

The Institute of American Indian Studies: A Tradition of Scholarly Pursuit

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The Institute of American Indian Studies at the University of South Dakota celebrated its fortieth birthday on April 30, 1995. The Institute is one of more than twenty academic institutions in the United States devoted to the preservation, study, and teaching of American Indian history and traditions. In addition to the Institute's devotion to its mission, the South Dakota legislature envisioned its role as an entity that provides enlightened background information on problems confronting American Indian citizens in South Dakota and maintains dialogue and outreach programs between American Indian and non-Indian people.

The concept of the Institute at the University of South Dakota was formulated by Dr. William O. Farber, Political Science Department, and Dr. Wesley Hurt, director of the W. H. Over Museum. The idea of creating the Institute came to them after their attendance at a conference held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Among the topics discussed by fellow university administrators and American Indian representatives were the ongoing efforts to preserve American Indian heritage within their respective states. With their idea sharing they hoped that their initiative would become part of a nation-wide effort. Farber and Hurt both believed that this concept would enrich the University, its students, and citizens of the state.

Since the Institute was founded in 1955, it has upheld in various ways, a guiding principle shared by the Nakota Oyate (Nakota People, a linguistic division of the Ocheti Sakowin, Seven Council Fires) belief in Mitakuye Oyasin,

All My Relatives. Throughout its history, the Institute has remained active by sponsoring or co-sponsoring visiting scholars, speakers, presentations, forums, and conferences that address issues facing American Indians on local, state, national, and global levels. These events covered a wide variety of topics ranging from race relations, the ramifications of legislation designed to terminate treaty rights held by the American Indian people living on nine reservations located principally within the state's boundaries, and inquiries into the Indian Health Service to cultural preservation and roles of American Indians in literature and the fine arts. One of the Institute's main goals originating from presenting these issues was to increase awareness by non-Indians.

The Institute's desire to preserve all aspects of American Indian life, history, and culture led to the formation of the South Dakota Oral History Center (SDOHC). As an on-going, vital, and expanding oral history project, the SDOHC houses over five thousand interviews covering myriad facets of historical and contemporary issues. The collection is divided into two distinct subdivisions; the American Indian Research Project (AIRP), and the South Dakota Oral History Project (SDOHP). The bulk of interviews were collected in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The information provided by the people give the next generation a comprehensive view of the American Indian and non-Indian history of South Dakota and others living in the northern plains region. Issues discussed are aimed most specifically in the time span of the 1860s through the late 1940s.

Primarily, the American Indian Research Project contains personal interviews, but it also contains recordings of lectures, songs, music, and powwows. Because of the project's location on the northern plains, most of the interviews originate within the Ocheti Sakowin Oyate. For example, there are interviews with children and grandchildren of survivors from the Minnesota War of 1862 and Wounded Knee (1890 and 1973), accounts of changes brought on by the General Allotment (Dawes) Act of 1887, and the Indian Reorganization (Wheeler-Howard) Act of 1934. However, the Institute has continued to collect interviews through the years though operating with limited financial resources. From this activism interviews covering recent topics such as the American Indian Movement (AIM), the Native American Church, and casinos are found in the collection. The AIRP, however, does contain interviews from over thirty other American Indian nations ranging in location from the Arctic to the Yucatan Peninsula.

In addition to interviews found in the American Indian Research Project, the Center also houses the South Dakota Oral History Project. The SDOHP is a collection of interviews with predominantly non-Indians in South Dakota. This collection contains accounts of South Dakotans from days of the first settlements to contemporary times. Some interviews were made with first generation immigrants who compared lifestyles in various European countries to that of the United States. One informant, for example, gave his account of serving in the Czar's army during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), prior to immigrating to the United States. One interesting fact found in this collection is that some of the older interviews were partially done in the informants' mother tongues.

Also found in the SDOHP are interviews with people of African and Asian heritage. Examples include African-Americans sharing their experiences as homesteaders, encounters with the Ku Klux Klan of South Dakota, organizing local and regional chapters of the NAACP, and accounts of segregation as it applied in South Dakota. The SDOHP also contains a few interviews with Asian-Americans. In one notable interview, a person of Japanese descent shares with us experiences of life in an American concentration camp during World War II.

Today, the South Dakota Oral History Center serves as the heart of the Institute of American Indian Studies. The Center is important because it preserves the voices and life experiences of thousands of individuals from various locations throughout our universe. Because many of those people who shared themselves for posterity have departed from this life, the Institute's director and staff view the recorded interviews as a repository of information and as a memorial to what these people accomplished and contributed to humanity. In the words of the Nakota Oyate, the South Dakota Oral History Center is *nina wakan*, very sacred. The Oral History Center and other functions throughout the history of the Institute of American Indian Studies were directed and coordinated by the Institute's directors. The Institute has had ten directors since its inception in 1955, with Dr. Wesley R. Hurt serving as the Institute's first director (1955-59 and 1962-63). A socio-economic survey of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate completed in 1955, was the first state-wide project in which the Institute participated. The first two American Indian student staff members at that time were Ardis Tuttle (Rives) from Ft. Thompson and Ira Grinnell from Cheyenne River.

During the first decade of the Institute's existence, an Executive Committee composed of university and community leaders was formed to assist the director in his duties. Members of the Institute's first Executive Committee were Dr. Hurt, Dean E. W. Harrington (College of Arts and Sciences), chairman; Dr. W. O. Farber, secretary; Dr. T. S. McPartland; and Mr. O. E. Laymon. Mr. John Artichoker, State Supervisor of [American] Indian Education served as an associate member of the Committee. The Institute began very quickly sponsoring programs and conferences that centered around economic, legal, and political issues. From 1955 to 1965, the Institute's staff published seven works, sponsored four conferences, and participated in two projects (one state and the other federal) that analyzed legal and political issues which Ocheti Sakowin Oyate Councils and American Indian citizens encountered during the 1950s period of termination. A momentous occasion occurred in 1957 when Dr. Oscar Howe (Ihanktonwanna Nakota) joined the faculty at the University of South Dakota. His career and creative genius in fine arts led to an appearance on the television show, "This is Your Life," in 1960. In that same year, Dr. Howe designed the emblem which the Institute still uses as its symbol.

Reflecting the slowly evolving changes that were gathering force in Ocheti Sakowin country during the first ten years of its existence, leadership of the Institute underwent several upheavals. William H. Cape (1959), Dr. Robert L. Hall (1959-1961), Dr. James H. Howard (1963-1966), and Carol M. Mickey

(1966-1967), served as directors and succeeded in keeping the Institute firmly guided on its mission. Dr. Hurt was called on once again in 1962-1963 to provide interim direction as the Institute strove to establish itself as a viable entity in the university community. The immense amount of published scholarship and interactive relationships with Ocheti Sakowin Oyate during this period highlights the foresight of the founders.

The year 1967 is used as a demarcation because that was the year in which University of South Dakota President, I. D. Weeks, welcomed aboard an enrolled member of a federally-recognized Oyate to direct the Institute. Major General (retired) Lloyd R. Moses (Sicangu Lakota) was appointed to guide the Institute's programs. In his seven-year tenure (1967-74), General Moses oversaw a period of great expansion of responsibilities for the Institute. As an example, in 1967, Dr. Joseph H. Cash's idea for an oral history project was funded by a large grant from the Doris Duke Foundation. With this impetus, the American Indian Research Project was founded and became the genesis of the South Dakota Oral History Center. Under Dr. Cash's leadership, the AIRP collected nearly twelve hundred interviews over a five-year time-span while employing many American Indian and non-Indian people for the collection, transcription, and collation of the interviews.

Publications became another facet of the Institute's mission of informing its constituency. From its inception the Institute has published information in its own publication, the *News Report* which evolved into *The Bulletin*. The Institute aided in the publication of two valuable books that have had a lasting impact on scholarship in the field of American Indian history. In 1970, the late Dr. Joseph H. Cash and Dr. Herbert T. Hoover published *The Indian Americans*, and a year later, edited the work, *To Be An Indian*, a collection of interviews garnered from the American Indian Research Project. The book became an important component of the oral history discipline because of its format and its exposition of how and why oral history provided an excellent method of writing American Indian history from the Indian point of view.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were also a time of increasing American Indian student enrollment at the University of South Dakota. The increase of American Indian students on campus, in addition to a rising consciousness about American Indian issues, brought about the formation of other organizations and clubs on campus centered around American Indian affairs. Among these were the Wapaha Club (forerunner of Tiospaye, and in 1997 the Inter-Tribal Council on Cultural Awareness), the Tribal Law Study Club (Native American Law Students Association today), [American] Indian Community Action Project (ICAP), and Upward Bound. All these organizations (except ICAP) have flourished through the years. Upward Bound, under the thirty year leadership of Mr. Charles (Chuck) Swick (Oglala Lakota) (USD, BSED, 1972), has proven its worth to the university and American Indian communities as it has grown into a pipeline for American Indian high school students to matricu-

late at the University of South Dakota. The majority of American Indian graduates from the University have also graduated from Upward Bound.

When all these organizations were established, university officials were unclear as to their proper placement within the hierarchy. Initially, then, their guardianship was entrusted to the only established Indian focused department that existed on campus at that time: the Institute. It soon became apparent to university policy-makers that the Institute had heavy enough responsibilities as it was and that the other organizations were large enough to run themselves. This separation benefited both the university and the organizations. Another side-effect of increased enrollments and interest was the addition of Lakota language courses to the university's curriculum. American Indian employment as faculty grew by one when in 1968, Mr. James Emery, a man who came from Nakota and Lakota families, and a noted linguist and advocate of Ocheti Sakowin Oyate music and dances, was hired to instruct students. At the same time Mr. Joseph Rockboy, Mr. Charles Kills Enemy, and Mr. Adam Sitting Crow assisted historians and anthropologists in learning the good ways of the Oyate. With their presence the Native American Church opened a fireplace in Clay County where adherents were welcomed to Saturday night meetings. Purification lodges and sundance gatherings were available for Indians who were learning and practicing the old ways of spirituality. All in all the University became a dynamic force in American Indian Student life on and off campus.

In 1974, University President Richard L. Bowen named Reverend Webster Two Hawk (Cetan Nunpa) director of the Institute of American Indian Studies. Reverend Two Hawk, an alumni of the University of South Dakota's Business School (ESBA, 1952), provided a smooth transition as he continued the Institute's mission at a time of turbulence within Ocheti Sakowin life. During the three years under his charge, the Institute aided and sponsored four conferences on American Indian education, self-determination, tribal [Oyate] government, and emerging issues surrounding the founding of tribal [Oyate] colleges on Oyate lands. The Institute also played a major role in the approval of an [American] Indian Studies minor at USD. In addition, three works were published by Institute executive committee members or affiliates.

The first was an ethnohistorical work, *Three Affiliated Tribes*, written by Dr. Joseph H. Cash and Dr. Gerald Wolff of the history department. Their book examined relationships of the Arikaras, Hidatsas, and Mandans with whites between the nineteenth century to the 1960s and how that contact affected their cultures. The second work, *An Indian Philosophy on Education*, was edited by Dr. John Bryde. This was the first publication of its kind in that it was a collection of essays by American Indian professionals describing how American Indian children should be educated. The last work published while Rev. Two Hawk was director came from recently-deceased, Dr. John R. Milton of the English Department and editor and founder of *South Dakota Review*. Dr. Milton published a small anthology of poems written by four Indian poets entitled

Four Indian Poets.

Mr. Cato Valandra succeeded to the Institute directorship in 1977 with the presidency of Charles D. Lien and held that position until his passage from this life in 1986. During Mr. Valandra's tenure, the Institute's conferences and articles published in *The Bulletin* began reducing its focus on legal and political issues and placing more emphasis on cultural values. Some of the titles of these conferences and articles were: "Tiospaye," "Oral Tradition," "Indian Roots," "Ceremonies," "The Cannupa Wakan and Pipestone," "Lakota Women," "Little Spirits (Nagi)," "Indian Names and Imprints," and "New Beginnings." Three other conferences dealt with South Dakota urban Indian health, tribal development, and conflicting treaty interpretations.

In the years of Valandra's leadership, T. Emogene Paulson, administrative assistant for the Institute, published *Sioux Collections*, an examination of changes in Ocheti Sakowin leadership during the twentieth century. Dr. Robert Bunge, professor of modern languages who taught Oyate language and culture, compiled a *Lakota Children's Dictionary*, illustrated by Barbara (Snellgrove) Sokolow (USD, BFA '83). Also during this time General Moses and Mrs. Paulson continued work on their book, entitled, *Who's Who Among the Sioux*, which was published in 1988.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Dr. Richmond L. Clow supervised the efforts of the South Dakota Oral History Center. With funding from the South Dakota Committee on the Humanities, Suzanne Julin, Judy Zabdyr, Dr. Herbert T. Hoover, and Dr. Gerald W. Wolff published the *Index to the American Indian Research Project (1979)*, a comprehensive subject index of the AIRP holdings. Dr. Clow, along with Dr. Larry Zimmerman, were among the early University faculty to begin using personal computers. In 1986, Dean Joseph H. Cash allocated a personal computer to the Oral History Center for purposes of saving transcriptions on "floppy disks." Benjiman Kitto (Isanti Dakota), (USD, BSED '87, MA '90), Arthur D. Honomichl (Ihanktonwan Nakota), (USD, BS '86), Cheryl Holiday Honomichl (Ihanktonwan Nakota), (USD, BS '86), and the late Gerald L. DuMarce (Sisitonwan Dakota), (USD, BA '88), were the innovators of computerized transcriptions for the South Dakota Oral History Center.

With the end of Mr. Valandra's directorship, Dr. Joseph H. Cash assumed leadership as acting director of the Institute in the period of Dr. Joseph M. McFadden's presidency. Dr. Cash served until Dr. Leonard R. Bruguier (Ihanktonwan Nakota Oyate) (USD, BA '84, MPAD '86), was appointed director in 1990. In 1987 and 1988, *The Bulletin* continued the emphasis on cultural matters by printing articles on "Sioux music," "Sioux Legacy," "Kinship of Cultures," and "Rites and Pipes." In 1988, Dr. Herbert T. Hoover, coordinator of the American Indian Research Project, published his work *The Yankton Sioux*. When Dr. Bruguier was appointed director by President Betty Turner Asher in 1990, the Institute entered another time of transition. Though several components of its original mission remained intact, it was also given new direction and responsibilities. Guided by President Joseph M. McFadden's Blue Ribbon Com-

mittee Report on the Role of USD in Serving Native Americans published in 1987, the Institute underwent several changes in its mission and name. Previously known as the Institute of Indian Studies [we have purposely used the new name throughout this narrative to avoid confusion], the name was changed to the Institute of American Indian Studies to differentiate between Asian Indians and peoples inhabiting North and South America. The Blue Ribbon Report consolidated information pertaining to the university's American Indian programs and made several recommendations.

Perhaps most importantly, the Institute once again had grown to the point where many of its past functions were shared by other organizations on campus, and it was clear that this element of its mission should be excised and efforts channeled into assisting growth into an academic and research component of the university. In an earlier address to the university community, President Asher made her intentions known when she commented, "I believe helping Native Americans [American Indians] as a special population is a serious obligation of this university." With this assurance of compliance with the university's legislated mission, many of these functions became the responsibility of Mr. Doyle Pipe On Head (USD, BSBA '92), who was named Coordinator of American Indian Activities at the newly opened Native American [American Indian] Culture Center.

To assure compliance with the Institute's growth toward an academic and research center, the director was assigned to the History Department to teach coursework within his academic discipline, American history. To bolster the research activities of the Institute, Dr. Bruguier instituted several programs that publicized and made accessible the rich resources found in the South Dakota Oral History Center's interviews. The Institute acquired its own library when the family of Dr. Joseph H. Cash, former College of Arts and Sciences Dean and acting Institute Director, donated his personal library to the Institute.

President Asher's enlightened leadership encouraged concerned people to step forward offering their expertise to upgrade the Institute's ability to meet its obligations. With support from Dr. Lyn Corder, former executive director of the University of South Dakota Foundation, and former Vice President of Academic Affairs Steve Hazlett, financial resources enabled the Institute to initiate an equipment modernization program. The Institute's Save the Voices program gained impetus when funds from the General Mills Foundation were used to purchase data base programs which aided the preservation and research efforts of the Oral History Center. During the summer of 1995, Mr. Bruce Chandler and Dr. Larry Zimmerman combined their talents to construct a website for the Institute. The site went online on 10 October 1995. Database programs and machines were purchased with the vision of making the oral history collections easily accessible to researchers. Both the AIRP and portions of the SDOHP collections were downloaded into the database in the effort to ease access. Plans are to publish, both in hard copy and online, the complete indexes to both collections. With the aid of graduate research assistantships presently filled by

Mr. Bruce Chandler (USD, MA, 1997), and Mr. David Deng, under the director's supervision, the Institute of American Indian Studies website has been maintained online since 1995.

College work study students continue the transcription of tape recordings to the point where ninety per cent of the American Indian Research Project and twenty-five per cent of the South Dakota Oral History Project are now in hard copy. Other programs such as "Returning the Voices" have been initiated with the goal of returning Oyate members' remembrances to their respective nations. The Institute has aggressively pursued programs to increase the holdings of the South Dakota Oral History Center through grants and voluntary donations, increasing the oral history collections over twenty percent since 1990. In this way, oral history remains a central focus of the Institute's commitment to the people it serves.

The director and administrative assistant Margaret Quintal (USD, BA '87, JD '90), who replaced Mrs. Peggy B. Fox after she retired in 1991, continue to provide public service by serving on committees both within and outside the university. The Institute of American Indian Studies continues to play a role in preserving and educating others by studying and disseminating American Indian history and culture. Support is extended to other organizations and agencies to bring about a better understanding between cultures. In keeping with the Institute's past efforts, work is now underway to bring online a cooperative American Indian Studies major. The Institute expects this new academic endeavor, in collaboration with Black Hills State University (Spearfish, South Dakota), to be in place by Spring 1998.

Perhaps the most gratifying aspect of the Institute's history are the many outstanding people who have worked here. With their service, they have given us the heart, strength, and spirit that bind together a Tiospaye: we have become a family for those away from home. Though statistics have not been compiled, the many students and other professionals who served in many capacities, have carried themselves proudly and successfully into other fields of endeavor. The alumni of the Institute of American Indian Studies are the Institute's greatest asset; they carry the message wherever their travels take them in this world. We are humbled to use the Ocheti Sakowin Oyate words, as a prayer for our universe: Mitakuye Oyasin, All My Relatives.