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only with the Anglo-American perspective. Instigated by imperial competition, incessant warfare vitiated colonists' powers to distinguish among friendly and hostile Natives, fostering hatred of all. As the tomahawk's shadow lifted, fighting Indians became merely an occasion for military adventure, not a life-or-death struggle. That Indians vanish from the book when they disappear from English Wachusett makes perfect sense given Jaffee's primary interest in serial town founding, but the resulting inquiry does not constitute ethnohistory, which entails paying comparable attention to all participants in an historical event. Colin Calloway's *The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600–1800* illumines Algonquian Wachusett more capably. An account of serial town settlement that incorporates Native as well as English perspectives—no small task—remains to be written.

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**Redskins: Racial Slur or Symbol of Success?** By Bruce Stapleton. San Jose: Writers Club Press, 2001. 204 pages. \$16.95 paper.

In *Redskins: Racial Slur or Symbol of Success?*, Bruce Stapleton analyzes the controversy surrounding the use of Indian-themed mascots in sports with the central focus of the book being whether the name of the Washington professional team, the Redskins, is a derogatory term or a term of honor. The author examines the feelings of those who maintain that the term is a racial slur and the use of Indian-themed mascots is demeaning. He also examines the feelings of those who claim that the use of Indian names, images, and mascots in sports is not offensive and is, in fact, an honor.

Stapleton contends that these deep-seated feelings are overstated and that the issues are oversimplified by the involved parties. He pursues a course of examining the use of the term *Redskins* in American literature. His analysis of an Internet database of more than 4,000 books published over the past 150 years revealed that *redskins* or *redskin* was used 224 times. About 25 percent of these uses was classed as derogatory, while less than 3 percent was classed as positive. The remainder were placed into a benign or ambiguous category. Since 1930, the author finds that *redskins* has virtually disappeared from the American scene, with the exception of its usage in sports.

Stapleton also examines the historical events affecting Indians that occurred during the most frequent uses of the term in American literature. He finds a correlation between the occurrence of these events and the introduction and proliferation of Indian images, names, and mascots in American society. Interestingly, the emergence of Indian mascots coincided closely with government policies aimed at eradicating Indian cultures by assimilating this minority into American society. It was certainly not a period of honoring Indians, and in reality was one of their most demoralizing times.

Stapleton concludes from his analysis that *redskins* is a hateful term associated with more than 400 years of history ranging from the injustices of the

Spanish Conquistadors in the sixteenth century to American government policies of assimilation in the early twentieth century. The term emerged from a background that involved the loss of millions of Indian lives due to war, illness, and bounty hunting for Indian skins. The earliest uses of the term occurred in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and these uses were demeaning. Its introduction into sports occurred at a time not only when the government was trying to assimilate Indian culture, but also when non-American Indians viewed Natives as ignorant, savage, violent, cowardly, and drunken. The author writes that it is highly unlikely that the use of Indian-themed mascots, names, and images was born out of honor and respect.

Stapelton's examination of American literature for the manner in which *Redskins* was used offers a novel approach to assessing the meaning of the term. The author arrives at his conclusion that *Redskins* is a racial slur and that it in no way exemplifies a "symbol of success" independently of the feelings of the involved parties. The fact that Stapelton says that it is a hateful word based on its use in American literature provides Indians with another argument of its offensiveness and one that supercedes the claims by Redskin proponents that Native Americans are just too sensitive about the word. The author also emphasizes that so much of Native American regalia (traditional dress, drums, eagle's feathers, and painted faces) used as logos, costumes, and other fun-fare by team fans, are in fact spiritual and religious symbols and that this aspect of involving Indian names in sports is often overlooked. He concludes that these uses are sacrilegious.

Stapelton's book provides an excellent resource documenting the feelings expressed by members on both sides of the issue. The viewpoint expressed by seven American Indian petitioners in the 1998 trademark case before the US Patent and Trademark Office's Trial and Appeal Board challenging the Washington football team's trademark of the term *Redskins* was used by the author to exemplify the opinion of many American Indians regarding the term. "'Redskins' is today and always has been a deeply offensive, humiliating, and degrading racial slur" argue the petitioners—it is a "disparaging, racial epithet" (p. 32). Numerous psychologists and Native American leaders maintain that the "socio-psychological" effects of mascot use on Native Americans and, in particular, Native American youth, are factors contributing to low self-esteem in a community with the highest suicide and unemployment rates and the poorest education standards of any minority in the country.

The author details the arguments given by the Washington Redskins' legal team in their defense against the trademark suit challenging the use of the moniker. The defense team maintained that the name is a completely neutral term and is synonymous with ethnic modifiers such as *Indian* and *Native American*. Furthermore, they argued that *Redskins* has taken on a meaning that is separate and distinct from ethnicity, and that it reflects positive attributes of American Indians such as "dedication, courage and pride." Team fans echo the arguments of the legal defense team that the term and team mascot symbolize Indian courage and strength, and they point out the long and proud tradition associated the term as reasons for not changing the name.

Although the Redskins' legal team lost this suit, Stapelton contends that they will likely be successful in their appeal by pursuing the argument that

their First Amendment rights (the right of free speech) have been violated. He outlines a set of criteria that he feels could result in a name change regardless of the opinion of the Washington team owner and team fans. He suggests that even if the Indian petitioners win their case, it may not make that much difference to their cause in the long run.

The author disputes the claims of American Indian activists that *Redskins* is the worst racial slur expressed openly in today's society and is equivalent to the N word. He feels that these are overstatements in part because of the low percentage of American Indians who responded unfavorably to the use of *Redskins* (only 37 percent) in a survey conducted for the petitioners in the trademark case noted above. The author's reliance on this poll to conclude that American Indian activists are not justified in their claims that *Redskins* is an extremely racist term may be somewhat inappropriate since an awareness of what constitutes racial discrimination is an evolving process. In support of the suggestion that most American Indians would respond unfavorably to the use of *Redskins* if the poll were conducted more recently is a survey published in *Indian Country Today* (August 8, 2001). The survey, entitled "American Indian mascots: Respectful or negative stereotype?" found that more than 80 percent of the respondents, all of whom were American Indian, said that Indian mascots are offensive, while only 10 percent said they are an honor. It would also seem that if a similar poll were taken during the early, mid, and late stages of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, it would reflect an increase in the number of African-Americans who vehemently objected to the N word. History will determine where American Indians are in their civil rights movement to eradicate the use of words like *Redskins* and Indian-themed mascots. In the interim, it would seem inapt for non-Indians to tell Indians how they should feel about the word.

Stapelton claims that the issues surrounding the meaning of the term *Redskins* are too complex to say that it is a racial slur just because American Indians say it is and he reiterates that the term is degrading, but not because of the claims of American Indians. Although this approach provides Indians with an important tool to use in supporting their claims that *Redskins* is a racist word (see above), the author leaves himself open to criticism. He certainly is as guilty as the proponents of the Washington Redskins and Indian-themed mascots in ignoring the feelings of American Indians and of telling this minority how it should feel about issues that directly affect them. The feelings of the affected party are, in fact, paramount in determining what constitutes racial discrimination as only the affected party can describe how it feels to see themselves portrayed in public. The reason such words as *wetback* and *gook*, expressions like *a tough monkey* and *Yellow Peril*, caricatures like Little Black Sambo and the Frito Bandito, and black-faced minstrel shows are no longer acceptable is that in every case the affected party said that they constitute racial discrimination. Without the objections of American Indians to the use of *Redskins* and Indian-themed mascots, there would not of course be any dispute involving their use.

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