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# Indigenous Nations Studies Journal

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## Contact Information

For additional subscription or submission information, contact the Indigenous Nations Studies Program at the University of Kansas.

Mailing Address:

Telephone/Fax:

Center for Indigenous Nations Studies

785-864-2660 (t)

INS Journal

785-864-0370 (f)

The University of Kansas,

Lippincott Hall

1410 Jayhawk Blvd., Rm. 105

Lawrence, KS 66045-2114

e-mail: [insp@ukans.edu](mailto:insp@ukans.edu)

Web Page:

<http://www.ukans.edu/~insp>

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the journal was made possible with the assistance of Antonie Dvorakova, Stephanie AL Molholt, Melissa Isaacs Fisher, Dianne Reyner, David Querner, Denise Lajetta, Regina Toshavik, and Paula Courtney, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Word Processing Center, in addition to the Editor and Associate Editor. Thank you.

## Notes On Contributors

**Laura Hobson Herlihy** earned a Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of Kansas. She has completed two more years of field research in the Honduran Moskitia (funded by Fulbright and Tinker) and learned the Miskitu language fluently. She has worked as a Lecturer in KU's Center of Latin American Studies since 2001 and just received a 2004 Fulbright to Nicaragua.

**Lomayumtewa C. Ishii** is Hopi. He is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at The University of Iowa, Iowa City. He received his Ph.D. in History from Northern Arizona University and has taught at Diné College, Temple University Japan, Eberhard Karls Universität (Germany), and the Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis, Graduate School of Studies in the Humanities (Slovenia). His research interests are indigenous-centered historiography, travel writing, and Hopi history.

**Janna Knittel** holds a doctoral degree in English from the University of Oregon in Eugene. She currently teaches in both the Department of English and the Women's Studies Program at KU. Her current research interests are in nineteenth-century Indigenous authors, including Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), and Jane Johnson Schoolcraft (Bame-wa-wa-ge-zhik-a-quay).

**Patrick Russell LeBeau** holds a doctorate from the University of Michigan. Currently, at Michigan State University, he is Director of the American Indian Studies Program and Associate Professor of American Thought and language, where he teaches writing composition and Native American Studies. He has published several articles on Native American history and culture, including *Stands Alone, Faces and Other Poems*. He is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation of South Dakota.

**Sara Mohammadi** earned her master's degree in American Studies and is currently enrolled at the University Creteil Paris XII in France. Her current research interests are in nineteenth-century Native American prophets, missionaries, and Christianity.

**Franci Washburn** is of mixed blood Lakota/Anishnaabe/Irish/Scots heritage. She is a doctoral candidate in American Studies at the University of New Mexico. She is a Visiting Professor of Native American Literature in the English Department at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Currently she is finishing a Native American Novel entitled "Elsie's Business" and a critical work entitled "James R. Walker's Lakota Creation Story: A Critical Analysis."

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# Miskitu Identity in the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, Honduras

Laura Hobson Herlihy

“We are *sambos*, *mestizos*, and *mulattos*, we are mixed. We are Miskitu because we speak Miskitu” (Enemecia Ferrera, Kuri).

## *Abstract*

This article examines how Miskito individuals construct their ethnic identity in the inter-ethnic relations of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, an internationally designated protected area in Honduras. The field research focuses on the ethnic terms of reference and stereotypes that Miskito speakers use to distinguish between themselves and Others. The presented data illustrate the situations in which Miskito individuals manipulate cultural markers to define themselves as “Sambos” (stressing their Black ancestry) or “Indians” (stressing their Amerindian ancestry). Conclusions suggest that the Miskito people’s ability to construct situational ethnic identities during social interactions, while remaining essentially Miskito, may be a key factor in the success of their population group within and beyond the reserve.

The bi-national Miskito peoples reside along the Miskito Coast (Moskitia). Their historic homeland extends from Black River, Honduras, to just south of Bluefields, Nicaragua. While other Latin American Native Peoples have