tooker "does not . . . address the factual evidence of Iroquois and American interaction, from sending of wampum belts to Iroquois sachems by the Sons of Liberty in 1776 to the lodging of the Iroquois on the second floor of the Pennsylvania State House (Independence Hall) in May and June of 1776."⁵⁶

Among the many facts in the historical record that support Johansen and Grinde's influence thesis that were overlooked or ignored by the anti-influence anthropologists and ethnohistorians are the following: In 1744 the Iroquois sachem Canassatego advised the competing English colonies to unite as had the Iroquois nations under their Law of the Great Peace. Canassatego symbolically broke one arrow, then bound a handful to illustrate how difficult it was to break several at a time. He advised the colonists to unite, as the Iroquois nations had done centuries earlier, because in unity there is strength. Today, on the United States' Great Seal and on the back of the dollar bill, the eagle (sacred to the Iroquois and a symbol of their pine tree confederacy) clutches a bundle of thirteen arrows, signifying the original thirteen colonies. Benjamin Franklin, who was quite familiar with the Iroquois League, popularized this image. Indeed, Franklin attended many of the early treaty councils and negotiations, and published the proceedings.

The proceedings of the Lancaster treaty council (and many others) were printed, bound, and sold by Franklin between 1736 and 1762. Franklin used the imagery of "Join or die" in one of the continent's first editorial cartoons in 1754. Several months earlier, Franklin had attended an Iroquois condolence ceremony (a key ritual in understanding the Iroquois League) at a treaty conference in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.⁵⁷

Most importantly, Franklin was heavily influenced by the League when he proposed the Albany plan of union to the colonists in 1754. "The Albany Plan was an early experiment with a federal system—states within a state. The only practicing examples of such a system at that time were the Iroquois and other Native American confederacies."⁵⁸ This became the model for the Articles of Confederation, which was authored by Franklin and others. In May and June of 1776 the Iroquois chiefs were lodged on the second floor of the Pennsylvania State House in Philadelphia when the Declaration of Independence was framed. The Iroquois sachems attended the deliberations weekly, while yet other Indians camped on the State House lawn, engaging the citizens of Philadelphia with games of archery and the like.

Other founders who were influenced by the example of the Iroquois Confederacy include Tom Paine, Thomas Jefferson, John Rutledge, and John Adams. Paine greatly admired the Iroquois political system, and Jefferson was a serious student of American Indian societies, doing seminal work in both Indian archaeology and linguistics. Rutledge, who chaired the draft committee for the Constitution, like Franklin, was a confirmed "Indian buff." In fact he "mentioned some American Indian ideas to the Constitutional Convention's drafting committee."⁵⁹

For the colonists, the personal freedom of Indian societies like the Iroquois became a symbol in their protests against British tyranny. This was especially true with the tea tax and explains why the protesters dressed as Mohawk Indians when they dumped English tea into the harbor in the revolutionary Boston Tea Party. To understand the extensive influence of Indian societies on the colonists along the eastern seaboard during the colonial period, Johansen and Grinde suggest that we place ourselves in the colonists' shoes. The colonists were:

relatively small groups of immigrants, or sons and daughters of immigrants, on small islands of settlements surrounded, at least for a time, by more widespread American Indian confederacies with whom they traded, socialized, and occasionally made war for almost two centuries before the Constitution was ratified. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Boston and Philadelphia, each with about thirty thousand residents, were considered large cities.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, by late 1988, in spite of the impressive evidence supporting the Iroquois influence thesis, some of which is described above, the debate continued. The anti-influence academicians leveled their attack on an educational resource guide that was being developed by the Iroquois for the state of New York. On the "influence" side of the argument were Johansen, Grinde, Vine Deloria, Jose Barreiro, and the traditional Haudenosaunee chiefs. On the other side were the "Fentonites," scholars associated with Iroquoianist William Fenton. They included, among others, Jack Campisi, associate professor of anthropology at Wellesley College, Hazel W. Hertzberg, professor of history and education at Columbia University, Laurence Hauptman, professor of history at the State University of New York, William A. Starna, professor and chairman of anthropology at SUNY at Oneonta, and James Axtell, professor of history at William and Mary College. The attack and "debate" is recounted by Johansen and Grinde in the 1990 aforementioned Commentary in the American Indian Culture and Research Journal, and more recently in a collaborative work by Johansen with Grinde and Mann, Debating Democracy: Native American Legacy of Freedom.⁶¹

The debate was nearly joined later at an annual meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory. Grinde was originally listed as a discussant on a panel by Axtel in a preliminary program along with Tooker and Fenton, but was removed from the final program. Finally, in 1989 a real debate took place between the opposing parties at the annual Iroquois Studies Conference near Albany, New York. At one point, during a face-to-face conference in May 1989,

Grinde asked Tooker, the ethnohistorian, . . . whether she was familiar with the historical documents he was citing. For example, he asked, "Have you ever read John Adams's Defence of the Constitution . . . of the United States?" Published in 1787, Adams's Defence was a lengthy handbook used by delegates to the Constitutional Convention. In the Defence, Adams comments on Native American governments as well as those of Europe. He urges American leaders to investigate "the government . . . of modern Indians" because the separation of powers in them "is marked with a precision that excludes all controversy." Adams believed that studying "the legislation of the Indians . . . would be well worth the pains." He observes that "some of the great philosophers . . . of the age" sought to "establish governments [like] modern Indians." He also commented on "the individual independence of the Mohawks."⁶²

At yet another conference, in October 1989, feminist historian and biographer, Sally Roesch Wagner, broadened the debate by documenting the influence of Iroquois matrilineality and women-focused society on the suffragettes, as evidenced in the writings of Matilda Josylyn Gage and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In 1991, Grinde and Johansen coauthored *Exemplar of Liberty* in which they restated and enlarged their documentation for the Iroquois influence.⁶³ Then, in 1992, Oren Lyons, John Mohawk, and others brought out a definitive collective volume, *Exiled in the Land of the Free*, which was mentioned earlier. Johansen published an annotated bibliography on the entire affair in 1996, *Native American Political Systems and the Evolution of Democracy*, and a supplemental bibliography came out in 1999.⁶⁴

Although the evidence for the Iroquois contribution to the evolution of American democracy appears to be indisputable, its detractors have not entirely given up their academic turf war. Vine Deloria characterized this state of affairs with the following piece of sarcasm:

In the last few years there has been a tremendous battle over the degree to which the Six Nations might have influenced the thinking of the Constitution's fathers. Here we have seen the anthros show their true colors. No sooner was the subject raised than a bevy of anthros, lacking even a rudimentary knowledge of the historical papers, charged into the fray spouting a confusing conglomerate of anthropological concepts that made no sense at all. Advocates of the Indian position have found themselves rejected for National Endowment for the Humanities grants, been denied positions at colleges and universities, and seen well-documented books rejected by university presses that feared the wrath of prominent figures in anthropology.⁶⁵

Perhaps the last word goes to Grinde who sums up the Iroquois influence theory and debate in the following way: "In denying Iroquois influence upon the American government, academics, and particularly historians, do so despite documentary and oral traditions that clearly indicate a firm connection between Iroquois political theory and American instruments of Government."⁶⁶

CHAMPAGNE'S SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION THEORY

Duane Champagne (Chippewa) is former director of UCLA's American Indian Studies Center and the editor of that institution's *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. Among his many academic achievements is the scholarly research on the different responses that early American Indian societies made to Euro-American hegemony and politico-economic pressures. Much of his research focuses on social differentiation (or organizational) theory. Social differentiation refers to the extent to which the various functions of society—familial, political, economic, religious, defense, and the like have become institutionalized and distinct from one another. In indigenous societies like those of American Indians, kinship often dominates the other functions, and political authority and religious leadership are frequently indistinguishable.

In a 1983 article in the *American Sociological Review*, he examines the contrasting social responses made by four Indian societies during the 1795–1860 period in US–Indian relations.⁶⁷ "The Cherokee and Choctaw developed state political organizations and agrarian class structures, while social change among the Delaware and Iroquois was strongly influenced by revitalization movements."⁶⁸ The purpose of his research was to test empirically two different theoretical formulations—the deprivation and social structural models to see which best could explain the different responses. He found that since social deprivation was present in all four cases, it alone is not a predictor of the different change outcomes. Differential social organization, on the other hand, at least in these four cases, is the independent variable that can explain the contrasting results, for instance, revitalization movements on the part of the Delaware and Iroquois and state-building in the case of the Cherokee and Choctaw.

Two years later, in a monograph for Cultural Survival, he extended his sociological analysis even further by including additional American Indian change cases in the research.⁶⁹ In the introduction to the 1985 publication he points out that "Native Americans have responded to threats of Western political domination with revitalization movements, passive resistance, state formation, secular political movements and political-social fragmentation," and he asks, "Why has there been such varied responses to Western contact?"⁷⁰ His analysis now includes the "geo-political environment," that is, European aims and policies such as competition between colonial powers, hegemony by a single imperial power, and direct administrative control. Furthermore, he now terms non-differentiated societies as "segmentary" and structurally differentiated societies as "pluralistic."

A paper presented by Champagne to the 1987 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association focused on the differing rates of social change found among southeastern tribes, the Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, and Chickasaw in the nineteenth century. He explains that the rate of state-build-ing varies according to the degree of social differentiation found in each case. For example, "the Cherokee had the most differentiated political institutions and the strongest institutions of social solidarity," and the Creeks had the least differentiated institutions.⁷¹

A new Cultural Survival monograph appeared in 1989 in which Champagne broadens his theoretical analysis and includes yet more cases of Indian social change.⁷² In addition to the four indigenous nations examined in the original 1983 article, he includes the Chickasaw and Creek of the Southeast; the Northern Cheyenne, Crow, and Northern Arapahoe of the Plains; the Navajo and Quechan in the Southwest; and the Tlingit in the Pacific Northwest. This work underscores even more strongly the role of historical processes in explaining American Indian social change.

Thus historical events play a central role in the survival of any particular group; to merely classify a society's economic or social organization is not an infallible predictor of its survival or of the way it will respond to Western impacts. Native American societies are culturally and institutionally complex, and vary considerably in cultural, social, and political organization. This variation provides a major key to understanding the different changes in Native American societies. In order to understand these variations, *we should first observe their institutional orders and then study their changes over the historical events of contact with Western economic, political, and cultural institutions* [emphasis added].⁷³

In a concluding chapter of the 1989 monograph, Champagne offers a tripartite classificatory schema in which to undertake historical analysis for understanding the different change responses: (1) societies that were socially and politically decentralized with a non-differentiated political order (Crow, Quechan, Sioux, Navajo, Delaware prior to 1760, Choctaw prior to 1860, and Tlingit prior to 1912); (2) societies that had mythically ordained social and/or political order (Iroquois, Delaware from 1760 on, Creek; "all had decentralized social and political organization," but the Northern Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and Chickasaw "had more centralized social and political loyalties"); and (3) societies that were—or became—socially and politically well integrated with a differentiated polity (Cherokee between 1809 and 1907, Chickasaw between 1856 and 1907, Choctaw between 1860 and 1907, and the Tlingit after 1912). "Given the three classifications, our task will be to discuss the types of change and the conditions under which change occurred."⁷⁴

I do not propose to go into a detailed discussion of Champagne's very interesting sociohistorical analyses of the numerous American Indian cases presented in his published research, but will simply point out instead that his theoretical proposition that Native social structure is an important variable in social change resulting from culture contact seems to be empirically demonstrated and therefore valid. My intention here is not to critique this work but, rather, to present it as an example of innovative social scientific research in American Indian studies.

In order to simplify his argument, I will return to the original four cases presented in the 1983 study.⁷⁵ I will pass over his discussion of methodology and focus instead on the theoretical idea of Indian structural differentiation, which can be summarized as follows:

The major social, cultural, economic, and political institutions of more structurally differentiated societies [e.g., Cherokee and Choctaw] tend toward relative autonomy. Structurally non-differentiated societies [e.g., Iroquois and Delaware] have their major cultural, political, economic and kinship institutions fused within a single institutional framework.⁷⁶

The result is that the structurally differentiated Cherokee and Choctaw were able to respond to US aggression and political pressures by forming Indian republics, that is, state-building, whereas the structurally non-differentiated Iroquois and Delaware, whose social systems were strongly integrated around kinship and band-level organization respectively, responded with revitalization movements. In order to abbreviate my exposition of Champagne's social change model, however, I will confine my discussion to the Iroquois as an example of revitalization, and the Cherokee as an example of the state-building response.

The Iroquois

The Iroquois were a structurally non-differentiated (segmentary) society because their economic, political, and major cultural institutions were overshadowed by a strong lineage and clan system. This kinship system, along with the co-resident units of the associated Iroquoian tribes or nations, became the foundation upon which the larger political confederacy was formed.

In many ways the matri-clan was the social "glue" of the confederacy that consisted of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and eventually the Tuscarora, who were admitted in about 1720. Thus, the confederacy has been described as a council-kin state. The structure and function of confederate government was so constructed that an Iroquois child, who understood the family and clan relationships in the longhouse at the local level, would also have a rudimentary knowledge of the structure and function of Iroquois government at the national (tribal) and confederacy levels of political organization.

The ancient longhouse or residence of the Iroquois extended family was fifty or sixty yards long and twelve yards wide, with a passage down the middle. A typical Iroquois town might have fifty of these structures. In each longhouse a senior woman, or clan mother, would reside with her female kin, their husbands and children, perhaps forty to one hundred people altogether. Crosscutting the single clan affiliation of the female residents would be the different clan affiliations of the married men. All personal relationships were governed by these kinship statuses and roles.

Each nation (or tribe) had its own separate territory, located from east to west along the finger lakes in what is now upstate New York and bordering Canada. The Iroquois considered their entire confederate territory a great longhouse, and this metaphor along with kinship terms and their relationships dominated confederate protocol and discourse. The Mohawk were in charge of confederate defense as "keepers of the Eastern Door," the Seneca as "keepers of the Western Door," with the Onondaga, who were located in the central part of confederate territory, as the "firekeepers." The Oneida and the Cayuga were referred to as "younger brothers." The fifty *royaneh* (lords or

sachems) of the confederacy were all clan chiefs who were selected from their respective nations. By tradition they were always men, but they were nominated by the clan mothers and could be removed by them as well. In the deliberations at the confederacy level these fifty lords or sachems represented both their respective clans (bear, turtle, deer, snipe, etc.) and their nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, etc.). They did so by a series of small caucuses until consensus on an issue was reached. In an annual meeting of the confederacy, the Mohawk sachems would deliberate an issue, reach consensus, and pass their decision to the Seneca who had also undertaken a similar deliberation. Once the two nations reached agreement they would "throw the matter across the fire" to the "younger brothers," the Oneida and the Cayuga. These two nations had, of course, followed the same procedure. Once the four nations reached consensus, the Onondaga, acting as a sort of supreme court and executive, would rule on the issue procedurally, making certain that the issue had been deliberated fully and fairly according to confederacy protocol, thereby legitimizing the decision.

Champagne summarizes the history and eventual decline of the confederacy, and then its resurgence through the Code of Handsome Lake, a revitalization movement.⁷⁷ Although formed much earlier in the mythical past, the Iroquois Confederacy, according to Champagne, became much stronger towards the end of the seventeenth century. The Beaver Wars, in which the Iroquois competed with the French and their Indian allies for the beaver as a valuable trade commodity, greatly strengthened the power of Iroquois war leaders. "The post-1700 Iroquois Confederacy emerged as a political organization that made military, political, and trade policy, looked after the general welfare of the confederacy, and continued to manage internal disputes between the five [later six] nations."⁷⁸

The outbreak of the American Revolutionary War fragmented the Iroquois Confederacy politically and led in a major way to its rapid decline. At first the Confederacy tried to remain neutral between the two belligerents, the British and the Americans.

The Six Nations had no wish to be drawn, yet again, into fighting foreigners' wars. They declared themselves neutral, but warned that the first side to molest them would become their foe. At this critical time small pox attacked the Onondagas. . . . The losses, requiring condolence rites and new elections, crippled the Six Nations parliament.⁷⁹

Mohawk leader Joseph Brandt then talked four of the Six Nations into supporting the British cause, while the Christianized Oneidas and the Tuscaroras took the American side. The Confederacy was effectively split in two.

Following the Revolutionary War, George Washington ordered Iroquois settlements destroyed because of Tory sentiments. "In 1779, General John Sullivan cut down orchards and crops, burning 500 houses and nearly a million bushels of corn."⁸⁰ Many Mohawks, under British loyalist Joseph Brandt, then emigrated to Canada. This started the political division between Canadian and American Iroquois that became permanent following the War of 1812. At the same time, those Iroquois who remained in the new United States were under intense pressure to acculturate. "During the 1780s and 1790s the New York Iroquois ceded most of their territory to American and foreign land companies."⁸¹ Great pressure was brought to bear for the men to take up individualized farming (a role reversal since the women traditionally were the horticulturalists) and to become Christian. At the same time, land alienation rapidly increased. As a result, "many sought escape from this dilemma in drink. Violence born of despair and alcohol became endemic. . . . Women aborted their babies rather than bring them into a ruined world," and suicides became frequent.⁸² "The loss of morale and disintegrating conditions on the reservations resulted in idleness, chronic drunkenness, gossip, violent disputes, and family instability."⁸³ By 1794 their population had declined from an estimated original population of 75,000 to a mere 4,000.

It was at this time, during the annual Strawberry Festival, that an Iroquois Turtle clan sachem, Ganiodaiyo, or Handsome Lake, brought the *Gawiio*, or Good Word, to the despairing Iroquois people. Although a well-known medicine man, Handsome Lake is said to have become a drunkard. In May and June of 1799, while deathly ill, he had the first of three visions. In these visions he received instructions from the Creator and was told to preach a new moral code that focused on four evil words: alcohol, witchcraft, black magic, and abortion that were dividing the people and destroying the population and Iroquois society. Wrongdoers who were guilty of these evils must confess and repent of their wickedness. The oral text of the Code, written down forty years later, takes up more than a hundred printed pages.

This moral code is syncretic (the result of cultural fusion) in that it drew from Christianity as well as from the old Longhouse religion. The new doctrine was strongly influenced by Quakers (the Religious Society of Friends), who had taken up residence and were regarded favorably by the Iroquois for their temperance, nonviolence, and frugality. At the same time, "Handsome Lake endorsed the ancient ritual calendar. . . . He sang and passed on the holy songs. The Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy . . . became in effect an 'Old Testament' reinterpreted in the light of a new [Testament]."⁸⁴ It gave new hope to the Iroquois as a moral code for right living, and it particularly encouraged Iroquois men to participate in the agricultural economy, remain abstinent, and practice family values. Today, it is known as the Longhouse religion.

Thus, through a revitalization movement, the Iroquois were able to unite around a common religious ideology, reestablish their Longhouse government, and embark upon a period of cultural renaissance. Champagne summarizes the situation.

The Iroquois Confederacy continues to be the government of the conservatives [traditionalists], and the Handsome Lake church is now a primary center of Iroquois culture. . . . The reforms of Handsome Lake provided a cultural-normative order and economic reform that enabled many Iroquois to manage the transition from an independent horticultural, hunting, and trade society to a dependent, agricultural reservation community.⁸⁵

The Cherokee

The Cherokee were a structurally differentiated (pluralistic) society, meaning that each part of the Cherokee social system—the family and clan structure, the economy, ceremonialism, and village government—was autonomous or independent of the other. Traditional, pre-contact society was organized around seven matrilineal clans that were autonomous and functionally separate from village government and other Cherokee institutions. Clan function was primarily judicial rather than political, and economic life was left to family households.

The autonomous village governments were the primary political units while even larger political groups were formed by coalitions of village governments. Religious life was under the care of the clans and specialized priestly lineages, and these "were functionally differentiated from the village headman and warrior leadership roles."⁸⁶

Structurally differentiated societies like the Cherokee, in contrast to the non-structurally differentiated Iroquois, were able to more easily adjust to European and Anglo-American pressures. In a series of historic stages, the Cherokee changed their economy by adopting southern plantation agriculture, including slavery. They became literate in their own language, established schools, academies, and courts, and eventually, between 1810 and 1827, formed a national government that was modeled in part on that of the United States (which in turn had been influenced by the Iroquois Confederacy). At the same time the Cherokee kept their language, important aspects of culture, and ethnic identity, thus forming an Indian republic of a new type. Despite this successful adjustment along lines that one would think white society would approve, they were repeatedly smashed as an independent republic, first in their homeland in southeastern United States and later in Indian Territory (Oklahoma) following the Civil War.

In the early 1700s there were between 10,000 and 20,000 Cherokees living in the Smokey Mountain area of the contemporary states of South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia. Fred Gearing has provided us with a useful description of the early Cherokee political structure.⁸⁷ On the eastern mountain slopes of the Savannah River system were the Lower Cherokees. On the opposite side of the mountains were the Overhill settlements, and between the two sections were the Middle and Valley settlements, tucked along the Tennessee and Hiwassee River systems. Originally, several dialects were spoken in the sixty-odd settlements. The main co-resident unit, however, was the village, not the settlement. Settlements were small, but the village, made up of one or more settlements, could number between 350 and 600 people. Gearing believes there were thirty to forty of these politically organized, autonomous villages.⁸⁸

One of the primary functions of the village in Cherokee society was to oversee several important ceremonies, especially the harvest ceremony, the New Year ritual in October, and the annual renewal ceremony. In between these ceremonies were the formal council sessions. "Villagers organized themselves into a single whole by becoming a set of seven clan sections and by activating also another organized group which cut across the seven clans, the body of elders, or "beloved men."⁸⁹ The question of war or peace was one of the important issues discussed by the village council. Secular matters were discussed under a white flag led by the chief priest and an inner council of clansmen. Council decisions had to be unanimous. On the other hand, when a village council deliberated on the question of an offensive war, "the red standard . . . was soon raised, and a new combination of organized groups went into operation," including a war chief, a war priest, and others selected by the warriors.⁹⁰

Early in the 18th century there was no formal political system beyond the villages.⁹¹ The Cherokee were a jural community. The Cherokee villages, although autonomous and recognizing no higher political authority, did not usually wage war on one another. It was left to the clan system to settle disputes, including blood revenge in the case of murder. By 1730, however, chiefly in response to pressures from the imperial power, primarily the hegemony of Great Britain, the Cherokee slowly transformed their jural community into what Gearing terms a "Cherokee priest-state." Later, prominent warriors were brought into the tribal councils, and "by the 1760s and 1770s, Cherokee priests were excluded from political and military decisions making. . . . The head warrior of the nation usurped the role of head priest."⁹² Further secularization of Cherokee government continued after 1795 when the United States replaced Great Britain as the dominating power.

There were several reasons for the evolution of the Cherokee people from autonomous villages into a nation-state. The British, for example, found it convenient to deal with a single, central authority for the Cherokee villages in their trade and diplomatic negotiations. Thus, "between 1718 and 1752 Carolina officials proclaimed various Cherokee leaders as 'emperor.'"⁹³ Furthermore, Cherokee leaders attempted to protect themselves from collective punishment and the interruption of trade whenever a trader or settler was killed by a vengeful Cherokee warrior, because relations with Yankee settlements were anything but peaceful. This had repeatedly resulted in a series of crises for Cherokee political authority. "One Cherokee, or a few, had harmed a trader; then trade had been cut off. In two of the instances, the loss of the ammunition supply was especially damaging because of a war with neighboring tribes' . . . In short, South Carolina behaved as if all villages together were a political entity sharing group responsibility for the actions by any of its members."⁹⁴

A third stage in Cherokee political development occurred after the American Revolution.

After 1795 the Cherokee responded to American threats to territory and political autonomy with conscious political centralization and economic development. Between 1810 and 1827, in direct response to American political threats, the Cherokee created state political institutions as an instrument to help ensure Cherokee national survival and political autonomy. The Cherokee state survived until 1907, when it was abolished by the U.S. government.⁹⁵ The Cherokee had lost their hunting lands north of the Ohio River, and by 1800 their seventy-five towns and villages were concentrated east and north of the Creeks in south-central Tennessee, northwestern Georgia, and northeastern Alabama. Between 1800 and 1830, in about one generation, a new political structure was formed through a concerted action of elders and younger men, "sometimes assisted by delegations of women whose place continued high in Cherokee affairs."⁹⁶

At the apex of the new political organization were the "most beloved men": Path Killer, principal chief; Charles Hicks, the second "most beloved man;" The Ridge, speaker of the council; a young man named John Ross who later played a major leadership role in Cherokee affairs; and others of lesser importance. In 1808 they wrote the legislation of the national council and developed a body of codified laws. The first law established "regulating companies," called Light Horse Guards, for the maintenance of law and order in all Cherokee territory. In 1810 they legislated against the ancient custom of clan revenge. This was followed in 1817 with the establishment of a bicameral legislature consisting of a National Committee and the traditional National Council. In 1820 "the Cherokee territory was divided into eight districts, in each of which there would be a council house where a judge for the district would transact business."97 A national Supreme Court was established in 1822. At the top of the national structure were two "beloved men," a president of the National Committee, and a speaker of the Council. A national capital at New Echota was built in 1825, and a national printing press was established. A constitution, modeled after that of the United States, was prepared and approved in 1827. It "provided separation of powers among the executive, judiciary, and legislative branches, and a legal code that regulated criminal and economic concerns."98

Formal education was encouraged, and Christian religious denominations were asked to set up schools. By 1825 there were eight schools operated by the American Board of Missions alone, and perhaps another five schools by other denominations. Thus, a cadre of formally trained young men and women began to play a central role in Cherokee political life. Between 1809 and 1821 Sequoyah (Charles Gist) devised a syllabary for writing the Cherokee language using eighty-five symbols for the basic syllables. A national press was established, and Elias Boudinot became the editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper in 1828. Within a few years, the majority of the Cherokee people became literate.

Tragically, a crisis developed in 1830 with the passage of the Indian Removal Act. This inhuman removal policy, spearheaded by President Andrew Jackson and southern planters, was aimed at solving "the Indian problem" by forcing Indian nations to relocate west of the Mississippi River to Indian Territory. Gold had been discovered in Cherokee territory, and the Cherokees came under great pressure from the state of Georgia and special interests to vacate their rich lands, resources, and plantations. When Jackson failed to enforce the 1832 *Worcester v. Georgia* Supreme Court decision favorable to Cherokee sovereignty, the fate of "The People" was sealed. In 1835 a small number of the Treaty Party led by The Ridge agreed to leave, and, later, between 1838 and 1839, the majority of the Cherokees under John Ross's leadership reluctantly trekked to Indian Territory in the Trail of Tears. One-fourth of the population died on the trail as a result of this ethnic cleansing policy. Survivors who hid in the hills to avoid removal became today's Eastern Band of Cherokees.

Remarkably, once in Indian Territory, the Cherokees reestablished their national government, legal system, printing press, schools, academies, and other institutions, only to be smashed once again following the Civil War. The Cherokee with their planter economy and slave-holding (even though only a minority held slaves) favored the South and were punished by the victorious North accordingly. The passage of the Curtis Act in 1898 sealed their fate when they and the other Five Civilized Tribes were terminated, their tribal lands broken up into small allotments, and the "surplus," especially in the Cherokee Strip, was opened to white settlers. This particular history is an ugly story, and I need not go into the details here in my summary of Champagne's theory. The reader can consult Angie Debo's classic chronicle of the official deceit, skullduggery, and outright theft that deprived the Cherokees of their right to self-determination when Oklahoma became a state in 1907.⁹⁹

Today, the Cherokee people remain split between the Eastern Band in North Carolina and the Western Cherokee in Oklahoma. Originally thought destined for final extinction, the Cherokee of Oklahoma now number over 80,000 and began making a comeback in 1961 when they used money obtained from a federal lawsuit to purchase land and to build a cultural center.¹⁰⁰ They regained the right to elect their own leaders in 1970, they adopted a new constitution in 1975, and in 1990 the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma assumed responsibility for running its own affairs with federal funds that were formerly administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Eastern Band of 12,000 Cherokee remain in North Carolina on the Qualla Boundary Reservation. Both groups rely heavily on tourism for economic self-sufficiency.

The question that remains, however, is what is the reason for this remarkable penchant for self-government, for state-building? Champagne concludes that several important conditions present in Cherokee society and history of contact account for institution-building in the nineteenth century. First were the threats by the United States to Cherokee sovereignty. Second was their incorporation into Southern plantation agriculture, mainly the cotton market, which led to class stratification. "About eight percent of Cherokee households became slave-holding plantation owners who produced cotton and other agricultural products for export."101 The rest of the Cherokee households became small farmers and husbandmen who relied primarily on a subsistence economy "while marketing some products in order to buy manufactured goods."102 It was the Cherokee planter class who "were influential in advocating economic and political change and introduced American models of political organization and constitutional government."103 Fundamentally, however, "the Cherokee had two major institutional features that facilitated their capacity to adopt political and economic change: national institutions of social solidarity, and a polity that was differentiated from culture, kinship and the institutions of social solidarity."104

In a response to Indian anthropologist Russell Thornton, Champagne explains why revitalization movements among the Cherokee, such as the Ghost Dance movement and White Path's Rebellion, or even the Redbird Smith movement after 1898, never became institutionalized as did similar fundamentalist or conservative movements among the Iroquois and Delaware.¹⁰⁵ State-building and agricultural development were "the primary Cherokee response to U.S. threats against Cherokee territory and national autonomy," because Cherokee society, unlike that of the Iroquois, was structurally differentiated.¹⁰⁶

In the relatively differentiated Cherokee society, fundamentalist movements failed or were incorporated into the institution-building process; while in the less-differentiated Iroquois and Delaware societies, fundamentalist opposition prevented or fragmented and limited acceptance of political and economic innovations.¹⁰⁷

CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENT

The above are but several examples of any number of new contributions to knowledge from American Indian Studies. (I discuss these developments in a textbook that I am writing on contemporary Indian nations of North America.¹⁰⁸) Other examples of innovative contributions in social scientific research within the American Indian Studies/Native American Studies paradigm include Steven Newcomb's doctrine of Christian nations theory, Theresa Harlan's "Indian visual history," Susan Lobo's urban Indian research and critique of US Census Indian methodology, Vine Deloria's critique of anthropology's Bering Strait and peopling of the Americas hypotheses, Paula Gunn Allen's gynocratic Indian societies, Alice Littlefield's proletarianization and Indian policy, Walter Williams's religious role of Indian gays in traditional society, Jose Barreiro's Taino extinction refutation, Jack Forbes's critique of anthropological and related Western philosophical concepts, Ward Churchill's numerous contributions documenting genocide, Winona LaDuke's work on Native environmentalism, and my own writing on the role of religious revitalization in the "new" Indian movement of the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁰⁹ There are, of course, many more examples. The contributions to literature, philosophy, politics, environmental studies, education, women's studies, and religion are immense.

NOTES

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1. See the Guide to Native American Studies Programs in the United States and Canada, website: www.richmond.edu/rnelson/guide.html.

2. An earlier version of this article was presented at the 43rd annual conference of the Western Social Science Association in Reno, Nevada, 18–21 April 2001.

3. Alexander Ewen, "Mexico: The Crisis of Identity," in *Native American Voices: A Reader*, eds. Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 113–122.

4. Devon A. Mihesuah, Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples (London, England and Dunedin, NZ: Zed Books and University of Otago Press, 2001).

5. Mihesuah, Natives and Academics, 4-6.

- 6. Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies.
- 7. Ibid., 1.
- 8. Ibid., 17.

9. Luana Ross, "Personalizing Methodology," in *Native American Women's Studies: Critical/Creative Representations*, ed. Ines Hernandez-Avila (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, forthcoming).

10. Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies, 137.

11. Luana Ross, Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

12. Ross, "Personalizing Methodology," 4.

- 13. Ibid., 35.
- 14. Ibid., 36.
- 15. Ibid., 37.
- 16. Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies, 7.

17. Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Thought," in *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship in Lived Research*, eds. M. Fonow and J. A. Cook (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

18. Ross, Inventing the Savage, 3.

19. Ibid., 5.

20. Ibid., 12-13.

21. K. Llewellyn and E. A. Hoebel, *The Cheyenne Way: Conflict and Case Law in Primitive Jurisprudence* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941).

22. Ross, Inventing the Savage, 14.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 16.

25. Ibid., 266.

26. Colonial theory can also be applied to the Native peoples of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, and Hawai'i, since the first three were former colonies of Spain that were seized by the United States as a result of the 1898 Spanish American War, and the annexation of Hawai'i has a related imperialist history.

27. Luana Ross, "Punishing Institutions: The Story of Catherine (Cedar Woman)," in Lobo and Talbot, *Native American Voices*, 456.

28. Ross, Inventing the Savage, 34–72.

29. Ross, "Indian Country: Reservations, Laws, Criminals," original Comprehensive Exam paper in sociology, University of Oregon, Summer 1987.

30. Traditional Circle of Indian Elders & Youth, "Communique No. 15," *News From The 4 Directions* (ACH Community Bulletin, Winter 1992–93); Steven Newcomb, "The Legacy of Religious Racism in U.S. Indian Law," *Indian Country Today*, 24 April 2002; Newcomb, "The Evidence of Christian Nationalism in Federal Indian Law: The Doctrine of Discovery, *Johnson v. McIntosh*, and Plenary Power," *Review of Law and Social Change*, 20, 2 (1993).

31. Ross, Inventing the Savage, 19.

32. Ross, "Indian Country: Reservations, Laws, Criminals," 20-21.

33. Ross, Inventing the Savage, 22.

34. Ross, "Indian Country," 21.

35. Ross, Inventing the Savage, 26.

36. Ross, "Indian Country," 26.

37. Ross, "Criminology and Deviance," Question Two, Comprehensive Exam Paper in sociology, University of Oregon (Summer 1988): 41.

38. Ross, "Criminology and Deviance," Question One, Comprehensive Exam Paper in sociology, University of Oregon (Summer 1988): 24–29.

39. Ibid., 29-32.

40. Ibid.

41. Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983).

42. Curiously, Native Americans are often included along with other ethnic and national minority groups in academic texts under the rubric of "the immigrant experience."

43. Ross, "Criminology and Deviance," Question One, 32–33.

44. Ibid., 34.

45. There are a number of excellent works on the Peltier case. A listing of some of these works, and a summary of the case, can be found in Steve Talbot, "Free Leonard Peltier," in Lobo and Talbot, *Native American Voices*, 224–225.

46. Peter Matthiessen, In the Spirit of Crazy Horse (New York: Viking Press, 1992): xx.

47. Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot, *Native American Voices: A Reader*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 128.

48. For an extended discussion of the quincentennial controversy, Indian reaction to it, and historical truth, see Lobo and Talbot, *Native American Voices*, 127–130.

49. Oren Lyons, John Mohawk, et al., *Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the U.S. Constitution* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 1992).

50. Carole M. Gentry and Donald A. Grinde, Jr., eds., *The Unheard Voices: American Indian Responses to the Columbian Quincentennary*, 1492–1992 (Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center, 1994).

51. Bruce E. Johansen and Donald A. Grinde, Jr., "The Debate Regarding Native American Precedents for Democracy: A Recent Historiography," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 14:1 (1990): 61.

52. Donald A. Grinde, Jr., *The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1977); Bruce E. Johansen, *Forgotten Founders: Benjamin Franklin, the Iroquois and the Rationale for the American* Revolution (Ipswich, MA: Gambit, 1982).

53. Elizabeth Tooker, "The United States Constitution and the Iroquois League," *Ethnohistory* 35 (Fall 1988): 305–336.

54. Johansen and Grinde, "The Debate," 64.

55. Michael Newman, "Founding Feathers: The Iroquois and the Constitution," *The New Republic*, 7 November 1988, 17–18.

56. Johansen and Grinde, "The Debate," 66.

57. Ibid., 65.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., 70. An extended account of the Iroquois Confederacy's influence on the US founding fathers is found in detailed articles by Curtis G. Berkey, "United States-Indian Relations: The Constitutional Basis," and Donald A. Grinde, Jr., "Iroquois Political Theory and the Roots of American Democracy," in *Exiled in the Land of the Free*, eds. Lyons, Mohawk, et al., 189–225.

60. Ibid.

61. Johansen and Grinde, "The Debate," 63-88; Bruce E. Johansen, *Debating Democracy: Native American Legacy of Freedom* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 1998).

62. Johansen and Grinde, "The Debate," 77-78.

63. Donald A. Grinde, Jr., and Bruce E. Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America* and the Evolution of Democracy (Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center, 1991).

64. Bruce E. Johansen, Native American Political Systems and the Evolution of Democracy: An Annotated Bibliography (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996); also by Johansen, Native America and the Evolution of Democracy: A Supplemental Bibliography (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999).

65. Vine Deloria, Jr., "Conclusions: Anthros, Indians, and Planetary Reality," in *Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria, Jr. and the Critique of Anthropology*, eds. Thomas Biolsiand and Larry J. Zimmerman (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997), 215.

66. Donald A. Grinde, Jr., "Iroquois Political Theory and the Roots of American Democracy," in *Exiled in the Land of the Free*, eds. Lyons, Mohawk, et al., 228.

67. Duane Champagne, "Social Structure, Revitalization Movements and State Building: Social Change in Four Native American Societies," *American Sociological Review* 48 (December 1983): 754–763.

68. Ibid., 754.

69. Duane Champagne, American Indian Societies: Strategies and Conditions of Political and Cultural Survival in American Indian Societies, Cultural Survival Report 21 (Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, December 1985).

70. Ibid., 1.

71. Ibid., 4.

72. Duane Champagne, *American Indian Societies: Strategies and Conditions of Political and Cultural Survival*, Cultural Survival Report 32 (Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, 1989).

73. Ibid., 2.

74. Ibid., 135.

75. Champagne, "Social Structure, Revitalization Movements."

76. Ibid., 755.

77. See also Ronald Wright, *Stolen Continents: The "New World" Through Indian Eyes* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1992); Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois* (New York: Chelsea House, 1988); Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1877); Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Random House, 1969).

- 78. Champagne, "Social Structure, Revitalization Movements," 756.
- 79. Wright, Stolen Continents, 138.
- 80. Ibid., 139.
- 81. Champagne, "Social Structure, Revitalization Movements," 756.
- 82. Wright, Stolen Continents, 233.
- 83. Graymont, The Iroquois, 99.
- 84. Wright, Stolen Continents, 236.
- 85. Champagne, American Indian Societies (Report 32), 33.

86. Champagne, "Social Structure, Revitalization Movements," 757. See also Fred Gearing, *Priests and Warriors: Social Structures for Cherokee Politics in the 18th Century*, Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association 93 (1962); Wilma Mankiller, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); James Mooney, *Historical Sketch of the Cherokee* (Chicago: Aldine, 1975); and Wright, *Stolen Continents.*

87. Gearing, Priests and Warriors.

- 88. Ibid., 3.
- 89. Ibid., 23.
- 90. Ibid., 26.
- 91. Ibid., 5.
- 92. Champagne, American Indian Societies (Report 32), 42.
- 93. Ibid., 41.
- 94. Gearing, Priests and Warriors, 87-88.
- 95. Champagne "Social Structure, Revitalization Movements," 758.
- 96. Edward H. Spicer, A Short History of the Indians of the United States (New York: Van Nonstrand Reinhold, 1969), 59.
 - 97. Ibid., 60.

98. Champagne, American Indian Societies (Report 32), 47.

99. Angie Debo, And Still the Waters Run: The Betrayal of the Five Civilized Tribes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940).

100. The 2000 Census gives a number of 281,069 Cherokees. However, the census asked respondents for the first time to report one or more "races" (white, black, Asian, etc.) they considered themselves and other members of their households to be. For example, 62 percent of the self-identified "Cherokees" reported at least one other "race" or American Indian tribal grouping. Thus, the 2000 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 1990 census or earlier censuses. I have not yet seen current information on the number of tribally enrolled members of the Eastern Band in North Carolina, or of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

101. Champagne, "Social Structure, Revitalization Movements," 760.

102. Ibid.

103. Champagne, American Indian Societies (Report 32), 51.

104. Ibid., 52.

105. Duane Champagne, "Cherokee Social Movements: A Response to Thornton," *American Soicological Review* 50:1 (February 1985): 127–130.

- 106. Ibid., 128.
- 107. Ibid., 129.

108. Steve Talbot, *Contemporary Indian Nations of North America* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, forthcoming).

109. See, for example, the following: Theresa Harlan, "Creating a Visual History: A Question of Ownership," in Native American Voices, 166-172; Susan Lobo, "Is Urban a Person or a Place? Characteristics of Indian County," in American Indians and the Urban Experience, eds. Susan Lobo and Kurt Peters (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2001): 73-84; Vine Deloria, Jr., Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact (New York: Scribner, 1995); Paula Gunn Allen, The Sacrd Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986); Steven Newcomb, "The Evidence of Christian Nationalism in Federal Indian Law; Walter Williams, The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986); Jose Barreiro, "Taino Ascendant: Extinction, Continuities and Reassertions" (photocopy, 1997); Jack D. Forbes, "Basic Concepts for Understanding Native History and Culture," in Forbes, Native Americans of California and Nevada, rev. ed. (Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph Publishers, 1982), 156–178; Ward Churchill, Since Predator Came: Notes from the Struggle for American Indian Liberation (Littleton, CO: Aigis Publications, 1995); Winona LaDuke, All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life (Cambridge: South End Press, 1999); Steve Talbot, "Pluralistic Religious Beliefs," in The Native American Almanac: A Reference Work on Native North Americans in the United States and Canada, ed. Duane Champagne (Detroit: Gale Research, 1994): 668–683; also see the revised article in the 2nd edition of the Almanac (2001).