

# The First and the Forced

Essays on the Native American and African American Experience

Edited by James N. Leiker, Kim Warren, and Barbara Watkins



### The First and the Forced Essays on the Native American and African American Experience

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## The First and the Forced Essays on the Native American and African American Experience

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The First and the Forced: Essays on the Native American and African American Experience marks the exciting conclusion of a project conceived more than four years ago. In 2003, Maryemma Graham, professor of English; Carl Strikwerda, professor of history and then associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Victor Bailey, professor of history and director of the Hall Center for the Humanities; and Donald Fixico, professor of history and then director of the Center for Indigenous Nations Studies, all of the University of Kansas, approached Dr. Gertrude Fraser of the Ford Foundation to sponsor a multiyear, interdisciplinary study of the intersections between black Americans and American Indians. The project has included faculty not only from KU but also from the neighbor institutions of Haskell Indian Nations University and Johnson County Community College, as well as genealogists, activists, tribal leaders, and academics from around the United States. "The Shifting Borders of Race and Identity: A Research and Teaching Project on the Native American and African American Experience" has hosted two oral history workshops, a keynote conference, and a monthly research seminar. Through its website, it has provided an array of bibliographic and curriculum materials for the use of teachers, scholars, reformers, and other interested individuals. The essays in this collection emanate from this four-year body of work.

Many people have given input into "Shifting Borders," and indirectly to this anthology. Without the generosity of our patrons at the Ford Foundation, this project would not have existed. Our many colleagues at Haskell Indian Nations University—most notably Dan Wildcat, Venida Chenault, Julia Goodfox, and Mike Tosee—introduced to all who worked on the grant a wide variety of cultural and intellectual perspectives that inform the topic of Afro indigenous studies. Bobbi Rahder and her students in oral history applied our research to the development of a wonderful exhibit that will tour the state of Kansas in 2007 and 2008. My friend Carmaletta Williams, with whom I have taught African American studies for years, provided helpful advice and conducted numerous interviews that—along with Mike Tosee's work—will be published in a separate e-book volume, *Of Two Spirits: American Indian and African American Oral Histories*. Victor Bailey.

director of the Hall Center for the Humanities, and his excellent staff shouldered much of the administrative burden, providing leadership while allowing the scholars much-needed autonomy. Kathy Porsch has been especially helpful in her patient work as liaison between participating contributors and the Ford Foundation. No one has done more to advance the goals of this project than its director, Zanice Bond de Perez, doctoral candidate in American studies at KU, whose dedication, diplomacy, and painstaking eye for detail proved crucial for success. Zanice truly has been the heart and soul of the project.

All of the contributors to this anthology deserve commendation for the unique set of insights and questions that they raise. My coeditors, Kim Warren, KU assistant professor of history, and Barbara Watkins, KLW-Webwork coordinator, have been models of patience and perseverance, bringing to this work a shared commitment to sound scholarship. Lynne Lipsey, KLW-Webwork instructional designer, created the e-book. I have been delighted to work with all three.

For all the kudos and applause due the many people responsible for this collection and the other products of the "Shifting Borders" grant, the greatest thanks are due the millions of people of Afro indigenous descent, both those living now and those in the past. Only through their recorded lives, their intimate experiences, their willingness to share memories pleasant and painful, and ultimately, their defiance of rigid attempts to fragment the human race into separate categories, do we have access to this history. Understanding the legacy they have bequeathed will prove invaluable as their descendants enter a future where "race" will be more problematic than ever.

My colleagues and I have merely recorded the stories that others have lived. My greatest hope is that we are worthy of being their storytellers.

James N. Leiker, Professor of History Johnson County Community College James N. Leiker, lead research adviser for the Shifting Borders Project and associate professor of history at Johnson County Community College, earned his PhD from the University of Kansas in 1999. He has taught courses in African American studies, the American West, and race in America. Leiker's writings have focused on the national and social constructions of race as they apply to regional and western history. His articles have appeared in Western Historical Quarterly, Journal of the West, Great Plains Studies, and Kansas History. He is a speaker for the Kansas Humanities Council, a consultant on grants for helping public school instructors teach the history and legacy of the Brown decision,



and a regular guest on television and radio programs. His book <u>Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande</u> was a 2002 cowinner of the T.R. Fehrenbach award for best book on the history of Texas. Leiker's essay "The Difficulties of Understanding Abe: Lincoln's Reconciliation of Natural Rights and Racial Inequality" was published in 2007 by Northern Illinois University Press in an anthology *Lincoln Emancipated*, edited by Brian Dirck.



Kim Warren, research and curriculum development faculty for the Shifting Borders Project and assistant professor of history at the University of Kansas, earned her PhD from Stanford University in 2004. She has taught courses in women's and United States history with emphases on Native American and African American studies. Her articles have appeared in Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains and History Compass, and she has published essays in the Journal of Women's History and Reviews in American History. With the

support of a fellowship from the National Academy for Education/Spencer Foundation, Warren is currently completing a book manuscript comparing African American and Native American citizenship training in schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Barbara Watkins has recently retired as coordinator of curriculum and projects at the University of Kansas Continuing Education. She received her PhD from KU in 1981 and wrote her dissertation as a graduate research fellow with the US Department of Justice. She has written numerous articles on Kansas history and coedited several books including On the Hill: A Photographic History of the University of Kansas, now in its third edition; Old Fraser; Dyche Hall; Embattled Lawrence: Conflict and Community; and a centennial history The Foundations of American Distance Education. She is now the coordinator of KLW-Webwork, a web-design company. Watkins was inducted



into the KU Women's Hall of Fame in 2002 and also received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center.

### Introduction—Kim Warren

Not until the 2000 United States census was anyone allowed to check more than one of six boxes under the category of race. In that census, a small but significant percentage of the nation's population checked two boxes (seven million people) or three boxes (400,000 people). The census finally acknowledged what many had already known: that race is neither finite nor singularly defined for many Americans. Instead, race is a fluid category that can be defined or redefined by skin color, family heritage, DNA testing, political rights, court decisions, or any number of other factors. With a population in the United States rising to a new high of 300 million people in October 2006, and a global population of more than 6.5 billion, placing people in racial categories will become increasingly challenging unless we make allowances for mixing and intersections.

The role of intersections between descendents of Africans and of indigenous populations in the Americas has been the subject of a four-year scholarly collaboration between Haskell Indian Nations University and the University of Kansas. "The Shifting Borders of Race and Identity," a project supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation, has concentrated efforts to explore the ways in which African American and Native American lives have mixed within families, histories, languages, and folklores, as well as in the minds of court and government officials, members of both communities, and even casual observers. Outcomes of the grant have included conferences that have drawn participants from across the nation; oral history projects documenting the experiences of mixed-race people; an audio/visual exhibit "Power, Place, and People: African American and Indigenous Stories;" and this collection of articles, The First and the Forced: Essays on the Native American and African American Experience.

Cherríe Moraga has referred to African Americans as those who were forced to live on the North American continent after being taken from the continent of Africa and Native Americans as those who first occupied the North

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Seattle Times, January 17, 2005.

American continent before the arrival of Europeans. The First and the Forced embraces the umbrella terms to describe people related to those two populations, although throughout this anthology, authors use a variety of terms to describe their subjects, including "black," "Indian," "indigenous," "African American," "Native American," "First American," and others. The list of terms gets larger when considering descendents of both populations. For example, "Afro Indian," "Afro Native," and "Cherokee freedmen" are among a large group of terms employed to acknowledge the mixed heritage of people in the former Indian Territory (Oklahoma), the United States frontier, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Such terms also reveal the perpetual challenges in identifying and naming mixed-race peoples. The First and the Forced brings together a range of interpretations of native and black experiences in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean in order to pose arguments and raise questions about commonalities, tensions, and cultural or familial mixing of African Americans and Native Americans.

With a focus on subjects who have acknowledged some sort of experimental or experiential or biological mixing, these essays force us to reexamine racial borders and categorical terms such as "biracial," "bicultural," "multiethnic," "mixed," mixed-descent," "hybrid," or "dual citizenship." W. E. B. Du Bois might have employed his notion of "being of twoness" when referring to people of both African and indigenous descent, but the authors in *The First and the Forced* suggest that understanding intersections between blacks and Indians goes far beyond the struggle to form multivalent or amalgamated identities. The authors suggest that the struggle for categorization is one that has local contexts, as well as multiple definitions in literature, science, the law, descriptive imagery and music, and historical and personal experience.

"The Shifting Borders of Race and Identity" project has engaged hundreds of community activists, genealogists, literary critics, legal scholars, artists, teachers, artists, students, historians, insiders, and outsiders. We honor that

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cherríe Moraga, "From Inside the First World Foreword 2001" in Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Berkeley, CA: Third Woman Press, 2002 [1981]), xvi.

diversity of interpretation by offering essays that represent the wide range of approaches to understanding the different ways in which race, ethnicity, culture, and identity have been conceived and reconceived. We have designed this anthology to speak to as wide a variety of readers as its contributors represent. The volume is multidisciplinary in approach and creates a space for activists, writers, scholars, and others concerned about Afro Native relations to come together under one heading rather than in separate (and occasionally disparate) fields or venues.

The First and the Forced joins a rich collection of scholarship that examines the intermixing of African Americans and Native Americans through slavery, family relations, and removal and post-removal experiences. Most recently, the work of James Brooks, Sharon Holland, Tiya Miles, Barbara Krauthamer, Celia Naylor, and Claudio Saunt has explored histories of peoples that William Katz once termed "black Indians." The volumes edited by Brooks, Confounding the Color Line: The Indian-Black Experience in North America, and Miles and Holland, Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds: The African Diaspora in Indian Country, showcase scholars' efforts to carve out a new field of interracial studies. In Confounding the Color Line, James Brooks reminds us that shifting the focus on inquiry is not impossible to do, and that in the past few decades there has been a noticeable transformation in scholarship about Native

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For a more comprehensive overview of scholarship in this area, see James N. Leiker's essay in the first section of this anthology. Also see James F. Brooks, Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); James F. Brooks, ed., Confounding the Color Line: The Indian-Black Experience in North America (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002); Tiya Miles, Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Tiya Miles and Sharon P. Holland, eds., Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds: The African Diaspora in Indian Country (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); Barbara Krauthamer, "Blacks on the Borders: African-Americans' Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Texas and the Indian Territory, 1836-1907" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2000); Celia Naylor-Ojurongbe, "'More at Home with the Indians': African-American Slaves and Freedpeople in the Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory, 1838-1907" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2001); Claudio Saunt, Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); William Loren Katz, Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage (New York: Atheneum, 1986); Barbara Krauthamer, Celia Naylor, Tiya Miles, Claudio Saunt and Circe Sturm, "Rethinking Race and Culture in the Early South," Ethnohistory 56 (Spring 2006): 399-405; Barbara Krauthamer, "The Incorporation of Fugitive Slave Women into Creek Society, 1769-1832" in New Directions in the Study of Slavery, Stephanie Camp and Edward Baptist, eds. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005).

Americans. Whereas Indian history had once been contained in stories of "Indian-White Relations," scholars have established Native American history as its own field. So, too, have scholars of African Americans. Until the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, much of that scholarship treated each group separately and rarely examined the intersections between the two groups. 4 Tiya Miles points to the 2000 Dartmouth College national conference, "Eating Out of the Same Pot': Relating Black and Native (Hi)stories," as a landmark moment when those interested in Indian-black studies gathered together to exchange scholarship, ideas, and critiques. From that meeting and subsequent exchanges, Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds was born. 5 The First and the Forced adds to the historiography on intersections between Indians and blacks in four parts: overviews of the field of study; regional and local contexts within the United States and Peru; the contesting and development of new identities in literature, science, and the law; descriptive imagery; and personal reflections on the growth of interest in mixed-race people through scholarly, governmental, and familial venues.

James Leiker starts the volume with a comprehensive overview of scholarship on black-Indian intersections in the United States. In "Tangled Histories: Contemporary Research on African American/Native American Intersections," Leiker moves through an extensive chronology by explaining the ways in which historians have examined colonial and slavery experiences, the early development of Indian Territory, westward expansion of European Americans, interracial education, and the Progressive Era. His essay then focuses on the twentieth-century scholarship—the social-science movement and the rise of the discipline of anthropology and its interpretations of race—and ends with post-World War II racial nationalism. Ruben Kodjo Afagla adds an overview perspective by reviewing common experiences of blacks and Indian in the United

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> James F. Brooks, "Introduction" in *Confounding the Color Line: The Indian-Black Experience in North America*, James F. Brooks, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 5-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Tiya Miles, "Preface: Eating Out of the Same Pot?" in Tiya Miles and Sharon P. Holland, eds., *Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds: The African Diaspora in Indian Country* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), xv-xvi.

States. In "A Divided Horizon in Their Common Sky?: Some Commonalities of African American and Native American Experiences in the United States," Afagla argues that relationships between African Americans and Native Americans have stemmed from their common histories as minority groups, who have often been displaced or denied equality, and who have demonstrated resistance to the cultural domination of Europeans.

Quintard Taylor's and Tanya Golash-Boza's essays demonstrate how region matters when understanding the histories of blacks in the diaspora and indigenous peoples. Taylor focuses on the American West in "Native Americans and African Americans: Four Intersections across Time and Space in the West." He forces us to examine the various stages when Indians and African Americans not only encountered each other but also found themselves in conflict or contested power positions. Golash-Boza takes readers to Ingenio in Peru, where a collective amnesia has attempted to erase the memory of the African slave trade. "Left in the Dark: Collective Memory and Amnesia among Africandescended Peruvians" demonstrates that the difference between collective memory and history influences the ways in which people perceive both their past and present existence.

LaRose Davis, Arica Coleman, and Joyce McCray Pearson each explain contested identities and the construction of new identities through their respective research areas. All three show that even with the aid of new interpretive frameworks, technology for understanding biological lineage, and court decisions that take into account long histories of Indian-white-black-government relations, strict categories that define race or inheritance can be elusive. In "Real Africans, Real Natives, Whoever They Might Be: Refiguring the Mixed-race Concept," Davis examines mixed-race people in literature and argues that in the absence of an established subfield of mixed-race literature, scholars have often overlooked or misunderstood bicultural characters in novels. With the framework of mixed-race identity, Davis reexamines literature that grapples to place mixed heritage at the center of their stories. In "Ancestry DNA and the Manipulation of Afro-Indian Identity," Coleman addresses the recent rise in

popularity of DNA testing to determine tribal origin (Native American) and/or national/ethnic origin (African American). She argues that although new technology has brought excitement to indigenous and/or Africans in the diaspora seeking answers to lost members of their lineage, tests do not provide complete answers, leaving many disappointed and confused. McCray Pearson's article, "Red and Black—A Divided Seminole Nation: *Davis v. U.S.*," explains that legal decisions can often provide little more certainty than DNA testing about the changing nature of identity and citizenship of black Seminoles.

The last three essays in this volume use a different format than the preceding ones but leave us with rich questions about the ways in which descendents of Africans and indigenous peoples have been portrayed in descriptive imagery, histories, and in family and national folklore. José Bravo de Rueda's essay, "(Dis)Connections: African and Indigenous Peoples in Peru," discusses various ways that Peruvians have thought of their country as multicultural or multiethnic. Bravo de Rueda argues that in order to understand Afro Peruvian experiences, one has to look beyond traditional Spanish, indigenous, or mestizo heritages. To find evidence of Afro Peruvian populations, Bravo de Rueda turns to descriptive imagery of blacks and natives in literature, art, and music since the sixteenth century to provide a series of flashpoint examples of African-descended people in Latin America.

The last two essays in the volume explore experiences of studying Afronative people from personal experiences. "The Legacy of St. David's Islanders, Bermuda: Their Voices Are Not Silent," Eugene "Jean" Foggo Simon recounts her own experiences of living on St. David's Island in Bermuda and explains the connections between her family and the Pequot Indian tribe, native to New England. Foggo Simon explains that it was not until 2005, when the government of Bermuda celebrated its 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary, that it recognized the presence of native inhabitants for the first time. Such native cultures have struggled to maintain a distinctive identity amid an otherwise multicultural, mixed-raced population in Bermuda, but they have been aided by techniques in tracing family genealogy. William Loren Katz reflects on the twenty years of interest in his

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ground-breaking monograph, *Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage*. In his essay, Katz explains how his interest in this topic started with his father's own record collection as well as advice from Langston Hughes. Katz shares some of the plans that shaped *Black Indians*, and also discusses the ways in which the book has maintained a position as an influential piece of scholarship.

While each essay in *The First and the Forced* pushes us into new territories of understanding, we are still left with questions about cultural identity, heritage, and dual belonging, not to mention the "one-drop rule," "blood quantum," and the concept of a "third race." Where are the borders between people on removal trails, in maroon settlements, on a family tree, or in a DNA laboratory? What happens to the definitions of race when a judge, a test, an oral history, or a newly found piece of paper reveals that people are linked together in biological ways that were previously thought unimaginable? With new conceptions of identity, can a community of people cease considering themselves a family even if previous generations had already established familial links? Can a common consciousness exist between two groups of people from different, but sometimes merging, racial backgrounds? If the essays in this anthology continue to push scholars to grapple with these questions, the field will continue to expand, and the intersections between African Americans and indigenous peoples will persist as an important framework for understanding the changing nature of race.

James N. Leiker, lead research adviser for the Shifting Borders Project and associate professor of history at Johnson County Community College, earned his PhD from the University of Kansas in 1999. He has taught courses in African American studies, the American West, and Race in America. Leiker's writings have focused on the national and social constructions of race as they apply to regional and western history. His articles have appeared in Western Historical Quarterly, Journal of the West, Great Plains Studies, and Kansas History. He is a speaker for the Kansas Humanities Council, a consultant on grants for helping public school instructors teach the history and legacy of the Brown decision, and a regular guest on television and radio programs. His book Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande was a 2002 cowinner of the T.R. Fehrenbach



award for best book on the history of Texas. Leiker's essay "The Difficulties of Understanding Abe: Lincoln's Reconciliation of Natural Rights and Racial Inequality" was published in 2007 by Northern Illinois University Press in an anthology *Lincoln Emancipated*, edited by Brian Dirck.

# Tangled Histories: Contemporary Research on African American/Native American Intersections by James N. Leiker

James Leiker offers a comprehensive historiographic overview of scholarship on black-Indian intersections in the United States. Leiker's essay includes an extensive chronology of scholarship dating back to Carter Woodson's pioneering work in the 1910s through the most recent work in the twenty-first century that analyzes African American and Native American histories together rather than as separate disciplines. Leiker explains the ways in which historians have examined colonial and slavery experiences; the early development of Indian Territory, westward expansion of European Americans, interracial education, and the Progressive Era. His essay then focuses on the twentieth-century scholarship—the social science movement and the rise of the discipline of anthropology and its interpretations of race—and ends with post-World War II racial nationalism.

Building on the success of the "Eating Out of the Same Pot" conference held at Dartmouth in 2002, the "Shifting Borders" project has represented an ambitious undertaking: an exploration of the myriad ways in which First Nations and African American histories have intertwined, whether through military conflict, political and economic cooperation, cultural and literary blendings, or—via intermarriage—the formations of new families and identities that defy traditional racial borders. More than a blend between two institutions, the University of Kansas and Haskell Indian Nations University, the project also combined the interdisciplinary efforts of historians, literature scholars,

genealogists, community activists, and others. In many ways, the project's ambition was both its most worthwhile feature and its biggest conceptual challenge, for by defining a wide, inclusive research agenda that goes beyond conventional understanding of how these groups have defined themselves, it made the setting of parameters difficult for determining which topics were appropriate for the project, and which were not.

This essay attempts to address that concern by presenting an overview of the work that leading scholars have contributed to understandings about the historical nexus between black studies and indigenous studies. As this essay will show, the first such reconciliation occurred at the genesis of black history itself, with scholarship by Carter Woodson in the 1910s, and continued thereafter for several decades. The 1960s marked a watershed for both disciplines, as the historical study of the black and Indian experiences became entwined with the goal of building racial solidarity within those groups. Understandable as that goal was, an unfortunate side-effect was a de-emphasis on the porous nature of black and Indian histories, obscuring their long-standing connections not only with each other but with Latinos, Asians, and whites. This survey of the available literature will assess the impressive array of work already completed on the "tangled histories" of black and red, and suggest what work needs to be completed to hasten their further rediscovery.

This essay will limit itself to a brief examination of black-Indian intersections in seven categories: the colonial and slavery experiences, the early development of Indian Territory (present Oklahoma), United States westward expansion, black-Indian interracial education, the Progressive Era, the social science movement and the anthropological attack on "race," and post-World War II racial nationalism. In some of these areas, it is evident that African and Native Americans had little direct contact, yet they made their choices and helped shape their own histories within the same social milieu, pointing to the need for a comparative approach. Missing from this survey is an overview of how these groups interacted in Latin American history. Although a rich and valuable topic deserving of attention, the dynamics of race relations in Central and South

America and the Caribbean islands differ so substantially from that of North America that, for brevity's sake, this essay limits itself to the major areas of US history. Granted, much of North America descends culturally from the former Spanish empire, and racial identities as they developed in the colonial era might be better understood within a larger, hemispheric context. But by definition, the concepts "Native American" and "African American" originated, and continue to be more salient, in the United States. So it seems appropriate that a project aiming to uncover their intersections begin with this country's past.

### **Colonial and Slavery Experiences**

In his study of the linguistic origins of racial classifications, Jack Forbes suggested that the Atlantic currents connecting Africa to South America may have led to pre-Columbian contacts between black and red peoples. Most scholars concur, however, that initial black-Indian encounters happened through the colonial expansion of European powers into the Western Hemisphere and the dependence of empire-building on expropriated labor. The concept of "race" evolved to justify the elaborate labor hierarchy that followed, although some historians point to certain tendencies in Medieval and Renaissance culture that predisposed Europeans to see blacks and Indians as alien "others," unworthy of Christian civilization. As both Tiya Miles and Patrick Minges have written, the contemporary tendency to equate "slavery" with "blackness" has become almost second nature. Perhaps no attempt to uncover black-Indian intersections has the potential for controversy as the effort to write American Indians into this history, since Africanists and African Americanists often insist on claiming the tragedy of slavery as a unique, defining feature of the black experience. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 2nd ed., 6-25; Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (New York: WW Norton, 1968); Alden T. Vaughan, *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999 [1982]).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Tiya Miles, "Uncle Tom Was an Indian: Tracing the Red in Black Slavery," in James Brooks, ed., *Confounding the Color Line: The Indian-Black Experience in North America* (Lincoln: University of

It is important that scholars become sensitive to the distinctions between Atlantic-based chattel slavery, which regarded slaves as human commodities. and the system of captive-taking practiced by some indigenous societies. In Captives and Cousins, James Brooks describes how people acquired in Indian raids were sometimes traded but were also adopted into tribes and intermarried and produced children who enjoyed full familial acceptance. "Captivity," as practiced especially by peoples of the Southwest, at first bore slight resemblance to the English system and its emphasis on slave owners' property rights. However, in the case of the Southeast, the documentary record shows that African slavery was imposed on a preexisting form of indigenous slave owning, and gradually altered it. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Indian slave trade represented a major source of commerce with English colonists, who often formed alliances with coastal native groups and encouraged them to make war on weaker tribes. Indians often helped suppress black slave insurrections or captured runaways, while South Carolina's Creeks, Cherokees, and southern Shawnees sometimes raided and enslaved neighboring groups, whom they sold as captives to English traders. During the American Revolution, the Creek Nation amassed a large number of black slaves from raids on southern plantations, or received them as rewards for their services to the British. By the 1790s, when the cotton gin began to extend slavery's life by making it more profitable, the Creeks and Cherokees had established a system of chattel bondage.<sup>3</sup>

Some colonial historians have explained black-Indian conflict as a "divideand-rule" strategy on the part of elites, who realized that their fortunes depended on the stolen labor of blacks, Indians, and poor whites. Southern aristocrats—

Nebraska Press, 2002), 137-60; and Patrick Minges, introduction, *Black-Indian Slave Narratives* (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 2004), xvii-xxiii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Brooks, Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Gary B. Nash, Red, White, and Black: The People of Early America (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 157-76; Minges, introduction, Black Indian Slave Narratives, xvii-xxiii; and Gregory Evans Dowd, A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 152-154.

fearing the possibility of an armed coalition of landless laborers as had happened with Bacon's Rebellion in 1676—abandoned indentured servitude and Indian enslavement, both of which were becoming impractical anyway, and passed a series of "black codes" designed to make chattel slavery permanent, hereditary—and exclusively black. Anti-miscegenation laws were devised to protect "white purity" from any African taint; simultaneously, Indians' dark features were dismissed as insignificant, perhaps even the result of cosmetics or prolonged exposure to tropical environments. Thomas Jefferson, who recoiled from officially advocating mixture between the white and black races, did encourage intermarriage with Indians as a way to integrate them into white society. While American Indians could and did become targets of European racism, whites seemed more willing to bestow on them a category of "junior whiteness" that blacks could never claim. According to this neo-Marxist theory, categories of "whiteness" and "blackness" originated in colonial times to keep the proletariat divided against itself, with American Indians able to negotiate an intermediate position between the two.4

More recently, scholars have turned their attention to the ways that the presence of Europeans and Africans on their shores altered the worldview of American Indians. William McLoughlin and Nancy Shoemaker are among those who contend that by the late eighteenth century, eastern Indians had begun thinking of themselves as "red" in order to distinguish themselves. Gregory Dowd and Katja May have emphasized the role of Christian missionaries in modifying Indians' views on race and gender. Pre-contact horticultural societies such as the Cherokees had equated women with fertility and saw farming as females' work, while men formed hunting parties. With the arrival of whites and the accompanying pressure to assimilate, some Indians adopted the Euro-American belief that field work was the domain of black slaves, regardless of gender. In "civilizing" Indian women to come in from the fields, white missionaries willingly

<sup>4</sup> William Willis, "Divide and Rule: Red, White, and Black in the Southeast," *Journal of Negro History* 48, 13 (July 1963), 157-76; Kenneth Wiggins Porter, "Relations between Negroes and Indians within the Present Limits of the United States," *Journal of Negro History* (1932), 287-367. Also Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002).

de-feminized black women. Such thinking may have encouraged the rise of a slave-owning elite among southeastern Indians. Polygenetic creation stories indicate that Native Americans were not unsympathetic to blacks, or at least understood whites' capacity for deceit and murder. Certain Indian myths describe how God granted to Indians the bow and arrow (knowledge of hunting); to blacks, the hoe, bucket, and other tools (predestining them to work for others); and to whites, the knowledge of books (how to develop technology and cheat others). Anthropologist James Mooney recorded a Cherokee story of how a black man created the first locomotive as a toy and had great fun with it, until a white man came, killed him, and took it for himself.<sup>5</sup>

If scholars place slavery and warfare at the start of all discussions of race in the colonial and antebellum periods, then their natural conclusion will be that black-Indian relations involved incessant hostility. But most Indians, like most whites, did not own slaves. Cultural-studies theorists, using literature, oral traditions, and social-science methodologies, have looked beyond the written record to reveal histories of friendship and cultural borrowing across racial lines. For instance, Mechal Sobel's *The World They Made Together* interpreted the Second Great Awakening as a biracial movement of southern blacks and poor whites that attacked the formulaic rationality of the Enlightenment. Similar examples can be found in black and Indian experiences. Groups such as the Lumbees and Seminoles contained large "mixed" populations. Forbes' linguistic approach to racial terminology reveals numerous similarities in African and Native languages, suggesting if not the presence of hybrid populations then at least remarkable fluidity of words and concepts. Jonathan Brennan's collection of essays posits a shared black-Indian literary tradition that extends to the sixteenth century, prior even to the arrival of the first Africans at Jamestown. By contrast, Joanna Brooks saw this tradition as emerging much later, in eighteenth-century evangelicalism, and takes issue with theses concerning the "hybridity" of race in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic* (reprint. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Shoemaker, "How Indians Got to be Red," *American Historical Review* 102, 3 (June 1997), 625-44; Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 152-154; and May, *African Americans and Native Americans in the Creek and Cherokee Nations*, 1830s to 1920s (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 19-24, 35-41. Mooney's anecdote is cited in May.

arguing for distinctive communities of color—in essence, a refutation of the trend toward "blurring" racial boundaries in early American history.<sup>6</sup>

Slavery became the great political and moral debate of the early nineteenth century, but a full study of the role that American Indians played, either in attacking the peculiar institution or defending it, has yet to be produced. Certainly the profits to be realized from expanding cotton production played significant roles in the removal of southeastern tribes in the 1820s and 1830s, and in the acquisition of Texas and the Mexican War in the 1830s and 1840s, which exacerbated new conflicts with southwestern tribes like the Apaches and Comanches. Minges has suggested that the abolitionist movement evolved from white anti-removal attitudes, which opposed the eviction of Indians to make way for expansion of black slavery—an interesting thesis but one deserving of further testing. Scattered references by the great black abolitionists of the time show no inclination to conflate the two issues. In 1848, Henry Highland Garnet claimed that "the Red men of North America are retreating from the approach of the white man," whereas blacks clung to white civilization like ivy. Frederick Douglass made much the same claim six years later before an audience at Western Reserve College, declaring that blacks had proven adept at adjusting to all climates, unlike the Indian who "dies, under the flashing glance of the Anglo Saxon." Ironically, these two early employments of "the vanishing Indian" theory extolled the virtues of African Americans by making unfavorable comparisons to another oppressed race.7

Vine Deloria Jr. has claimed that whites regarded blacks as "draft animals," fit only for work, whereas Indians were seen as "wild animals" who infested vast acreages of bountiful land. In dehumanizing both groups, racist attitudes justified the stealing of labor and freedom from one, and the stealing of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Sobel, *The World They Made Together* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Forbes; Brennan, ed., *When Brer Rabbit Meets Coyote: African-Native American Literature* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 1-21, 34-48; and Joanna Brooks, *American Lazarus: Religion and the Rise of African-American and Native American Literatures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3-8, 15-17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Minges, xvii-xxiii; and Garnet and Douglass, quoted in Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1982), 86-88.

land from the other. That seems a fair summation of early whites' views, yet little is known about the way the two groups viewed each other, even though the experiences of slavery and colonial expansion clearly affected both. At times, blacks and Indians seemed to recognize some mutuality and formed bonds of affection, just as they occasionally did with whites; at other times, they became enemies. Innovative new research into the WPA slave narratives, as well as in oral traditions and literature, will shed new light on their intersections. But for the moment, it is impossible to generalize about such relationships in the colonial and antebellum periods. New studies will need to examine how African Americans and Native Americans interacted within the specific contexts of local time and place.

### **Blacks in Indian Territory**

Forty years after the end of legal slavery, Booker T. Washington, the great black educator, journeyed to Oklahoma and was impressed by what he saw. Black farmers there were acquiring land and developing reputations for thrift and industry far above the common white immigrant. Oklahoma, as far as Washington knew, had no tradition of racial prejudice, and what anti-black sentiments existed emanated from some blacks' "foolish" meddling in politics. Washington was especially interested in how blacks and Indians got along, a topic that had intrigued him since his days as a student at Hampton Institute. When the question was asked of them, however, the blacks whom Washington met replied "Oh, the Indians. Well . . . they have gone back" and airily dismissed them with a wave of the hand. In the minds of many African Americans, apparently, the "vanishing race" theory held true; the black race had prospered while Indians had receded, their lands lying barren and uncultivated. Overall, Washington described the opportunities for African Americans in Oklahoma in positive terms, but he admitted, "The whole situation out here is complicated and puzzling, and if one attempts to understand it he is very deep into the intricacies

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988 [1969]), 7-8.

of a social and political history so full of surprises that it reminds him of Alice in Wonderland" (italics added for emphasis).

A century later, historians continue to echo Washington's analysis. Like most states on the Great Plains, Oklahoma has been split culturally between its eastern half, the historic Indian Territory, and the west, Oklahoma Territory, where refugee groups of nomadic tribes lived on arid reservations after the Civil War. Scholars have focused most of their attention on Indian Territory, where the fascinating nexus of southern whites, slave-owning Indian tribes, and black and Indian freedmen still dominates most discussions of African American/Native American intersections. Prior to 1907, Indian Territory consisted of numerous independent republics of nonwhite citizens. Even after it achieved statehood, its population did not become significantly white until the 1920s. As Washington observed, the relationships between Oklahoma's diverse peoples could be strained. Katja May even declared that the explosive combination of so many racial groups makes Oklahoma the "nuclear waste dump" of US history. 10

The origins of this cauldron lay in the different slave owning practices of the so-called "Five Civilized Tribes" during the pre-removal era. Daniel Littlefield's classic work *Africans and Seminoles: From Removal to Emancipation* established the reputation of the Seminoles as most liberal, allowing black freedmen full equality and tolerating intermarriage to such a degree that a large mixed-blood population emerged by 1800. The Seminoles' granting of sanctuary to runaway slaves became a leading cause of the US Army's campaign in Florida during the 1830s. Believing the status accorded to slaves and free blacks offensive and troublesome, other Indian slave owners pressured the Seminoles to bring their racial practices into the mainstream. By the early 1800s, the Creeks and Cherokees had passed slave codes reminiscent of white society: reserving enslavement for blacks alone, mandating a death sentence for slaves who killed an Indian, and forbidding inheritance for mixed-blood children. The Chickasaws

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> "Booker T. Washington's Trip through the Southwest," in *Colored American Magazine* (Jan. 1906), no pages available.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> May, 3-10.

even prohibited the emancipation of slaves without tribal consent. Such practices continued after removal to Indian Territory and may have been part of the reason why some families of "Black Seminoles" fled from there in the 1850s to establish separate communities in Texas and Mexico. 11 Scattered testimony within the WPA slave narratives points to a commonality with white slave owning which shows that slavery varied enormously between locales, families, and even individuals. Occasionally expressing resentment against full-bloods, some accounts suggest that a high level of acculturation by Indians toward white society increased the likelihood of their mimicking racist attitudes toward blacks. 12

During the Civil War, secession and slavery divided communities in Indian Territory just as they did white ones, creating rifts along race and class lines that erupted into violence. Although many tried to remain neutral, the interests of slave-owning Indians gradually pushed some tribes into better relations with the South. Despite the contribution of many American Indians to the successful Union effort, the federal government decided in 1866 to punish the Five Nations for the support that some gave to the Confederacy. A new set of treaties imposed the cession of the western half of their lands and abolished slave owning, emancipating some 7,000 African Americans and Afro Indians. Again, the five tribes varied in their responses to "Indian Reconstruction." Complying with the treaties' insistence on granting full citizenship to freedmen, the Seminoles, Creeks, and Cherokees adopted their black ex-slaves immediately as tribal members. The Choctaws resisted adopting theirs until 1885. The Chickasaws, apparently the most conservative, delayed longest in adopting their former slaves and even tried to drive them out of the nation through humiliating legislation. Granted citizenship in the Indian republics, freedmen became eligible to receive

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Daniel Littlefield Jr., *Africans and Seminoles: From Removal to Emancipation* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977), 197-203. On the black Seminoles, see Kevin Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila, and Texas* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Minges, 135-41.

equal rights in land after the General Allotment Act of 1887, which opened vast portions of Indian Territory to non-Indian settlement. <sup>13</sup>

From the perspective of African Americans, the Civil War and the constitutional amendments that followed established a legal framework for equality and citizenship that would reach fruition a century later in the civil rights movements. But for Native Americans, Reconstruction meant something else. The 1866 treaties, though well-intentioned toward former slaves, meant a violation of the sacred principle of tribal sovereignty, which lay at the heart of many Indians' historic grievances against the United States. Indians' belief in the supremacy of tribal government included the right to incorporate freedmen and other "non-equals" on terms decided through traditional customs and councils, not through systems imposed by outsiders. Viewed in this light, resentment toward blacks emanated less perhaps from racism than from the loss of tribal power to determine tribal membership. Oral testimony suggests that black freedmen, for their part, remained proud of their native heritage—if they could claim it—and even identified with natives as another oppressed group, but were jealous of how whites invited Indians to assimilate while insisting on segregation for blacks. 14

The new immigrant wave of whites and blacks in the 1880s and 1890s added another layer to Indian Territory's complex racial triangle. Many African Americans were disappointed with the lack of available land in Kansas during the Great Exodus, so they eyed Oklahoma for expansion. Newspapers such as the *Afro-American Advocate* declared Coffeyville, Kansas, on the border as "the Gate City to Indian Territory," while boosters such as Edward P. McCabe aggressively promoted the area as a safe haven for blacks fleeing southern

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Littlefield, 197-203; Donald A. Grinde and Quintard Taylor, "Slaves, Freedmen, and Native Americans in Indian Territory, 1865-1907," in Sucheng Chan, Douglas Henry Daniels, Mario T. Garcia, and Terry P. Wilson, eds., *Peoples of Color in the American West* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1994), 288-300; and Murray R. Wickett, *Contested Territory: Whites, Native Americans, and African Americans in Oklahoma, 1865-1907* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2000), 205-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> See Wickett, ibid.

persecution. Dozens of all-black towns, including Langston and Boley, were created to implement Washington's dream of "racial uplift" in a new western setting. Increased numbers brought political power, with black leaders like McCabe even lobbying for the establishment of Oklahoma as an all-black state. The Five Civilized Tribes looked on these acquisitive new migrants with frustration, declaring them to be "state Negroes" who came in the 1870s and later from surrounding states, as opposed to Afro Indian freedmen. In a strange new polarity that further confuses the color line, many black freedmen preferred categorization as Indians rather than blacks, taking pains to distinguish themselves from "state Negroes." 15

As white settlement increased during the land rushes of the 1890s, whites and Indians both grew alarmed at blacks' growing political assertiveness and soon formed common cause. Whites emphasized the mixed-blood potential for assimilation of Indians, and with statehood in 1907, Oklahoma stepped in line with the Jim Crow South in establishing segregation and anti-miscegenation laws. Marked by their former masters as undesirables, blacks in the Cherokee Nation tried to combat the new discrimination by appealing to federal authorities and having the tribal government dissolved. By contrast, traditionalists in the Creek Nation for a time allied with their black members, encouraging integration into tribal society and inviting them to join a short-lived movement to establish Oklahoma as an all-Indian state. One consequence of Jim Crow's entry into Oklahoma was that "Black Indians" and recently arrived African Americans ("state Negroes") came to be equated, and so intermarried. This may explain the increase of 8.6 per cent in the number of "Blacks" in the state between 1910 and 1920. Simultaneously, the number of "Indians" declined by 23.1 percent, which at least one scholar, Katja May, has explained as the choices of mixed-bloods who—having once identified with their native ancestors—now joined the white race in anticipation of Indians' eventual extinction. Thousands of African

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Grinde and Taylor, "Slaves, Freedmen, and Native Americans"; Robert Athearn, *In Search of Canaan: Black Migration to Kansas*, 1879-80 (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979); and Kenneth W. Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

Americans chose not to suffer the new three-tiered system and so launched another migration, this time to the Canadian prairies.<sup>16</sup>

Oklahoma history dominates discussions about race for good reason, not the least of which is the way it illustrates the connection between racial identity and power. "Black Indians" could assert their Indian heritage as a means of enjoying the benefits of tribal autonomy and land, which set them at odds with those Indians who could claim a measure of whiteness, and therefore, of white supremacy. These shifting identities formed during a scramble for alliance-making, as the territory's remarkable racial malleability offered opportunities to associate with the group eventually expected to dominate. Indeed, if the promises of Reconstruction for African Americans actually had been fulfilled, Oklahoma's racial hierarchy might well have seen American Indians subordinated by a white/black alliance, or even an independent black/Indian state with whites excluded.

Most historians study these turbulent collisions in Indian Territory through its topical components, though a few noble efforts at synthesis have been made. All of them point to establishment of a new racial environment that—while resembling the antebellum South in certain features—emerged from the particular dynamics of the late nineteenth century and from Oklahoma's intersection between South and West. This picture highlights the importance of geographic context for understanding how African Americans and Native Americans met each other and leads to a greater appreciation of regionalism, the understanding of how local economies and cultures shape society. It is to the peculiarities of one region, the West, that we now turn.

### **United States Westward Expansion**

Academics who speak about "the North" and "the South" as distinctive regions often hesitate to describe "the West" in similar essentialist terms.

<sup>16</sup> Wickett, 205-10; May, 223-31, 242-62; Scott L. Malcomson, *One Drop of Blood: The American Misadventure of Race* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2000); and *Deemed Unsuitable: Blacks from Oklahoma Move to the Canadian Prairies in Search of Equality in the Early 20th Century Only to Find Racism in Their New Home* (Toronto: Umbrella Press, 1997).

Western history has had a difficult time shedding its stereotypical image as a genre obsessed with minutiae of military campaigns, "cowboys and Indians," and an overall celebratory tone of conquest. Many find the field itself offensive, seeing even in the directional term "West" a form of Euro-centrism; after all, to Hispanics who regard the Mexican War of the 1840s as a mere land grab, the region was not "West" but "North," while to indigenous people, it was simply "home." Whatever pitfalls have prevented the field from gaining widespread academic acceptance, western history is nonetheless crucial for studying race, since it was through the process of expansion that white Americans, at least, gained a sense of national consciousness and identity, and consequently, reached an imperfect understanding of the Latinos and Native peoples who were displaced through that process. Frederick Jackson Turner articulated this vision when he published his famous "frontier thesis" in the 1890s, which argued that through expanding into "untamed" areas, Euro Americans adapted themselves and their institutions to new environments and so developed a democratic character different from their European counterparts. Although generations of revisionists have debunked nearly all parts of Turner's thesis, his articulation of the nineteenth-century "frontier" as the bastion of American character remains well entrenched in popular imagery and myths. 17

The Turnerian view clearly justified the actions of whites in laying claim to the continent, and hence has provided a major source of misunderstanding and conflict with indigenous people. But to what extent did African Americans share that view? Outside of Indian Territory, did they also see the West as a mere resource for the taking, with little thought to the civilizations that already lived there? Certainly Frederick Douglass took a different position than Turner. When in 1879, in the aftermath of Reconstruction, 26,000 "exodusters" left the South, to

<sup>17</sup> For revisions of the Turner thesis, see Patricia Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: WW Norton, 1987), and Richard White, "*It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*": A New History of the American West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991). On western myths in American culture, see Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization* (Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 1973) and *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992).

embark for Kansas, Douglass described the Exodus as unfortunate and ill-timed. For him, the migration generated in the public mind an illusion that black lives and voting rights could not be protected in the South, and that expansion to the West only produced restlessness and unsettlement: "The habit of roaming from place to place in pursuit of better conditions of existence is by no means a good one." While limiting his remarks specifically to the Exodus, Douglass' view that expansion only delayed the addressing of important social problems, and even exacerbated new ones, might have applied to white migration as well.<sup>18</sup>

Until recently, scholars have followed Douglass' lead by assuming that few African Americans found moving to the West appealing and so omitted them from the story. Over the past generation, the writings of Quintard Taylor, Albert Broussard, Frank Schubert, and others have given rise to a subgenre called "Black Western History" that documents the presence of African Americans in agriculture, community building, urban reform movements, music and literature, and all aspects of westward development. <sup>19</sup> Aside from military histories, only a handful of these studies directly address blacks' intersections with the region's original inhabitants. Outside of Indian Territory, few black westerners had much opportunity to know Indians, congregating in urban areas, or homesteading on lands from which Indians had been driven after the Civil War.

Individual African Americans sometimes recorded their observations of Indian life, but the sensationalized style of western writing renders such recordings problematic. A good example is James Beckwourth, the mountain man and fur trapper who was born to a black slave woman and a white father in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> "The Negro Exodus from the Gulf States: Address before Convention of the American Social Science Association, Saratoga Springs, Sept. 12, 1879," in Philip Foner, ed., *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, vol. 4 (New York: International Publishers, 1955), 335-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> For examples of "Black Western History," see Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: WW Norton, 1998); Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, eds., *African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003); Monroe Lee Billington and Roger D. Hardaway, eds., *African Americans on the Western Frontier* (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1998); Albert Broussard, *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993); Frank Schubert, *Black Valor: Buffalo Soldiers and the Medal of Honor, 1870-1898* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1997), and *On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier: Biographies of African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866-1917* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1995).

Virginia, and went to the northern Rockies with the Ashley fur company in the 1820s. Beckwourth twice lived with the Absaroka Indians in Montana and had two Indian wives, but his memoirs contain none of the sophistication scholars might expect from one who had crossed a racial frontier. His 500-page autobiography contains exaggerations of his fights with tribes like the Crows and Seminoles and of his numerous affairs with Indian and Spanish "princesses." Although the blatant disregard for reality in his memoirs led the Texas folklorist J. Frank Dobie to name him "the champion of all western liars," Beckwourth did have an exceptional familiarity with both Indian and non-Indian cultures. He served as a scout on the infamous Chivington expedition of 1864 in which the Colorado militia slaughtered a peaceful village of Cheyennes and Araphoes at Sand Creek, though there is no evidence that the elderly Beckwourth participated in the massacre itself. Surprisingly, never once in his autobiography—which occasionally expresses sympathy for Indians—does Beckwourth claim to be black, referring always to himself as a representative of white civilization or, at times, even as a white man. Prior to the 1860s, interracial marriages and families in the far West were fairly common, whether between Anglos and Hispanics in the Mexican borderlands, or, as in Beckwourth's case, between fur trappers and Indian women for whom kinship ties helped facilitate trade. An undeveloped theme in western history is the way in which racial prejudices and hierarchies were transported with the thousands of new immigrants who arrived after the Civil War. Like Indian Territory, the late nineteenth-century West saw a solidification of categories that made future "crossings" difficult. 20 During the previous period when racial boundaries were more fluid, Beckwourth's claim to whiteness holds some validity; "whiteness" was determined at that time and place not by ancestry or color but by religion, language, and lifestyle.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> T. D. Bonner, *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth, Mountaineer, Scout, Pioneer and Chief of the Crow Nation* (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, 1965 [1856]); and John Mack Faragher, "Americans, Mexicans, Metis: A Community Approach to the Comparative Study of North American Frontiers," in William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, eds., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past* (New York: WW Norton, 1992), 90-109.

Other examples confirm this fluidity of the West, particularly in the borderlands. In the 1870s, the Black Seminoles, who earlier had left Indian Territory and started colonies in Coahuila, were invited by the US Army to live in Texas. Employed as trackers and known officially as the Seminole Negro Indian Scouts, they participated in military campaigns against tribes like the Kickapoos and Apaches. Building a civilian community at Brackettville near Fort Clark, Texas, the Black Seminoles comprised a unique group among the border's diverse peoples, neither African nor Indian but a blend of both. Today, their descendants in west Texas speak English, Spanish, and Seminole, while the surviving church at Brackettville contains elements of Baptist, indigenous, and Catholic practices. African Americans too contributed to a growing multiracial population. Black soldiers at Fort Davis, Texas, having discovered that white females were "off-limits," often took wives and sired children with women from surrounding Hispanic and Indian communities.<sup>21</sup>

Military service provided the thread that connected these encounters. Black soldiers were far more likely than black civilians to meet American Indians, possibly as enemy combatants, but more likely as allies since the US Army employed Indians as scouts and auxiliaries against their traditional foes. The term "buffalo soldier," which described African Americans who served in segregated combat regiments, may have originated with the Kiowa Indians as a term of respect equating them with a revered animal. Much of the literature on buffalo soldiers has been celebratory, describing them as forgotten heroes who brought white civilization to the Plains. Such tributes, while well-intended toward blacks, have produced anger and resentment among Native Americans. When the US Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp honoring "Buffalo Soldiers" in 1994, the American Indian Movement protested the action. Several years later, the black columnist M. Dion Thompson stopped with a "Buffalo Soldiers" bus tour at a Lakota cemetery near Wounded Knee, South Dakota. A

<sup>21</sup> James N. Leiker, *Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2002), 69-92. See also Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border*.

Lakota woman drove up and castigated the group, proclaiming: "Buffalo soldiers and the white man killed my people. My ancestors are buried up there. And I don't appreciate you being here! Why don't you go look at Abraham Lincoln's grave?" 22

Accordingly, some works on the buffalo soldiers try to go beyond the celebratory model to focus more on the paradox of one oppressed group fighting another, delving into the question of what military service reveals about black-Indian intersections. In 1907, an article in Colored American Magazine described the problems of black soldiers in Minnesota preparing for possible Indian violence there. The author marveled at the rapid advance African Americans had made since they were freed from slavery, when they were absolutely penniless, in contrast to Indians who—the writer believed—had squandered their vast domains of timber and resources, and whose "lack of industry, perseverance and intelligence puts him at the mercy of his more civilized neighbors and he is fast disappearing from the face of the earth." Other writings glorified black soldiers by condemning Indians as "warlike" and "savage" and who were unfairly "given more consideration and recognition than the Negro who saved the country from his onslaughts." As argued in *Racial Borders*, nationalism increased during the imperialist era, making military service an effective vehicle for African Americans to show their patriotism and unity with whites, unfortunately at the expense of those foreign "others" they were employed to fight. 23 How much of this entered the mind of the average black trooper is difficult to say. But the fact that buffalo soldiers arrived in the West as conquerors bent on subordinating Indians to US authority probably did not dispose them to see indigenous people with affection.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> The quote from Thompson's trip appears in his article "Visiting the World of the Buffalo Soldiers," in the *Baltimore Sun*, April 21, 1996, Travel Section, 1-2. Indian reaction to the "Buffalo Soldiers" stamp is in Vernon Bellecourt, "The Glorification of Buffalo Soldiers Raises Racial Divisions betwen Blacks, Indians" in *Indian Country Today*, May 4, 1994, 5(A). For conventional histories of the black western military, see William A. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), and Charles L. Kenner, *Buffalo Soldiers and Officers of the Ninth Cavalry*, *1867-1898: Black and White Together* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> "Wanted—A Brave Black Batallion," *Colored American Magazine* (Feb. 1907), no pages available. See also Leiker, *Racial Borders*, (quote on p. 106).

As with Beckwourth, other black western writers—mostly men—described American Indians with language no less prejudicial than what whites used to describe them. Nat Love, a well-known cowboy who worked the cattle trails between Texas and Kansas, devoted the opening chapters of his autobiography to a condemnation of the evils of slavery. Apparently seeing no similarities, he then scattered his short memoir with lurid accounts of gunfights in which "we had the satisfaction of knowing we had made several good Indians out of bad ones" and "I had the satisfaction of seeing a painted brave tumble from his horse and go rolling in the dust every time my rifle spoke." Oscar Micheaux, who later gained fame as one of the first African American filmmakers, homesteaded land in South Dakota in the early 1900s near the Rosebud reservation. In his book The Conquest, which was closely based on his own experiences, Micheaux described his Indian neighbors much the way he did his fellow blacks who refused to follow him west, as lazy, frivolous trouble-makers prone to alcoholism: "The Indians were always selling and are yet, what is furnished them by the government, for all they can get. When given the money [he] spends it as he possibly can, buying fine horses, buggies, whiskey, and what-not."24

Michael K. Johnson, in his literary analysis of black western writings, asserts that these works attempt to co-opt the civilizationist and masculinist discourses common at the time to white writings. On the heels of the Turner thesis and Teddy Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West*, popular frontier narratives depicted white males as rugged, manly individuals who proved their worth by defeating savage Indians, part of a racial contest that established their right to dominate. Johnson contends that writers like Love, Beckwourth, and Micheaux used this same narrative as a means of racial uplift, proving that by killing Indians and living lives of masculine vigor, black men are equal to whites—a sentiment echoed by advocates of black military service. The legends of the American West can also be black America's legends; the frontier is a place where designations between black and white become meaningless. But as

<sup>24</sup> The Life and Adventures of Nat Love (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995 [1907]); and Oscar Micheaux, *The Conquest: The Story of a Negro Pioneer* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994 [1913]).

Johnson points out, such narratives are not antiracist, for they fail to recognize that the supposed racial utopia for African Americans that they purport is itself built on racial inequalities for American Indians.<sup>25</sup>

Advances in western history show that, despite Douglass' admonition, African Americans played decisive roles in extending the institutions and economies of the United States across the breadth of North America. While most blacks rejected the racist doctrines of Manifest Destiny that justified expansion, they did approach the West with opportunistic eyes: searching for land, assisting with Indian removal, making alliances with whites, even adapting whites' frontier myths to place themselves in the conquest narrative—anything to alleviate their own plight. Very little is known about how all this affected African/Native relations at the micro levels of individual friendship, family, and community. Scholars also know virtually nothing about Indian reactions to black westerners; how many Native Americans perceived blacks as members of a separate category from whites? Conversely, how many broadly used the term "white man" to describe any invader seeking to occupy their land, regardless of color? These are the questions that await future researchers.

#### **Black-Indian Education**

The history of interracial schooling affords an opportunity to examine African/Native American encounters in the more intimate settings of classroom and dormitory. These encounters, however, occurred within institutions and philosophies controlled by whites. In particular, the ideology of "racial uplift" assumed that African Americans left slavery as culturally and morally backward beings, and that only through education would they rise to white men's standards. As the success of the Freedmen's Bureau schools prompted a dramatic rise in black literacy, reformers wondered about the possibility of expanding this approach to other races. During the 1870s, when Reconstruction overlapped with the well-publicized Plains Wars, many white liberals saw the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Johnson, *Black Masculinity and the Frontier Myth in American Literature* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 42-55, 69-82.

"problems" of the black and red races as emanating from a similar cause—the need for education—and concluded that black freedmen would serve as natural role models for teaching Indians about white culture. Prior to the Niagara Movement of the 1900s, black elites touted the doctrine of racial uplift. Most notable among these was Booker T. Washington, whose autobiography *Up from Slavery* and whose life work at Tuskegee Institute championed uplift ideology. Some historians claim that African Americans had their own goals for education that had nothing to do with uplift but with ethnic autonomy. Yet as Kevin Gaines has shown, "racial uplift" evolved from the antebellum efforts of free blacks, whose churches and literary societies had been designed to prepare former slaves for the responsibilities of freedom.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, many of the white architects of interracial schooling came from missionary and abolitionist backgrounds, among them General Oliver Howard, head of the Freedmen's Bureau and founder of Howard University. Hampton Normal School in Virginia—Washington's alma mater and his model for Tuskegee—was established by Samuel Chapman Armstrong, who first worked with people of color as a missionary in Hawaii. By contrast, Richard Henry Pratt came from a military background, having served on the southern plains as an officer in an all-black regiment, the Tenth Cavalry. Working closely with buffalo soldiers and Indians, Pratt became convinced that the challenges of both races stemmed from whites' neglect and a lack of enforcement of federal treaties. Pratt especially believed that "race" had no basis in science and nature, and his experience in accompanying people of the Five Civilized Tribes to Florida only convinced him further of this. When in 1878, twenty-two Indians in his charge refused to return home, Pratt approached Armstrong about educating black and Indian students together at Hampton. Armstrong proved receptive, and initially seventeen Indian students were accepted, with more to follow. Armstrong insisted, however, on segregating the two outside of the classroom, a practice which clashed with Pratt's assimilationist views. Later, Pratt established a school

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 31-32.

at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, which became the model for Indian colleges nationwide. Remembered today for his famous use of "before" and "after" photographs of Indian students showing the benefits of assimilation, Pratt's views—while ethnocentric—placed him at odds with racial essentialists of the time for his forthright assertion of race as a meaningless abstraction caused by environmental differences.<sup>27</sup>

No less an authority than Booker T. Washington—Hampton's star pupil—had the opportunity to observe the experiment. Washington was one of seventeen black students in 1878 who volunteered to shepherd the Indian youths through their classes. He served as "housefather" to a dormitory that eventually housed seventy-five Indians. Apparently, after overcoming initial fears that "they might scalp us," most African Americans at Hampton accepted the new arrivals. Black students were placed in positions of authority as hall monitors and drill instructors. While both groups attended integrated classrooms, they lived in separate housing. According to Washington's chapter "Black Race and Red Race" in *Up from Slavery*, a minority of black students resented the presence of Indians. The Indians themselves, while friendly, considered the blacks far below them for having submitted to slavery. At first, Washington criticized his Indian classmates' stubborn refusal to cut their hair, stop wearing blankets, and cease smoking, but then he realized that "no white American ever thinks that any other race is wholly civilized until he wears the white man's clothes, eats the white man's food, and professes the white man's religion." Washington's experiences with Native Americans also caused him to question the vagaries of white racism. Escorting a sick Indian boy to the nation's capital, he was twice refused service—once on a dining car, another time at a hotel—while the Native American gained entry to both places: "I never could understand how he [the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience*, 1875-1928 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 44-48; and Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1982), 111-20.

white steward] knew where to draw the colour line, since the Indian and I were about of the same complexion."<sup>28</sup>

Author Donal F. Lindsey inspected school records and copies of the Southern Workman, Hampton's newspaper, to uncover an informal racial hierarchy at the mixed-school environment. Lindsey affirmed Washington's conclusion about an overall friendly atmosphere, although incidents of hostility did occur. Learning whites' racist attitudes was often an Indian's first sign of assimilation; fights erupted over racial slurs like "sambo" and "savage." For the most part, however, American Indians with obvious anti-black prejudice were never admitted to Hampton in the first place, and troublemakers who engaged in racial violence were expelled. The same policy applied to interracial dating. Armstrong enforced a strict ban on black/Indian couples, although naturally some liaisons developed anyway. According to later interviews with graduates, black male students enjoyed the attention of both black and Indian females. African Americans being the school's dominant group. This, of course, created much resentment among Indian men. Indigenous students also despised the black students' ability to leave as they wanted, whereas Indians were wards of the state and thus subject to harsher punishments. For their part, African Americans understood the elevated position they enjoyed at Hampton to be temporary, and that on leaving school, Indian classmates would enjoy status and privileges denied to blacks.29

On one point, African Americans and Native Americans completely agreed: namely, the untrustworthiness of whites. Washington related a story about a history teacher who asked a mixed class what contributions the other race had made to "civilization." Indian students replied that blacks had patience, musical talent, and a desire to learn, while African Americans praised Indians for their strong race pride and sense of honor and courage. But when the instructor asked what contributions whites had made, no one from either side responded.

<sup>28</sup> Washington, *Up from Slavery* (Penguin Classics, 1901), 97-99, 102-103.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 156-68.

A quote from Lindsey perhaps summarizes it best: "Although blacks and Indians may sometimes have found each other's reasoning inexplicable, they learned from each other: between them they agreed that Christianity had not prevented whites from seizing a people from one continent to develop the continent stolen from another. Neither race could lay anything at the other's doorstep that compared to the injustices whites had done to each of them." On one occasion, a visiting Sioux elder with strong anti-black views was shown several photos of black students whom he mistook for Indian; on realizing they may have had Indian ancestry, or at least closely resembled them, the elder apparently began to see their problems as similar. In this sense, mixed education at Hampton produced an opposite result from the founders' purpose. Rather than teaching appreciation of white culture, it stimulated an awareness of common grievances and an understanding of the larger consequences of white supremacy. 30

Ironically, such discoveries occurred in institutions controlled by whites. and it was due to changes in white prejudice that the experiment ended. In the 1890s, a vicious new form of anti-black racism swept the nation, manifested through a horrifying upsurge in lynching violence and a host of segregation laws that gained federal approval in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. The racial roles now reversed; the optimism of Reconstruction forgotten, blacks were suddenly considered the more degraded race, while Indians became better candidates for elevation. White southern politicians expressed alarm that Native Americans freely associated with blacks, an idea seconded even by some Indian leaders. The Oklahoma congressman Chickasaw Charles Carter declared that the Indian "has nothing left but his self-respect, and now you come to him with Hampton school and ask him to surrender that self-respect by placing his children on a social equality with an inferior race, a level to which you yourself will not deign to descend." By the early 1900s, more Native Americans attended public schools with whites, and even the Bureau of Indian Affairs began to discriminate against Hampton's Indian graduates for their association with blacks. In 1912, Congress

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., quote on p. 168.

eliminated funding for Indian students at Hampton. Washington and several Indian alumni wrote letters in support of interracial education, but fears of race mixing—even among two "non-white" groups—proved too strong. By 1923, no Indian students remained at Hampton Institute.<sup>31</sup>

Despite its brief duration of only forty-five years, the interracial experiment at Hampton deserves further scholarly attention for at least two reasons. One, it demonstrates the need for a comparative study of how racial uplift ideology affected African Americans and Native Americans. Such a comparison may well reveal more overlap in their respective histories than previously believed; for instance, *Up from Slavery* was assigned in many Indian schools in the early twentieth century. Secondly, historians know little about the affects of biracial schooling on Hampton's graduates in later years and how it altered their long-term relationships with each other and with whites. Donal Lindsey contends that the experiment produced a generation of assimilationists from both races who saw whites as the proper role model rather than each other. Such a thesis can neither be confirmed nor refuted without further research into their post-Hampton lives and careers.

### **Progressivism**

In 1903, the publication of W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* launched a revolutionary assault on the ideology of racial uplift. Demanding social and political equality for African Americans, Du Bois' cry soon reverberated throughout the country, galvanizing black elites and intellectuals into forming the Niagara Movement and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which fomented decades of legal challenges to lynchings and Jim Crow laws and quickly supplanted the accommodationist approach of Booker T. Washington. Historians have described the new spirit of black activism as part of Progressivism, a movement of urban, middle-class professionals who sought

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Quote from Carter in Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 326-28. See also Lindsey, 263-71. For an overview of anti-black prejudice in the late nineteenth century, see George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny*, 1871-1914 (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971).

to reform business and government and produce better living standards in the industrializing cities. Progressivism emerged in a rapidly changing international setting. Millions of immigrants from central and eastern Europe crowded into US cities, further complicating the country's ethnic makeup, while in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, the United States joined European imperial powers in acquiring foreign territories and propounding the racist doctrine of "white man's burden." When Du Bois prophesized that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line," he acknowledged that the issue of race had just been elevated to a more global, and complex, level. 32

Surprising, then, few black or Indian progressives shifted the discourse on race to a broader dialogue that went beyond group-specific situations. Some organizations did attempt to address racism in a holistic context; the Anti-Imperialist League, which included many African Americans, protested colonization of foreign lands and the abuse of indigenous people, while the Lake Mohonk Conference expanded its work with American Indians to include Filipinos. But these were exceptions. At the First Universal Races conference in London in 1911, two leading representatives of African and Native American society presented papers on their respective groups. Du Bois reiterated many of his themes from Souls of Black Folk. The Indian representative, Charles Eastman, briefly described the trend toward white-Indian intermarriage and predicted that full-blood Indians would disappear within two centuries. Eastman glowingly praised the work of Richard Henry Pratt for bringing Indian youths into direct contact and competition with whites. No evidence exists that Du Bois or Eastman collaborated, nor did either one acknowledge the problems of the other or even suggest that they shared common causes.<sup>33</sup>

As previous examples attest, the intense "Negrophobia" of the turn of the century discouraged cooperation between indigenous people and African

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1994 [1903]).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Gustav Spiller, ed., *Papers on Inter-Racial Problems, communicated to the First Universal Races Congress held at the University of London, July 26-29, 1911* (London: P.S. King and Co., 1911). On the policies of the Anti-Imperialist League and the Lake Mohonk Conference, see the essay by Edwin D. Mead titled "International Organisation for Inter-Racial Goodwill," 443-53.

Americans. In 1900, an ex-slave named George Allen Mebane claimed "comparison between the negro and the Indian is odious. The two are as dissimilar in character as races can well be. The Indian has almost absolutely refused the white man's civilization. . . . though fed from the public crib and housed and educated by the government, he has not kept pace with the progress of the negro. The conditions of the two races are in no way analogous." Whites did not agree with such reasoning, and despite the nativist and imperialist ideas that gained popularity, American Indians still enjoyed higher perceived racial status, even culminating in improved legal status. During Reconstruction when blacks had been redefined as citizens, federal citizenship eluded many Indians due to their anomalous tribal jurisdictions. While many became eligible for citizenship in subsequent decades through treaties and allotments, not until 1924 did all become full-fledged citizens. This happened, ironically, just as the US closed its doors to more immigrants from Europe. In this new, more hopeful climate, the Bureau of Indian Affairs officially encouraged amalgamation with whites, and whites themselves scrambled to claim descent from Pocahontas and great Indian chieftains and "princesses." Even Theodore Roosevelt expressed regret that his Dutch genealogy included no "savage Indian blood." In such an atmosphere. Indian progressives astutely realized that they had nothing to gain by comparing themselves to blacks, and everything to gain by associating with whites. One of the movement's most eloquent newspapers, *The American* Indian, published from 1926 to 1931 in Tulsa, reported on a variety of Indian issues, from sports to business successes to Indians' military records in World War I. By demanding inclusion with whites, the paper denied that same opportunity to African Americans, expressing resentment that "radical abolitionists" after the Civil War had forced former slaves of the Five Nations onto their tribal rolls. A similar group, the Indian Council Fire of Chicago, sponsored a bill before Congress in the 1930s mandating fines or imprisonment for those falsely representing themselves as Indians, especially blacks: "We draw the color line very sharply. We do not admit to membership any Indian who is mixed with

Negro blood. . . . The white race does not class mulattoes as white. Why should the Indian?"<sup>34</sup>

Fascinating research awaits the scholar who is willing to explore comparisons between the early black and red progressive movements. Similar to the NAACP, the founders of the Society of American Indians (SAI), established in 1911, tended to be formally educated intellectuals. Just like their African American counterparts, they sometimes faced accusations of being out of touch with their poorest constituents. Several SAI founders graduated from Pratt's educational programs, which—according to historian Brian Dippie—meant developing deep appreciation for white culture along with a sprinkling of selfloathing. One of SAI's leading members was the Navajo Jacob Morgan, who had attended school with blacks at Hampton Institute and there became committed to the self-help philosophy of Washington. More prominent was Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa), a Santee Sioux who had grown up believing that his father had been hanged during the 1862 Minnesota uprising. Filled with rage toward whites, he discovered in 1873 that his father was alive, having been pardoned by Lincoln. The elder Eastman, then a Christian convert, determined that his son "walk the white man's road." Charles Eastman received his training at Beloit College, Dartmouth, and finally Boston University Medical School, and was stationed with the BIA at Pine Ridge during the height of the Ghost Dance and the aftermath of the Wounded Knee massacre. Sickened by the fraud and ignorance of agency authorities, he resigned and moved to Minneapolis, where he began a life of writing and scholarship. Eastman's books emphasize the compatibility of Christianity with indigenous spiritualism. Though a certain love for his ancestral way of life is evident, he also thought it to be doomed, believing that Indians should adopt the most positive aspects of white society while retaining their more valuable native traditions. As a founder of the SAI and later as the first American

<sup>34</sup> Dippie, *The Vanishing American*, 250-68.

Indian to head the BIA, he stressed the need for better health, education, and citizenship rights.<sup>35</sup>

Of all Indian reformers, the ethnologist Arthur Parker, a one-quarter Seneca from the Cattaraugus reservation in New York, compared most directly the experiences of African and Native Americans. Parker was heavily influenced by the ideas of his great-uncle Ely Parker, the Iroquois colleague of nineteenthcentury anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan. Morgan and Ely Parker's views on white/Indian amalgamation anticipated the "melting pot" theory popular around World War I, which argued that the United States' many diverse peoples were blending into a homogenous national culture. Like Charles Eastman, Parker found in the melting-pot analogy a way for Indians to adjust to a new environment, a means by which contemporary indigenous persons could reconcile themselves to the dominant society and at the same time combat the insulting "vanishing Indian" theory. This idea placed him at odds with academic trends of the time, particularly with the Colombia University anthropologist Franz Boas (to be discussed in detail later), who considered acculturation a betrayal of one's traditional culture. As Boas and his students prepared to shift anthropological thinking to a model of cultural pluralism, Arthur Parker found himself increasingly estranged from academic circles, which perhaps explains why he never earned a graduate degree. As a founder of the Society of American Indians, he also borrowed many traditions from the Iroquoian council model, in which parties with varying perspectives expressed their views in an open forum and then settled on a decisive plan of action. Consequently, Parker advocated a plan called "Reform Pan-Indianism" in which the SAI would comprise a structure to mediate between all tribes and serve as a communicative link with whites. 36

Parker and other reformers set an ambitious goal of representing all Indians through the SAI, akin to what black leaders were attempting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Hazel W. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 38-42; and Raymond Wilson, *Ohiyesa: Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 130-46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity*, 48-58; and Hertzberg, in Margot Liberty, ed., *American Indian Intellectuals: 1976 Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society* (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1978), 129-36.

simultaneously through the NAACP. Unfortunately, Parker held strong hostility toward blacks, a legacy perhaps of his childhood in New York, where several tribes with African ancestry, including the Shinnecocks, lived. In 1916, Parker authored the essay "Problems of Race Assimilation in America," which compared the extent of assimilation of African Americans and European immigrants to Indians. Here he plainly distinguished "assimilation" from "amalgamation," the former being the internalization of the dominant culture's values, while the latter meant mere biological blending through intermarriage. Whereas white immigrants from civilized countries did both, by contrast "the African Negro was a savage who was cruel to his own race," superstitious, with natural servility. Parker acknowledged that blacks gradually forgot their African homes and customs and adopted whites' ways, but this did not civilize them, because "Imitation is never civilization, for civilization is an inward growth during the process of which, there is much of the old nature retained. . . ." Parker did praise individuals such as Booker T. Washington, who, he believed, promoted "real culture" through their work at institutions like Hampton and Tuskegee. Nonetheless, he believed that because of whites' strong desire to keep their perceived purity, blacks would never be allowed to amalgamate and thus make contributions to national society equivalent to that of other groups. Elsewhere, Parker expressed sympathy with African Americans, just as he did with Italians, Poles, and various Europeans who were forced to assimilate; however, as Hazel Hertzberg has pointed out, he never guite understood that the refusal of whites to blend with blacks or even grant them political equality could also work against Indians.37

By the 1920s, Parker's attraction to the melting-pot theory had run its course. In later writings, he claimed the United States' democratic character rested on the strength and stamina of the Nordic European race which had started the republic, a strain that intermixture with blacks and lower European races now threatened—an idea no doubt influenced by racist eugenic theories.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity*, 155-66.

The loss of Parker's assimilationist dream foreshadowed the decline of the SAI itself. Despite passage of the Indian Citizenship Bill in June 1924, Indian Progressives seemed unable or unwilling to rally around a common set of ideas. Most men of Parker and Eastman's generation had been educated on the Hampton and Carlisle model, and with Carlisle's decline, a new batch of reformers rose to prominence who appeared more concerned with tribal than with Pan-Indian issues. Successors to the Society of American Indians did emerge, but these were more attuned to principles of ethnic nationalism than assimilation. Gertrude Bonnin, who helped found the National Council of American Indians, wrote that Indians should emulate the race-consciousness of blacks, who had more than seventy colleges and universities and generally used their education to help their own people, unlike Indians who rarely took such training back to their reservation communities. 38

"Race consciousness" crested during the 1920s, resounding with amazing parallels in Native American and African American society. NAACP leaders such as Du Bois now found themselves branded as elitists by Marcus Garvey and his United Negro Improvement Association. The unprecedented popularity of the "Back to Africa" movement marked a dramatic turning point for black history. A similar awakening occurred in Indian communities, manifested in groups like the Tepee Order founded by the Rev. Red Fox St. James. A type of "Fraternal Pan-Indianism" more concerned with preservation of tradition than reform, the Tepee Order taught a vague Christianity that condemned intermixture with whites and blacks and shared a number of features with Garvey's UNIA: hostility to outsiders, racial solidarity, and a heavy reliance on costumes, symbols, and elaborate titles. One can argue that many of these same characteristics were shared by the new, resurgent organization of white extremists, the Ku Klux Klan. When taking into account also the xenophobic fears that led to passage of the National Origins Act in 1924, which halted much immigration from Asia and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Ibid., 205-09.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibid., 179-200, 308-12.

Europe, it becomes apparent that the national obsession with race crossed many boundaries.

Although the black and Indian progressive movements never truly intersected, the similarities they shared call for more comparative studies. Both demanded social and political equality; both were led by educated professionals ("the Talented Tenth" Du Bois called them) who worked closely with whites; both had origins in the Washington-Pratt model of education but ultimately rejected the uplift doctrines that they espoused; and both faced challenges in the 1920s from racial nationalism. Neither movement advocated common cause and both even took pains to avoid conflating the two, internally as well as in the eyes of whites. There were also many differences: unlike African Americans, American Indians in the early twentieth century lacked an urban base with a structured class system. Nor did they engage in a polarizing debate, as did Du Bois and Washington, over the merits of industrial versus academic education. Finally, perhaps because of limited means and mobility and a continuing loyalty to their particular tribes, American Indians lacked the equivalent of a nationwide Harlem Renaissance, which provided a common set of cultural expressions that helped define blacks as a unified people.

#### Race and the Social Sciences

The apex of racial thinking that culminated in the 1920s had been building for decades. Half a century before, Herbert Spenser's doctrine of Social Darwinism taught that different classes of humanity were destined to lead the world to higher levels of prosperity while others would fall behind and become extinct. Building on Spenser, the eugenics movement tried to apply the principles of animal husbandry to human beings, arguing for the existence of distinct races, each with innate capabilities and limitations. Eugenics found its most nightmarish manifestation in Nazi Germany, but it influenced public policy in the United States as well. Segregation, laws against intermarriage, use of IQ tests, and incessant references to Indians as "the vanishing race" were all apparently legitimized by the concept of "race" as a category fixed in nature.

However, an intellectual shift in the social sciences, as well as the Second World War, soon placed racism on the defensive. Colombia University professor Franz Boas, in *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911) critiqued white supremacy by claiming that it had no basis in science, and that technological progress among some societies was largely the result of historical accident. A German Jew who had immigrated to the US, Boas devoted much of his time to refuting racial classification schemes and intelligence-quotient exams, maintaining that a certain mental capacity was roughly equal among all races. Boas gradually came to represent the liberal, antinationalist wing of anthropology, the leader of what he later called "cultural relativism." His influence over the training of future generations of anthropologists was enormous. He insisted students visit and immerse themselves within the cultures they studied rather than make detached comparisons from afar. In time, Boas' followers—among them Alfred Kroeber, Margaret Mead, and Ruth Benedict—combined political activism with wellresearched studies to attack racist ideas and policies, and came to dominate the social sciences with their sheer numbers.<sup>40</sup>

African Americans quickly grasped the importance of Boas' ideas and modified them for their own ends. Alain Locke, a giant of the Harlem Renaissance and a proponent of "the New Negro," delivered a series of lectures at Howard University in 1916 championing Boas' work. Locke likewise described race as a social fiction, a historical phenomenon, but his ideas' resemblance to cultural relativism ended there. Though race was a construct, it had power; practiced since ancient times, race, or racial consciousness as he called it, created a sense of social solidarity that aided a group in its struggle for power, and, as such, presented advantages to oppressed people. Carter Woodson, known by some as the father of black history, also drew on Boas' work to produce some of the first scholarly investigations into black-Indian intersections. Through a series of articles in the *Journal of Negro History* during the early 1930s, Woodson challenged the concept of distinct biological races by trying to

<sup>40</sup> Elazar Barkan, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States between the World Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 76-96.

substantiate Melville Herskovits' claim that 27.2 percent of African Americans had Indian ancestry. Others, including James Hugo Johnston, even claimed that Native Americans were not disappearing as a group but had survived as part of the black race, with whom they had lived side-by-side and intermarried for centuries. Du Bois referred to these studies when he attacked white justifications for Jim Crow that claimed a polarization of races into black and white. <sup>41</sup> One can easily perceive in the works of these early intellectuals the seeds of a new black nationalism that would arise in the 1960s.

Boas' ideas had an equally strong impact on US Indian policy, if not necessarily on Indians. Boas himself never paid much attention to indigenous people but several of his students did, and by the 1920s they were using the language of cultural pluralism to preserve what they saw as Indians' "traditional way of life." Particularly, the reformer John Collier became enamored of the Pueblo Indians of rural New Mexico. Befriended by Georgia O'Keefe, Aldous Huxley, and other intellectuals who had grown disillusioned with western society, Collier thought he discovered in the Southwest all the values that industrialized white culture lacked—simplicity, community, harmony with nature—and believed anthropology could play a role in saving them from the destructive forces of modernization. As executive secretary of the American Indian Defense Association, Collier helped produce the 1928 Meriam Report. Eight-hundred pages long and as breathtaking in scope as Gunnar Myrdal's An American Dilemma, the Meriam Report employed sociological methods to explain reservation poverty and to compile massive statistics on Indian life, including housing, health, education, and various other social problems.<sup>42</sup>

Collier had more opportunity to put his ideas into practice during his tenure as Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1929 to 1945. Many of his reforms were passed by executive order of Franklin Roosevelt: noninterference with native

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Alain LeRoy Locke, *Race Contacts and Interracial Relations: Lectures on the Theory and Practice of Race*, Jeffrey C. Stewart, ed., (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1992), introduction by Stewart; and Laura Lovett, "African and Cherokee by Choice: Race and Resistance under Legalized Segregation," in James Brooks, ed., *Confounding the Color Line*, 208-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 176-80.

religions, encouragement of native arts and crafts, and transfer of students from boarding schools to day schools located on or near the reservations. The Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934 represented the culmination of his efforts, allowing Indian communities to establish tribal governments similar to municipalities that would keep decision making at local levels rather than at the centralized BIA. Collier certainly had his critics; besides charges by conservative whites of promoting paganism and communism, many Indians felt he improperly understood the diversity of their cultures by treating them all like Pueblos. Less than half of eligible Indians voted in elections to write constitutions under the IRA. and even fewer established tribal corporations to develop their economic resources, as Collier wanted. Traditionalists complained that the new "reform" tribal governments of the 1930s too closely resembled white systems. Even his mentor Franz Boas, strangely enough, had opposed Collier's appointment as Indian commissioner, calling his ideas impractical. Though his legacy was mixed. Collier's work had the support of most social scientists, who now claimed a monopoly on explaining native cultures to white audiences. Even his Indian opponents acknowledged that he had helped reverse the trend toward assimilation.43

Just as anthropologists and sociologists turned their attention to black and indigenous people, the rise of fascism in Europe further politicized the study of "race." In 1940, Collier testified at a joint Army-Navy Selective Service committee that Nazi propagandists had infiltrated Indian reservations. German racism always had accommodated American Indians, dating to the late nineteenth century when the novelist Karl May—Hitler's favorite childhood author—asserted that Indians and Germans shared a proud military tradition and even a common Teutonic background. In 1938, the German government granted citizenship to the grandson of a Sioux woman and a German immigrant to the US, part of a sweeping extension of Aryan status that later included all Sioux Indians. Posing as scientists, German propagandists appeared on scattered reservations in the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Ibid., 180-86.

1930s claiming that Native Americans descended from a lost Germanic tribe that had wandered into the New World, and whose societies had been systematically destroyed by white Americans, the bastard refuge of Europe. Joseph Goebbels supposedly claimed that in the event of war with the US, Indians would revolt against their overlords rather than fight Germany. Seeking to refute these claims, Alex Hrdlicka, a physical anthropologist with the Smithsonian, offered one of the first theories that Indians had migrated millennia earlier across the Bering Strait and therefore descended from Asian peoples. According to Collier, fascism enjoyed a fair hearing among a minority of middle-class, assimilation-minded Indians.<sup>44</sup>

Most American Indians likely regarded Nazi propaganda as nonsense. But the very prospect of Indian collaboration with the enemy, combined with blacks' demands for racial equality and the need for international allies from darkskinned countries, meant that the US government could no longer ignore the issue of race. African American leaders often likened Nazism to Jim Crow, warning in newspapers like *The Crisis* that, given the racist nature of the Axis Powers, the support of blacks would be necessary for victory. Throughout the 1940s, the black press attacked the continued policy of racial segregation in the armed forces as unpatriotic and, given the need to mobilize troops quickly, even cumbersome. Furthermore, World War II legitimized Boasian scholarship. Works such as Myrdal's An American Dilemma and Ruth Benedict's The Races of Mankind became part of the Office of War Information's official discourse; in some cases these books were distributed to army personnel to combat Nazi ideology. While many historians have questioned the extent to which whites actually adopted a more liberal perspective about race, the rhetoric of "racial equality" nonetheless permeated the war effort, enough to worry southern whites

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Jere Bishop Franco, *Crossing the Pond: The Native American Effort in World War II* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 1999), 3-23; and Kenneth William Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 32-35, 59-60.

into declaring that World War II marked the greatest threat to "peaceful" race relations since Reconstruction. 45

Although black enlistment ran proportionately low during the war, more than one-third of all Indian men aged eighteen to fifty served in the military. On some reservations, seventy percent of men in that category served. Unlike blacks and Japanese Americans, Indian soldiers were fully integrated into all branches of the military. Collier emphasized the bravery and patriotism of Native Americans during the war, encouraging newspapers to run stories about Indian men's 99 percent registration rate and the enormous purchases of war bonds by tribes at a higher per capita rate than any other racial group. The stereotype of the Indian as a "ferocious fighter" caused them to be recruited for exceptionally dangerous missions. But by 1945, some officials in the BIA had reason to question all this favorable publicity. Reporters perpetuated prejudice by describing Indian soldiers as "stoic, blood-thirsty, and exotic" in combat, and ran cartoons of feather-bonneted chiefs in tribal regalia fighting Nazis and Japanese. 46

Students of African American history are unanimous in their assertion of World War II as a seminal turning point, not only because it popularized relativistic understandings of culture, but also because it permanently equated racism with Hitler and un-American values. While African Americans seized this opportunity to launch a postwar attack on racial segregation, Native Americans had a somewhat different reaction to the new integrationist trend. Many former soldiers and young defense workers returned to their reservations convinced of the importance of cooperating with whites and assimilating to their ways, a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper, 1944); Daniel Kryder, *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State during World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4-11; and Sherie Mershon and Steven Schlossman, *Foxholes and Color Lines: Desegregating the Armed Forces* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 105-14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Townsend, 134-7; Franco, 126-44; Alison R. Bernstein, *American Indians and World War II: Toward a New Era in Indian Affairs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 40-46; and Tom Holm, "Fighting a White Man's War: The Extent and Legacy of American Indian Participation in World War II," rpt. in Sterling Evans, ed., *American Indians in American History, 1870-2001* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), 93-100.

stance that alienated them from elders and traditionalists. Ira Hamilton Hayes, the Pima soldier who became famous after he and fellow Marines were photographed raising the US flag over Iwo Jima, returned to huge acclaim in 1945 and lent his image to selling war bonds. Disillusioned with his postwar life, Hayes became an alcoholic and died on the Pima reservation ten years later. Native Americans' exceptional military service, and their apparent success at assimilating to white culture, also created the impression that there remained little need for federal supervision. This planted the seeds for the disastrous termination policy of the 1950s that tried to abolish the reservation system by forcing Indians off their traditional lands and into urban areas. By this time, social scientists had begun to lose interest in studying indigenous cultures, and many American Indians for their part had grown disgusted with the teams of researchers who invaded their reservations annually. Once again, this suggests the need for a comparative study of the ways in which World War II and the social sciences affected African Americans and Native Americans differently.

#### **Post-World War II Nationalism**

No simple overview can do justice to the revolutionary movements led by red and black since World War II. Although protests and activism had been present before the 1940s, it was mostly during the prosperity of the postwar era that the two groups confronted racist ideas and practices in dramatic, visual, and highly successful ways: fighting segregation in schools, housing, businesses, and other public places; demanding an end to demeaning media stereotypes; opening black- and indigenous-studies departments at universities to critique the triumphalist vision of American history; even redefining themselves on their own terms by replacing earlier pejorative labels with categories like "African American" and "Native Americans." Ostensibly antiracist, these movements nonetheless organized around conventional racial lines. While the success of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Franco, 126-44; Bernstein, 59-62; and Liberty, *American Indian Intellectuals*, 1-4. On the overall impact of World War II on the concept of race, see James N. Leiker, "Building a Multiracial Military in World War II," unpublished paper, presented at "Democracy in Arms: The American Soldier in World War II," April 8-9, 2005, Dole Institute of Politics, University of Kansas.

Martin Luther King Jr., Vernon Bellecourt, Cesar Chavez, and other leaders encouraged new tactics and ideologies among blacks, Indians, and Chicanos alike, little effort appears to have been made to consolidate groups like the SCLC, AIM, and the United Farm Workers into broader coalitions.

Generally, scholars of black-Indian intersections have ignored the common roots of these movements in urbanization. In 1900, more than 90 percent of all African Americans lived in small towns and rural areas; as of 2000. that number had shrunk to less than 10 percent. The causes of "the Great Black" Migration" are well known; diversification of southern crops, mechanized farming, and the abundance of jobs in the industrializing North and West all prompted millions of black families to relocate. Indigenous people went through a similar demographic shift, although to date only one major study examines it. As Donald Fixico's work explains, the termination policy of mid-century sparked an exodus of such magnitude that as of 2000, more than two-thirds of all American Indians lived in urban areas. According to Fixico's analysis, urbanization brought mixed results. Deprived of the traditional land base from which natives traditionally have drawn their culture, urban Indians lack the strong attachment to tribal community that their ancestors enjoyed. For some, this has produced loneliness and angst, manifest in high alcoholism and suicide rates. For others, urbanization revived earlier notions of Pan-Indianism, the belief in a collective experience among all Indians that by the 1960s exploded as the new nationalist "Red Power." This thesis fits comfortably with scholarly understandings of "Black Power," which also drew most of its support from urban African Americans. Historians know little about interactions between black and Indian urban communities. Fixico claimed that some of the first Indian migrants to cities—having come from quiet reservation environments—were repelled by urban blacks' loud music and extroverted activities. Over time, young people from both sides managed to establish friendships and even engaged in cultural borrowing.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Donald L. Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 154, 172-88.

Sociologist Joane Nagel affirmed Fixico's link between ethnic nationalism and the earlier establishment of an urban population base. On the heels of Collier's reforms, Indians from varied backgrounds in 1944 created the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to represent tribal interests before federal officials. Through ensuing decades, the NCAI helped stimulate supra-tribal alliances to control the flow of federal money via the New Deal and the War on Poverty onto reservations. As both black and Indian communities experienced an unprecedented sense of financial efficacy, young urban progressives, many college-educated, adopted new tactics in the late 1960s. Organizations such as the Black Panthers, founded in Oakland, and the American Indian Movement, started in Minneapolis in 1968, openly challenged white hegemony by emphasizing racial pride and power in their respective identities. AIM began essentially as a protest organization, but by the 1970s had moved to legal actions and consciousness-raising. Nagel has joined Alvin Josephy and other scholars in claiming that the black civil rights movement, the counterculture, and the antiwar movement all helped trigger Indian nationalism. In the name of Red Power, activists launched a series of "fish-ins," occupied Alcatraz Island and Wounded Knee, and staged a march on Washington by adopting high-visibility media tactics employed originally by African American groups like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee.<sup>49</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that these various movements learned from each other and tried to duplicate one another's successes, even though the historical record shows little empirical evidence. At least in their official speeches and writings, African American leaders of the time rarely mentioned or acknowledged the plight of American Indians and other oppressed groups, except when trying to illuminate some additional dimension of white supremacy. In his classic autobiography, Malcolm X delivered a thoughtful expose of whites' crimes against the world, including their bloody reaction to the Chinese Boxer

<sup>49</sup> Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 131-40, 158-78.

Rebellion, but made little mention of Indians.<sup>50</sup> Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, in their manifesto for Black Power, equated institutional racism with colonialism by comparing discrimination in the US with the imperial occupation of Africa—useful for Pan-African purposes but again making no reference to Indians and Chicanos, who also constituted internally colonized groups.<sup>51</sup> Eldridge Cleaver did dwell at length on atrocities against Indians in his chapter "The White Race and Its Heroes" in *Soul on Ice*, claiming that the Vietnam debacle caused young whites to reassess their culture and its racist myths: "They recoil in shame from the spectacle of cowboys and pioneers—their heroic forefathers whose exploits filled earlier generations with pride—galloping across a movie screen shooting down Indians like Coke Bottles." Emulating Indians by wearing beads and listening to black music to alarm their elders, the white youth recoiled at "racial arrogance . . . [and] genocide; he sees the human cargo of the slave trade; he sees the systematic extermination of American Indians; . . ."<sup>52</sup>

In a masterful study, William Van DeBurg claimed that Black Power always exerted more influence culturally and aesthetically than it did politically. Black Power was essentially a revolution of the mind, an attempt to create a power base through racial solidarity and positive self-images by recognizing African Americans as distinct from mainstream America. Consequently, this meant distinguishing themselves not only from whites but from other oppressed peoples, not condemning them but not openly identifying with them either. Believing that acceptance of white assistance meant subordination to white control, Black Power also taught the importance of autonomy, of blacks building their own communities from within—another principle that may have discouraged solidarity with groups that also carried grievances against white power.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1964), 174-84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Carmichael and Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 3-32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Cleaver, Soul on Ice (New York: Dell, 1964), 68 and 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> William L. Van DeBurg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 11-28, 292-308.

Some Indian leaders did take official notice of Black Power. In his clarion call for Indian nationalism Custer Died For Your Sins, Vine Deloria Jr. offered an assessment that combined praise with criticism. Deloria claimed that American Indians refused to participate in King's March on Washington nor in any of his earlier protests because of their integrationist impulses, the demands by blacks to assimilate with whites: "It was incomprehensible to us that a people would rebel against a system that they felt was irrelevant and unresponsive to their needs. Blacks seemed to be saying that white society was bad, but they wanted it anyway." Only when black progress took its separationist turn in the mid-1960s did Indians respond positively: "It was therefore no surprise to us when Stokely Carmichael began his black power escapade. We only wondered why it had taken so long to articulate. . . . " Applauding the trend among African Americans toward self-determination, Deloria nonetheless warned Indian youths about mimicking that trend. Too many indigenous people perceived "Black Power" as a mere anti-white reaction with the goal of attracting national publicity, more a form of militancy rather than genuine nationalism. Clarifying the difference, Deloria explained "militancy" as a movement with ill-defined objectives that uses intensity and threats of violence to force favorable decisions from those in authority. Militancy loses much of its theatrical effectiveness as other news dominates the headlines and the militants themselves are required to become ever more radical, dependent on the spotlight. By contrast, true nationalism rests on traditions and customs that channel such rage into constructive paths of behavior, resulting in the development and continuance of the tribe. In his analysis, Black Power marked a huge step forward in African Americans' consciousness. But its progress was incomplete due to its misunderstanding about the real sources of power.<sup>54</sup>

In his chapter "The Red and the Black," Deloria provides a definition of "power" that cut to the heart of many historical divergences between African and Native Americans. He wrote: "Time and again blacks have told me how lucky they were not to have been placed on reservations after the Civil War. I don't

<sup>54</sup> Deloria, 180-83, 240-41, 254-57, quotes on 186 and 240.

think they were lucky at all. I think it was [an] absolute disaster that blacks were not given reservations." Deloria maintained that true peoplehood—and thus true power—were impossible without cultural freedom, which in turn depends on a land base. Unlike African Americans, Indian tribes are recognized as holding distinct legal status by the federal government and occupy actual physical homelands. Blacks must acquire this too if they wish to survive; they "must have a homeland where they can withdraw, drop the facade of integration, and be themselves." Black Power, as an ideology, communicated the fundamental concepts of self-determination that Indians and Chicanos long had needed—the most important gift of African Americans to fellow oppressed peoples. But the actualization of power for blacks themselves would only languish until they grasped the essential nature of tribalism. Unlike the NAACP or SNCC that claim to speak for all blacks, Indian groups like the National Congress of American Indians play little role in shaping the relationships between local tribes and the United States. During hard times, tribes tend to pursue independent strategies and reject assistance from national organizations. For this reason, Deloria saw little possibility of an eventual coalition of minority groups working in tandem to achieve their rights. Native peoples would never work within a cooperative movement that failed to understand Indian nationalism and its institutional corollary, the tribal state. 55

Deloria also attacked the basic premise of modern liberalism's attempt to address the two groups' wrongs, namely, the classification of both under the misleading rubric of "Race Relations." This begins, oddly enough, with the essentializing of whiteness. A quarter-century before scholars launched a wave of "whiteness studies" exploring the historical construction of "white" as a racial identity, Deloria wrote "White solutions fail because *white* itself is an abstraction of an attitude of mind, not a racial or group reality. The white as we know him in America is an amalgam of European immigrants, not a racial phenomenon." From that point, reformers and activists draw a dichotomy between "whites" and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Ibid., 180-221.

"nonwhites," lumping together in the latter category all persons with dark skin whom they perceive as sharing the same basic goals, and then developing policies based on those false perceptions. Although "race" as a historical phenomenon has been a harsh reality, the continued reference to black and Indian problems as *racial* problems obscures all cultural, religious, and economic differences between the two.

Recently, blacks and some Indians have defined racial problems as having one focal point—the White Man. This concept is a vast oversimplification of the real problem, as it centers on a racial theme rather than on specific facts. . . .

The basic problem which has existed between the various racial groups has not been one of race but of culture and legal status. The white man systematically destroyed Indian culture where it existed, but separated blacks from his midst so that they were forced to attempt the creation of their own culture.

The white man forbade the black to enter his own social and economic system and at the same time force-fed the Indian what he was denying the black. . . . (italics added for emphasis)

Further on, he suggests, "There is no basic antagonism between black and red, or even between red and white." Still, each group has its own road to travel, each overcoming different obstacles, discovering different solutions, and all ultimately leading to their own respective affirmations of group identity. <sup>56</sup>

Deloria's analysis may be the most succinct explanation of black-Indian relations thus far, with ideas that should resonate deeply with any scholar hoping to uncover intersections or engaging in comparative history. Yet however strong the impact of tribalism on Indian nationalism, the lack of coordinated efforts at the national level, and the eschewing of cooperation across racial lines, has produced problems. Groups such as the Black Panthers and AIM continued to work separately into the 1970s despite fierce opposition from a common enemy, J. Edgar Hoover's COINTELPRO, which launched a libelous and violent

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Ibid., 170-72.

campaign against all "radical" organizations that advocated self-determination. Over the past three decades, the growing rate of intermarriage raises questions about the salience of politicized racial identities in a pluralistic society. As Ron Welburn has described, persons of mixed ancestry who tend to identify more with their Indian heritage often alienate African Americans, who—in the interests of racial pride and unity—feel betrayed and declare that they should be "Black First," basically upholding the one-drop rule. Afrocentrists occasionally express resentment against Native creation stories since these collide with assertions of Africa as the mother of humanity. The lack of dialogue is most evident in clashes over Indian mascots on collegiate and professional sports teams, where African American athletes dominate. In the late 1960s, the Black Student Union at Florida State University challenged and overthrew anti-black discriminatory practices, such as waving the Confederate flag and singing "Dixie" at games, but remained strangely silent when indigenous people later protested the use of the "Seminole" mascot. Some examples of black-Indian, and even black-Indian-Latino, cooperation have occurred, as when all three helped retire Chief Illiniwek at the University of Illinois-Champaign. The NAACP officially opposes mascot use but has refused to support local movements against them. Such was the case recently when Indian activists protested the use of "Redskins" at a Wichita high school, where the African-American principal declared the symbol to be not racist at all, because "he should know." Such responses, or lack thereof, have caused some Native Americans, ironically, to dismiss the NAACP as a racist organization.57

#### **Conclusions**

Obviously, as this broad overview demonstrates, black-red relations in the US have been characterized by many examples of personal affection and intermixture, as well as group indifference and hostility. The point in exploring

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Van DeBurg, 292-308; Ron Welburn, "A Most Secret Identity: Native American Assimilation and Identity Resistance in African America," 292-320, C. Richard King, "Estrangements: Native American Mascots and Indian-Black Relations," 346-70, and Valerie J. Phillips, "Seeing Each Other through the White Man's Eyes: Reflections and Commentary on the 'Eating Out of the Same Pot' Black Indian Conference at Dartmouth College," 371-85, in Brooks, ed., *Confounding the Color Line*.

these examples has not been to offer judgment but rather to improve understanding about the historical wall that continues to separate these groups and prevents them from forming common cause against racial injustice. This wall further affects scholarly conceptualizations of race. Categories of "indigenous studies" and "African American studies" give the impression of separate, parallel histories that lead to the eventual formation of unique peoplehood, thereby discouraging focus on individuals and traditions that emanate from the nexus between them. The "Shifting Borders" project has welcomed any attempt to redress these limitations, not in defiance of those disciplines but in a collaborative effort to supplement them.

Especially useful would be the work of genealogists and community historians who can produce micro-studies of black-Indian intersections within the contexts of home and family; their findings may belie the conclusions of broader syntheses. Particularly, more research is needed on black-Indian experiences of the twentieth century and on the common roots of modern racialized identities in urbanization. We should also be open to comparative approaches that do not examine black-Indian relations *per se* but rather explore how both have made their choices and shaped their histories within the same dominant ideologies and institutions. Lastly, although the immediate goal of the project has been to uncover intersections of red and black, the long-term goal is a more sophisticated paradigm about the meaning of "race" in its holistic, multidimensional context, which will eventually mean incorporating the experiences of Latinos, Asians, Middle Easterners, and even whites.

Vine Deloria Jr. described red and black as having walked noble journeys on separate roads. But those roads have not run in parallel paths. To add to his metaphor, the histories of African Americans and Native Americans comprise a network of intersecting highways that constantly twist, combine, separate, only to twist and combine again, offering travelers confusing choices and demanding decisions that will influence not only their own identities and destinies but those of their progeny. Unraveling these "tangled histories" will result in a deeper, more

respectful appreciation of both the American past and the convoluted meaning of race.

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Government and Students' Notes on American Culture (coauthor). He is currently theorizing indigenousness and the dialectics of (de)colonization in Elizabeth Cook-Lynn's works.

# A Divided Horizon in their Common Sky?: Some Commonalities of African American and Native American Experiences in the United States by Ruben Kodjo Afagla<sup>1</sup>

Ruben Kodjo Afagla's review of common experiences of African Americans and Native Americans suggests that relationships between blacks and Indians have stemmed from their common histories as minority groups, whovoften have been displaced or denied equality, and who have demonstrated resistance to the cultural domination of Europeans. Afagla turns to minority and nonminority scholars to understand the ways in which members of both groups have struggled with the dominant culture to establish their own rights and identities.

What America wants in its race relations with American Indians is to steal and occupy land, to kill and otherwise destroy the land's inhabitants, and yet provide an ethical example throughout the world of a democratic and "good" society developed for the purpose of profiting from that activity.

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Anti-Indianism in Modern America

The dominant discourse on America has a powerful effect on most scholars; most foreign scholars fall easy prey to the dominant discourse and buy into it. As a student of American culture, I have sometimes wondered if there is any commonality between seemingly different traumatic experiences of African Americans and American Indians. The dominant, first-world discourse for the most part successfully ignores any "close" rapprochement between the condition

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to David M. Katzman, Elizabeth Shaw, Ray Pence, James N. Leiker, and Kim Warren for their helpful, detailed, insightful, and thought-provoking comments on various drafts of this essay.

of African Americans and Native Americans when it comes to how both groups experienced their lives within the larger constructs of conquest, slavery, racial marginalization, and white supremacy. Many minority scholars, however—Vine Deloria Jr., Gerald Vizenor, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Devon Abbott Mihesuah, Ronald Takaki, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, Edward W. Said, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, and Molefi Kete Asante—have addressed my puzzlements. Whether colonized or enslaved by the peoples from a geographic and cultural area known as the "West," any people who have known the yoke of slavery or colonialism share tales of conquest, oppression, silenced voices, and distorted identity. This essay demonstrates that African Americans not only share a common sky with American Indians but also that they see the same horizon. Although my premise is that Native Americans and African Americans are linked by common experiences of oppression from European colonization and enslavement, it must be acknowledged, from the outset, that there have been tensions, enslavement, and problems between both groups as well.

In rejecting an application for a conference on "The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse"—a conference that materialized in two special issues of *Cultural Critique* on minority discourse—the National Endowment for the Humanities cites an anonymous reviewer's skeptical view. Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd, the organizers of the conference, quote the reviewer:

I cannot but feel that a conference that would bring together in a few days of papers and discussion specialists on Chicano, Afro-American, Asian-American, Native-American, Afro-Caribbean, African, Indian, Pacific island, Aborigine, Maori and other ethnic literature would be anything but diffuse. A conference on ONE [sic] of these literatures might be in order, but even with the best of planning, the proposed conference would almost

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mostly use "African Americans" and "blacks" throughout this essay.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> A 1995 survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that 49.8 percent of the people I am calling Native American preferred "American Indian" and 37.5 percent preferred "Native American"; still others preferred their tribal names. Michael Yellow-Bird's essay "What We Want to Be Called: Indigenous People's Perspectives on Racial and Ethnic Identity Labels," *American Indian Quarterly* 23:2 (1999): 1-21, certainly did not provide the definite statement on how indigenous peoples in the United States want to be called: the debate is still open. However, I use interchangeably the collective designation Native Americans and American Indians in this essay. The variations in the names of African descents in the United States are documented in Joseph E. Holloway, ed., *Africanisms in American Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). Here, as in the case of American Indians, the preferred terms vary; however, I

certainly devolve into an academic Tower of Babel. It is not at all clear that a specialist on Native-American literature, for example, will have much to say to someone specializing in African literature. It is also unlikely that the broad generalizations Professor JanMohamed would have them address would bring them any closer.<sup>3</sup>

Should we share this reviewer's assumption that scholars from American Indian and African American communities, both of which have been brutalized by Euro-American imperialism and marginalized by its hegemony, have nothing to say to each other?

Reflecting on the unshakable American belief in private ownership of property and the impulse to defend it with all means possible, Nigerian poet and playwright John Pepper Clark denounces Euro American readiness to "take up gun at once not only in the unequal fight with the original owners of the land he was tilling by the labour of another, but also as soon as Congress cried out against tax prerogatives of an imperial master overseas." In his bold criticism of Euro-American imperial ideology, Clark ties together the slaughter of American Indians and the enslavement of African Americans who have been kept "ever since in one form of chain or another in the land of the free."

Many critics point to Euro American imperialism as the epicenter of the lawless situation that affects subjected people worldwide. In *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan contends that humankind has known social oppression since time immemorial but points out that Europe's global conquest fundamentally intensified and dramatically changed oppression's character and scope. Europe's greed for land and labor entailed the occupation of continents, the enslavement of millions, leaving victims

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd, "Minority Discourse: What Is to Be Done?" *Cultural Critique* No 7, special issue: "The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse" (autumn 1987): 5-17; 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> John Pepper Clark, *America, Their America: The Nigerian Poet and Playwright's Criticism of American Society* (New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1969), 125-26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> John Pepper Clark, America, Their America, 83.

in every corner of the world. In the name of a "civilizing mission," genocide and barbarism were committed against indigenous populations. Throughout Euro-American occupation and settlement of the West, American Indians who resisted displacement onto what were euphemistically called "Indian reservations" were annihilated, while the chattel principle packaged, priced, and sold thousands of African Americans into bondage. Similar to African Americans, many Native Americans were subjugated to servitude after colonial invasion. Salvador Vallejo's description of the Native American burden after the conquest of California is revealing:

Our friendly Indians . . . tilled our soil, pastured our cattle, sheared our sheep, cut our timber, built our houses, paddled our boats, made tiles for our houses, ground our grain, killed our cattle, dressed their hides for market, and made our unburnt bricks; while the Indian women made excellent servants, took care of our children and made every one of our meals.<sup>7</sup>

The dearth of scholarship that intersects African American/Native
American history might have prompted William Loren Katz to refer to historical
relationships between Native Americans and African Americans as "one of the
longest unwritten chapters in the history of the United States." Recently,
however, there has been a growing interest in the subject. In addition to the
scholarship presented in James F. Brooks's edited volume *Confounding the Color Line*, a number of scholars have brought some insights into their relations.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression* (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), 37-48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Salvador Vallejo, "*Nota històrica sobro California*," 1874, 46; unpublished testimonial, as quoted by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, *The Squatter and the Don*, ed. and intro. by Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1992), 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> William Loren Katz, *Black Indians* (New York: Atheneum, 1986), 4-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Selected essays from James F. Brooks, ed., *Confounding the Color Line: The Indian-Black Experience in North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002) that have addressed aspects of Indian/Black intersections include: Dedra S. McDonald, "Intimacy and Empire: Indian-African Interaction in Spanish Colonial New Mexico, 1500-1800," 21-46; Russel Lawrence Barsh, "'Colored' Seamen in the New England Whaling Industry: An Afro-Indian Consortium," 76-107; Tiya Miles, "Uncle Tom Was an Indian: Tracing the Red in Black Slavery," 137-160; Ron Welburn, "A Most Secret Identity: Native

And, indeed, participants in "Shifting Borders" conferences have contributed to the emerging scholarship on American Indian and African American intersections during the past two years. Ranging from the training for African Americans and Native Americans to mixed-blood literary-canon critique, papers presented at the "Shifting Borders" conferences have expanded research on African American and Native American intersections. They have illuminated some hidden aspects of African American and American Indian relations. For instance, Gary Zellar demonstrates how African Creeks had been instrumental in setting up the first Christian churches in the Creek nation. Further, Zellar asserts that African Creeks have not only facilitated the absorption of Euro American racial attitudes but have played a key role in promoting "the use of slave labor that had enormous consequences for African Creek status and identity in the Indian nation." <sup>10</sup>

Daniel F. Littlefield Jr. contends that as late as 1774, peoples of African descent were not always on good terms with the Seminoles. That African Americans and American Indians have been at odds with each other did not altogether keep both populations apart, however. In the American Southwest, for

American Assimilation and Identity Resistance in African America," 292-320; and C. Richard King, "Estrangements: Native American Mascots and Indian-Black Relations," 346-370. Other scholarly publications on African American and American Indian common historiography comprise: Jack D. Forbes, Black Africans and Native Americans: Color, Race, and Caste in the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Jan R. Carew, "United We Stand! Joint Struggles of Native Americans and African Americans in the Columbian Era," Monthly Review 44:3 (1991): 103-127; Annie H. Abel, The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); Jack D. Forbes, Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Daniel R. Mandell, "Shifting Boundaries of Race and Ethnicity: Indian-Black Intermarriage in Southern New England, 1760-1880," Journal of American History 85:2 (Sept. 1998): 466-501; Murray R. Wickett, Contested Territory: Whites, Native Americans, and African Americans in Oklahoma, 1865-1907 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000); James N. Leiker, Racial Borders: Black Soldiers along the Rio Grande (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2002).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Gary Zellar, "Europe Speaking to America through Africa: The African Creek Role in Introducing Christianity into the Creek Nation," available online at <a href="http://www.shiftingborders.ku.edu/presentations/zeller.html">http://www.shiftingborders.ku.edu/presentations/zeller.html</a>; date consulted: April 24, 2007. LaRose Davis challenges the limitations of mixed-race literary canon solely based on definitions of mixed race from biological perspectives. For Davis, determining the lineage of a child of mixed-race ancestry by assigning the child the race of his or her more socially subordinate parent is limiting the child's multiracial heritages; see LaRose Davis, "Real Africans, Real Natives: Whoever They Might Be: Refiguring the Mixed Race Concept." See also James N. Leiker, "Tangled Histories: Contemporary Research on African American/Native American Intersections." All three texts are available online at <a href="http://www.shiftingborders.ku.edu/list.html#">http://www.shiftingborders.ku.edu/list.html#</a>; last time consulted: April 24, 2007.

instance, Native Americans and blacks interacted throughout the Spanish colonial period, roughly from 1500-1800. Nearly 500 persons of African descent accompanied the Seminoles to the West during the latter's removal from Florida between 1838 and 1843. Some of these blacks had recently become part of the Seminole community through theft, purchase, or as runaway slaves from the nearby plantations. Also included in this wave of migration were runaway slaves who had formed their own communities after seeking refuge in Florida during the eighteenth century. These interactions often resulted in the most intimate of relations, including romance and formal marriages. Aspects of these relations included slavery as well. Contrary to the widely held view that slavery consisted only of Euro Americans owning people of African descent, the reality defied easy categorization. In actuality, some whites were enslaved or indentured, a few blacks were free, and a few Indians owned African slaves or were enslaved themselves.

William Loren Katz, Daniel F. Littlefield Jr., Devon Abbott Mihesuah, Kevin Mulroy, and James F. Brooks have scrutinized relationships between whites and Indians, on one hand, and between Indians and African Americans, on the other. These studies reveal that some American Indians owned African slaves, as did some Euro Americans in the Southern colonies. For instance, the "Five Civilized Tribes"—the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and the Seminoles—adapted European ways that included agricultural methods and the use of African slaves to work their farms. According to some scholars, African slave labor played a key role in the rapid ascendancy of Indian slaveholders to prominence in Indian Territory. Arguing that chattel slavery was never absent in the Southwest borderlands and was particularly common along their eastern

<sup>11</sup> Daniel F. Littlefield Jr., *Africans and Seminoles: From Removal to Emancipation* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See Dedra S. McDonald, "Intimacy and Empire: Indian-African Interaction in Spanish Colonial New Mexico, 1500-1800," in James F. Brooks, ed., *Confounding the Color*, 21-46; and Susan A. Miller, *Coacoochee's Bones: A Seminole Saga* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 59-60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 46-59; 234-41 and 332-34. See William Loren Katz, *Black Indians*, p.138, for the numbers of African slaves owned by Indian nations.

frontiers, Brooks claims that slaveholding élites among the Five Civilized Tribes brought with them approximately five thousand slaves—about 6 percent of the total population—during their relocation to Indian Territory throughout the 1830s.<sup>14</sup>

Other scholars describe basic variations in slaveholding among the Five Nations. Littlefield finds that Cherokees became slaveholders after contact with Euro Americans, and that Cherokees who shunned slavery adopted Euro American attitudes toward blacks. The strictness of the Cherokee slave code speaks volumes to this assertion. Although a relatively small number of Indians were slaveholders (less than 3 percent), Katz affirms that bondage created destructive cleavages within their communities and promoted class hierarchy based on "white blood," with racial and class ideology approaching that of the white South.

Rhett S. Jones's survey of a rich variety of scholarship contrasts the Cherokees with the Seminoles in equal terms. Generally, the Seminoles took a "different attitude toward Blacks and slavery than the Cherokees." <sup>17</sup> Influenced by the values of their Euro American neighbors, the Cherokees followed suit by passing an act forbidding "any person or persons whatever, to teach any free negro or negros not of Cherokee blood, or any slave belonging to any citizen or citizens of the Nation, to read or write." <sup>18</sup> By comparing (ill)-treatment of African slaves in the First Nations as documented in scholarly sources, Jones's study comes up with a contrasting finding. At one end of the continuum, Jones locates the Cherokees, who tended to adopt many attitudes and practices of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> James F. Brooks, Captives and Cousins, 307.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Daniel F. Littlefield Jr., *Africans and Seminoles*, 78-79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> William Loren Katz, "Africans and Indians: Only in America. Bound By Commonality and Miscegenation throughout American History," available at <a href="http://www.cwo.com/~lucumi/blk-ind.html">http://www.cwo.com/~lucumi/blk-ind.html</a>; consulted on August 10, 2006; and Katz, *Black Indians*, 138. See also Susan A. Miller, *Coacoochee's Bones*, 56; and Devon A. Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds: The Education of Women at the Cherokee Female Seminary*, 1851-1909 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 104-105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Rhett S. Jones, "Black/Indian Relations: An Overview of the Scholarship," *Transforming Anthropology*, 10: 1 (2001): 3-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Devon A. Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds*, 18.

slaveholding South. Mihesuah elaborates: "Teachers and ministers were careful not to preach against slavery, even if they were abolitionists, in order to avoid being expelled from the Cherokee Nation. They were well aware that many of the students were from slave-holding families and that even Chief Ross owned at least forty slaves." At the other end of the continuum, the Seminoles tended to reject slaveholding practices. In fact, the Seminoles allowed Africans to live in separate settlements and to enjoy most products of their labor: "They live in villages separate, and, in many cases, remote from their owners, [enjoying] equal liberty with their owners."

More explanation of the Seminoles' general attitude in this matter is warranted. The Seminoles associated servitude with capture in warfare rather than with an organized labor system. By the 1770s, they tended to view captives as replacements for tribal members lost during wars; adoption was the usual result. Prior to their encounter with Africans, then, Seminoles had enslaved other Indians.<sup>22</sup> In addition, special circumstances leading to Seminoles' meeting with Africans shaped their interactions accordingly. During the period in which the Seminoles were establishing a separate political entity in Florida, the Spanish were treating Africans favorably. In general, the Spanish welcomed runaway slaves from Southern plantations by giving them freedom. In return, runaways were asked for full cooperation in repelling a common enemy, the English Americans. To some extent, Spanish treatment of African runaway slaves may have impressed the Seminoles positively. "The Spaniards allowed Africans to live apart, own arms and property, travel at will, choose their own leaders, organize into military companies under black officers, and generally control their own destinies,"23 so much so that some scholars have stressed the indulgence of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Devon A. Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds*, 36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Rhett S. Jones, "Black/Indian Relations," 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Kevin Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila, and Texas* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 1993), 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> See, for instance, James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins, 5; and Kevin Mulroy, Freedom on the Border*, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Kevin Mulroy, Freedom on the Border, 10.

Seminoles toward African slaves. Seminole masters required little labor from their African slaves, who generally lived in areas separate from the Indians, tilling and planting their own crops. In return, their masters required an annual token of their products. Overall, this describes a benign form of slavery practiced in Africa before the advent of a mass scale slavery introduced by European traders. Generally, slaves were kindly treated in pre-European Africa. As a domestic institution in Africa, slavery required all masters to provide their slaves with food, clothing, a house, a farm plot to work on half shares, and also a wife or husband. The phrase slave for life, for instance, was almost unheard of in Africa, where slaves could elevate themselves, consolidate their social status, and ultimately gain freedom in various ways. Many slaves had bought "their freedom with what they save from farming on half share with their masters," while others had won their freedom by marrying into the family that owned them. And, indeed, some slaves prospered beyond their masters. Some had even taken slaves for themselves, and some had become very famous persons.

Despite these intriguing observations about exceptions to the South's rigid system of slavery and segregation, these rare practices do not overshadow widely accepted slaveholding rules that regulated the social fabric in America for generations. A noteworthy principle to bear in mind in this connection is the concept of divide and rule. Many scholars concur that British merchants introduced Africans as slaves—as an organized system of labor—to the Five Nations in order to make partners of the Indians. My study of autobiographies of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., Africans and Seminoles, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Paul James Bohannan, Africa and the Africans (Garden City, NY: The Natural History Press, 1964), 105-106; and Adu A. Boahen, Topics in West African History (Hong Kong: Commonwealth Printing Press, 1981), 110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Alex Haley, Roots (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 52-53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> ibid, 53.

escaped slaves and scholarly publications on African Americans and American Indians has identified some striking recurrent themes that bind both together.<sup>28</sup>

If some European groups such as the Puritans and Quakers migrated to the United States in part to preserve their ways of life in less-threatening settings, as lan K. Steele notes, other groups of actors in the New World drama were deprived of this luxury in an environment fraught with political domination, legal enslavement, economic exploitation, and social control resulting from overwhelming power in the hands of some European settlers to exclude and exploit. <sup>29</sup> Given their particular histories in the Americas, African Americans and the indigenous peoples of North America are deeply interconnected through numerous parallels. This article covers three major commonalities found in scholarship on the plights of both marginalized groups. Coupled with their minority status, these groups have been brutalized, but they still resist Western cultural domination.

Scholarship on African Americans and Native Americans provides a set of attributes that both groups share. From the outset, the theme of victimization dominates the scholarly literature on both racial groups. Some studies attempt to demonstrate that blacks suffered more than Indians, or that Indians suffered

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> On African Americans, see, for instance, Walter Johnson, Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1999), Frederick Douglass, The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave (New York: Viking, 1982); My Bondage and My Freedom (New York: Dover, 1982); Booker T. Washington, Up from Slavery (New York: Airmont Publishing Co. Inc., 1967); Randall M. Miller and John David Smith, eds., Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988); John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans, 7th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994); John Blassingame, The Slave Community (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); W. Haywood Burns, The Voices of Negro Protest in America, foreword by John Hope Franklin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963); Bernard W. Bell, The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987); Dexter Fisher and Robert Stepto, The Afro-American Literature: The Reconstruction of Instruction (New York: Modern Language Association, 1978); and Richard Wright, Black Boy (New York: Harper and Row, 1989). On American Indians, see, for instance, Howard Adams, A Tortured People: The Politics of Colonization (Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 1995); MariJo Moore, ed., Genocide of the Mind: New Native American Writing (New York; Nation Books, 2003); Susan A. Miller, Coacoochee's Bones; Dee Alexander Brown, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West (New York: Henry Holt, 1991); Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Anti-Indianism in Modern America: A Voice from Tatekeva's Earth (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), and Devon Abbott Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women*: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), among others.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ian K. Steele, "Exploding Colonial American History: Amerindian, Atlantic, and Global Perspectives," *Reviews in American History*, 26:1 (1998): 70-95; 81.

more than blacks. Brown University Professor of Africana studies Rhett S. Jones, in his review of the scholarship on white/black/Indian relations, identifies an area he terms "chauvinistic studies." He observes, "Blacks and Indians, or those who write on their behalf, try to demonstrate that they were somehow treated worse than, or were superior to, the other race." As a student versed in the sociology of victimization, I find it pointless, even cynical, to quantify human suffering for comparison purposes. Hasn't Elaine Scarry argued that some entities elude quantification? Pain and happiness cannot be objectively measured. It is abhorrent to engage in such a vicious exercise on behalf of groups who have known oppression, suffering, and exploitation at the hands of a common oppressor. It is an ethical question. Fanon asserts, "All forms of exploitation resemble one another. . . . All forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same 'object': man."

While this article does not support the view that African Americans, or Native Americans, have suffered more in contrast to the multitude of ethnic groups in the United States, it assesses the concept of victimization for both. Arguably, within the historical context of the United States, American Indians and African Americans have more in common with each other than they do with other minority groups. They fully meet the criteria used by clinical psychologist Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan in his definition of oppressed peoples. Bulhan theorizes that anyone who finds his/her physical and psychological space unacknowledged, intruded into, and/or curtailed is an oppressed person. He notes that "The energy of the oppressed is often depleted, expropriated, and harnessed to advance the oppressor's interests." Finally, arguing that the movements of the oppressed are controlled and curbed, Bulhan concludes: "All situations of oppression violate one's space, time, energy, mobility, bonding, and identity." 33

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Rhett S. Jones, "Black/Indian Relations," 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>Elaine Scarry, Resisting Representation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 13-48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1971), 88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression, 124.

## First Commonality: They Constitute Minorities in America

When Christopher Columbus thought he had discovered the "New World," it is estimated that 10-30 million indigenous peoples lived in the geographic area currently covered by Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The first US census was taken in 1790 and counted 3.9 million inhabitants. Blacks were enumerated in the 1790 census and represented 19.3 percent of the population. Although estimates of the numbers of Native Americans have been made since the founding of the United States, it was not until 1860 that the federal government counted members of this group. In that year, American Indians were counted only if they had left their reservations and lived among other Americans. The 1890 census was the first to obtain a complete count of the American indigenous population throughout the country. The table below gives an idea of how the population of African Americans and Native Americans measure against the majority population. The 1850 census was the first to obtain a complete count of the American indigenous population of African Americans and Native Americans measure against the majority population.

Year	1860	1890	1960	1990
Total population	31,443,321	62,622,250	178,464,236	248,709,873
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
White	26,922,537	54,983,890	158,454,956	199,686,070
	(85.6%)	(87.8%)	(88.8%)	(80.3%)
Black	4,441,830	7,470,040	18,860,117	29,986,060
	(14.1%)	(11.9%)	(10.6%)	(12.1%)
American Indian,	44,021	58,806	508,675	1,959,234
Eskimo and Aleut	(0.1%)	(0.1%)	(0.3%)	(0.8%)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> See: *We the . . . First Americans*; issued by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration; September 1993, p. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Data collected from U.S. Census Bureau, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1780 to 1990," available at www. census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056.html; consulted on February 6, 2007. Since I am primarily dealing with African Americans and American Indians in this essay, I have omitted Hispanics from this table.

As of 2006, it is estimated that whites represented 81.7 percent; blacks represented 12.9 percent; American Indians and Alaska Natives accounted for 1 percent of the total population. In all, as of April 30, 2007, both groups make up about 14 percent of the total population of 301,730,860.

Coupled with the official census, scholarship on African Americans and Native Americans places both groups in the minority category. In spite of not identifying themselves as a (political) minority, Indians are in most ways a minority group in the United States. Demographically speaking, the peoples forever indigenous to this continent, the American Indians, are minorities.

Those people now called African Americans, who represented a majority in their homeland, were brought to the United States as involuntary immigrants only to find themselves in a minority position with all the consequences such a status entails in a racist environment.<sup>37</sup> The DuBoisian concept of "double consciousness" impacted their daily lives, with its complexities of being both American/English and not American/English simultaneously. Likewise, American Indians, who have been in this nation since time immemorial and who constituted a majority in pre-Columbian America, are now reduced to a tiny group that survived a genocidal history.<sup>38</sup> Yet, tribal intellectuals, including Vine Deloria Jr., David E. Wilkins, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Robert Warrior, and Gerald Vizenor, strongly deny that American indigenous peoples are minorities within the United

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> An instantaneous world and American population is available at <a href="http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html">http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html</a> (Accessed on April 30, at 1:15 p.m. – GMT (8: 15 a.m..Kansas time).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Estimates of Africans who became commodity of the Atlantic trade range from 15-150 million. See Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, 41-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> See Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *Anti-Indianism in Modern America*, 185-195; Vine Deloria Jr., and Sandra L. Cadwalader, eds., *The Aggressions of Civilization: Federal Indian Policy since the 1880s* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984); Lynwood Carranco and Estle Beard, Genocide and Vendetta: *The Round Valley Wars of Northern California* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981); Robert S. Cotterill, *The Southern Indians: The Story of the Civilized Tribes before Removal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954); Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance: A History of the Creek Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941); Arthur H. DeRosier Jr., *The Removal of the Choctaw Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970); T. R. Fehrenbach, *The Comanches: The Destruction of a People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984); and Robert F. Heizer, *The Destruction of California Indians: A Collection of Documents from 1847-1865* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).

States. These scholars underscore the sovereign status of American Indian nations: "The reality is that from the beginning, the indigenous peoples in North and South America have behaved as nations among other nations, with complex governing and social systems, and a history of treaty-signing with the United States that has been largely ignored and dismissed by American and European scholars," according to Cook-Lynn. <sup>39</sup> Based on the history of treaty-making between Indian nations and the United States, American Indians rightly view themselves as members of sovereign nations and separate political cultures that entitle them to privileges under international law. As Deloria and Lytle put it, American Indians are "Nations within." Hence the specific state taxation privileges that federally recognized First Nations enjoy, among other benefits unforeseen by United States authorities. Taxation remains a contentious point; state governments do not have the authority to tax tribal members on their reserved homelands.

Granted, American Indians have standing treaties with the federal government. In fact, the numerous treaties between Indian nations and the United States were based on fundamentally sound principles of international law including mutual recognition of sovereignty. Scholars provide varying counts of treaties signed by both protagonists. Ward Churchill notes that between 1790 and 1870, the United States government entered into 371 treaties with various First Nations in North America. David E. Wilkins identifies hundreds of treaties, over 300 of which are still legally valid, a fact confirmed in Deloria and DeMallie's comprehensive work. 41 Documents of American Indian Diplomacy not only

<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *Anti-Indianism in Modern America*, 24. For a striking comparison of their political and other institutions, see M. Annette Jaimes, "The Stone Age Revisited: An Indigenist View of Primitivism, Industrialism and the Labor Process," *Wicazo Sa Review*, 7: 2 (1991): 34-48. See also Gerald Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses: Native American Scenes of Presence and Absence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); and David E. Wilkins, *American Indian Sovereignty and the U.S. Supreme Court: The Masking of Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Vine Deloria Jr., and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ward Churchill, "The Situation of Indigenous Populations in the United States: A Contemporary Perspective," *Wicazo Sa Review*, 1: 1 (1985): 30-35; David E. Wilkins, "The Cloaking of Justice: The Supreme Court's Role in the Application of Western Law to America's Indigenous Peoples," *Wicazo Sa* 

provides extensive historical context surrounding ratified treaties and agreements but also highlights American Indians' roles as active agents in international diplomatic affairs. To refute their minority position engrained in mainstream views, radical American Indian intellectuals address key issues of land-theft, cultural diminishment, misguided governmental policy, and faux morality in the context of struggles for Native sovereignty and survival, all revolving around the fundamental theme of anti-Indianism in America.<sup>42</sup>

In light of American Indians' grounded claims to sovereignty and separate nationhood distinct from the United States, many will assume that African Americans' lack of an alternative to a racist nation entitles them to minority status, unlike the case of American Indians. As I shall demonstrate, both groups share minority status, not only from a numerical perspective but also from a political perspective.

# They Have Been Displaced, Murdered, or Denied Sovereignty and Equal Place in Society

"To kill Indians with conviction, Columbus had to attribute to them a mode of life whose very evil made it basically commensurate with his own." Cook-Lynn articulates a diatribe against the American empire and cultural imperialism:

Imperialism, defined as the policy of extending the rule of an empire over colonies for reasons of conquest and profit, was a condition that clearly marked early Indian/white relations and continues today, on and off Indian Reserved Homelands throughout the country. It is the impetus for colonial

Review, 10: 1 (1994): 1-13; Vine Deloria Jr., and Raymond J. DeMallie, *Documents of American Indian Diplomacy: Treaties, Agreements, and Conventions*, 1775-1979; 2 vols., foreword by Daniel K. Inouye (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Cook-Lynn defines "anti-Indianism" as the sentiment "which treats Indians and their tribes as though they don't exist, the sentiment that suggests that Indian nationhood (i.e., tribalism) should be disavowed and devalued." See *Anti-Indianism in Modern America*, x.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Myra Jehlen, "Why Did the Europeans Cross the Ocean?: A Seventeenth-Century Riddle," in Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., Cultures of United States Imperialism (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 45.

praxis, which has become the basis for several centuries of oppression as well as the contemporary crimes of America that remain unlitigated.<sup>44</sup>

My comparative scrutiny of American Indian and African American literatures reveals shared themes of genocide, brutality, exploitation, colonization, and marginalization. In light of these experiences, African Americans and American Indians are not only "the First and the Forced"; they also remain "the Wretched of the Earth," to use Frantz Fanon's insightful phrase. In the so-called "New World," peoples of African descent are reminded daily of the hostile environment into which they were transplanted after removal from their homeland. Their traumatic transatlantic voyage—the Middle Passage—foretold the bleak conditions awaiting them in America, a country they and their posterity would call home for their remaining days. Despite living in "the land of the free," African Americans must still rely on the justice system of the United States to enforce fair treatment for them on their continent of adoption. Many African American scholars continue to envision their history in terms of a journey toward liberation. In the solution of the stream of the envision their history in terms of a journey toward liberation.

At the other end of the continuum are American Indians, whose status as sovereign nations is seriously jeopardized: colonization and imperial ideology

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Cook-Lynn, Anti-Indianism in Modern America, 5-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> See, for instance, Ira Berlin et al., eds., *Free at Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War* (New York: New Press, 1992); Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Dover, 1969); Alferdteen Harrison, Black Exodus: *The Great Migration from the American South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1992); Randal Miller and John David Smith, eds., *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery*; George E. Thinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Vine Deloria Jr., and Sandra Cadwalader, eds., *The Aggressions of Civilization*; Richard A. Grounds, George E. Thinker, and David E. Wilkins, eds., *Native American Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003); Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown 1993), 166-84, 225-66, 340-69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> A number of African American authors have written both fiction and nonfiction works about the condition of blacks in the United States. Frederick Douglass's classic work, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, is one illustration. In addition, Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton's study, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), is another political statement amplifying the issue of domination and liberation for African Americans. See also John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*. The title of Molefi Kete Asante's book speaks clearly to the point: *African American History: A Journey of Liberation* (Maywood, NJ: Peoples Publishing Group, 1995). Finally, the theme of African American Month this year (2007) says it well: "From Slavery to Freedom: Africans in the Americas."

prevail. Cook-Lynn bitterly remarks that despite their treaties with the United States, "American Indians are treated as colonized peoples." She asserts,

[T]he autonomy and sovereignty of the First Nations of America has been thought to be incidental, i.e., occurring as a "fortuitous or minor concomitant," the point being that Indians and Indian nations will in time cease to exist and their citizenship rights as citizens of their nations, therefore, are either nonexistent or disappearing. Since the beginning of colonization in America, its scholars, historians, and politicians have sought to define and describe the native populations in this "incidental" way. 47

Julia V. Emberley theorizes that colonialism becomes discernible when any ruling nation dominates "indigenous peoples, economically, politically, culturally, religiously, and legally." The ruling power exerts domination over the native populations by means of cultural and economic restrictions. Edward W. Said envisions imperialism as "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory," a practice that still "lingers where [colonialism] has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices." Aimé Césaire has written the most radical definition of colonialism by casting the violation of basic human rights as the centerpiece of the concept: colonialism is the process whereby human beings are animalized. 50

The above definitions apply fully to the system of internal colonialism to which indigenous nations are subjected. The nineteenth century was a turbulent period marked by the beginning of American imperialism and the expansion of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Cook-Lynn, "The Literary and Political Questions of Transformation: American Indian Fiction Writers," Wicazo Sa Review, 1: 1 (1995): 47; reprinted in *Anti-Indianism in Modern America*, 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Julia V. Emberley, *Thresholds of Difference: Feminist Critique, Native Women's Writings, Postcolonial Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 177. In the original French version, he writes: "colonisation égale chosification" (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1955), 19. By this neologism "chosification," he means colonial subjects become objects or things in the colonial system.

national borders from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. The political scientist Albert Weinberg observes that by the decade of the 1840s, the notion of continental dominion, the expansion "from sea to sea," and the concept of Manifest Destiny had become the nation's dominant ideological construct. Ronald Takaki and Devon Abbott Mihesuah assert that the American expansionist effort in the nineteenth century fomented an ideology of racial superiority and entitlement to land that called for driving out American Indians to extend the boundaries of a "chosen" nation and satisfy land-hungry populations. An examination of the tense relationships between the United States and the First Nations located within its geopolitical boundaries fits Albert Memmi's classic description of the colonized/colonizer interactions. Despite being denizens of the mightiest economic nation on the face of the earth, members of both marginalized groups share similar socioeconomic statuses with other economically disadvantaged Third World citizens.

The economic census, which provides essential information for the general public, is a major source of facts about the structure and functioning of the American economy. The US Department of Commerce estimates that 51 percent of American Indians residing on reservations and trust lands were living below the poverty level in 1989.<sup>53</sup> In that same year, the proportion of American Indians living below the government poverty level was 31 percent, compared with the national poverty rate of 13 percent. In 1990, the median family income of American Indians was \$21,750, compared with \$35,225 for the total population. In other words, for every \$100 US families earned, American Indians families earned \$62. Also, a 1997 survey estimated that American Indian and Alaska

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Albert Weinberg, Manifest Destiny (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935), 43-62; Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 166-84; 225-66; and Devon Abbott Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 41-61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> See, Albert Memmi, *L'homme dominé* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985); *Le Portrait du colonisé* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), and *Le Portrait du colonisateur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> We the . . . First Americans, 6-12.

Native-owned firms accounted for 1 percent of nonfarm business in the United States and 0.4 percent of their receipts.<sup>54</sup>

American Indians living on reservations cannot take indoor plumbing for granted, as most Americans can. The Census Bureau finds that their households were as likely to lack complete plumbing facilities in 1990 as all US households were in the 1950s. According to this report, 20 percent of American Indian housing units on reservations and trust lands lacked plumbing in 1990. In addition, many American Indians lived in crowded housing and coped with the absence of two amenities no household can do without in a developed country: refrigerators and telephones.<sup>55</sup>

With statistics simultaneously supporting both residual effects of historical marginalization and sustained progress for large sections of the population, the collective economic status of African Americans remains a matter of debate. The overall median income of African Americans is roughly 65 percent of that of white people. In 2003, 17.4 percent of African American families made a total income of \$75,000 or more, compared with 37.7 percent of white families; 4.1 percent of African American families made a total income of \$2,499 or less, compared with 1.3 percent of white families. There is more alarming news from the report released by the National Urban League. The *State of Black America 2006* report concludes: "the median net worth of the average African American family is ten times less than the average White family, (\$6,166 versus \$67,000 respectively). This is largely due to the difference in home ownership, home equity values, and income. Blacks own nearly 50 percent of their homes, while

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> US Census Bureau, *American Indians and Alaska Natives—1997 Economic Census: Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises*. Issued in May 2001 (EC97CS-6), p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> See Statistical Brief SB/95-9, issued in April 1995, by the U.S. Department of Commerce; available at <a href="http://www.census.gov/apsd/www/statbrief/">http://www.census.gov/apsd/www/statbrief/</a>; page numbers not available; consulted on February 12, 2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African\_Americans; consulted on February 12, 2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> See US Census Bureau, Racial Statistics Branch, Population Division; "Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2004," Internet release date: March 2006. Available at <a href="http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/race/black/ppl-186/tab15.html">http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/race/black/ppl-186/tab15.html</a>; consulted on February 12, 2007.

Whites own over 70 percent of their homes." Furthermore, although the 2006 report notes an economic bright spot—the growth of black-owned businesses in recent years—there still is a significant disparity between white- and black-owned businesses, because "access to financing and capital still prevent most Black owned businesses from stabilizing and expanding."58

Based on these historical and socioeconomic elements, some scholars suggest African Americans and American Indians might belong to the Fourth World. 59 According to the United Nations, Fourth World countries are nations that exhibit the lowest indicators of socioeconomic development, with the lowest human development index ratings of all countries worldwide. A Fourth World country must meet three criteria: low-income, human resource weakness, and economic vulnerability. Given the cost of living and the level of development in the United States, an argument can be made that both minority groups are relatively poor amid plenty. 60 Resulting from this economic marginalization, both African Americans and American Indians share high rates of incarceration, low literacy rates, and lower life expectancy.

From 1492 on, European countries and later the United States justified their dealings with First Nations under the doctrine of discovery. Under this principle, the European country that first discovered a new area where Christian Europeans had not yet set foot could claim the territory as its own. In other words, American Indians could sell their land only to the one European nation that "discovered" them; they could deal politically only with that one European

http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view article.html?article id=f01a3a8eb0e38e94567fa723fce1e154 ; consulted on February 18, 2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Commentary by Marc H. Morial, president and chief executive of National Urban League; posted on April 04, 2006 and available at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Edward C. Valandra, "Rethinking Indigenous Underdevelopment in the United States," Wicazo Sa Review, 12: 2 (1997): 111-49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> For a compelling analysis of how poverty affects disadvantaged peoples in the United States, see David Cohen, Chasing the Red, White, and Blue: A Journey in Tocqueville's Footsteps through Contemporary America (New York: Picador, 2001).

state.<sup>61</sup> Ironically, Europeans' agreement to be bound by the principle that the discovering country earned a protectible property right in newly discovered territories has legal consequences for the "discoverers": Europeans enforced the discovery doctrine against themselves.

Legal scholar Felix S. Cohen observes that the status of tribal nations in the United States "is not a matter of race or birth but is a matter of contract or consent."62 American Indians endure a colonial system similar in many respects to European colonies established in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; they are subjugated and robbed of their lands, despite treaties. Reminiscent of colonial arrogance primarily realized through occupation of fertile lands for economic purposes in Africa, the American Indian's frequent removals at the convenience of the new imperial power is a grim reminder of their colonial status. 63 Notwithstanding the right to sovereignty that devolves from historical treaties, Indian nations are controlled politically and economically by the United States. One needs only peruse the scholarship by some American indigenous intellectuals to realize how colonialism remains the driving force behind their writing. For instance, Vine Deloria Jr., Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, and Gerald Vizenor are centrally concerned with the uncertain future of First Nations due to their unstable legal, political, and economic positions resulting from colonialism. Their works not only address crucial issues of politics, law, and religion in the context of ongoing Native American resistance to the dominant culture but also promote American Indian cultural nationalism and greater understanding of Native American history and philosophy. Although Indians are, these days, generally welcome to the land left to them, which is mostly inhospitable, the land is appropriated again, if it is discovered to have value in resources such as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Antony Anghie, *Colonialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Lucy Cohen, ed., *The Legal Conscience: Selected Papers of Felix S. Cohen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 255; as quoted in David E. Wilkins, "The Cloaking of Justice," 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> On the colonial occupation of land and its consequences in Africa, see the Kenyan case in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Weep Not, Child* (London: Heinemann, 1966), and Petals of Blood (London: Heinemann, 1977).

minerals and oil. In any case, Fanon expresses the need for endless battle to keep Indian land from the colonizer's grab: "For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity." Reminiscent of Fanon, Memmi, Césaire, Ngugi, Cabral, Lamming, and other anti-colonialist and nationalist writers, the fiction and criticism of radical American indigenous scholars engage colonialism and its destructive effects on American Indians. 65

In sum, America is resolutely committed to a gigantic project of colonizing Native nations. Deloria and Wilkins explain that in its infancy, the United States gave indigenous sovereignty its due in negotiating treaties of peace and friendship with the Indian nations. The federal government was in no position to presume to have jurisdiction over the internal affairs of Indian nations or to exercise governing powers over Indian peoples. Since the survival of the United States depended on alliances with Indian nations that might otherwise side with England or pose a military threat to the young country, America had no choice but to respect the independent nation status and the right to self-determination of the indigenous nations with which it came into contact. However, with the passing of time and for colonial purposes, America began dodging its treaties with Indian nations, violating the prerogatives of Indian sovereignty. <sup>66</sup> Charles Wilkinson argues that one fundamental barrier Native Americans have faced is that public understanding of their distinctive issues comes slowly. He adds:

Their special rights are complex and history-based, emerging from the deep past rather than being ignited by the fire of moment. . . . In every instance, the Indian position is fragile because it ultimately depends on the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*; trans. Constance Farrington (Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1967), 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Particularly, see their publications in these four academic journals: *Studies in American Indian Literatures, American Indian Culture and Research Journal, American Indian Quarterly*, and *Wicazo Sa Review*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Vine Deloria Jr., and David E. Wilkins, *Tribes, Treaties, and Constitutional Tribulations* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999). See also Vine Deloria Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence* (New York: Dell, 1974).

capacity and willingness of the majority society to explore unfamiliar intellectual terrain.<sup>67</sup>

The willingness of mainstream America to understand American Indians' distinctive rights is eclipsed by the will to colonize that is deeply engrained in the American unconscious.<sup>68</sup>

#### **Both Groups Have Resisted Western Cultural Domination**

There is a large body of literature addressing the effort of policymakers to uproot both groups culturally. Cultural disruption (for African Americans) and cultural assimilation (for American Indians) remain two primary consequences of American policies. In other words, cultural annihilation stands as the common denominator, the centerpiece of policy formulation for both minority groups. Removed from their homeland, Africans are expected to experience a cultural tabula rasa; instead, they have adapted to exigencies of a new environment through cultural recycling. After centuries of forced removal, Africans still hold onto their African worldviews. Jessie Gaston Mulira finds that vodu (which is Dahomean in origin and means "spirit" or "deity") remains the most dominant and intact sign of African religious survival in the black diaspora. Vodu is still actively practiced in New Orleans, as it is in West Africa. Other studies have shown the cohesive role of vodu in slave communities. C. L. R. James affirms vodu provided African slaves with creative, conspiratorial, organizational, and political strategies to circumvent their masters' rule. Critic Sandra Adell reminds us that black diasporan peoples redefine their African-ness through vodu ceremonies that recover, reconstitute, or (re)affirm their history and culture. The character of Avey Johnson in Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow* is a typical case

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Charles F. Wilkinson, "To Feel the Summer in the Spring: The Treaty Fishing Rights of the Wisconsin Chippewa," 1991 *Wis. L. Rev.* 375, 378-79, as quoted by Robert A. Williams Jr., *Linking Arms Together: American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace*, 1600-1800 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 134.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Amy Kaplan, "'Left Alone with America': The Absence of Empire in American Culture," in Kaplan and Pease, eds., op .cit., 3-21.

showing the vital role of vodu in the lives of African diasporan peoples.<sup>69</sup> All in all, these examples illustrate that an Afrocentric perspective still shapes many African Americans' worldviews.<sup>70</sup>

Deloria contends that the Indian Rights Association, founded in 1882, came into being "when public attention was shifting from the continuous conflicts on the frontier to new ways of assimilating the surviving members of Indian tribes into American society." Native Americans were once the targets of the most radical form of assimilation policy "aimed at forcing indigenous nations to jettison their cultural identities and part with their communal lands." Although the timeline cannot be verified, it is generally believed that the United States government began to create federal and state agencies to impose the mainstream model of education on American Indians soon after independence from Britain. Some scholars demarcate the period starting in the early 1800s and extending to the late 1950s. During this time, radical attempts were made to alienate indigenous peoples from their traditions and force them into American culture. Indian Bureau personnel placed great faith in the power of education as a civilizing device. As strong believers in progress, missionaries endowed education with a transformational possibility in matters of civilizing American

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Jessie Gaston Mulira, in Joseph E. Holloway, ed., op. cit., 34-68; Cyril Lionel Robert James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*; 2nd and revised edition (New York: Vintage, 1963); Sandra Adell, *Double Consciousness, Double Bind* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 30; Paule Marshall, *Praisesong for the Widow* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1983).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> On this subject, see these three books by Molefi Kete Asante: *The Afrocentric Idea* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), *Afrocentricity* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1988), and *Malcom X as Cultural Hero and Other Afrocentric Essays* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Deloria Jr., and Cadwalader, eds., op. cit., 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> David E. Wilkins, "Tribal-State Affairs: American States as 'Disclaiming' Sovereigns," in Brad A. Bays and Erin Hogan Fouberg, eds., *The Tribes and the States: Geographies of Intergovernmental Interaction* (Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 1-28; 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> See Francis Paul Prucha, ed., Americanizing the American Indian: Writing by the Friends of Indians, 1880-1900 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), and Frederick E. Hoxie, A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Morgan Otis, "Indian Education: A Cultural Dilemma," in Jeannette Henry, ed., The American Indian Reader (San Francisco, CA: American Indian Educational Publishers, 1972), 66-73.

Indians.<sup>75</sup> In order to disintegrate the tribes, schooling in English language with a heavy emphasis on Anglo American culture became mandatory, while all tribal history and traditions were to be suppressed:

The original intent of Indian education was to wean the child away from his or her family, community, relatives, clan, band, and tribe. People seriously believed that if an Indian child was brought within the purview of non-Indian education at an early age, the corruptive influences of Indian people would not affect them and they would grow up to be "normal." That is to say, they would naturally adopt and exemplify all the values and perspectives of the non-Indian society.<sup>76</sup>

Thus, early off-reservation boarding schools and on-reservation mission schools actively encouraged assimilation of American Indians.<sup>77</sup> Emulating the Carlisle model set up by Richard Henry Pratt, a confirmed believer in assimilation and progress, many boarding schools worked tirelessly in hope of turning "young Natives against the traditions of their communities by any means necessary, including beating and forced separation from family."<sup>78</sup> It is not surprising that some scholars use the concept of ethnocide when referring to this policy.<sup>79</sup> By declaring war on American Indian language, culture, and religion, schooling became the centerpiece of the government's forced assimilation policy.

Meanwhile, most African Americans were generally denied education. Of the total black population of 1,002,037 in 1800, only 108,435 were free; the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Graham D. Taylor, The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-45 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 14; Ronald N. Satz, American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 253-54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Vine Deloria Jr., and Daniel Wildcat, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Resources, 2001), 155-56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Andrew Cowell "Bilingual Curriculum among the Northern Arapaho: Oral Tradition, Literacy, and Performance," *American Indian Quarterly* 26:1 (2002): 24-43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Caskey Russell, "Language, Violence, and Indian Mis-education," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 26:4 (2002): 97-112; see also Robert Allen Warrior, Tribal Secrets: *Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Donald A. Grinde, "Taking the Indian out of the Indian: U.S. Policies of Ethnocide through Education," *Wicazo Sa Review* 19:2 (2004): 25-32.

remaining 893,602 blacks were slaves. As is well known, teaching slaves to read was illegal in most southern states. Nevertheless, as evidenced in Frederick Douglass's rather unusual path to literacy acquisition, the possibility of self-education remained a remote alternative, but a dangerous one.<sup>80</sup>

After centuries of resisting attempts to assimilate them, American Indians are even more determined to keep themselves apart from mainstream America; their "futures are held in the principles of sovereignty and indigenousness, not assimilation and colonization." In any case, their writing speaks volumes of their rejection of cultural assimilation. Many American Indian intellectuals are now striving to protect and nurture their cultural traditions and to ensure their survival as autonomous groups with a powerfully articulated sense of ethnic identity. Not only does their scholarship proclaim cultural survival against cultural death; it also celebrates the inventive Indian against the invented Indian. Ea Their "warrior scholarship" deconstructs the way the "Indian" is invented by the dominant culture, and continuously foregrounds "modes of being in a world denigrated by colonialist discourse."

To a great extent, as Annette M. Taylor and John Bloom have suggested, the government-sanctioned policy of eradicating native religion, languages, and cultures instituted primarily through the education of Native youth in faraway boarding schools has failed.<sup>84</sup> If any proof is needed, the current mission

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Ruben Kodjo Afagla, *A Study of Slavery and Escape in Frederick Douglass'* Narrative, unpublished MA thesis (Lomé: Université du Bénin, 1994), 83-90.

<sup>81</sup> Cook-Lynn, "An Origin Story," Wicazo Sa Review, 20: 2 (2005): 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> See, particularly, Gerald Vizenor, *Fugitive Poses: Native American Scenes of Presence and Absence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000) and *The People Named the Chippewa* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Arturo J. Aldama, *Disrupting Savagism: Intersecting Chicana/o, Mexican Immigrant, and Native American Struggles for Self-Representation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 80. Taiaiake Alfred defines Native scholarship as a "Warrior Scholarship," in Devon Abbott Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson, eds., *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 88-99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Annette M. Taylor, "Cultural Heritage in Northern Exposure," in Elizabeth S. Bird, ed., *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 229-44, and John Bloom, "There Is Madness in the Air": The 1926 Haskell Homecoming and

statement of Haskell Indian Nations University repudiates this policy: "Once a center to remove all traces of tribal identity, Haskell now is a center for advanced academic study and [indigenous] cultural preservation." Despite serious attempts at forced assimilation, American Indians have resisted bartering their cultures. Moreover, their call to indigenize the academy is a severe blow to assimilation policies. 87

# Conclusion: From a Common Experience Stemmed Their Shaky Relationships

The above attributes represent only a portion of commonalities that unite two aggrieved populations. American indigenous peoples and African Americans have more in common than a foe wielding whips and muskets. Many studies have addressed other, more positive commonalities of both groups. These range from healthy oral traditions to powerful cultural traditions and strong spirituality. 88 Also, Katz notes some basic views of life commonly held by members of both communities. Besides the crucial importance both attach to family, with children and the elderly treasured, religion remains "a daily part of cultural life, not merely practiced on Sundays." 89

Popular Representations of Sports in Federal Indian Boarding Schools," in Elizabeth S. Bird, ed., *Dressing in Feathers*, 97-110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Available at Haskell web site: <a href="www.haskell.edu">www.haskell.edu</a>; consulted on April 9, 2003.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Theodore W. Taylor, *The Bureau of Indian Affairs*, foreword by Phillip Martin (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Mihesuah and Wilson, eds., *Indigenizing the Academy*; Russel Thornton, ed., *Studying Native America: Problems and Prospects* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998); Cornel Pewewardy, "Renaming Ourselves on Our Own Terms: Race, Tribal Nations, and Representation in Education," *Indigenous Nations Studies Journal*. 1:1 (2000): 11-28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> See Deborah Tucker's list of parallels between African Americans and American Indians at: <a href="http://www.weyanoke.org/hc-blackindianrelations.html">http://www.weyanoke.org/hc-blackindianrelations.html</a>; consulted on August 21, 2006.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> William Loren Katz, *Black Indians*, 29. The role of churches in many black communites is significant; most African American leaders have ties to churches. The Reverends Martin Luther King Jr. and Jessie Jackson are prime examples. However, Afrocentricity has an important place in African Americans' worldviews.

Because many American Indians find it difficult to relate to the word "religion" to explain their beliefs, traditions, and spiritual practices, they prefer using the concept of "the Sacred" to translate their religious worldviews. Lying at the heart of Indian culture, indigenous institutions of government, the family, and even the economy, the Sacred is not only something declared or made holy. As a collective experience necessary to keep the oral traditions and folkways vital, the Sacred also involves something shared. Through its broad inclusion of aspects of Native spiritual culture as diverse as certain mountains and water/river, the Sacred is, in sum, "the relationship of peoples to their sacred lands, to relatives with fins or hooves, to the plant and animal foods that anchor a way of life," as Winona LaDuke asserts. <sup>90</sup>

Indeed, African Americans and American Indians are "the First and the Forced" in the Americas. The origins of their rocky relationship can be traced back to the dawn of American colonization. Their common experience dates to the beginning of the sixteenth century. Katz locates the first evidence of Native American and African unity in a 1503 communication between Spain's King Ferdinand and Viceroy Nicolas de Ovando of Spain's headquarters in Hispaniola, now Haiti. In his message, Ovando complained about his African slaves who "fled among the Indians and taught them bad customs and never could be captured." Since then, a host of scholars have uncovered fascinating glimpses of the lasting relationship between African Americans and American Indians. In 1622, the colony of Jamestown, now Virginia, was attacked by American Indians but Africans were spared. Similarly, during the Pontiac uprising in 1763, it was reported that Native Americans killed whites but were "saving and caressing all the Negroes they take." 91

<sup>90</sup> I am indebted to Steve Talbot's detailed and comprehensive article for this perspective on American Indian religious practices. See Talbot, "Spiritual Genocide: The Denial of American Indian Religious Freedom, from Conquest to 1934," Wicazo Sa Review 21:2 (2006): 7-39. Winona LaDuke, *Recovering the Sacred: The Power of Naming and Claiming* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005), 106, as quoted in Talbot, p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> William Loren Katz, "Africans and Indians: Only in America;" consulted on August 10, 2006. See also Katz, *Black Indians*, 28.

Although Africans never found complete assimilation or equality within American Indian communities, they played an active role among the tribes of the colonial Southeast. They created strong alliances and mutually supportive economic and military ties with the Creeks and Seminoles. 92 As contact with white people increased, the Seminoles grew more dependent on African Americans: "Their common distrust of the Americans, the blacks' greater agricultural skill and the resulting economic advantage, and their ability to speak English contributed to the dependency as well as to a tendency by the Seminoles to view the blacks in many instances as allies, if not as equals." 93 Strategic relationships between African Americans and Indians persisted into the twentieth century. Investigating tensions between racial oppositions and structural opportunities, Laura L. Lovett contends that African Americans' claims to Indian ancestry during the Jim Crow era (1876-1965) proved a useful tool against racial stereotyping. In fact, African Americans of mixed ancestry readily invoked their American Indian ancestry to challenge different aspects of segregation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. 94 Brooks has suggested that, depending on the circumstances, African Americans "could inject a tinge of romance and danger into local narratives with the recovery of an Indian progenitor (usually Cherokee) and in so doing counter some of the most damaging psychological poison of regional White racism."95

The treatment both peoples of color received from a common oppressor might have generated their bonding. Their first encounters occurred on tobacco and rice plantations, in slave huts, and in mines, generations before the United States emerged as a nation. Katz and Takaki remind us that Indians and Africans have known the yoke of bondage together; Native Americans were not exempted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Claudio Saunt, "The English Has Now a Mind to Make Slaves of Them All: Creeks, Seminoles and the Problem of Slavery," in James F. Brooks, ed., *Confounding the Color Line*, 47-75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Daniel F. Littlefield Jr., Africans and Seminoles, 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Laura L. Lovett, "African and Cherokee by Choice: Race and Resistance under Legalized Segregation," in James F. Brooks, ed., Confounding the Color Line, 192-222.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> James F. Brooks, ed., Confounding the Color Line, 11.

from the system until after the American Revolution. Europeans then used African slaves to till the land they snatched from Indians, after freeing the latter from the "peculiar institution."

Their histories are definitely intertwined. Russel Lawrence Barsh argues that contrary to popular literary traditions that claimed American Indians as the dominant manpower in the early New England whaling industry and recent historiography that locates blacks in a similar role, the reality is that "African American and Indian communities were so extensively intertwined by kinship and employment that they should be considered together as a single antebellum socioeconomic class, defined by their occupations as well as color." Barsh contends that the shared experiences of African Americans and American Indians in the poorly paid whaling industry and racial discrimination contributed to the shaping of a common consciousness for both. <sup>96</sup> Tiya Miles concurs:

The single-minded vision of "empire as a way of life" did not discriminate between Black and Red people. Both groups, representing multiple nations and tribes, were seen as ripe for the picking, indigenous Americans in South America, Central America, North America, and the Caribbean, as well as Africans, were coerced and pressed into labor by the British, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.<sup>97</sup>

Given their intermingled history, most African Americans openly admit that American Indians treated them with dignity whenever circumstances brought them together. As Katz theorizes, many people of African descent found escape in Indian nations and some even located their American dream among Native Americans. They knew from experience that American Indians, with whom they shared similar misfortunes, would not brutalize or lynch them. In other words, the opportunities for African Americans within First Nations far surpassed alternatives offered by the United States: "Whatever unfairness African

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Russel Lawrence Barsh, "'Colored' Seamen in the New England Whaling Industry: An Afro-Indian Consortium," in James F. Brooks, ed., *Confounding the Color Line*, 76-107; especially p. 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Tiya Miles, "Uncle Tom Was an Indian: Tracing the Red in Black Slavery," in James F. Brooks, ed., *Confounding the Color Line*, 140.

Americans felt living among Indians, they knew did not compare with what they could expect from southern whites." There are many reports that African American slaves enjoyed a relatively "good life" among American Indians. 99

It is also important to stress that American Indians and African Americans share similar demeaning representations in mainstream literature, which either fabricates images to belittle them, or portravs them as evil or devilish. 100 For Indians, this literature is organized around the figure of the "Noble Savage." They are presented as daring, boastful, cunning, ruthless, and self-denying persons. American Indians are portrayed as fierce, warlike, proud, and brave yet ultimately destroyed by a civilization higher and greater than their own. For African Americans, it is the image of lazy, shiftless, childlike, carefree, and playful people that dominates. In his classic study *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said theorizes that these false portraits provide cultural, moral, and artistic justification for imperial domination. A condescending attitude of the oppressor vis-à-vis the oppressed mainly characterized the interactions among the three races. Those who wielded power viewed the indigenous populations and the involuntary guests as primitive. uncivilized, and natural inferiors to Europeans. Overwhelmingly, most British settlers portrayed themselves as the only logical and rational human beings "capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion"—the colonized "are none of these things." 101 Nevertheless, since African Americans and American

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> William Loren Katz, "Africans and Indians: Only in America;" consulted on August 10, 2006.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> See Claudia Saunt, "The English Has Now a Mind to Make Slaves of Them All," 59.

<sup>100</sup> For a broad view of these caricatures, see: Elizabeth Bird, ed., *Dressing in Feathers*; Angela Aleiss, "Hollywood Addresses Postwar Assimilation: Indian/White Attitudes in *Broken Arrow*," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 11:1 (1987): 67-79; John A. Price, "The Stereotyping of North American Indians in Motion Pictures," *Ethnohistory* 20:2 (1973): 153-71; Mary Alice Money, "Broken Arrows: Images of Native Americans in the Popular Western," in Diane Morrison, ed., *American Indian Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Contemporary Issues* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc 1997), 363-79, and Devon Abbott Mihesuah, *American Indians: Stereotypes and Realities* (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 1996), among others. On the portrayal of African Americans, see George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny*, 1871-1914 (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); Miller and Smith, eds., *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery*; and Sébastien Joachim, *Le Nègre dans le roman blanc* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1980).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Viking Books, 1978), 49.

Indians were engaged in culturally intense interactions, they became aware not only of their respective strengths and weaknesses, but also of their similar philosophical conceptions of the world. Although technologically underdeveloped, both "primitive folks" come to regard the community-oriented outlook in their worldviews as a unifying trait. As Jones argues, "These shared traits naturally drew them together against the individualist, racist, and imperialist Whites with whom they shared the Americas." 102

Euro American imperialists feared that interactions between American Indians and African Americans would result in viable alliances between them. For instance, African Americans participated in the Seminoles' resistance to the Euro Americans' invasion and seizure of the Seminole nation in Florida in the early nineteenth century. <sup>103</sup> As allies of the Seminoles, African American maroons once engaged American forces in Indian wars. Formidable and uncompromising warriors, Africans were of tremendous value to the Seminoles militarily, diplomatically, and politically. As Florida came under the American flag, the Seminoles utilized African maroons more and more as interpreters, intermediaries, and negotiators. <sup>104</sup>

One major preoccupation of the colonizer was to abort these alliances. Any strategic alliances between both oppressed groups, if left undestroyed, could damage the colonial enterprise. As part of the imperial project, these two peoples of color had to be divided by means of subterfuge. Native Americans' adoption of fugitive African slaves went against this goal. It is not surprising, then, that both victimized races often found themselves in skirmishes resulting from the manipulative techniques of their common oppressor.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Rhett S. Jones, "Black/Indian Relations," 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Susan A. Miller, "Seminoles and Africans under Seminole Law: Sources and Discourses of Tribal Sovereignty and 'Black Indians' Entitlement," *Wicazo Sa Review* 20:1 (2005): 26; and *Coacoochee's Bones*, 66-68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> See Daniel F. Littlefield Jr., *Africans and Seminoles*, 8-9; and Kevin Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border*, 3-19.

Instances where both were set against each other are legion. African American soldiers were used to do the dirty work of Manifest Destiny against American Indians on the frontier. African Americans are no strangers themselves to persecution. However, African American soldiers played a crucial role in the subjugation of Indians throughout the West. Although subjected to segregation in the army, black soldiers were used to subdue the Sioux at the Wounded Knee massacre in South Dakota, on December 29, 1890. 105

Generally, scholars tend to overlook the role played by both groups' own sense of difference and respective prejudices when they assess the essence of racial aversions between African Americans and American Indians. Racial theories that accompanied American expansionism cast race relations in a complex web, making the field of race relations a difficult terrain to navigate. Desperate ills call for desperate remedies. In order to offer an incisive insight into America's complex alchemy of race relations, alternative explanations that weave sophisticated elements become mandatory. For instance, historian James N. Leiker's study of members of the black military reveals how black soldiers patrolled the Mexican border, protected white communities, and forced American Indians onto reservations in order to extend federal control over western lands. However, his study departs from conventional explanations that routinely attribute racial hostilities between both groups to white supremacy. The animosity between blacks and Indians, Leiker contends, is not solely the work of a powerful white majority that used black military service as a means to sow division between people of color. Black soldiers' participation in subduing American Indians is just one among the many sources that promoted hostilities between them. Both groups' attitudes toward each other generated feelings that helped fuel conflict, especially when the "Buffalo Soldiers" abused their positions of power to respond to discrimination. Their own respective prejudices and sense of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Mario Gonzalez and Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *The Politics of Hallowed Ground: Wounded Knee and the Struggle for Indian Sovereignty* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), and Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 26.

difference contribute to racial aversions in their tangled histories. And, of course, friendship between both is less likely amid accusations of betrayal.

While African Americans were rewarded for fighting Indians, American Indians were used to track down runaway slaves for rewards. They were the losers, despite rewards in whatever form. These divide-and-rule tactics continue to this day in the field of scholarship. Rarely does any scholar of one group make the effort to integrate the bibliography of the other group into his/her research. Apparently, African American and American Indian scholars avoid each other and thereby suggest a difference in their horizons, while their commonalities support the contrary view, from my outsider perspective. One cross-racial alliance has occurred, however. In 1998, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) condemned the use of Chief Illiniwek as the mascot at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. 109

African Americans were the first modern Americans. They struggled to create new social contexts for survival, fighting for freedom in America after being forced out of their homelands. Given their shared history of exploitation and oppression, a host of scholars, including Ian K. Steele and William Loren Katz, considers African Americans and American Indians to be role models, the first freedom-fighters of the Americas whose courageous contributions to the legacy of resistance to tyranny deserve greater recognition.

Finally, a daunting awareness-raising task is necessary for a better rapprochement between both groups. It is my hope that black Indians, who are at the intersections of both victimized groups, will take the lead in such a campaign by providing their first-hand accounts to better delineate the shared burdens of their parents. These accounts can help counteract the flawed perceptions that lie

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> James N. Leiker, Racial Borders.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Susan A. Miller, Coacoochee's Bones, 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> See, for instance, Kathryn W. Shanley, "Talking to the Animals and Taking out the Trash: The Functions of American Indian Literature," *Wicazo Sa Review*, 14:2 (1999): 32-45, and Rhett S. Jones, "Black/Indian Relations," 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> James F. Brooks, ed., Confounding the Color Line, 15.

behind their shaky relations. They also have potential to rekindle strategic alliances between both groups for the sake of their common causes. Only then could these words ring with true meaning for both groups:

Africans and Indians are fundamentally tribal people, indigenous to the earth. Their blending only strengthens what they already are, if they remain true to their essence. Blacks and Indians who uncritically persist in looking at each other through the white man's eyes only undermine themselves. We strengthen ourselves by seeing the past clearly, changing our present, and consciously building our future on a solid, indigenous foundation.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Some black Indians are currently involved in uncovering their commonalities; see: http://www.africanamericans.com/BlackIndians.htm. Author, genealogist, and historian Angela Y. Walton-Raji has begun a work that stresses their bonding, in *Black Indian Genealogy Research: African-American Ancestors Among the Five Civilized Tribes*. See <a href="http://www.estelusti.com/angela\_walton-raji.htm">http://www.estelusti.com/angela\_walton-raji.htm</a> for more details; consulted on August 15, 2006.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Valerie J. Phillips, "Seeing Each Other through the White Man's Eyes," in James F. Brooks, ed., *Confounding the Color Line*, 383.

Taylor's website.)

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Taylor has more than thirty years of teaching experience in African American history and specifically African Americans in the American West. His previous positions have been at Washington State University, California Polytechnic State University, the University of Oregon (where he was chair of the Department of History from 1997 to 1999), and the University of Lagos (Fulbright-Hays Fellowship).

Currently serving on the Board of Trustees of the Northwest African American Museum in Seattle, the Idaho Black History Museum in Boise, and History Link Interactive History Project, Taylor has also served on the Council of the American Historical Association, the Board of Trustees for the Washington State Historical Society, and the Washington Territorial Commission. He was a founding board member of the Central District Forum for the Arts and Ideas.

### **Native Americans and African Americans:** Four Intersections across Time and Space in the West by Quintard Taylor

Quintard Taylor demonstrates how region matters when understanding the histories of blacks in the diaspora and indigenous peoples. In his essay, Taylor focuses on the American West and forces us to examine the various stages when Indians and African Americans not only encountered each other but also found themselves in conflict or contested power positions. He examines black-Native relations in colonial New Spain, on the Texas frontier, through slavery in the former Indian Territory, and in the post-Civil War American West. Taylor demonstrates that such relationships were filled with complex rivalries and collaborations throughout centuries of interaction.

I begin this discussion of black-Indian interaction in the West with a quotation from someone thoroughly identified with the East, African American educator Booker T. Washington. In his autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, published in 1901, Washington describes the "experiment" in placing of Native American students in Hampton Institute, one of the leading colleges for African American students in 1879, at a time when wars against Native Americans were being waged in the West and just three years after the Battle of the Little Big Horn in Montana:

I use this lengthy quotation to provide a frame of reference for understanding the complex and often contradictory relationship between Native Americans and African Americans over five centuries in the West. In fact, encounters between Native people and African people in the West, the longest of any two groups of color in the United States, included an array of interactions with each group in a position of power vis-à-vis the other. At various stages, Indians were victims and oppressors of African Americans. At various stages, African Americans were victims and oppressors of Native Americans. Thus, when we discuss the encounters, we must ask disturbing questions about the relationship that found expression at different times in conflict, cooperation, and accommodation.

We have an opportunity to explore these relationships over time and space so that we may move beyond stereotypes about blacks and Indians that posit two equally wrong notions: namely, that the cultural divide between the races prevented any positive association, or that Indians and blacks understood their shared oppression and always struggled to defeat their common foe, the European American.

I have chosen four episodes to explore black-Native interaction that are suggestive, but not exhaustive, of the range of possibilities for reinterpreting the meeting of these two peoples. As you will see, the narrative is incomplete in each of these episodes—meaning that future historians can explore and possibly answer the questions I pose. The episodes are: 1) Interaction in colonial New Spain, 2) Frontier Texas, 3) Slavery in Indian Territory, and 4) Indians and Buffalo Soldiers in the post-Civil War West.

### **Colonial New Spain**

On January 8, 1600, in a small town outside of Mexico City, the capital of New Spain, Isabel de Olvera declared before the alcalde (mayor), "I am going . . . to New Mexico and have some reason to fear that I may be annoyed by some individual since I am a mulatto. It is proper to protect my rights in such an eventuality by an affidavit showing that I am a free woman, unmarried and the legitimate daughter of Hernando, a Negro and an Indian named Magdalena . . . I demand justice."<sup>2</sup>

De Olvera was destined for the northern frontier of New Spain and would be one of the founders of Santa Fe later that year. Her arrival in what is now the United States West in 1600 (nineteen years before the first twenty blacks landed at Jamestown) should cause us to rethink our assumptions about the origins of African American history along the lower James River in colonial Virginia. Equally important, de Olvera's lineage as the daughter of "a Negro and an Indian" indicates one of the earliest intimate connections between Native Americans and African Americans. This woman, who was both Indian and black, represented in her person the multiracial population that emerged in colonial New Spain in the sixteenth century.

Nearly 200,000 Africans entered Mexico during the colonial period (1521-1821), a figure comparable to the 345,000 who were brought to British North America. They entered a region that was overwhelmingly Indian. The Spanish census of New Spain in 1570 estimated 3.3 million indigenous people, as compared with 17,000 Spaniards and 21,000 blacks. Large-scale intermarriage

in New Spain over the next two centuries produced a biracial and multiracial population that soon constituted the vast majority of the persons of African descent. Although the term "mulatto" so often used to describe these new people supposed a mixture of African and European blood, the vast majority of these "mulattoes" were, in fact, part Indian and part African. By 1793 this multiracial (African-Spanish-Indian) population had grown to 370,000 and was the second largest nonwhite racial group in New Spain. However, they were still outnumbered by 2.3 million Indians.<sup>3</sup>

Blacks, Indians, and their progeny were proportionally even more numerous on the northern frontier of New Spain. This multiracial population that included blacks, Indians, and biracial people, as well as "white" Spaniards, founded all of the towns of El Norte including San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Barbara, Tucson, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, San Antonio, El Paso, and Laredo. By 1801, for example, 56 percent of the "Spanish" settlers in Tucson were in fact Native Americans and 8 percent were of African ancestry.<sup>4</sup>

Spanish settlement in California affords an opportunity to view the consequences of the forging of a mixed-race population. The forty-six persons who founded Los Angeles in 1781 included twenty-six individuals who were "African or part African," comprising fifty-six percent of the settlers. Another seventeen were Indian. Of the three remaining founders, one was Chinese from Manila and two were of Spanish ancestry. The first mayor of Los Angeles, Jose Vanegas, was a full-blooded, Spanish-speaking Native American. The second mayor, Francisco Reyes, was of black and Indian ancestry. Jose Bartolome Tapia, a soldier of Indian and African heritage, became the first Spanish owner of Rancho Malibu on the Pacific Ocean. Juan Jose Dominguez, an Indian, became the first rancher in the area south of Los Angeles. Dominguez State University is named after him. According to historian Jack Forbes, approximately 55 percent of the Spanish-speaking population in California in 1790 was of mixed heritage. Thirty percent had some Indian ancestry and 25 percent had some African ancestry. In both cases, this was a larger percentage than today.<sup>5</sup>

There was a similar pattern of settlement in New Mexico. Isabel de Olvera, of course, is an obvious example. A 1750 census for Albuquerque revealed that of 200 families in the town, fifty-seven had spouses (husband or wife) of African ancestry, and nearly half had spouses of Indian ancestry. Yet interaction between Indians and blacks included more than intermarriage. Historian Dedra McDonald, for example, describes the African and Indian female servants of wealthy Spaniards in New Mexico who often forged bonds across racial lines. These women shared information on food preparation, medicine and herbs, potions, and "spells." In a 1631 witchcraft case, a mulatto woman testified that she brought back to her bed a philandering husband and thus "saved" her marriage by using the potion provided by an Apache fellow servant. 6 These stories suggest that much of Native American and African American western history is hidden under the rubric of "Spanish colonial" or Latino history in the Southwest. Moreover, they complicate notions of identity. Would the founders of Los Angeles have considered themselves Indian or black? That answer is unclear. Certainly, traditional historians of Latin America and Spanish colonial officials have called these people "Spanish." However, given the Indian and African cultural survivals and Isabel de Olvera's declaration, I believe their definition of themselves would have included their racial identity as well.

#### **Frontier Texas**

The Texas frontier proved an area of frequent contact between Native Americans and African Americans. Slavery developed quickly in Texas after its war of independence from Mexico in 1836. By 1860, one third of the 400,000 people of Texas were, in fact, black slaves. Likewise, a number of Native peoples resided across the vast expanse of Texas. The Indian-white frontier moved westward slowly from the 1830s to the 1870s. Put another way, Indians and whites competed for land and power in Texas for half a century—a much longer time than in any other western state.

Across such a vast array of time and space, Native Americans and African Americans met as both enemies and allies. At the risk of oversimplication, we

can argue that there were two types of contact. Often they met as enemies. The much-feared Comanche, according to historian Kenneth Porter, made no distinction between black and white frontier settlers. The Comanche saw people dressed similarly, who used the same tools and weapons, and who often lived in the same houses. [T]hat their complexions differed, "wrote Porter," was of little significance compared with their basic cultural similarity."

Conversely, many slaves and free blacks developed a hatred and fear of the Comanches as intense as that of white settlers among whom they lived. In one raid on the Texas frontier near Austin in 1838, two white and two black men fought the Comanche and were killed. Two years later, in 1840, the Comanche killed seven blacks and six whites at Victoria while taking several black and white children and women as captives.<sup>8</sup>

The story, however, is more complicated. Native people and blacks were often allies. In August 1841, a raiding party of Comanches who attacked a farm included a "burly negro" who was killed in the attack. In another "Indian raid" in November of that year, nine attackers were killed. Seven were Native American, two were African American.<sup>9</sup>

Evidence of this black presence among the Comanche continued after the Civil War. In March 1868, a Comanche party of 38 attacked settlements in north-central Texas. The party of "Indians" included two Mexicans and two blacks, one of whom was described as a "big negro" who led the attack. Apparently the "big negro" was a Comanche sub chief. In May 1869, ten cowboys were attacked by thirty to forty Comanche "commanded by a large colored man, who gave his orders from his seat on a large rock out of gun range." The attack ended when the Comanche "blew a bugle and went away." Five years later in 1874, white buffalo hunters were attached by Comanche led by the famous biracial (Indian and white) chief Quanah Parker. In the ensuing battle, a black bugler who rode with the Indians was killed, as were ten native warriors. The bugler was a US army deserter who had joined the Comanches.

Although stories of white women captives, such as Cynthia Ann Parker (the mother of Quanah Parker), who became incorporated into the Comanche

nation are well enshrined in the folklore of the Texas frontier, black women captives also became wives of Comanche warriors. In 1852, an unnamed black woman was found at a Comanche camp. She had been captured a decade earlier in Arkansas and when "rescued," she left with her four part-Comanche daughters.<sup>11</sup>

To be sure, the vast majority of African Americans fought the Comanche and other Indian people—and neither side showed much mercy. But these examples show a story of black-Native contact that is far more complex. We need to know more about the blacks who joined the Comanches, and we need to know why they welcomed some blacks but not others.

### Slavery in Indian Territory

The longest and largest encounter between nineteenth-century Native Americans and African Americans in the western United States took place under slavery. From the era of the Trail of Tears in the 1830s through 1865, five nations—the Chickasaws, Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, and Seminoles—held black women and men in bondage. In 1860, the 8,300 slaves in Indian Territory comprised 17 percent of the total population. Black slaves as a component of these five nations ranged from a high of 30 percent among the Seminoles to a low of 10 percent among the Creeks. Yet, the slavery issue in the West was complex. Although African slavery was a well-established practice among these five nations, they were virtually the only people among 500 Indian tribes in North America who owned black slaves. Moreover, the West also included New Mexico, where the enslavement of Indian as well as Mexican peonage precluded the need for black bondspeople.

African slavery in the Indian West began with the Trail of Tears. These various migrations brought 60,000 Indians and their bondservants to a vast new domain of 70,000 square miles of woodland and prairie. The newcomers conveniently ignored the claims of the indigenous tribes—the Kiowas, Cheyennes, and Comanches—whom they pushed into the western part of the territory. This rich agricultural and grazing land, protected from white intrusion by

the federal government, would evolve into a plantation society, which mirrored the Old South. The Trail of Tears is correctly described as an arduous, life-threatening journey for many Native peoples from their former homes in the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. For the more affluent, however, the journey was considerably less difficult and dangerous because of the labor of their slaves.

Typical of this group of emigrants was the George Lowery family, of the Cherokee Nation, who left their "comfortable estate" in northwest Georgia in September 1838 with thirty enslaved African Americans. Five months later, the Lowery family settled eight miles south of Tahlequah, the capital of the western Cherokee Nation. Their slaves soon had several hundred acres under cultivation on land they now called Greenleaf Plantation. Slaveholding Indians such as the Lowery family were at a tremendous advantage in reestablishing their prosperity and wealth in the new land. Moreover, the gap between the wealthy and impoverished Indians increased in the West.<sup>13</sup>

The work of the black slaves in Indian Territory differed little from the tasks of bondservants in the slaveholding states such as Texas. African American men cleared and improved land, built fences, plowed, planted and harvested cotton, tended livestock and cultivated rice, corn, and vegetables. African American women cooked, operated spinning wheels, cleaned plantation houses, and cared for children. The wealthier Indians had slave coachmen, butlers, and maids. Black slave stevedores loaded and unloaded steamships and flatboats.

Slavery, however, changed both Indians and blacks. Since they were often bilingual in English and Indian languages, some slaves served as interpreters. Among the black slaves of the Seminoles were persons who spoke Spanish, English, and the language of their owners. In 1832 a white observer watched a black girl translate English into Cherokee and wrote: "The spectacle seems strange . . . no doubt, the coal black girl speaking both English and Cherokee and keeping the old woman informed as to what was being said." 14

On occasion, there was a mixing of Indian and black cultures. At North Fork Town in January 1842, one observer noted Creeks and their black slaves

engaged in prayer and psalms singing. His description of the service revealed the language as Creek, the music Southern Baptist, and the lyrics those of a slave spiritual. Of course, not all African Americans were bilingual or bicultural. Some families who had been among Indian people for generations knew only the Native language and culture. They adopted Indian dress, followed the Indian diet, used Native medicine, practiced Indian modes of agriculture, and celebrated Indian holidays and festivals. Black slavery among the Five Nations illustrates the grand example of Indian oppression of African Americans; however, it also allows, paradoxically, contemporary scholars to examine the most prolonged intimate interaction between the two peoples in the history of the United States.

The Seminoles represent the one exception to the pattern of Indian slaveholding. The experiences of their bondspeople differed markedly from those of other Indian Territory blacks. The Seminoles allowed their slaves to maintain an autonomous lifestyle and to keep arms, thus putting themselves at odds with their other Indian neighbors. Fears of Seminole-inspired slave rebellions were exacerbated in 1842 when Cherokee bondservants revolted, and more than 100 slaves attempted to escape to Mexico. The Seminoles and their slaves were wrongly blamed for the uprising.<sup>16</sup>

Eventually, this unease with their Indian neighbors caused Seminole Chief Wild Cat to lead a band of 200 Indians and blacks into northern Mexico in 1850. His action would generate a remarkable Indian-black-Mexican alliance on the border. Cora Montgomery, a journalist who resided at Eagle Pass on the Rio Grande, described the Seminole-black party as it passed into Mexico:

[Emerging] from the broken ground in a direction that we know was untraversed by any but the wild and hostile Indians, came forth a long procession of horsement. . . . Some reasonably well-mounted Indians circled round a dark nucleus of female riders, who seemed the objects of special care. But the long straggling rearguard [was composed of] an array of all manners, ages, sexes and sizes of negroes, piled up to a most bewildering height, on and among such a promiscuous assemblage of

blankets, babies, cooking utensils . . . held together on horseback by themselves and their red brothers. 17

The Mexican government allowed this band to create a colony in the state of Coahuila at the *hacienda de Nacimiento* in the Santa Rosa Mountains, eighty miles southwest of the Rio Grande. There Wild Cat welcomed other fugitive slaves from Texas as well as Plains Indians. After a series of meetings in San Antonio and other south Texas towns, slaveholders raised \$20,000 for an expedition to recapture these fugitives and to destroy this Indian-black community that threatened Texas slavery itself. In October 1855, they sent 111 Texas Rangers to Mexico, ostensibly to "chastise hostile Indians" but, in fact, to attack Wild Cat and his followers and to return as many fugitive slaves as possible to Texas. A combined Mexican-Indian-black force of 700 armed defenders, however, drove the intruders back into Texas. Wild Cat's colony represented the largest Indian-black (and Mexican) military alliance in the nineteenth-century West. <sup>18</sup>

#### **Native Americans and Buffalo Soldiers**

There is no greater source of tension between Native Americans and African Americans than in the disparate recollections of the "Buffalo Soldiers," the approximately 25,000 men who served in four regiments, the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry and the Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Fifth Infantry, between 1866 and 1900. These troops, along with cowboys, were the first African American westerners to capture public attention in the 1960s.

Long before the rest of the nation recognized them, however, nineteenthand twentieth-century African Americans derived considerable pride from the soldiers' role as the "sable arm" of the government of the United States. Some African American soldiers eagerly embraced that role. "We made the West," boasted Tenth Cavalry Private Henry McCombs," we defeated the hostile tribes of Indians; and made the country safe to live in." As early as 1969, however, Native American historians, such as Jack Forbes, began to probe the moral dilemma posed by the actions of these men. Were they not instruments in the subjugation of Native peoples in a society that despised them and the Indians? In recent years Native American people and scholars have extended their critique of the black soldiers. When US Postmaster General Marvin Runyon announced a "Buffalo Soldiers" commemorative stamp in 1994, representatives of the American Indian Movement (AIM) demanded both the stamp's withdrawal and a public apology. "The pain of history cannot be so easily passed over," wrote Vernon Bellecourt in *Indian Country Today*, "we remember." Two years later when M. Dion Thompson, an African American correspondent for the *Baltimore Sun*, visited the Wounded Knee cemetery, he encountered a Lakota woman who said to him. "Buffalo soldiers! Buffalo soldiers and the white man killed my people. My ancestors are up there! And I don't appreciate you being here. Why don't you go look at Abraham Lincoln's grave?"

One scholar has argued that the United States Army "developed African American cavalry units . . . for the purpose of destroying Indians."<sup>21</sup> I have found no evidence of black soldiers being recruited specifically to fight Native Americans. The primary responsibility of the black soldier, much like the white soldier, was to carry out the policy directives of the United States government and to protect the West's inhabitants. To be sure, these inhabitants were mostly European Americans rather than Native Americans or African Americans. But protection of the inhabitants also meant that Buffalo Soldiers guarded Native Americans in Indian Territory from other Indians. Chickasaw, Cherokee, and Creek farmers, for example, suffered as much from Comanche or Kiowa raids as white farmers in neighboring states. On occasion, it meant protection of Indian people from the depredations of white men. In 1879, for example, Tenth Cavalry troops protected Kiowa women and children from Texas Rangers who had invaded their village intent on killing and scalping its occupants. In 1887 units of the Ninth Cavalry protected the Ute Indians from Colorado militiamen who illegally entered their reservation in pursuit of Indian raiders.<sup>22</sup> Understandably the various western Indian nations—the Comanche and Kiowa, for example,

hated the soldiers—black or white—who pursued them after raids. But how did they feel about the black soldiers who defended their villages from attack?

We also know little about how Buffalo Soldiers saw Native Americans. Certainly, many black soldiers, such as Private Henry McCombs, shared the anti-Indian bias of their white contemporaries. Apparently these soldiers had little in common with the Hampton University students of the time who welcomed Native American students to their campus. But the record occasionally shows examples of sympathy extended to Native peoples. After the 1890 Sioux uprising at Wounded Knee, the US War Department stationed four companies of the Ninth Cavalry to guard the Sioux. Both Sioux and Buffalo Soldiers endured a winter that was bitterly cold even by upper-Plains standards. There were record snowfalls and the temperature often fell to 30° below zero. One soldier, Private W. H. Prather, asked in a poem why both Indians and blacks were abandoned to this harsh Dakota winter. "The Ninth, the willing Ninth," he lamented, "[who] were the first to come, will be the last to leave, we poor devils, and the Sioux are left to freeze."

This is an area that demands more scholarly investigation. While it is quite clear that many contemporary Native Americans see the "celebration" of the Buffalo Soldiers' role in the conquest of the West as not simply wrong but offensive, the historical record is far more complex. We need to know how Native warriors felt about Buffalo Soldiers, both as soldiers and as African Americans. Presumably, they saw a distinction between black and white soldiers, thus the name "Buffalo Soldier."

Did that distinction also embrace a racial hierarchy? Did they consider African Americans special enemies or potential allies because of their race? Similarly, did black soldiers have a special animus toward Native peoples that prompted contemptuous treatment of the Indians they inevitably encountered? Did they imagine themselves projecting their own racial advancement in the eyes of European Americans by becoming adept at "hunting Indians?" Such questions must be addressed if we are truly to understand the complex and often contradictory relationship between Native Americans and African Americans in

the late nineteenth-century West. Moreover, numerous examples of African Americans, including former or deserting soldiers, who made common cause with the Comanche, Kiowa, and other native peoples in defense of their land, or of the numerous Indian women who married African American soldiers, argue against assuming a simplistic "blacks versus Indians" approach to Western military history.

The attempt to elevate African American soldiers to heroic status on the backs of fallen indigenous warriors is wrongheaded. It is also historically inaccurate since "Indian fighting" was only a small measure of the role of black soldiers in the West. In fact, military records reveal that Buffalo Soldiers fought in proportionately fewer engagements with indigenous warriors than white soldiers. Yet, it is entirely understandable that many indigenous people hated black soldiers for carrying out orders that limited their traditional freedoms and confined them to reservations. As Native American scholar Cornell Pewewardy has aptly written, "As we retell our stories, reconstruct our history, and venture into multicultural learning we honor each other's past. To that end, both Native American and African American historians have a responsibility to learn from both sides about our mutual history. There is much work to be done regarding the reconstruction of the past of these two groups of color who have the longest history of interaction in the West, and, in fact, in the entire nation. Let us begin this work now.

## **ENDNOTES**

- <sup>1</sup> Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1901), pp. 97-99.
- <sup>2</sup> The entire de Olvera statement and account appear in George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, eds., *Don Juan de Onate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1953), pp. 560-62.
- <sup>3</sup> See Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990* (New York: Norton, 1998), pp. 30-32, for a discussion of this emergent population.
- <sup>4</sup> See Henry F. Dobyns, *Spanish Colonial Tucson: A Demographic History* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1976), pp. 137-38, and Taylor, *In Search*, pp. 32-34.
- See Jack Forbes, "The Early African Heritage of California," in Lawrence B. de Graaf, Kevin Mulroy, and Quintard Taylor, eds., Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), pp. 79-83.
- <sup>6</sup> Dedra McDonald, "To Be Black and Female in the Spanish Southwest: Toward a History of African Women on New Spain 's Far Northern Frontier," in Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, eds., *African American Women Confront the West, 1600-2000* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), pp. 39, 44-47.
- <sup>7</sup> The quotation appears in Kenneth W. Porter, *The Negro on the American Frontier* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), p. 392.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 406, 394, respectively.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 386-87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Quoted in Porter, *The Negro on the American Frontier*, p. 417. For numerous other examples of African Americans participating in Comanche raids, see pp. 414-20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 397-98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See Taylor, *In Search*, pp. 62-71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Quoted in Theda Perdue, Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866 (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1979), p. 107.

- <sup>15</sup> See Taylor, *In Search*, pp. 67-68.
- <sup>16</sup> Daniel F. Littlefield Jr., and Lonnie E. Underhill, "Slave 'Revolt' in the Cherokee Nation, 1842," *American Indian Quarterly* 3:2(summer 1977):121-31.
- <sup>17</sup> The Montgomery quotation appears in Kevin Mulroy, *Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida*, the *Indian Territory, Coahuila and Texas* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 1993), p. 57. For background on the migration to Mexico, see pp. 46-60.
- <sup>18</sup> See Mulroy, Freedom on the Border, pp. 77-81, and Ronnie C. Tyler, "The Callahan Expedition of 1855: Indians or Negroes?" Southwestern Historical Quarterly 70:4 (April 1967):574-85.
- <sup>19</sup> The quotation appears in Frank N. Schubert, ed., *On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier: Biographies of African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866-1917* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1995), p. xviii.
- The first quotation is taken from Vernon Bellecourt, "The Glorification of Buffalo Soldiers Raises Racial Divisions between Blacks, Indians," *Indian Country Today (Lakota Times)*, May 4, 1994, p. A-5. The second quotation appears in M. Dion Thompson, "Visiting the World of the Buffalo Soldiers," *Baltimore* Sun, April 21, 1996, Travel Section, p. 1. On Forbes's early critique of the celebratory historiography of the Buffalo Soldiers, see Jack Forbes, *Afro-Americans in the Far West: A Handbook for Educators* (Berkeley, CA: Far West Laboratory for Research and Development, 1969), p. 33.
- <sup>21</sup> See Cornell Pewewardy, "A View of the Buffalo Soldiers through Indigenous Eyes," *The Raven Chronicles* 7:2 (summer/fall 1997): 50.
- The attack on the Kiowa camp and its defense by black soldiers is described in "Report of the Agent for the Kiowa, Comanche and Wichita Agency," *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1879* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1879), p. 64. See Ronald Coleman, "Buffalo Soldiers: Guardians of the Uintah Frontier, 1886-1901," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47:4 (fall 1979):430, for an account of Buffalo Soldiers protecting Ute Indians from Colorado militiamen.
- <sup>23</sup> Prather's poem, "The Indian Ghost Dance and War," appears in James Mooney, The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1896), pp. 882-83.
- <sup>24</sup> See Pewewardy, "A View of the Buffalo Soldiers through Indigenous Eyes, p. 52. See also Quintard Taylor, "A View of the Buffalo Soldiers through Indigenous Eyes: A Response," *The Raven Chronicles* 7:2 (summer/fall 1997):53-55.

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# Left in the Dark: Collective Memory and Amnesia among African-descended Peruvians by Tanya Golash-Boza

Tanya Golash-Boza's essay addresses the collective amnesia of the African slave trade in a small village in northern Peru where the majority of the residents are of African descent. Based on oral histories, interviews, and participant observation conducted in this village, she addresses the question, How was the African slave trade collectively forgotten, when both Africa and slavery figure in the memories of the villagers? Golash-Boza develops a framework for understanding collective amnesia that emphasizes the importance of the current relevance of forgotten events. She demonstrates the importance of social forgetting to our understanding of the difference between collective memory and history.

Mi papá ha sido negrito, bien negro, pero nunca nos han conversado de que hemos sido africanos.

My father was very dark-skinned, quite black, but we were never told that we were Africans.

Liliana, a villager in Ingenio

#### Introduction

Ingenio<sup>1</sup> is the site of a former plantation in northern Peru where the majority of the villagers appear to be of African descent. However, very few of the villagers think of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The name of the town, Ingenio, may or may not be a pseudonym, as are the names of all of the townspeople presented in this essay.

themselves as being the descendants of African slaves. When I asked residents of Ingenio how their ancestors had gotten to Ingenio, few of them recounted the story that the historical archives reveal: that the ancestors of the people of Ingenio were among the millions of Africans who were uprooted from their homelands, boarded onto slave ships, made to cross Panama by foot, crowded onto yet another ship, sailed down the Pacific coast of South America to the Peruvian ports of Callao and Paita, and sold into slavery at a plantation called Hacienda Yapatera in northern Peru.

While most villagers consider themselves to be black and are cognizant of the enslavement of their ancestors, they rarely expressed the view that their blackness was related to their enslavement. By the same token, those who were aware of their African ancestry often did not connect their African-ness to the enslavement of their ancestors. None of the villagers recounted to me the horrors of the passage from Africa to Peru. The collective amnesia of the slave trade prevents people in Ingenio from connecting the enslavement of their ancestors to their African roots. This essay will focus on the selective nature of this forgetting. Why has the passage been forgotten by nearly all, Africa by some, and slavery by nearly no one?

In approaching these questions, this essay will assess three important debates in the field of collective memory. First, I will discuss the importance of social forgetting for understanding collective memory. Secondly, I will argue that in order to make a case that social forgetting has occurred, it is essential to point out the current relevance of the forgotten events. Finally, I will make the case that it is important to take both structure and agency into account when examining cases of collective amnesia and memory.

# **Collective Memory and History**

As Jeffrey Olick (1999: 335) points out, "History is the remembered past to which we no longer have an 'organic' relation—the past that is no longer an important part of our lives—while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities." Under this Halbwachian framework, slavery is part of collective memory in Ingenio, since it is actively remembered, while the transatlantic slave trade is part of history, since it no longer plays a role in people's understanding of themselves and their community. Collective memories require access to shared symbols and signs that people can use to

give meaning to past events, while history can be read and understood by anyone, inside or outside the community. This is because "collective memories originate from shared communications about the meaning of the past that are anchored in the lifeworlds of individuals who partake in the communal life of the respective collective. As such, collective memories are based in a society and its inventory of signs and symbols" (Kansteiner 2002: 188). Collective memories bring the past to life and give meaning to the communities that hold them. For collective memories to exist, however, requires a "stable interpretive community" (193) that can give meaning to these shared symbols. History, or past events, simply provides the potential material for collective memories. This raises the question as to whether it is possible to make the claim that some parts of history have been socially forgotten, for the alternative explanation is that some parts of history simply were never destined to be part of collective memory.

The distinction between history and social forgetting is poignant, although, admittedly, it is not always clear what has been forgotten and what is history. As Wulf Kansteiner (2002: 190) points out, "there is no natural, direct connection between the real and the remembered. . . . Collective memories might exclude events that played an important role in the lives of members of the community." At this point the concept of social forgetting becomes useful. In order to claim that an event has been socially forgotten, it is not sufficient to point to the historical record and show that the event happened; it is also necessary to provide evidence that the event was important enough that it merits a place in collective memory. Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, for example, posits that "to speak of social forgetting we need . . . to be convinced that the now presented fragment of the past should have been part of collective memory all along. Few works pass this test. . . . What we *now* deem important or interesting or worthy of remembrance is not an absolute standard" (1994: 117).

In this sense, the history/memory dichotomy misses an important part of the collective memory story—social forgetting. While it may be true that communities at times do not have access to the signs and symbols to give meaning to something that happened in the past, there are some events that we can say have been forgotten, while others have been remembered, and others that simply are not of sufficient import

to give meaning to a community. Those events that could give meaning to the present that are not remembered are those that we can say have been forgotten.

#### The Transatlantic Slave Trade

The transatlantic slave trade, for example, was important when it happened, and the effects of that series of events are still evident today. This particular form of exploitation is unparalleled in the magnitude of people involuntarily transported from one continent to another. Throughout the colonial period, Africans were uprooted from their homelands and packed onto ships to be sold as slaves to plantation owners in the New World. Individuals were separated from their families and all that they had known. Free men and women were converted into slaves with masters. Africans were transformed from people into property. On a collective level, customs, languages, art forms, and countless human lives were lost. Africa was stripped of generations of young men and women, while the Americas were inundated with peoples from distinct parts of the world. People who had thought of themselves as Ashante, Igbo, and Carabali were renamed blacks or *negros* and their pasts were rendered unimportant.

The transatlantic slave trade facilitated the development of African chattel slavery throughout the Americas. In the case of the US, Audrey Smedley (1999: 143) posited that "Slavery was seminal to the creation and the development of the idea of race in the North American colonies." In the colonies, the situation where the plantation owners were white and the slaves black created a particular system of racial domination that was the forerunner of conceptions of race and racism in the contemporary United States. In Peru, the racial system was very different, in that many more indigenous people survived the Spanish conquest than in the North American colonies. A racialized system of labor was imposed, where people of African descent were chattel slaves, people of indigenous descent were intermittently forced to labor, and Europeans were free or slave owners. This racialized division of labor also led to the creation of a particular brand of racial oppression in Peru.

From this history, we can discern two things that were quite important when they happened, and whose repercussions continue to be felt. The first is the slave trade itself. The repercussions of the slave trade are evident in the presence and social

conditions of people of African descent throughout the Americas. The second is the racial nature of chattel slavery through the creation of a racialized system of exploitation. In the US, chattel slavery and the slave trade are important parts of the collective memory of African Americans. This is not simply because black Americans are descended from African slaves who were forcibly brought to the US. The survival of this memory is also due to the fact that this enslavement continues to have repercussions insofar as African Americans today are concerned, and because the descendants of African slaves have done a considerable amount of "memory work" (Stoler and Strassler 2000: 9) in order to keep the memory alive.

Slavery is in large part responsible for the relative impoverishment of African Americans today. As a corollary, slavery is also responsible for the relative enrichment of Anglo Americans. The fact that Africans were once enslaved in the United States continues to be an integral part of African Americans' understanding of themselves, their position in society, and, for many, their demand for reparations for past harms. France Twine (1998: 123), for example, points out that "memories of African slave ancestors have been an important means for African Americans to establish an antiracist identity in the United States. . . . This collective memory is one of the ways that a national US black community has been established and continues to reproduce itself from generation to generation." Ron Eyerman (2004) and Paul Gilroy (1993) also posit that the memory of slavery plays a vital role in the formation of African American collective identity.

The importance of Africa in African Americans' construction of their ancestry and thus of their collective identity is in line with Evitar Zerubavel's (2003) conjecture that conceptions of ancestry are based on social conventions. Using this understanding of collective memories, it is possible to conclude that the social conventions in Ingenio leave the African slave trade with relatively little significance in people's constructions of their ancestry, and that this is why this has been forgotten. Or, in Kansteiner's (2002) conception, the people of Ingenio lack the shared signs, symbols, and meanings that could be used to bring this part of their past to life, while African Americans have ample access to these symbols.

Peruvians of African descent generally consider themselves to be black and are considered by others to be black. When insults are exchanged, blacks are sometimes referred to as "slaves" or as "Africans." Nevertheless, in my interviews with Afro Peruvians, many were unable to explain to me the historical antecedents of these insults. Some of the residents of Ingenio told me that their ancestry was Peruvian, and that they were not aware of ancestors from anywhere else. They recounted that their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents had been from northern Peru, yet they did not know how they had arrived there. This construction of their ancestry as limited to Peru appears to be in line with Zerubavel's (2003: 67) claim that constructions of ancestry are subjective and thus "how deep we actually go back is basically a matter of choice, yet such choices are not just personal." He argues that "social conventions," not simply personal decisions, determine how we construct our ancestry. However, if we consider the importance of the African slave trade in shaping the contemporary lives of people in Ingenio, it makes sense to question these social conventions. The constructions of the people in Ingenio's ancestry as limited to Peru may be based on social conventions that render their African origins unimportant. Yet, it is important to ask, Who made these social conventions, and whose choice was it to leave Africa out of these accounts?

Through examining the collective amnesia of the Atlantic and Pacific passages and the selective amnesia of Africa and chattel slavery, the analyses presented in this chapter allow us to better understand the roles of structure and agency in the writing and rewriting of history, as well as the nature of social forgetting. In this essay I will provide evidence to support my claims that the people of Ingenio have collectively forgotten the slave trade, that some have forgotten Africa, and that, although they remember slavery, most people do not know that slavery was particular to people of African descent. This evidence comes from interviews and fieldwork with the people of Ingenio. I will contrast their accounts of their past with recorded evidence about the history of the region. These analyses will demonstrate the complexities inherent in the writing and rewriting of history and the making and remaking of collective memories.

#### Collective Amnesia in Brazil and Colombia

Although the collective amnesia of the African slave trade is not unique to Peru, the selective forgetting I witnessed in Ingenio differs from other similar cases of collective amnesia in Latin America. Anne-Marie Losonczy (1999), for example, found in her research in an Afro Colombian community that the residents of this village were not aware that they were from Africa, nor that they had been enslaved. Losonczy (1999: 17) recounts that the villagers she worked with had invented a new myth of origin—one that depicts Afro Colombians as being autochthonous Colombians. Her evidence for this claim comes from the local mythology, which situates the origin of the distinct racial groups in Colombia in time immemorial. Losonczy's story fits well into the framework presented by Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 120), who writes that "when we speak of forgetting, we are speaking of displacement (or replacement) of one version of the past by another." However, this contrasts with what I found in Ingenio. The villagers of Ingenio had not created an alternative account of how their ancestors had arrived in Peru. Many of my interviewees in Ingenio told me that they did not know how or why their ancestors had come to live in Peru.

In her research in Brazil, Twine (1998: 116) found that her Afro Brazilian informants did not wish to divulge their African roots to her, because they chose to "willfully forget" slavery. In order to maintain a sense of dignity, her informants intentionally distanced themselves from "the degradation of slavery" by claiming that their ancestors had not been subjected to it. Twine supports these claims by demonstrating that her informants first claimed not to have any African ancestors, or to have had any slave ancestors, and then later reluctantly admitting that they in fact were aware of their enslaved African ancestors.

The Peruvian case differs from these two cases in that the residents of Ingenio have not made up another story to account for their origins, nor are they feigning not to have African or slave origins in order to gain prestige. Unlike Twine's informants who pretended to be unaware of their African origins, my informants actually lacked the knowledge that would lead them to conclude that some of their ancestors had been enslaved Africans. In addition, in both the Brazilian and Colombian cases, both Africa

and slavery had disappeared from collective memory, whereas, in Peru, slavery is very much a part of collective memory.

#### Africans and Their Descendants in Peru

The transatlantic slave trade served to populate the Americas with African slaves. The slave trade in Peru was fairly substantial, although much less than that in Brazil or the Caribbean, both in raw numbers and in proportion to the non-slave populations. Between 1527 and 1821, more than 100,000 African slaves were brought to Peru (Hünefeldt 1994). The first African to arrive in Peru was most likely a slave of Francisco Pizarro. Pizarro and his company disembarked on the northern shores of present-day Peru in 1527. By the year 1550, there were 3,000 blacks in Lima (Del Busto 2001). And, by 1614, there were 16,272 blacks in Peru—11,809 of whom were in the capital city of Lima (Tardieu 1990).

It was not until the beginning of the seventeenth century that the enslavement of Africans and their descendants became an integral part of Peru's economy. Similar to slavery in the rest of the Americas, slaves were brought to Peru under horrible conditions in overcrowded, dangerous, and unsanitary slave ships, and forced into servitude against their will. Slaves in Peru worked on plantations but also could be found in positions ranging from domestic servants and water carriers to craftspeople, up until, and after, the end of slavery in 1854 (Hünefeldt 1994).

#### Enslaved Africans in Piura

Although slavery was concentrated in Lima, there were also African-descended slaves in northern Peru, especially in the province of Piura, where Ingenio is located. Most of these slaves came to Peru through the northern port of Paita in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The heaviest traffic of slaves through the port in Paita was in the 1730s. The year with the highest number of slaves was 1776, when more than 550 slaves were brought into Paita. After the 1730s, the slave trade tapered off a bit. However, in 1770, 291 slaves were brought into Paita, and 447 in 1771. Nevertheless, only twenty-five came through Paita in 1772 and none in 1773 (Schlüpmann 1993). Most of the slaves were brought directly from Africa, by way

of Panama. These African slaves were primarily forced to work on sugar cane plantations, although others worked in soap factories, in households, or in trades in the cities (Schlüpmann 1991).

In Piura, slaves never made up more than ten percent of the total population. This contrasts sharply with other slave societies, especially in the Caribbean, where the populations were primarily composed of African-descended slaves, with less than ten percent of the population not enslaved. The plantations in Piura were also relatively small, compared to the rest of Peru and to the rest of the Americas. For example, the largest plantation, Yapatera, had only sixty slaves in 1790, which was the height of its slave population. In contrast, the plantation La Ville in Lima had 433 slaves in 1771 (Schlüpmann 1991).

# Ingenio, Piura, Peru

The findings presented in this essay are derived from participant observation and interviews conducted between July 2003 and January 2004, and between May and July 2006 in Ingenio, a small village in northern Peru, where about 85 percent of the population is of African descent (author's estimate). Another source of data for this essay is a survey conducted by the author and a local research assistant in Ingenio and the neighboring village of 149 residents in May 2004. Ingenio, similar to other small towns in the Department of Piura, has about 300 houses and most of the villagers produce rice and corn for the national market. In the early part of the twentieth century, Ingenio was home to a sugar refinery. As a reminder of this, there is a chimney in the center of town that was formerly used to burn sugar cane. From what I could gather from the villagers, Ingenio produced sugar from 1925 to 1935. After that, the hacendados dedicated the fields to rice production. Today, rice remains the primary crop produced in Ingenio. Corn, cacao, bananas, mangos, cherries, oranges, lemons, yucca, and beans are also produced, but in much smaller quantities.

Ingenio lies in a valley in the foothills of the Andes. The town is surrounded by hills that are a vibrant green in the rainy season and a sandy brown in the dry season. Given its proximity to the equator, Ingenio is hot nearly year-round. At night, it cools down a bit, but the days are invariably scorching. The average high fluctuates from 82

to 93 degrees Fahrenheit. The rainy season, which provides some respite from the unrelenting sun, runs from January to May, with February and March the wettest months. The rest of the year, Ingenio boasts cloudless skies, desert-like heat in the day, and cool dry nights.

I spent six months in Ingenio, writing daily field notes, and carried out fifty-eight interviews with townspeople in 2003 and 2004, and then another two months in 2006. I did not begin my interviews in 2003 until I had been in the village for just over one month. The interviews were semi-structured, lasted between thirty minutes and two hours, and included questions about the interviewees' understandings of their ethnic identity and ancestry, racial and color labels, and *mestizaje*, as well as about their experiences of racial discrimination. I was granted permission to record all of the interviews I conducted in Ingenio. All of the interviews were in Spanish, and I have translated the excerpts presented in this essay.

#### How the Passage from Africa Was Forgotten

In Ingenio, few people know that chattel slavery had been particular to Africans and their descendants, and none of the villagers spoke of the horrors of the slave trade. In this section, I will first describe the various conceptions of ancestry that exist in Ingenio. Then, I will discuss three possible explanations for why the stories vary so widely. The first explanation is the Pacific Passage. The second reason involves demographics, namely the high level of miscegenation and the relatively small number of blacks in the region. Ingenio and a few other towns in the region are predominately African-descended. However, they are outnumbered in the region by towns that are primarily indigenous. The third reason is related to the conflation of slavery with exploitation and sharecropping.

#### Constructions of Ancestry in Ingenio

In order to understand how people in Ingenio constructed their ancestry, I asked my interviewees if they had African, indigenous, European, or Asian ancestry. Of the forty-nine African-descended people that I interviewed, only ten thought that they might have Spanish ancestry. Of these ten people, only three were sure that they had Spanish

ancestry. The other seven interviewees thought that they probably had Spanish ancestry, but were not sure. Six of those seven thought that they probably also had African ancestry. When I asked my interviewees if they had African ancestry, twenty-six said that they did not have African ancestry; thirteen said that they did not know whether they had African ancestry, and twelve said that they did have African ancestry. In addition to the in-depth interviews, I conducted a survey in Ingenio and the neighboring village. In this survey of 149 people, I determined 130 of the respondents to be the descendants of African slaves. This estimation was based on my understanding of the history of slavery in Peru, their physical appearance, as well as that of their relatives. Of those 130 respondents, only twenty-two responded yes to the direct question: ¿Usted tiene antepasados africanos? (Do you have African ancestors?). This was not directly related to the respondents' level of education. For example, eight of the respondents who reported that they had African ancestors had not completed secondary school, seven had never been to secondary school, and the remaining seven had at least a secondary education. In contrast, more than half of the respondents answered yes to the question: ¿Usted se considera negro/a? (Do you consider yourself to be black?).

Many of the villagers were simply unaware that they had ancestors from Africa and were further unaware that Africans had been brought over as slaves to Peru. Octavio, who self-identifies as black, provides an example of this. Octavio is an agricultural worker in his early sixties who, to a person from the US, wears his African ancestry on his face.

Tanya ¿tiene antepasados que han venido del África? Octavio no, de África, no

Tanya ¿usted antes ha escuchado la historia de cómo llegaron los africanos aquí al Perú?

Octavio no

Tanya Do you have ancestors who came from Africa?

Octavio No, from Africa, no

Tanya Have you ever heard the story of how Africans arrived here in Peru? Octavio No.

The majority of the villagers gave responses similar to that of Octavio. Roberta, who also self-identifies as black, provides another example of this sort of response, which reveals that many of the villagers did not conceive of their ancestry as coming from Africa. In my first interview with Roberta, I asked her if she had African ancestry, and she told me that she did not. In a follow-up interview, I decided to revisit the question and to probe further in order to figure out why she claimed not to have African ancestry, when her skin color and hair texture left me without a doubt that she did. In the follow-up interview, I first reminded her that she had earlier told me that she did not have African ancestry, and she confirmed this. I then asked her if it was the case that she did not have African ancestry, or if it was the case that she actually did not know. She responded that she did not have African ancestry, that her ancestors were from Peru. I then asked her if she knew anything about the history of Africans in Peru, and she indicated that she had heard something in school, but that she no longer remembered, since that was quite some time ago. (Roberta was in her forties at the time of the interview and thus had been out of school for a while.)

Later in the interview, I recounted to Roberta that the Spaniards had brought Africans to Peru on ships, and she responded that that story sounded familiar. I then pointed out to Roberta that when people speak of blacks in Peru they sometimes use the term "Afro Peruvian," and that that referred to African ancestry. She chuckled in response to that. So, I asked her if she had ever heard that connection made before, and she said that she had not. Finally, I asked her if she had ever felt any connection to Africa, and she said that she had not. What is revealing in this exchange is that Roberta seemed to be comfortable locating her ancestry solely in Peru but did not get defensive when I suggested that her ancestry might have come from Africa. She did not have an alternative explanation for why there were blacks in Peru and did not counter my suggestion that blacks had come from Africa. Roberta remembered hearing something about the slave trade in school but did not connect it to her own life. She had heard the

expression "Afro Peruvian" before but did not come to the conclusion that her family must be from Africa.

Roberta's reaction to my challenging her accounts in the initial interview was similar to other people's reactions. Perla, for example, in our initial interview, told me that she had no idea where her ancestors came from. In a follow-up interview, I reminded Perla that in the first interview, she had said that she didn't know whether she had African ancestors. She said that she didn't. I then asked her if she had heard that Africans had come to Peru, and she said that she had heard but didn't know the story. I told her that the Spaniards had brought Africans over to Peru as slaves. She nodded and agreed with that. I also told her that, when the Spaniards came, there were only indigenous people here, and she agreed with that. Then, I pointed out that anyone who is black must have African ancestors, since there was no other way that they would be black. She agreed with that and agreed that she must have African ancestry. I asked her why, in the first interview, she had said that she didn't, and she said that she hadn't been taught that she did.

I then asked Perla if she had heard that there was slavery here in Peru, and she said that she had. She told me that elders had told her about slavery when she was younger, and that she did feel some anger about slavery and about her ancestors having been slaves. It is revealing that Perla's elders did not tell her that her ancestors had come from Africa as slaves, yet they did talk openly with her about the cruelty of slavery. This again indicates that Africa and the transatlantic slavery were things that were erased from their collective memory, as opposed to the alternative explanation—that they chose not to discuss it.

In Perla and Roberta's cases, I was able to probe deeper into their accounts through follow-up questions, but Liliana offered more information on her own a few weeks after our initial interview. Liliana is Roberta's elder sister. She is in her early sixties and is the lightest complected of her brothers and sisters. Her tawny skin and straight hair do not reveal her African ancestry. In her connection between Africa and blackness, however, it is evident that she recognizes that there might be African ancestry in her family tree. Nevertheless, she points out that her father had never told her this; thus, she could not be sure.

- Tanya ¿Usted sabe si usted tiene ascendencia africana, tiene familiares que han venido del África?
- Liliana mi papá ha sido negrito, bien negro, pero nunca nos han conversado de que hemos sido africanos.
- Tanya Do you know if you have African ancestry, if you have relatives that came from Africa?
- Liliana My father was very dark-skinned, quite black, but he never told us that we were Africans.

Notably, a couple of months after our interview, I went over to Liliana's house to give her a box of cereal for her grandson. While we were chatting, she brought up the topic of my study. She told me that, when I did the interview, I caught her by surprise, and she didn't remember all that she knows about slavery. She said that she has seen films about how Africans were brought to Peru in chains and made to work in the fields. She told me that she also went to workshops organized by an Afro Peruvian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), and they taught her about slavery and how blacks were brought to Peru. In the context of the interview, I had primarily asked Liliana about what her family had told her about her past. Perhaps that was why she did not connect her family story with what she had learned at the workshops. It is notable that Liliana found the version of history put forth by the NGO to be believable, even though her family had never explained its history to her in these terms.

Rosa, a single mother in her fifties, whose skin tone and tightly curled hair indicate African ancestry, made the connection between Africa and blackness on her own, although she may also have learned this from her participation in the NGO workshops. The workshop to which the women referred took place nearly eight years before my fieldwork, and it had not been repeated since then.

Rosa De repente hemos tenido ascendencia africana por la parte de mi abuelita.

Porque mi abuelita era negrita.

Rosa Maybe we have African ancestry on my grandmother's side. Because my grandmother was quite black.

It is worth also making a distinction between those villagers who told me that their ancestors had been Africans, and those who reported that their ancestors had been African slaves. While twelve of my interviewees knew that Africans had been brought to Peru as slaves, only five of those twelve also knew that their ancestors had been among those brought over as slaves. Eva provides a good example of someone who suspected that her family had been from Africa but did not know how the Africans got to Peru.

Tanya ¿usted sabe si tiene antepasados, ascendencia africana, sabe si las raíces de su familia vienen del África?

Eva bueno, señorita, por que mi abuelito ha sido negrito tinto, tinto negrito. . . . No sé si habrá tenido por allá familia

Tanya ¿no le había contado que sus abuelos habían venido del África?

Eva No, no, la que ha tenido familiar de África ha sido la mamá de mi papá, también ha sido bien negrita

Tanya y ¿no les habían contado la historia de cómo llegaron aquí?

Eva No, no, ella nunca nos supo conversar.

Tanya ¿entonces usted conoce la historia de cómo los africanos llegaron aquí a Perú?

Eva no, señorita, no

Tanya Do you know if you have African ancestors, if your family's roots are in Africa?

Eva Well, miss, my grandfather was very black, black as soot. . . . I don't know whether he may have had family over there.

Tanya He never told you that your grandparents had been from Africa?

Eva No, no, who had family from Africa was my father's mother; she too had been quite black.

Tanya And, they never told you the story of how they got here?

Eva No, no, she never did talk about that.

Tanya So, do you know the history of how Africans got over here to Peru?

Eva No, miss, no.

In this conversation with Eva, it is clear that she sees it as a possibility that her grandparents' blackness derives from African roots but has no way of verifying it. Eva is an illiterate woman in her fifties. She never went to school, because she had trouble walking as a young girl and found it easier to just stay home. However, her lack of formal education is not the only reason why she is unfamiliar with the history of Africans in Peru. Some of the young people who had recently finished high school also were unaware of this history. This is in part a reflection of the very poor state of education in Peru in general, and in rural villages in particular. According to a recent World Bank study, the quality of education in Peru, as measured by test scores, is lower than most Latin American countries. In particular, "rural Peruvian students scored among the lowest in Latin America."

Esteban, for example, completed secondary school, self-identifies as *negro* (black), and is an agricultural worker and a small-business owner in his early fifties. Esteban told me that he is not quite sure why his family is primarily black. He indicates that this is probably due to the fact that his family is from Yapatera. Yapatera is the largest black community in northern Peru with nearly 6,000 residents, most of whom claim to be black. What Esteban does not include in this story is the fact that Yapatera was the place where African slaves were bought and sold until the mid-nineteenth century.

Tanya ¿Tiene antepasados que han venido del África?

Esteban Bueno, no. O sea, yo también a veces me pregunto, nosotros somos morenos. Y, mi descendencia por parte de mi padre es más morena. Por ejemplo, mi mamita, la madre de ella es recontra negra, pero ella decía, ella me conversaba que ella, ella había venido de Yapatera.

Tanya Do you have ancestors who came from Africa?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> From a 2005 World Bank Report on Education in Peru: (http://www.worldbank.org/oed/education/peru.html)

Esteban Well, no. That is, I also sometimes ask myself, we are morenos. And, my ancestry on my father's side is darker. For example, my mother, her mother is extremely black, but she used to say, she told me that she had come from Yapatera.

Esteban's interview indicates that he identifies with his Yapateran ancestry and that he sees it as a possibility that he might have African ancestry, but he does not have the necessary information to come to this conclusion. Several of the villagers attributed their blackness to being from Yapatera, as did Fabio. Fabio is Liliana's brother, and he also is an agricultural worker in his fifties. When I asked him where blacks come from, he responded:

Fabio Creo que los negros vienen de Yapatera.

Fabio I think that blacks come from Yapatera.

Although Fabio said that blacks come from Yapatera, he did not say that blacks come from Africa. Only a few villagers were able to connect Yapatera to their African ancestry, as Rocío did, and thus to connect Africa and slavery to their own families. Rocío is in her early twenties and has worked in Lima, as well as completed some post-secondary education. Rocío learned that African slaves had been brought to Yapatera through her participation in events organized by the Afro Peruvian NGO, in both Ingenio and Morropón. She, along with her mother, were two of the most active participants in the NGO.

Rocío Las personas que supuestamente llegaron a Yapatera eran africanos, las primeras personas. Y, como nosotros tenemos descendencia de Yapatera generalmente, me supongo que si, pues tenemos ascendencia africana.

Rocío The people who supposedly arrived in Yapatera were Africans, the first people.

And, since we have ancestry from Yapatera, I suppose that, yes, we have

African ancestry.

My interviewees did not vehemently deny being of African ancestry. They often were not sure, and some conceded that it might be the case that they have African ancestry, as did Isabela. Isabela works as an administrative assistant in a local school and is in her late forties.

Isabela ¿Del África? De repente, somos morenos. Isabela África? Maybe, we are morenos.

Isabela's brother, Hugo, who owns a small shop and also is an agricultural worker, however, was more convinced of the fact that his family comes from Africa.

Hugo los antepasados, todos sabemos que son de ahí del África

Hugo [Our] ancestors, we all know that they are from over there in Africa.

Furthermore, when I asked Hugo how the Africans got to Peru, he knew that the Spaniards had brought them as slaves. Notably, only four other interviewees knew both that their ancestors were Africans and that Africans had been brought as slaves.

Tanya ¿Usted conoce la historia de cómo los africanos llegaron aquí al Perú?

Hugo por intermedio de los españoles

Tanya y ¿qué más sabe sobre esa historia?

Hugo bueno, ellos llegaron acá y fueron dominados por los blancos, españoles.

Hacían todo, todos los trabajos, pues ellos trabajaban en fábricas de caña.

Tanya Do you know how the Africans got to Peru?

Hugo Through the Spaniards.

Tanya And, what else do you know of that history?

Hugo Well, they got here, and were dominated by the whites, the Spanish. They did

everything, all the work; they worked in sugarcane factories.

The selection of interview quotes above is not exhaustive; however, it does provide some idea of the range of responses that I got to my inquiries about the possible African origins of my interviewees. What is notable is that there is no outright denial of African ancestry, and most people claim not to know primarily because no one has ever told them where their ancestors are from. This is important because people do not seem to be simply denying African ancestry because they are ashamed of it, nor have they invented another tale to explain their ancestry.

It is also worth emphasizing that five of the fifty-one interviewees did recount their family history in the way that the historical archives would lead us to understand their history. Thus, it is not solely my interpretation versus that of the townspeople. Several competing stories exist. The townspeople generally agree that their immediate ancestors, that is, their parents and grandparents, migrated to Ingenio from other agricultural areas in the region to work on the hacienda. Where the stories begin to diverge is in the explanation of how their grandparents arrived in those towns. Historians of the region recount that people were brought from Africa to Panama to the port of Paita, and then transported by land to Yapatera, where some people were enslaved, while others were sold as slaves to nearby plantations. Those villagers who identified their place of origin as Yapatera were most likely to further associate Yapatera with blackness and with Africa. However, those people whose families migrated to Ingenio from Las Lomas or San Juan de Bigotes, or other nearby villages, were less likely to do so. The question that I am focusing on here is how these varying understandings of history were created. In the following sections, I will consider various possible explanations.

#### The Pacific Passage

The Pacific Passage is the trip from Panama to Peru. There was no direct sea route from Africa to Peru in the eighteenth century. As such, when the slavers made the trip from Africa to Peru, it was necessary for them to first disembark in Panama. From there, other ships could take passengers and freight to Peru. Most of the slaves that were brought to Piura came in the mid-eighteenth century. Between 1704 and 1773, there were 170 vessels carrying slaves that came through the port of Paita. All of these

vessels came from Panama, except possibly one whose origin is not known. In the manifests of the Port of Paita, 5,517 slaves are recorded as entering the port between 1704 and 1773. Of these African slaves, only twenty were listed as "criollos" or "ladinos." Criollos and ladinos are persons born in the Spanish colonies. Most of the other slaves were listed as "bozales," which means that they were born in Africa, and had yet to be "Latinized" or to learn to speak Spanish. The number, 5,517, is most likely an underestimate for several reasons. First, the purpose of these manifests was to collect tariffs on imports, so it is likely that importers would be inclined not to report everything on board. Second, it is possible that there were more ladino or criollo slaves that were not reported, as it seems that there are no tariffs on these slaves. Third, the slaves were often listed in the following fashion: "50 negros bozales piezas de india." Since the slaves were listed literally as pieces, it is possible that two unhealthy slaves could make up one "pieza de india."

The ships' manifests indicates that the slaves who were brought to northern Peru were first delivered to Panama and then transported on to Peru. This second passage, which I will call the Pacific Passage, puts an additional strain on African-descended people in terms of remembering their origins and passing along their stories of Africa to their progeny. This is not only because Africa is farther away but also because people who were members of the same tribe or residents of the same village were even less likely to be able to stay together over the course of two separate, arduous voyages. These factors made it more likely for tales of origins to be forgotten. In addition, most of the slaves did not refer to the place from which they came as "Africa." The low likelihood of ending up on a plantation with someone who spoke the same language and who came from the same tribe would further complicate the survival of a tale of origins. In contrast, the current availability of books, movies, and television programs that depicts slavery and the slave trade, as well as the rise of the Afro Peruvian NGOs, has made some re-remembering possible. This, in turn, could help explain how some people have re-remembered their histories.

## Miscegenation and Dispersion

Once African slaves arrived in Peru, they were likely to be sold to different owners, since most plantations had relatively few slaves. For example, using data from 1800 to 1820, José Leonidas Castillo Roman (1977) shows that the number of slaves on the haciendas in Piura ranged from two to twenty. In addition, he tells us that most of the slaves in Piura were not on plantations but worked in domestic service or in crafts. The combination of these facts indicates that slaves were unlikely to work with or near other slaves who shared their origins, which would likely contribute to the loss of tales of origins.

I do not have complete data on the number of slaves who were brought into the port of Paita. However, it is reasonable to claim that the data I do have, which includes the manifests from 1704 to 1773, make up the bulk of the slave trade in Piura. Jakob Schlüpmann (1994) tells us that, prior to the eighteenth century, slavery was still relatively rare in Piura. He also reports that slavery declined in Piura in the nineteenth century. For example, in the Hacienda Yapatera, there were sixty slaves in 1790, but only thirty-two in 1833. In addition, the Hacienda Morropón had about thirty slaves at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but only around ten at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In addition, Castillo Roman (1977) posits that most of the increase in the number of slaves in the nineteenth century was due to the reproduction of the slave population. Castillo Roman's estimates differ from those of Schlüpmann, yet both indicate that the haciendas were relatively small and that the rates of miscegenation were high.

Schlüpmann (1994: 341) found that there was a considerable amount of miscegenation in Piura in the eighteenth century. For example, in 1783, the total population of Piura was 12,850, of which there were only 537 blacks, but 3,066 mulattos, and 3,984 mestizos (the progeny of Indians and Spaniards). Schlüpmann also reports a large number of cases of intermarriage between blacks and Indians in Piura. The high rate of intermarriage in Piura also likely led to the loss of tales of origins, since the tale of origin of one parent may take precedence over the other.

In sum, it is not that surprising that many of the descendants of Africans in Peru are unaware of their ancestral origins in Africa, given the relatively small number of

Africans brought to Piura, the high rates of intermarriage, the Pacific passage, and the lack of concentration of slaves in specific geographical areas. However, it does come as a surprise that most of the residents of Ingenio were not aware of the slave trade at all, nor were they aware that chattel slavery was an institution peculiar to Africans and their descendants. This lack of knowledge appears to be due to the fact that many of the residents of Ingenio conflate slavery with sharecropping and other forms of exploitation.

## Slavery and Exploitation

When I asked residents of Ingenio about slavery, most of them told me that slavery had existed well into the twentieth century. Felipe provides a good example of this argument.

Tanya ¿Usted ha escuchado que antes aquí había esclavitud?

Felipe Bueno, sí cuentan, antiguamente por ejemplo dicen que el patrón exigía antiguamente eran mas de ocho horas de trabajos, doce, quince cuantas horas eran de trabajo y aquel que no trabajaba, lo castigaban. Lo metían a un cuarto donde habían unas argollas, unas cadenas y los castigaban y hasta incluso los mataban. Eso me contaba mi abuelito que trabajaba en la hacienda de Buenos Aires.

Tanya Have you ever heard that there was slavery here before?

Felipe Well, yes, they say that before, for example, they say that the boss used to force people to work more than eight hours, twelve, fifteen hours of work. And, those who did not work, he punished them. He would put them in a room where there were some rings, some chains, and he would punish them and even kill them. This is what my grandfather used to say, who worked in the Hacienda Buenos Aires.

Felipe, who is an agricultural worker in his fifties, is describing the conditions of work that his grandfather endured in the Hacienda Buenos Aires. The Hacienda Buenos Aires occupied the land where Ingenio currently is from 1907 to 1968, well after slavery

had officially ended in 1854. Nevertheless, Felipe and others reported to me that, until the 1930s, the hacendado was the absolute law of the land, and workers would be beaten and severely punished or even expelled for minor infractions, such as being late to work or drinking the evening before. To clarify what Felipe meant by slavery, I asked him if he had ever witnessed slavery. He replied that slavery still exists today.

Felipe Yo creo que la esclavitud quizás todavía continúe porque, en veces gente del campo, siembra su producto y él que en veces mayores beneficios tiene es el intermediario, el comerciante, el acaparador, entonces pues uno está prácticamente como esclavo de ellos, uno siembra pero no vende y si lo vende, lo vende barato para que ellos se ganen la mejor parte.

Felipe I think that slavery perhaps still exists, because, sometimes, people in the countryside plant their products, yet the one who has greater benefits is the intermediary, the businessperson, the middleman. In this way, we are practically slaves of others, we plant, but we don't sell, and if we do sell, we sell cheaply and others make more profit than we do.

Most of my interviewees did not argue that slavery still existed in the twenty-first century in Peru. However, like Felipe, most of my interviewees did not define slavery as the ownership of one human being by another; they defined it as exploitation, as working for little or no wages, as corporal punishment, or as forced labor. These are all conditions that existed in Ingenio well into the twentieth century. They are also conditions that were not particular to African-descended peoples. When chattel slavery was outlawed, many African-descended Peruvians continued to work on the same plantations, and their conditions of life changed little. For this reason, the abolition of legal slavery does not appear to be a significant part of their collective memory. My interviewees told me that, during the cotton campaign in the 1930s, the owners of the hacienda recruited large numbers of indigenous people to pick cotton, since they had experience in that domain. These cotton-pickers largely came from the Peruvian coast and moved into the area of Ingenio that is the closest to the fields and therefore infested with mosquitoes during the

rainy season. Despite this form of residential segregation that to a certain extent persists until today, my interviewees never mentioned race in connection with exploitation or indicated that the form of exploitation for indigenous people was distinct from that for African-descended peoples.

The residents of Ingenio speak openly about the differences between *morenos* (or *negros*) and *cholos* (indigenous people). However, when I asked my interviewees about slavery, very few of them seemed to be aware that chattel slavery had been particular to blacks, or that forced labor had worked differently for Africans and indigenous people in Peru. For example, Augusto, the town justice of the peace, told me that blacks and indians had suffered equally the hacendado's ire.

Augusto había una bodega, que llamaban la bodega del diablo y ahí había unos

cepos, unas argollas y decía mi abuelo, que ahí a la gente, por decir, el

que se portaba mal o llegaba embriagado al trabajo, ¿no? Ahí los

colgaban y los veteaban. . .

Tanya ¿a los cholos, también, los veteaban?

Augusto también, no había discriminación en ese sentido.

Augusto There was a little room, that they called the devil's room, and it had a

mantrap in it. Those were some rings that my grandfather used to say that

they used for people to, well, those that behaved badly or who came to

work intoxicated. They would hang them up there and beat them . . .

Tanya Did they beat the *cholos* as well?

Augusto Yes, there was no discrimination in that sense.

When Augusto refers to *cholos*, he is talking about the indigenous people who are originally from the coastal areas of Peru and had been brought to Ingenio to work on the hacienda. Augusto and other interviewees confirmed to me that blacks and indigenous people were treated equally badly during the time of the hacienda. For this reason, the common perception is that both blacks and indigenous people were enslaved in Ingenio. The historical archives reveal that there was never formally slavery in Ingenio,

and that the exploitation of indigenous people in Peru during the period of slavery was somewhat different from that of blacks. However, the fact that my informants conflated slavery with exploitation not only means that they do not think that slavery ended in 1854, but also that they did not think that only blacks had been slaves. As such, it makes sense that they would not be aware that Africans had been imported to Peru as slaves, even if they were aware that slavery had existed in Peru.

In Augusto and Felipe's cases, the "memory of slavery" (Gilroy 1993) is important in terms of their understandings of themselves and their history. However, since this memory of slavery is not connected exclusively to chattel slavery and the transport of Africans to the New World, Augusto and Felipe derive different meanings from this memory than would someone who thought of slavery as being particular to Africans and African-descended peoples, and having ended in 1854. For Augusto, Felipe, and other villagers, the period of the hacienda when the hacendado exacted cruel punishment on the workers seems to overshadow any memory of the slave trade and of chattel slavery.

The data presented thus far demonstrate the selective and collective amnesia of Africa and slavery in Ingenio. We can use these data to answer the central question: What are the processes by which collective memories are made and forgotten? In some cases, the constructions of ancestry were deduced—"I have dark skin and thus must be of African descent." In other cases, older relatives passed down stories of ancestry and collective history. This is especially common in the transmission of stories about the brutality of slavery, yet much less common in constructions of ancestry. In other cases, history is taught in school. Yet, my findings indicate that the way in which history is taught in school does not lead villagers to conclude that they have African ancestry. Finally, collective memories are created and recreated through popular culture, including books and movies, some of which may have been produced in the United States. All of this shows that there is a lot of work involved in the making of collective memories.

#### The Importance of Collective Memory

The fact that some of the residents of Ingenio are not aware that their ancestors were brought to Peru from Africa on slave ships for chattel slavery indicates that they

have collectively forgotten this history. Nevertheless, life in Ingenio continues to be shaped by the legacy of slavery. The descendants of African slaves in Ingenio are nearly all poor, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to survive as small farmers in Peru. Their condition as small farmers is a direct consequence of their legacy as plantation slaves. In addition, the structural factors that make it difficult for them to survive as small farmers today are consequences of the globalization of agriculture and the current world system. These structural factors were facilitated by the enriching of Europe and the US, which, in turn, are consequences of the slave trade (see Williams [1964] for a discussion of the relationship between slavery and capitalism). In many ways, the current poverty of the residents of Ingenio is directly related to the forcible removal of Africans from their homelands for the purpose of providing unpaid labor in the European colonies. As such, not only were slavery and the forcible removal from Africa important when they happened, but the repercussions of this also continue to be felt today.

To provide an example of this, nearly every woman that I encountered had a story to tell me of a child she had lost. One woman told me that she had given birth twenty-two times, yet only eight of her children survived. The high child-mortality rate in Ingenio is likely due to the lack of medical services and lack of clean water and a sanitary environment. These factors are linked to the legacy of slavery. For example, the hacendados built sewage, electricity, and running water systems but only connected them to the part of town where they and the office workers lived. The electricity and running water were powered by a hydroelectric mill that has been destroyed, and the sewage system is no longer in use, because it ran into the canal that provided the drinking water for the rest of the town. This denial of basic services to the agricultural laborers is not a historical idiosyncrasy; rather, it is a reflection of the general disregard for the lives of nonwhites that the system of chattel slavery engendered in the colonies, and that carried over into the Republican era, and, arguably, into the present day.

#### **Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter has addressed three key questions in the field of collective memory. This first relates to the importance of social forgetting for understanding collective memory. I have argued that the transatlantic slave trade is not simply history for residents of Ingenio, since it is something that continues to deeply affect their lives today. It also is not part of the collective memory of the residents, because few villagers were aware of it. The transatlantic slave trade has been collectively forgotten. This brings me to my second claim—that the current relevance of forgotten events is a key element to make the case that something has been socially forgotten. Irwin-Zarecka (1994: 117) cautions those researchers who wish "to restore to the deserving present a fragment of the past" that it is essential to examine the claim that "the now presented fragment of the past should have been part of collective memory all along." I argue, however, that the people of Ingenio have collectively forgotten that their ancestors were brought over on slave ships from Africa between 1592 and 1821 to work as slaves in the haciendas of Peru, not simply on the basis that this event was important when it happened, but because of its contemporary relevance. Collective memories are important insofar as they can help a community understand its position in the global social and economic hierarchy. In the case of Ingenio, the current impoverishment of the community is a product of the transatlantic slave trade and the effects of this are clearly seen today. The third issue I have addressed is how social conventions affect what is included in our collective memories. While it is true that stories of lineage and geographical origin are subjective understandings of our past, it is also easy to forget the power dynamics involved in the writing of history and remembering. The people of Ingenio's collective lack of understanding of their history and its present-day consequences is due not merely to social conventions, but also to the Pacific Passage, the history of miscegenation and dispersal, and the continuation of slavery-like conditions well into the twentieth century.

The findings and discussion presented in this chapter help to further elucidate that space between collective memory and history—the space of social forgetting. While history is the dead past, and collective memory is the living past, social forgetting

involves the non-memory or the loss of memory of events that deeply affect our lives. The transatlantic slave trade is a series of events that is responsible for having populated the Americas with peoples from the continent of Africa and has had a profound effect on each country in the Americas. Anyone in the Americas who remains unaware of the African slave trade and of the ways in which this process has shaped the hemisphere could be said to have forgotten slavery. The people of Ingenio are no exception.

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Coleman received her PhD in American studies from the Union Institute and University (2005). Her research focuses on the complex negotiations of race and identity within the historical and contemporary realities of people of African-Native ancestry in the southeastern United States. Her dissertation, "Notes on the State of Virginia: Africans, Indians, and the Paradox of Racial Integrity." is a narrative history that examines African



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Coleman has participated in a number of conferences, seminars, panel discussions, and workshops that focus on issues of racial identity, diversity, and social justice. In April 2007 she appeared as a guest on BET's *Meet the Faith*, to discuss the current Cherokee freedmen crisis. Her scholarly publications include "Tell the Court I Love My [Indian] Wife': Interrogating Race and Self Identity in *Loving v. Virginia*," *Souls: A Critical Journal in Black Politics, Culture, and Society* (2006). This article was chosen by Manning Marable, founding director of the Institute for African American Research at Columbia University, for inclusion in the Palgrave Macmillian Series on Contemporary Black History to be published late 2007. Coleman has a number of additional articles and book chapters forthcoming in 2007 and 2008. She is also revising her dissertation into a book manuscript.

# Ancestry DNA and the Manipulation of Afro-Indian Identity by Arica Coleman

Arica Coleman explains the rise in popularity of Ancestry DNA testing to determine more clearly an ancestral past for African Americans and Native Americans. In this essay, she shows that claims made by commercial companies promising to provide missing evidence for African and indigenous origins are more exaggerated than current genetic technology can deliver. Promises that a DNA test can provide a verification of Native American tribal relationships or define a link to an African tribe are misleading. Coleman argues that Ancestry DNA results are largely based on speculation and can vary from one company to the next. She also asserts that in developing identities, a shared history and ancestral consciousness, including knowledge transmitted through oral history, culture, and daily activities, should not be replaced by genetic technologies.

When thinking about race, think less about biology and more about politics.

Stuart Hall

It must be remembered that mtDNA and Y chromosome lineages are not human populations.

Peter N. Jones

# **Genetic Identity: A Cautionary Fiction**

When former California governor Ronald Reagan became the twenty-third president of the Confederate States of America (CSA), he appointed John Ambrose Fountroy V to head the Department of Commerce. Fountroy, a fifth-generation congressman, used his new post to promote a family-values initiative that included appropriating the most up-to-date technology to more effectively control slaves. Slavery, which continued throughout the twentieth century, was reinstated after the Confederate win, largely through the efforts of Fountroy's great-great-grandfather during his freshman tenure in the CSA Congress. Fountroy, seeking to exceed the aspirations of his Confederate forbears, ran for the Democrats' presidential nomination in the 1990s. His image as an impeccable symbol of white patriarchy embodying the core attributes of the family-values initiative (devoted husband/father and humane slave owner) placed him as front runner for the nomination. However, the former congressman's campaign experienced a downturn when his racial identity became the subject of interrogation. A journalist, who gained a secret interview with Fountroy's most trusted slave, reported that the Democrat nominee and his slave were related via the slave's great-greatgrandmother and Fountroy's great-grandfather. According to the slave, the mixed-race children that resulted from this relationship who were light enough to pass were brought up white and became heirs to the Fountroy dynasty. "He might look white." insisted the slave, "but he ain't all white." Fountroy appeared at a press conference to deny the allegations, attesting that he was 100 percent white, but suspicions increased when the Democrat nominee was reluctant to appear before the House Committee on Racial Identity (HCRI) and flatly refused to submit to a DNA test to prove that he was racially pure. As a result, the controversy cost Fountroy the election, as well as his reputation. Soon after, he was found dead in his car, the result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. The DNA test results released a few days later showed that Fountroy tested negative for African American ancestry. This scenario from Kevin Willmott's mock documentary The Confederate States of America: What if the South Had Won the War (2006), though fictional, provides a segue into an issue that has become of growing concern to peoples of African, Indian, or mixed African/Indian ancestry: Ancestry DNA.<sup>1</sup>

We are in the midst of a genetic revolution in which scientists are seeking answers to the question, Where did we come from? Phylogenetics, the study of the evolutionary development and history of a species, which analyzes genetic markers to trace human population movements and infer genetic ancestry, has expanded our knowledge of our forbearers' ancestral trail. Consequently, genetics has now become a hot commodity, as the commercial industry has been flooded with companies claiming they can (for a nominal or not-so-nominal fee) determine one's ancestral lineage with a small sample of DNA obtained by swabbing the inside of one's cheek. In a matter of weeks, the client will receive a letter from the company and a certificate of ancestry that certifies her/his biological affiliation with the group for which the company found a match. Yet, can present-day genetic technology settle the question of one's racial or ethnic lineage?

In spring 2000, at an international press conference held at the White House, Francis Collins and Craig Venter presented the first draft of the mapping and sequencing of human DNA. The salient aspect of Collins and Venter's presentation captured by the media was the unequivocal assertion that racial classifications made no biological sense, because on the molecular level the human population is 99.9 percent alike. The scientists' declaration may have been news to the public, but to the scientific community it only confirmed what many in the hard sciences had come to embrace as early as the mid-1940s—that separate biological races were indeed a myth. While many believed that the genetic blueprint had finally settled the race question, others said, "Not so fast." As sociologist Troy Duster explains, "While we may all be 99.9% alike, there are three billion base pairs of human DNA which leaves at least three million points of difference (single nucleotide polymorphism SNPs [pronounced snips] ) between any two people. Armed with the power of new computer driven technology, scientific attention is becoming riveted to that remaining 0.1% of genetic difference." Enter Ancestry DNA.<sup>2</sup>

Ancestry DNA (AD), also known as Personalized Genetic History (PGH), uses "Genetic data in the form of DNA polymorphisms sampled from different human populations . . . for inferring human population history, exploring genealogy and estimating individual ancestry." Hence, according to two of the leading scientists in the field, Mark D. Shriver and Rick A. Kittles, of Pennsylvania State University and Ohio

State University respectively, genetic ancestry provides a viable supplement to genealogical research that can be used to settle questions regarding a family's place of origin and ethnic heritage. In addition, Shriver and Kittles believe that the ancestry assessment obtained via Ancestry DNA can be used "for socio-political purposes (for example, adoption records access, affirmative action qualification, and Native American Tribal Affiliation.)" <sup>3</sup>

The former assertion has been particularly enticing to descendants of African slaves throughout the diaspora, as in the words of Henry Louis Gates Jr. "There is no Ellis Island for descendants of the slave trade." Hence, many African Americans are buying DNA kits at an average cost of \$300 as a last-ditch effort to learn their African tribe of origin and reconnect to a past severed by the transatlantic slave trade. The latter assertion has enticed many who believe that such DNA test results validates their claim to entitlements afforded by association to certain racial groups. Examples include prospective white employees who have tested positive for African ancestry now want to claim minority status so that they can benefit from affirmative action, blacks who have tested positive for European ancestry want to claim inheritance rights, and Christians whose test reveal an Ashkenazi Jewish relative want citizenship in the nation of Israel. Issues of entitlements certainly are cause for alarm, as Duster asserts, "This is not just somebody's desire to find out whether their grandfather is Polish. . . . It's about access to money and power." This has been a particularly contentious issue in Indian country as many debate whether DNA testing should be required of Cherokee or Seminole freedmen seeking reinstatement into the tribes that would provide them access to federal and casino monies.4

Issues of entitlement notwithstanding, the Ancestry DNA enterprise itself has come under scrutiny by many within and outside the scientific community. According to Shriver and Kittles, much of the controversy has centered on "the complex history of race, discrimination and injustice than on the science behind PGH [Personalized Genetic History]." In reality, the controversy has been on the science since many challenge the claim that Ancestry DNA can provide proof of one's individual ancestry. In addition, the language of race within this claim to ancestry identification has many up in arms over the genetic-ancestry enterprise. This essay will provide an overview of the

claims made regarding Ancestry DNA, the limitations of current genetic technology, and its implications for Afro Indian identity.<sup>5</sup>

#### Written in the Blood?

For over a century scholars have vigorously explored African American and indigenous intersections in the United States. In 1891 folklorist Alexander Chamberlain, recognizing African American and indigenous intersections in the Brer Rabbit tales collected among blacks in the southeastern United States, called on folklorists to "investigate the influence of the Indian upon Negro folklore and the influence of the Negro upon Indian folklore." Nevertheless, Carter G. Woodson's assertion in the 1920s, "One of the longest unwritten chapters of the history of the United States is that treating of the relations of the Negroes and Indians," spurred the momentum that invoked considerable investigation into this line of inquiry. By the conclusion of the twentieth century, African American and indigenous intersections had evolved into an expanding field of study supported by a large body of literature contributed by scholars from various disciplines. In 2000 the first scholarly conference devoted to the subject, "Eating Out of the Same Pot Black/Indian Conference," was held at Dartmouth College A second conference, "The First and the Forced: African American and Indigenous Intersections," was held in 2006 cosponsored by the University of Kansas and Haskell Indian Nations University. Both conferences were attended by scholars from such disciplines as Native American studies, African/African American studies, Latin American/Caribbean studies, history, religious studies, English, film, government, psychology, genealogy, and sociology, who were eager to engage in open dialogue regarding historical and contemporary issues in African/Indian relations. Yet, the historical and contemporary realities of African American and indigenous intersections are facing a new challenge, as scientific claims of inferring group affiliation via Ancestry DNA are not only shifting borders of identity but also seeking to subvert realities. The 2006 documentary African American Lives serves as case in point.<sup>6</sup>

The recent PBS documentary *African American Lives*, a four-part series that aired on February 1 and 8, 2006, has rekindled a dialogue among scholars regarding race, identity, and science. The series, organized by Harvard University scholar Henry

Louis Gates Jr., featured eight prominent African Americans (Benjamin Carson, Whoopie Goldberg, T. D. Jakes, Mae Jemison, Quincy Jones, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, Chris Tucker, and Oprah Winfrey) who embarked on a journey with Gates to discover their ancestral roots. Following the paper trail from local court houses and churches to the National Archives and the Church of Latter Day Saints, home to the largest genealogical repository in the US, Gates and his guests made intriguing discoveries about their ancestors. When the paper trail was exhausted, Gates turned to science. Using DNA analysis to assist his guests in tracing their ancestry back to their African tribe of origin, Gates also employed DNA analysis to ascertain whether there was any truth to the claim made by the guests that they also had Native American ancestry. According to the results Gates received from Mark Shriver, only two of his guests, Oprah Winfrey and Chris Tucker, demonstrated that they possessed considerable Native American ancestry. As a result, Gates concluded from these findings that the claim to Native American ancestry made by most African Americans was mere family lore.

During an interview on NPR's *All Things Considered*, Gates reiterated his position, stating:

I ask each of my guests if they thought they had a significant amount of Native American ancestry, and to a person, they said, oh, yeah, my great-grandmother, my grandmother, my cousin once removed, straight hair, high cheekbones. When we did the DNA analysis, only two of the nine had any significant amount of Native American ancestry. This is a myth.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, the claimed authoritative validity that Gates places on DNA results has convinced millions that Ancestry DNA provides valid proof of the associations or disassociations between African American and Native American peoples. Nevertheless, Ancestry DNA has serious limitations and should not be accepted as valid proof of one's ancestral lineage.

The promise of the Human Genome Project (HGP), an international scientific collaboration, the aim of which was to provide an entire blueprint of a human being by sequencing the estimated 25,000 genes in the nucleus of the human cell known as DNA, began in earnest in the United States and Europe in 1990. American and

European scientists believed that sequencing and mapping the human genome would provide an unparalleled potential "to revolutionize both therapeutic and preventive medicine by providing insights into the basic biochemical processes that underlie many human diseases." Nevertheless, while the genetic revolution has focused on the scientific use of genetic data to investigate inherited diseases, "the new molecular data" has scientists preoccupied with "questions of biological affiliations and historic population movements." As the HGP was gaining momentum, a parallel project, The Human Genome Diversity Project (HGDP), was underway. The HGDP's aims were to collect genetic data from indigenous populations from around the world and map migration patterns out of Africa by providing a global analysis of genomes from populations worldwide. The project aroused intense objections from indigenous communities. Among the numerous objections expressed by indigenous peoples, many "bridled at the notion that their DNA might be used to tell a story of their origins in conflict with their own traditional beliefs." In 2005 the National Geographic Society, in partnership with the IBM Corporation and the Watts Family Foundation, revived the project under a new initiative, the Genographic Project, which has the same goals as the now-defunct HGDP. While indigenous communities such as the Seaconke-Wampanoag of New England have volunteered to contribute their genetic data to the Genographic Project, others such as Debra Harry of the advocacy group Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism, objects, asserting, "The fundamental question the project is asking is 'Where do we come from?' That is not a question of interest to us as indigenous people. We already know where we came from." Nevertheless, Spencer Wells, National Geographic's explorer-in-residence, believes that Harry's sentiments are now more the exception than the rule among indigenous peoples, "But we find most people are happy to learn that they carry a record of their ancestry in their blood." Wells's enthusiasm notwithstanding, "Some groups find anthropomorphoric sampling so repugnant," states Philip E. Ross, "that they refuse access to the dead as well as the living."8

To tell the story of the ancestry that is written in the blood, scientists for the past twenty years have focused their analysis on mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), which is inherited from one's mother and the Y Chromosome DNA (NRY), which is inherited from

one's father. MtDNA and NRY analysis has proven quite useful in tracking human-population movements not only because it provides the ability to trace the mother's or father's line as far back as the genetic material is available, but also because these chromosomes undergo limited genetic recombination. Recombination, as defined by molecular anthropologist Peter N. Jones, "is a device used by chromosomes to reshuffle their genes at every generation, which has the evolutionary advantage that new, favorable gene combinations occasionally emerge." The uniparental inheritance and limited recombination features of these chromosomes have enabled scientists

to track the rare mutations that arise between generations of the mtDNA [NRY], thus allowing them to document mtDNA [NRY] allele frequencies of particular maternal [paternal lines]. It is these allele frequencies which can then be compared to other allele frequencies to calculate when two maternal [paternal] lines historically diverge.<sup>10</sup>

These qualities have made mtDNA and NRY useful to the scientific community. During the 1980s scholars from the University of California Berkley using mtDNA and NRY analysis confirmed what archeologists had long speculated—humanity began in Africa. As James Shreeve notes, "Scientists now calculate that all living humans are related to a single woman who lived roughly 150,000 years ago in Africa, a 'mitochondrial Eve.'" While Shreever acknowledges that this "mitochondrial Eve" was not the only woman living at the time, he contends that we are all linked to this woman via an "unbroken chain of mothers." 11

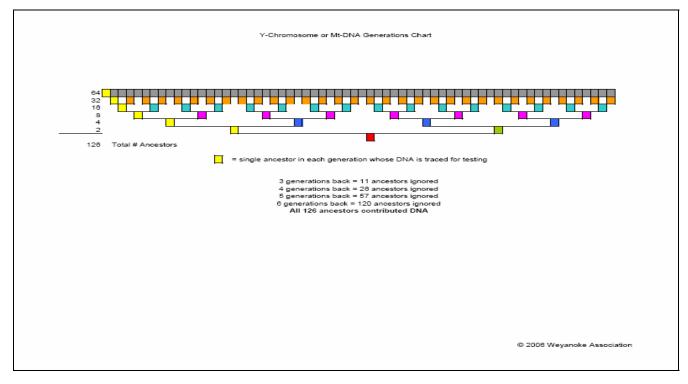
Here lies the problematic in determining demographic histories. As Jones observes, the primary problem when using mtDNA and NRY to determine population movements is

in interpreting the coalescent times of genes as times of origin for a population. Although tracing genealogy of mtDNA theoretically can lead to a single common ancestor, this is not evidence that the human population went through a period when only one breeding population was alive and reproducing. Tracing coalescent times leads to one ancestor of a unilaterally transmitted set of markers, but the descendants of the original mtDNA will have had haplotype frequencies that differed among themselves resulting in a biased sample of the

total historic population when using coalescent times. This is because working back in time does not allow one to take into account the various branches of diversity that the historic population had, but only can detect the lineal history of the specific marker being coalesced. . . . Any mtDNA or Y-Chromosome study that attempts to date the first appearance of a particular population in a certain geographical area as big as the Americas or as small as the Great Basin should be based on extensive sampling, not only of the population under consideration, but also of potential source populations and neighboring populations. <sup>12</sup>

This latter point cannot be overstated, since due to migration, mtDNA and NRY can be shared among ethnic groups. Nevertheless, any population analysis based primarily on mtDNA will have drawn inferences based on skewed estimates, because mtDNA represents only a miniscule fraction of the human genome and cannot provide an accurate phylogeny of the population under study.<sup>13</sup>

Jones points out an additional problem that concerns the unbroken chain of mtDNA and NRY. Because the only changes introduced in the genes are what are known as point mutations, it is believed that the founding lineage cluster contains the original founding-lineage haplotype, which includes the founding lineage's descendants. But such an assumption proves problematic. As Jones contends, "the original Y-Chromosome can eventually die out, shifting time, haplotype frequency, or relationships of the population under study and can result in faulty data when comparing a present population's frequencies to those of an ancient population's haplotype frequencies (whether actually based on aDNA [Ancient DNA] or hypothetical frequencies)." In fact, the original Y-Chromosome can die out after just one generation, which will result in direct descendants having different NRY markers, "yet still remain a descendant of that individual." This is true for mtDNA as well, "where a father's son or daughter will not carry the genetic information of that person's father's mother." But what if the original mtDNA or Y-Chromosome doesn't die out? As stated earlier, the best that this type of analysis can do is reveal one line of one's ancestral lineage, which represents less than one percent of the entire genetic makeup. For example, when tracing one's ancestry back six generations, genetic material must be obtained from all sixty-four relatives who equally contributed to one's DNA makeup. However, lineage analysis using mtDNA and NRY only allows for two of those sixty-four to be traced.<sup>14</sup>



To overcome the limitations of mtDNA and NRY, admixture mapping attempts to identify Ancestry Information Markers (AIM), which frequently appear in designated populations to demonstrate group affiliation. However, patterns that scientists identify as Native American or African can be found in peoples all over the globe. Hence, if Peter N. Jones is correct in stating that "haplogroups are not populations," how then can Shriver, Kittles, and others ascribe racial labels to haplogroups and measure with any precision one's percent of admixture? For example, a number of European and Asian groups have "Native American affinity" yet have never had any contact with North American Indians. Test results from a person from Germany or Hungary may reveal a 10 percent genetic affinity to Native Americans, but that 10 percent could also mean that his/her ancestor was Greek, or Jewish, or all three. In reality, it is not the absence or presence of the markers on which scientists base their estimations, but rather the frequency in which they appear among designated populations. If, as stated before, direct descendants can have different markers from their immediate forebears, however, some may test for Native American affinity while others of the same lineage

may not. In addition, DNA analysis has confirmed what scientists discovered almost thirty years ago while conducting comparative gene-group analysis from blood samples taken from people all over the world: "There's as much or more diversity and genetic difference within any racial group as there is between people of different racial groups." Hence, testing for Native American ancestry can result in false positives or false negatives. 15

Therefore, as Duster contends, "Instead of asserting that someone has no Native American ancestry, the most truthful statement would be: 'It is possible that while the Native American groups we sampled did not share your pattern of markers, others might since these markers do not exclusively belong to any one group of our existing racial, ethnic, linguistic, or tribal typologies."

The limitation of admixture DNA testing can be further demonstrated when examining issues pertaining to African Americans. Some African Americans' test results link their ancestral lineage to Europe, not Africa. As anthropologist John Hawkins explains, "in some test results for African-Americans, Europe means Europe, while in others it may mean East Africa, or Arab or East Indian." In reality, the results yielded by Ancestry DNA test are highly speculative. Even if DNA tests can pinpoint where a greatgrandparent came from, his/her "ancestors ultimately came from other places," leaving most researchers' genetic ancestry a mystery despite the number of test kits purchased. Shriver and Kittles confirm this, stating that due to migration within the African continent over the past 400 years, markers now found in west and central African populations, where most African captives were seized, "do not necessarily reflect those present at the time of enslavement [emphasis mine]. For this reason the best the PGH [Ancestry DNA] can do is link marker lineages that are found in African Americans to present day African populations." Shriver and Kittles's caveat notwithstanding, offering such analysis as guaranteed proof of one's ancestry, as demonstrated by the Certificate of Ancestry offered by Kittles's private company African Ancestry, is misleading and raises ethical questions.17



Moreover, the salient problem of admixture DNA is that in order to declare someone to be 50 percent sub-Saharan African, 40 percent Native American, and 10 percent European, one must assume he/she knows what constitutes 100 percent of these groups. According to Peter Jones, while most theories regarding human population movements are based on assumptions of isolation, even scientists acknowledge that such isolation was more the exception than the rule. Whether referring to Africans or Native Americans in general or specific ethnic groups identified as belonging to these groups, there is no evidence that lends credence to isolation theories. Modern-day African American and Native American genomes are similar to their ancestors in that they are not genetically homogeneous; instead, they possess a genome that is diverse and complex. Such deep roots and tangled branches, to use Duster's words, confirm Hawkins's assertion that, "Anthropologists studying genetic variation have always found complexity rather than simple one-plus-one racial mixtures." As one European geneticist acknowledged, labeling people based on genetic results is not only dangerous business, but also "very difficult in any case." Therefore, claims to genetic racial identity can not be based on scientific precision, but rather on long-held assumptions based on ideologies of biological racial difference.<sup>18</sup>

# **Manipulating Afro Indian Identity**

In 2000, Itazipco Lakota artist Francis Yellow paid tribute to African/Indian kinships ties in a 17.5" x 12" depiction of the first encounter between Carolina Indians

and Africans, "First They Made Prayers, and They Sang and They Danced and Then They Made Relatives." Concerning his artistic representation, Yellow stated, "[I] wanted to depict historical African-Indigenous relations from a perspective that today's indigenous peoples and Africans and African Americans could recognize, and relate to, as our truth." Yet, "our truth" as depicted by Yellow, was derived from the historical and cultural truths that have long constructed our individual and collective identities. But what happens when DNA is brought into the mix? Due to the current premium placed on Ancestry DNA, many turn to genetic testing because they believe it will confirm what they already know or reveal a hidden past. However, as Elliot and Brodwin acknowledge, "genetic ancestry tracing has the potential to disrupt identity claims as well as corroborate them." Interestingly, many African Americans are experiencing a disruption of identity due to test results that raise questions rather than provide answers concerning personal genetic lineage. Consequently, many spend thousands of dollars buying multiple kits in search of the answer they are looking for. Alondra Nelson, professor of sociology and African American studies at Yale University, states, "I've spoken with African Americans who have tried four or five different genetic genealogy companies because they weren't satisfied with the results. . . . They received different results each time and kept going until they got a result they were happy with." 19

Disrupted identity claims can be further examined by revisiting Gates's PBS documentary and observing the professor's journey to discover his own genetic link to his African tribe of origin. Gates, assuming that his admixture test would demonstrate the majority of his ancestry to be African with a small percentage of Native American and a hint of European, was surprised to learn from Shriver that his results showed him to be 50 percent European and 50 percent African. Gates, visibly shaken by these results, was anxious to undergo further testing. Combining information from three separate databases, Gates's mtDNA and NRY were tested to infer his African tribe of origin; however, the second round of results placed him even farther away from Africa than the admixture test. Gates's results overwhelmingly placed him among people of Northern Europe with one partial match in North Africa, not Sub-Saharan Africa. The comments Gates made in jest regarding disqualifying for a reparations check or having to resign his post as director of the African American Studies Department at Harvard not

only demonstrate a disruption of identity, but also represent assumptions of entitlement, as discussed earlier in this essay. Undaunted by the second round of test results, Gates remained determined to get the results he wanted. He returned to Shriver, who made up a special test that yielded the results Gates was hoping for. When receiving his results, Gates asked the geneticist, "What is the short answer that I tell people *with scientific accuracy* [emphasis mine]." Shriver responded that in his estimation Gates shared ancestral lineage with the Mende people of Sierra Leone, West Africa; however, the scientist appeared wary of the results. Despite Shriver's apparent skepticism, the results put the professor's mind at ease, as he stated with a smile, "I'm a Mende." The premium Gates places on genetic identity reflects what Duster observes as, "the seekers' eagerness to know [which] spurs a willingness to accept as definitive these artifacts of sampling contingencies." What is most disturbing is that Gates has substituted genetics for history as the marker that constructs our identities and defines our truths.<sup>20</sup>

Yet, how does one account for Gates's radical shift of opinion from his assertion twenty years ago that rather than a biological reality, race is a metaphor, "a dangerous trope" camouflaging as "an objective term of classification" to the now self-appointed leading apostles of genetic technology? In the introduction to his edited volume Race, Writing and Difference (1986), Gates states, "Race, as a meaningful criterion within the biological sciences, has long been recognized to be a fiction. When we speak of 'the white race' or 'the black race,' or 'the Jewish race' or the 'Aryan race,' we speak in biological misnomers and, more generally, metaphors." The trope of race, according to Gates, naturalizes the ways in which difference is "described and inscribed" to construct the other. However, deconstructing such tropes exposes "the hidden relations of power and knowledge inherent in popular and academic usages of 'race." Yet, this position is what cultural theorist Stuart Hall refers to as a linguist position that asserts that the reality of difference is merely created by humans in language and culture. Hall asserts that race is a discursive in that, "Differences exist in the world, but what matters are the systems of thoughts and language we use to make sense of the differences. Representation of racial difference, writing of power and the production of knowledge is crucial to the way in which they are generated and function." <sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, according to Gates, the new genetic technology, rather than confirming old notions of racial difference, affirms our connectedness by tracing all of humankind back to one common ancestor and dispels notions of racial purity. Hence, such knowledge moves us closer to a society free of racism. But if race is politics and not biology, why depend on biology to construct a politics of antiracism? As Hall aptly states:

the heart of the arguments for and against racism are founded on the notion of a biological guarantee—that is to say that somehow/somewhere either biology, physiology, genetics, or color or something other than human history and culture will guarantee the truth and authenticity of what we believe and what we want to do; it is the search of that guarantee that addicts us to the preservation of the biological trace. It makes it hard to conduct a politics of anti-racism without a guarantee. . . . How do we conduct an ethically responsible politics around race without the guarantee of biology?<sup>22</sup>

In a society where scientific validity is as sacred as religion itself, that question may remain unanswered for years to come.

Afro Indian peoples are now faced with the pressure to redefine our truths according to genetic markers rather than what bell hooks calls, "the history written in the hearts of our people." Long before genealogical research and genetic ancestry tracing became a Western obsession, African and Native peoples of the Americas believed that one's ancestors were vital in forging a collective identity through our historical reality and collective memory. As hooks states, "In the old days, Native Americans, Africans and African Americans believed that the dead stay among us so that we will not forget." Nevertheless, colonization and enslavement have pitted indigenous ways of knowing against Western constructions of history that continuously seek to effectively erase the reality of African American and Native American intersections from American memory. Initially, a historical consciousness based in oral tradition was deemed invalid, because there were no written records to corroborate the collective memory of African and Native peoples. Today, the memories of African American, Native American, and Afro Indian peoples can be corroborated by both oral tradition and written records, yet new genetic technologies are being appropriated to subvert those realities. Gates's assertion that his

colleague Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot is not Native American, because her DNA test revealed no American Indian ancestry (despite the long history of intermingling between blacks and Indians in her ancestral home of Charles City County, Virginia), and his equally unabashed proclamation that the lack of Native American ancestry detected in the DNA results of the majority of his guests warranted the conclusion that African American and Native American kinship ties are a myth demonstrates how the appearance of scientific precision assumes hegemony over other forms of knowledge.

This is of particular significance to the Cherokee freedmen who, under the threat of expulsion from the Cherokee membership rolls on the grounds that they are not "blood" Cherokees, submitted to DNA testing to prove their Cherokee affiliation. In June 2005, Rick Kittles, under the assumption that today's Cherokee freedmen possessed at least 20 percent Cherokee ancestry, gathered 100 DNA samples from freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes in Norman, Oklahoma. Kittles was surprised by the returns as the test results showed that, for those who tested positive for Native ancestry, the average yield was no more than 6 percent. Such results were disheartening to those who were expecting the test to provide the final genetic stamp of approval on their claims to Indian-ness. While Kittles hoped that his efforts could still provide some assistance to the Cherokee freedmen, in March 2007, 73 percent of the Cherokees voted to expel the freedmen from the Cherokee Nation. With all of the hype surrounding ancestry DNA, it is understandable that the freedmen would turn to science to stake their claim to equal rights as full-fledged members of the Cherokee Nation, a privilege their forbears enjoyed until the late 1970s. But it also demonstrates how genetic technology is increasingly substituting a genetic identity for the historical and cultural identity of Afro Indian peoples. Yet, as Tiya Miles, an expert in black-Cherokee history, cautions, ancestry DNA should not be used "as a foolproof kind of 'truth,' that trumps oral histories, origin stories, cultural connections etc. . . . about self and family [that] obscures other kinds of knowledge. . . . "<sup>23</sup> Peter N. Jones concurs, stating:

Because of the various limitations . . . these studies should be viewed as inchoate and requiring further investigation and support from other fields. . . . The mtDNA and Y chromosome data for American Indians, as well as many other regions throughout the world, have serious limitations . . . . Because of the

claimed authoritative validity of these studies there is a great danger that they will convince non-specialists of the hypothesized associations [or disassociations] between American Indian groups [and African Americans]. . . . [DNA analysis should] offer a discourse among our often disparate fields offering a greater understanding of American Indian [and African American] cultural, affiliation and demographic history.<sup>24</sup>

While the Cherokee freedmen fight continues, genetics may well prove a formidable foe of freedmen in obtaining rights of citizenship within the Cherokee Nation.

Ancestry DNA claims the potential to reconnect us to our ancestral lineage; in reality, however, it is having the opposite effect, as identity claims forged by a shared historical consciousness may well be replaced by those forged by shared genetic markers. Yet, as Jones further states, "the history of a contemporary group's genes" does not constitute the "specific history of that population." In fact, ancestry DNA has the potential to create affiliations not based on reality but rather based on "imagined genetic communities," which perpetuate fables of socially constructed ideals of the other. As Patricia Williams warns,

It behooves us to be less romantic about what all of this DNA swabbing reveals. I worry about the cravings to 'go back to Africa,' to 'connect with our Yiddishness' or to feel like new doors have been opened if we have an Asian ancestor. The craving, the connection, the newness of those doors is in our heads, not in our mitochondria. Rather, it is the process of superimposing the identities with which we were raised upon the culturally embedded, socially constructed imaginings about 'the Other' we could be. The fabulous nature of what is imagined can be liberating, invigorating—but it is fable. If we read the story into eternity of our bloodlines, if we biologize our history, we will forever be less than we can be.<sup>25</sup>

African American and indigenous intersections go far deeper than what any group of polymorphisms can reveal. Contrary to theories of biological determinism, we are not the sum and total of our genes; we are far more complex than the essentialism perpetuated by genetic identity. Our identity is grounded in the cosmology of our ancestors where, as Barbara Omolade states, "the oral tradition of transmitting information and knowledge is interwoven among music, art, dance, and crafts and

everyday activities intermixed with communication and connection with both the spiritual world and the ancestral past." It is this identity, not defined by genetic markers, but rather by a historical consciousness shaped by our own ways of knowing that will forge usable pasts for African American and indigenous peoples.<sup>26</sup>

# Glossary of terms<sup>27</sup>

Admixture mapping – a method of screening the human genome that relies on a quantification of population structure within as well as between individuals.

Allele – one of several alternative forms of genes, occupying the same position on a chromosome and controlling the same inherited characteristics. Also known as allelemorph.

Ancestry Information Markers (AIMS) – examines groups' relative sharedness of genetic markers found on the autosomes – the nonsex chromosomes inherited from both parents.

Haplotypes/Haplogroups – allele that are prevalent in a given population sample are known as gene frequencies. Such frequencies are called hylotypes. Hyplotypes come in a number of varieties which form hyplogroups.

Polymorphism – to have more than one state or alternative sequence at a particular position

Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) – a precise base pair position where different people are found to vary in sequence. Generally two alternate alleles are found at a particular SNP.

#### **Endnotes**

http://www.ipcb.org/publications/briefing\_papers/files/hgdp.html and Amy Harmon, "DNA Gatherers Hit a Snag: The Tribes Don't Trust Them," *New York Times* (December 10, 2006), 1; For more on the new genetic technology and public health, see Troy Duster, *Backdoor to Eugenics* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Kevin Willmott, *The Confederate States of America*, DVD, 2006.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Troy Duster, "Racial Medicine's Revival." *Project Syndicate*, <a href="http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/duster1">http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/duster1</a>, (June 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Mark D. Shiver and Rick Kittles. "Genetic Ancestry and the Search For Personalized Genetic History," *Nature Reviews* 5 (August 2004): 611. Shriver and Kittles also believe that the new genetic technology can be useful in determining the racial identity of a suspect who has left DNA at a crime scene. For a critical analysis of this, see Troy Duster, "Explaining Differential Trust of DNA Forensic Technology: Grounded Assessment or Inexplicable Paranoia," *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* (*summer* 2006), 293-300; also available at Longview Institute, http://www.longviewinstitute.org/research/duster/DusterJLMEtrust606.pdf/view.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Henry Louis Gates Jr., *African American Lives*, episode I; Quoted in Amy Harmon, "The DNA Age: Seeking Ancestry in DNA Ties Uncovered By Test," *The New York Times* (April 12, 2006), 3, <a href="http://fire.biol.wwu.edu/trent/trent/NYTgeneticancestry.pdf">http://fire.biol.wwu.edu/trent/trent/NYTgeneticancestry.pdf</a>.; The Seminole freedmen and the Cherokee freedmen were expelled from these tribes in 2000 and 2007 respectively. Their exclusion from the tribe on the basis that they are not "blood Indians" denies the long history of African American-Native American kinships ties in this country.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Shriver and Kittles, "Genetic Ancestry," 611.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Arica L. Coleman, "[Un]Mixing Bodies and Beliefs: The Manipulation of Race and Identity," *International Journal of Africana Studies* 12, no. 1 (in press); Carter G. Woodson, "The Relations of Negroes and Indians in Massachusetts," The *Journal of Negro History* 5, No. 1 (January 1920), 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Henry Louis Gates Jr., "All Things Considered," NPR News (February 8, 2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Peter N. Jones, *American Indian mtDNA, Y Chromosome Genetic Data, and Peopling of North America* (Boulder: The Bauu Institute 2004), 5; James Shreeve "Reading Secrets of the Blood," *National Geographic Magazine (*March 2006), 73; Philip E. Ross, "Endangered Genes," *Scientific American*, (January 1, 1993), 17; For more on indigenous opposition to genetic technology, see Debra Harry, "The Human Genome Diversity Project: Implication for Indigenous People" Indigenous People's Council on Biocolonialism (March 14, 1995),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Jones, *American Indian mtDNA*, 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> James Shreeve, "The Greatest Story Ever Told," *National Geographic Magazine* (March 2006), 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Peter N. Jones, "American Indian Demographic History and Cultural Affiliation: A Discussion of Certain Limitations on the Use of mtDNA and Y Chromosome Testing," *AnthroGlobe Journal* (September 2002), 3, 22. Sample size has been a salient issue in the human population debate. For more on this, see Jones, 6-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Jones, American Indian mtDNA, 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Jones, *American Indian mtDNA*, 16; for more on Ancient DNA (aDNA), see Jones, 60-65; For more on the limits of genetics and ancestry tracing, see Carl Elliott and Paul Brodwin, "Identity and Genetic Ancestry Tracing," *British Medical Journal*, 325 (December 21, 2002), 1469-71; MtDNA and Y-Chromosome Chart used by permission.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Jones, *American Indian mtDNA*, 31; John Hawkins, "How African Are You: What Genealogical Testing Can't Tell You" *Slate Magazine Online* (March 14, 2006), para 6-8, <a href="http://www.slate.com/id/2138059/">http://www.slate.com/id/2138059/</a>; Troy Duster, "Deep Roots Tangled Branches," *Longview Institute.org*, para18, <a href="http://www.longviewinstitute.org/research/duster/deeproots/view">http://www.longviewinstitute.org/research/duster/deeproots/view</a>. Reprinted from *The Chronicle Review Online*. (February 3, 2006); *Race the Power of An Illusion*, episode 1, DVD, California Newsreel (2002); Jonathan Marks and Brett Lee Shelton, "Genetic Markers – Not a Valid Test for Native Identity," Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism <a href="https://www.IPCB.org/publication/briefing">www.IPCB.org/publication/briefing</a> papers/files/identity.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Duster, "Deep Roots," 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Hawkins, "How African," para10; Shriver and Kittles, "Genetic Ancestry," 612; Certificate of Ancestry obtained from Google.com Image. Patron's name was altered for anonymity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Duster, "Deep Roots; para 21"; Jones, "American Indian Demographic" 6; Hawkins, "How African;" Quoted in Richard Tutton, "'They Want to Know Where They Came From:' Population Genetics, Identity and Family Genealogy," *New Genetics and Society* 23, No.1 (2004), 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Quoted in Juliette Harris, "The Black-Indian Connection in Art: American Portraits, Soulscapes and Spirit Works," *The International Review of African American Art* 1, No. 17 (Hampton University, 2000), 23; Carl Elliot and Paul Brodwin, "Identity and Genetic," 1471; quoted in Gary E. Young. "New Roots," *The Guardian*. (February 13, 2006), para 15, <a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,,1711821,00.html">http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,,1711821,00.html</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Gates, African American Lives, episode 4; Duster, "Deep Roots," para 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Idem. "Writing 'Race' and the Difference It Makes." *Race, Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 4-5; Stuart Hall, *Race the Floating Signifier* (North Hampton, MA: Media Education Foundation), VHS, 1996.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> bell hooks, "Revolutionary 'Renegades'," *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press), 1993, 183, 180, 181; For more on African American-Native American relations in Charles City, Virginia, see Coleman, "[Un]Mixing Bodies and Beliefs in note 6; Judy Gibbs Robinson, "Freedmen's Descendants Discover Past," CAC Review <a href="http://cacreview.blogspot.com/2005/06/freedmen-descendants-use-dna-to-show.html">http://cacreview.blogspot.com/2005/06/freedmen-descendants-use-dna-to-show.html</a>; Tiya Miles. "Re: Skip Gates and Red/Black People." Email to the author. February 19, 2006; the Five Civilized Tribes are former Southern slaveholding tribes—Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Seminoles, and Creeks—who were removed from their ancestral land west of the Mississippi in the 1830s as a part of President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Jones, "American Indian Demographic," 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ibid., 6; Bob Simpson, "Imagined Genetic Communities: Ethnicity and Essentialism in the Twenty-first Century," *Anthology Today* 16, No. 3 (June 2000); 3-6; Patricia Williams, "Emotional Truth," *The Nation* (March 2006), para 8, <a href="http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060306/williams">http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060306/williams</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Barbara Omolade, "The Silence and the Song: Towards a Black Woman's History through Her Own Language," *Wild Women in the Whirlwind: Afro-American Culture and the Contemporary Literary Renaissance*, Joanne M. Braxton and Andrea Nicola McLaughlin, eds. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press,1990) 285; Josephine Johnston, "Resisting a Genetic Identity: The Black Seminoles and Genetic Test of Ancestry," *The Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics* 31(2003), 262-71. For additional reading on indigenous ways of knowing, see Alexander Butchart, "Historiography, Progress and the Present" and "History Will Teach Us Nothing," *The Anatomy of Power: European Constructions of the Body* (New York: Zed Books, 1998), 6-12; Vine Deloria Jr., "The Concept of History," *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1982); *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997); Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People*, (New York: Zed Books, 1998).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Glossary of terms obtained from DNAPrint Genomics <a href="http://www.dnaprint.com/welcome/glossary/">http://www.dnaprint.com/welcome/glossary/</a>

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873 (2003); "KU Law School Launches Program with Emporia State University," 72 J. Kan. Bar Assoc. 8 (2003). Her latest article, "Red and Black—A Divided Seminiole Nation: Davis v. U.S.," was published in the Kansas Journal of Law and Public Policy.

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# Red and Black—A Divided Seminole Nation: *Davis v. U.S.*By Joyce A. McCray Pearson

Relationships between Native Americans and African Americans have had a long, confusing, and sometimes contentious history. Using a set of laws and court cases as a framework, Joyce McCray Pearson analyzes legal codes that have reshaped the boundaries of the Seminole Nation and defined the citizenship of black Seminoles. McCray Pearson examines the ways that federal law sometimes conflicted with Seminole Nation decisions regarding the status of African Americans formerly enslaved by Seminoles. In discussing present-day claims for citizenship and land among black Seminoles, McCray Pearson also shows how DNA testing does not always provide evidence that leads to clear conclusions about family and tribal membership.

Joyce A. McCray Pearson "Red and Black—A Divided Seminole Nation: *Davis v. U.S.*," 14 *Kansas Journal of Law and Public Policy* 607 (Spring 2005). Reprinted with permission of *Kansas Journal of Law and Public Policy*.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

One of the longest unwritten chapters in the history of the United States is that of the relations of the Negroes and the Indians. The Indians were already here when the white men came and the Negroes brought in soon after to serve as a subject race found among the Indians one of their means of escape. <sup>1</sup>

There is no black Seminole . . . 2

If you want to keep the bloodlines going, you got to keep'em separate . . . the tribe is not trying to rewrite history-it's just that the common fight for freedom that brought blacks and native people together 200 years ago doesn't apply anymore. <sup>3</sup>

When we all started out, we started out as brothers. We fought together as brothers. Our blood ran together the same. When we settled we were still brothers. We were brothers until this money came up and then they went to pulling away. <sup>4</sup>

These sentiments and opposing points of view regarding the identity of Black Seminoles is at the heart of the matter in the case of *Davis v. United States*. The history of the Black Seminoles reaches as far back as the 17th century. But the most recent history began in 1950 and 1951 when the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma (SNO) and Seminoles living in Florida filed claims for compensation for Florida lands ceded to the United States in 1823. In an attempt to quiet title to land taken from the Seminoles, in 1976 a \$16 million judgment from the Indian Claims Commission (ICC) was awarded to the descendants of the "Seminole Nation as it existed in Florida on September 18, 1823." The Department of Interior (DOI) directed that 75% of the money be distributed to the Oklahoma Seminoles, 25% to the Florida Tribes and nothing to the Freedmen or Black Seminoles because in 1823 they were considered slaves. Congress did not pass an act allowing distribution of the funds until 1990 which by this time, with interest, had ballooned to \$56 million.

In 1996, Sylvia Davis, a member of the Dosar Barkus band of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, was denied a \$125 school clothing allowance from the funds. The Dosar Barkus and Bruner bands are Seminoles of African descent and are the only branches of the tribes being denied access to these funds.<sup>11</sup> The Bureau of

Indian Affairs (BIA) and the SNO argue that in denying their claims, they are not discriminating against the Dosar Barkus band based on race, but they are correctly enforcing the requirement that the funds be distributed to descendants as defined in 1823.<sup>12</sup> The Black Seminoles, also known as Estelusi, were not considered members of the nation until 1866 when the U.S. government decided to recognize them as such after the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, and passage of treaties imposed upon the Seminoles and a number of other Indian nations who owned slaves.<sup>13</sup> These treaties provided for the emancipation of any slaves owned by the tribes and allowed them to incorporate the "freedmen" into the nation "on an equal footing with the original members"<sup>14</sup>

Obviously, there is much more at stake in the Davis case than \$125 worth of school clothes. What is at stake is how tribes, federal agencies and other entities, based upon both an historical analysis and today's public policy concerns over the distribution of resources, will choose to define or identify as Indian or Black, numerous people who have over the years identified themselves as Black Seminole Indians either through blood quantum, social construct, cultural affiliation, or proven descendancy from an identified ancestor.<sup>15</sup>

This article will not draw definitive conclusions about how to label or categorize an obviously mixed race of people. I will not endorse one position at the peril of alienating the legitimacy of the opposite stance. I only propose to point out the claims of both the Black and Red Seminoles.

Part II of the article explores the historical backdrop which created this ostensibly Black and Indian race. It also looks at the numerous definitions of the word "Seminole." Part III looks at the Davis case, and the rich heritage of the plaintiff, Sylvia Davis. This section will not employ an in-depth analysis of the procedural, constitutional or other substantive legal issues that plain people will never understand to be the reason why they win or lose a case. Because to plain people that is not what the real issues are. The real issue to plain people is the end result of litigation, not procedural questions or issues which ultimately sends them away from the courts empty handed.

Part IV looks at the reaction and the community outcry after Davis as tribal leaders and disenfranchised Black Seminoles express their agreement or discontent over the outcome of the cases.

Part V briefly explores how DNA and genetic tests may or may not bolster the claims of Black Seminoles, followed by a conclusion which unfortunately gives no solid solutions but instead merely provides a few concluding remarks and observations.

#### II. HISTORICAL BACKDROP

One of the histories<sup>16</sup> of the Seminole Nation begins between the 17th and 19th century.<sup>17</sup> Spain and Portugal were perhaps the first Europeans to come to the New World.<sup>18</sup> After Columbus sailed to the Western Hemisphere, Pope Alexander VI and the Catholic Church laid claim to significant parts of land dividing it between Portugal and Spain. North America was a part of Spain's legal territory.<sup>19</sup> Between 1520 and 1570, Spain began to fear ongoing British competition for the North and South Americas. The competition extended to religion, economics and colonial politics. In 1588, Phillip II of Spain sent 130 ships to stop the British spread of Protestantism and further exploration into the New World.<sup>20</sup> The British navy defeated Spain, gained control of the North Atlantic and began colonizing North America.

The Spanish claimed the territory between Florida and Virginia. In the early 17th century, British colonization began.<sup>21</sup> Spain attacked the British settlements in Virginia. Spain and its Native American allies also attempted to overtake colonies in South Carolina but failed. Yet, prior to all of these attacks and invasions between the British and Spanish, the runaway African slaves were problematic for both countries.

Much of Spain's wealth came from Panama through shipments of silver and gold.<sup>22</sup> In 1572, Francis Drake left England to raid Panama for treasure.<sup>23</sup> He left with two ships but by the end of the voyage had lost almost all of his men to sickness and disease. Drake was saved by the "cimmarons" or "symerons" whom Sir Francis Drake defined as "a Black people which about eighty years past fled

from the Spaniards... and are since grown to a nation under two Kings of their own."<sup>24</sup> Drake had attempted to raid Panama from the sea during the rainy season. The Symeron rebels told them to wait until the rainy season was over before they led their attack. They took care of Drake's crew, feeding and medicating them and hiding his ship in a shallow cove. Later the rebels assisted them in overtaking a Spanish mule train loaded with gold and silver. Nichols gives the Black rebels credit for making the British voyage successful. This success was a political victory for the British and the rebels.<sup>25</sup>

The Spanish and British were constantly juxtaposed between the slaves' constant desire for freedom. And they rebelled and conspired with both sides just to maintain that freedom. In North America, the British later switched positions with the Spanish and became the hated slaveholders. The Spanish, learning from the battles in Panama, were careful to maintain the allegiance of rebel slaves. For 117 years rebel slaves helped defend Spain in conflicts between Britain and the United States.<sup>26</sup>

So many slaves were unable to tolerate the notion of perpetual bondage that by 1687, large numbers fled from South Carolina to Florida and established separate and allied communities or relationships with Indian tribes. <sup>27</sup> The Spanish government <sup>28</sup> granted them asylum and allowed them to occupy land in the same manner as citizens of Spain and in fact considered them free subjects of the Spanish crown. <sup>29</sup> The Spanish colonial government consorted with African rebel runaway slaves, and the king of Spain, in his Edict of 1693, freed them and encouraged more to come to Florida. The edict established a political-military policy. The rebels were then inducted into the Spanish military and formed a garrison that protected the entrance to the Spanish capital in St. Augustine, Florida. <sup>30</sup> The inclusion of these rebels proved to be a key element in Florida's defense. <sup>31</sup>

# A. Definitions/Origins/Interpretations of the Word "Seminole"

There are several interpretations of the true meaning of the word "Seminole." The following excerpts best point out many of the definitions used over time.

"The term 'Seminole' is said to be derived from the Muskogee word simano'li, which may be translated as 'emigrants,' 'pioneers,' or 'frontiersmen.' The Muskogee word is in turn originally derived from the Spanish 'cimarron,' meaning 'runaway' or 'wild.'"<sup>32</sup> Another account states: "Seminole is a Muskogee word first used in the 1770's to refer to the Alachua band of Lower Creeks... Their prolonged isolation from the Creeks proper and their slow withdrawal from the Creek Confederation earned them the title of Seminole, meaning 'wild' or 'runaway."<sup>33</sup>

According to Twyman in the text *The Black Seminole Legacy and North American Politics*, 1693-1845,

There are generally two perspectives on the origin of the Seminoles . . . . The first perspective can be termed "mono-genesis" and the second "polygenesis." The mono-genesis view is more popular. According to this view, the Seminoles are essentially an amalgam of the Creek Confederation, which migrated from Georgia into Florida and incorporated the few remnants of the nearly extinct Florida natives....The African presence is explained as either runaway slaves permitted to settle or as Seminoles' slaves, who were bought or captured from white settlers. The second and less popular perspective ascribes to a poly-genesis view. According to this view, the first Seminoles were Africans and Native Americans who fled to Florida to escape British slavery in South Carolina. From this perspective, it is asserted that the migration of Africans and Yamasees and Apalachees (both said to be branches of the Creek Confederation) began in the 1680's. The second view merges the original migrants with the larger Creek migration in the mid-18th century.<sup>34</sup>

#### Twyman further asserts in terms of

The etymological linkage between the words "Seminole" and "cimarrón". . . scholars who hold the mono-genesis view on the origin of the Seminoles say that the word "Seminole" comes from "cimmarón." Then they add that "Seminole" refers not to runaway slaves but to Creek migrants in Florida who broke away from the Creek confederacy. However, because the term "Seminole" was originated during the British occupation, an English word

could have been used if the word was intended to refer only to Creek migrants. ". . . the British spelled "cimmaron" as "symeron" during . . . 1572.<sup>35</sup>

"Maroon" is also a term used to describe Black Seminoles. It is probably a derivation of the word "cimmaron." Although authorities make different assertions, the different perspectives do not clash. All agree that Seminoles are a mixture of numerous ethnic groups and tribes probably including the Appalachees, Creeks, Yamasees and Blacks.

# B. Seminoles and Black Slavery

The history of the Seminoles includes one of a unique community as it relates to slavery. Slavery among this group was firmly in place by the 19th century.<sup>37</sup> Their form of slavery was quite different from the traditional form of American slavery in many ways. Some Seminoles bought slaves from whites. They also received the slaves from the British as rewards for loyalty or left them in the villages after raids on British plantations.<sup>38</sup>

By 1836, 1,400 Blacks lived with the Seminoles in Florida.<sup>39</sup> The slaves lived a lifestyle similar to or in some cases in the same manner as free men and women.<sup>40</sup> The Seminole masters were kind to them, they did not treat them as slaves and "for the most part, the Seminole blacks lived like their masters and allies."<sup>41</sup> They owned their homes and some carried guns.<sup>42</sup>

One observer in 1834 noted that they retained full possession of all their animals. Even those slaves who did not live under such liberal conditions were reportedly better off than they would have been on white plantations. Seminole masters did not require much labor of the slaves. After they paid the required annual share or tribute, the Seminoles did not have a surplus for trade. In reality, their slaves did not support them. The white planters viewed this relaxed form of slavery as a threat to their institution of slavery.

The Black Seminoles dressed like their masters, and lived like them, but there was a distinct difference between the two. The Blacks spoke Spanish, English and Indian languages. They were often used as interpreters and "go-

betweens"<sup>45</sup> for the Indians who had to deal with whites. Seminoles had a great deal of confidence in their slaves in this regard. They became more and more dependent on the Blacks for their great agricultural skills and the economic stability it created, and their ability to speak English. They also bonded over their common mistrust of Americans. All of these elements made the Seminoles view the Blacks as allies and equals.<sup>46</sup> Blacks cultivated this relationship for survival and naturally preferred life with their Seminole brothers over life on a white plantation.<sup>47</sup> "Thus an association originally limited to mutual material advantage became cemented by reciprocal respect and affection."<sup>48</sup>

For U.S. Slaveholders, the armed, uppity Black Seminoles were an intolerable problem . . . . In 1835 Indian Agent Wiley Thompson reported they had "equal liberty with their owners." They . . . were allowed to travel long distances, and acted "impudently" free. These were not slaves, complained U.S. masters, but people who kept their African names, dressed in fine Seminole clothing and turbans, adopted Seminole stomp dances, sang Seminole and African songs. In this lenience, slave masters saw a great threat to their own slave system. Seminole seeds of revolution might overtake their own plantations and bloody the countryside with racial outbreaks. Florida would not be a fit place for slavery until the Seminole Nation behaved like proper slaveowners.<sup>49</sup>

Not all Blacks living amongst the Indians in this area were slaves. <sup>50</sup> Some of them were born free to mothers who were native, white, or of mixed race. Some purchased their freedom or were manumitted late in life. <sup>51</sup> There were many different life styles and combinations of heritage that integrated Blacks into Seminole societies during this era. This unconventional form of slavery, however, was one of the ways they escaped bondage to live in a civilized, safe environment.

#### C. Numerous Wars and Battles

## 1. The Yamasee War 1714-1716

One of the first wars which utilized the strength of a Black and Native military force was the Yamasee War.<sup>52</sup> This war also created a very strong alliance

between the natives and the Blacks. The war was an attempt to destroy the British presence in the Southeast. Natives and Blacks were slaves of the British in South Carolina, and both fled to Florida for freedom.<sup>53</sup> The Yamasee and Creek Indians aided the British in capturing slaves. They were paid in guns and other goods in exchange for the slaves. Unfortunately, the Yamasees often fell into debt with the British traders and were then seized into slavery to repay their debts.<sup>54</sup> This turn of events led to the Yamasee War.

The Apalachees were Britain's primary target in the Indian trade because they were one of the tribes, along with the Blacks, who were escaping to Florida. Apalachees and other area tribes were captured for the British slave trade by opposing tribes. For example, the Creeks sold captured Choctaws in Charleston, South Carolina. The Yamasees were also instrumental in the slave trade of natives. They worked closely with the British, positioning themselves in strategic areas between St. Augustine, Florida and Carolina to successfully capture the Apalachees. However, the exchange of humans and goods proved to be less lucrative for the tribes than the Spanish or British. As a result, the tribes allied and turned on the British. The Yamasee, Creeks, and Apalachees attacked the British colony of South Carolina. The Black slaves also joined the tribes creating a large alliance against the British. A large number of Blacks had escaped from the harshness of slavery in the south so that they soon outnumbered the Indians and Whites in the colony.

Blacks outnumbered Whites in the colony . . . When many slaves joined the Yamasee Indian War against the British, they almost succeeded in exterminating the badly outnumbered Whites. Indians loyal to the British helped to defeat the Yamasee, who with their black allies headed for St. Augustine. Although the Carolina Assembly passed harsh legislation designed to prevent further insurrections and control the slaves, these actions and subsequent negotiations with St. Augustine failed to deter the escapes or effect the reciprocal return of slaves. British planters claimed that the Spanish policy, by drawing away their slaves, would ruin the plantation economy.<sup>59</sup>

Yamasse Chief Jorge led the attack on South Carolina using slaves who had fled from Carolina. 60 The Spanish viewed the successful attack as a political victory. Even though they knew they could not remove the British from the land, they were satisfied with creating a battle which would deter British expansion. The South Carolina government was angrier with the St. Augustine government than it was with the Yamasees for starting the war. 61 Their major complaint was that the Spanish supported the Yamasee war and that the Yamasee tribes and Blacks were attacking plantations and stealing slaves and refusing to return them. 62 The British wanted their plantations to thrive and knew they needed slave labor to accomplish this. The Spanish sought to undermine their growth. The British actually won the war, but Spain achieved its political goals.

Another by-product of the war was that the Yamasees and Apalachees nearly ended the trade of Indian slaves. Black slavery continued in the Carolinas, but through the Spanish edict of 1693, and the Yamasee War, the Spanish, Native and Black military force strengthened Spain's stronghold in North America. Consequently, Black Seminoles and Native Seminoles realized their positions with regard to the British-Spanish conflict. Both groups opposed slavery but the primary focus in the Yamasee War was on Native slavery. Nonetheless, the military bond between the Natives and Blacks forged a resistance to Black slavery for nearly 150 years. 55

#### 2. Formation of the Seminole Nation

As mentioned above in section I, the Creek nation also settled in Florida. 66
The Spanish urged the Lower Creek Indians from Georgia and Alabama to move to Florida to buffer them against the English. 67 This group remained part of the Creek Confederacy which consisted of Creek Indian settlements that shared the same language and political affiliations. Eventually they began to distance themselves from the Creeks in the north and ceased participation in the confederacy. 68 The English referred to these disassociated Creeks as "Seminoles" to differentiate them from the Creeks in the north.

The Seminoles also united with the Miccosukee, also called the Muskogee.

and the Blacks to form the Seminole Nation.<sup>69</sup> The Muskogee culture of the Creeks accepted other Indian tribes such as the Yuchi, Hitchiti and Alabama, so they found it very easy to accept Blacks.<sup>70</sup> The Blacks had adapted well to Florida's tropical terrain, perhaps even more so than the Spanish or Seminoles.<sup>71</sup> They brought with them from Sierra Leone and Senegambia, Africa a method of rice cultivation. "From the beginning of Seminole colonization in Florida . . . the Indian[s] may have depended upon African farmers for their survival."<sup>72</sup>

In return for their assistance, the Seminole Nation offered Blacks, as well as other groups, an independent village status. In return for this status, they had to pay a nominal agriculture tax. This agriculture tax was well spent on the defense of Georgia slave hunters who constantly invaded Florida looking for their runaways. Seminoles and Blacks began to band together to fend off the slave hunters' invasions. But while the Seminoles developed their agricultural communities, the British, in the meantime, provided weapons and military might to anyone who would assist them in recapturing fugitive slaves. The Spanish also enlisted recruits including the Seminoles, both Native and Black, pirates, and smugglers to maintain a stronghold in Florida.

In 1739, fugitive slaves built a fort in St. Augustine to protect their families from the British. Spain was grateful for the protection provided by these dark men<sup>76</sup> while the English were not pleased about being kept at bay by a fort protected by armed Blacks and Indians.

Black Seminoles played a vital part in the coalition against the slave power to the north. Their knowledge of farming in Florida was second to none. They also brought the kind of information slaves always have about their masters' ways of thinking. One observer described them as "stout and even gigantic . . . the finest looking people I have ever seen." They were almost immune to the malaria and small pox that devastated Indians and Europeans.<sup>77</sup>

The fugitive slaves were known for their fighting skills and were viewed by a major in the Georgia militia as "the best soldiers."<sup>78</sup> Their skill as soldiers was later tested in the First Seminole War.

#### 3. The Red Sticks

After the Yamasee War, a group of militant Creek traditionalists, The Red Sticks, named this because of their scarlet war clubs, fought against the U.S. Their principal leader was a half-white Indian named Peter McQueen. On July 27, 1813, he led one of the largest attacks against the U.S. using weapons from Spanish Pensacola, Florida. The battle took place at Burnt Corn Creek just eighty miles north of Pensacola. Later in August, the Red Sticks struck a fort where whites, their slaves, and mixed bloods had sought refuge. In this battle at Fort Mims, the Red Sticks killed most of the group but spared most of the slaves because they were "ordered . . . not to kill any but white people and half-breeds."

This bloody battle angered the Americans and in October, 1813 General Andrew Jackson and 3,500 militiamen along with 1,000 Georgia volunteers crossed the Chattahoochee River to subdue the Red Sticks. The Red Sticks fought against them alongside the Blacks who dreaded a return to harsh plantation slavery. New runaways joined them and the slaves, natives and American soldiers fought bitterly. At the Battle of Holy Ground, which is near present day Montgomery Alabama, twenty one Creeks and twelve Blacks were killed on December 23, 1813.

Finally on March 27, 1814, despite Jackson's incompetent officers, insubordinate civilian soldiers and supply problems, the U.S. military broke the back of the Creek resistance killing a force of nine hundred Red Sticks in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. The Red Sticks continued to clash with the U.S. until the Treaty of Ghent was signed on December 24, 1814.<sup>83</sup>

#### 4. The First Seminole War and Annexation

Georgia slaveholders feared that Black Seminole camps could end their current slave system.<sup>84</sup> To alleviate this threat a group called the "Patriots" planned to annex Florida. The Seminoles got word of the plan and attacked the U.S. plantations. Soon St. Augustine Blacks assisted in the attacks, bolstering the Seminole ranks.<sup>85</sup> These raiders annihilated a U.S. wagon train, stopped the

Georgia militia, and killed the Patriot leader. President James Madison who had secretly financed the cause, withdrew aid to the Patriots.<sup>86</sup>

The U.S. slaveholders realized that Blacks, though valuable to the Seminoles as teachers and advisors, were beholden to them for protection. Red Seminoles cherished their land and peace, but for Black Seminoles freedom itself was threatened. The U.S., under the direction of General Andrew Jackson, planned to rid the area of all Seminoles. The Black Seminoles took over a British fortress, known as "Fort Negro" and run by black officers and men under the direction of Commander Garcia. The fort was on the Apalachicola River on the Florida panhandle. Garcia's forces included three hundred Seminole men, women and children, most of which were Black or mixed, with thirty-four Red Seminoles. The fort was near a treacherous swamp. Garcia's men raided plantations to add to their troops and other runaways joined the ranks.

The U.S. did not declare war, but they did send a large contingent of troops, Marines and five hundred Creek Indian mercenaries in to blow up Fort Negro and "restore the stolen negroes . . . to their rightful owners."

In July 1816, U.S. forces and the Creeks under the command of Chief McIntosh demanded the surrender of Fort Negro. <sup>89</sup> Garcia's men raised a British flag and a bloody red flag that represented a dare to fight. Each side fired cannonballs. The conflict ended with Fort Negro going up in flames caused by a cannonball that landed in the fort's ammunition dump. <sup>90</sup> Garcia was executed while the remaining women and children were sent back to slavery in Georgia. The U.S. armed forces did not divulge the occurrence of this massacre for twenty years. This battle was one of many armed conflicts that ended inconclusively in 1818. <sup>91</sup>

Known as the First Seminole War, it was the first of three Seminole wars that took place over several decades.<sup>92</sup> The surviving Seminole families joined Chief Billy Bowlegs on the Suwanne River. There they built new homes and returned to farming, fishing, cattle herding and horse breeding. Five hundred Red and Black Seminoles also drilled, marched and prepared for the next Seminole war.<sup>93</sup>

General Andrew Jackson and President James Madison continued to plan for the takeover of Florida. They sent troops to burn down a Black Seminole village called Fowl Town. Again, the U.S. executive branch kept Congress and the public ignorant of their slaughter.<sup>94</sup> The First Seminole War and the Fowl Town invasion pushed the Indians and Blacks to the south and east of Florida. Large numbers of runaways continued to flow into this same area.<sup>95</sup>

The invasions also led to the annexation of Florida. The U.S. signed a cession treaty with Spain in 1819, the actual transfer of the land took place in 1821.<sup>96</sup>

Once inside the confines of the United States, the Seminoles and blacks, whose destinies by that time were inalterably intertwined, faced an uncertain future. Demoralized by Jackson's invasion, impoverished by the loss of stores, crops, and property, and faced with reestablishing their settlement, they watched helplessly as the Americans entered Florida, opening plantations and restricting the bounds of Seminole lands.<sup>97</sup>

# 5. The Treaty of Indian Springs and The Treaty of Moultrie Creek

Georgia plantation slaveholders negotiated the 1821 Treaty of Indian Springs to hold the Creeks responsible "not only for the slaves and their increase, but also for the loss of labor which they would have performed had they remained in bondage." They claimed that the Creeks' earlier treaties required them to return property (slaves) to them. The Creeks argued that the Seminoles were a separate nation. 99

The Creeks were given money by the U.S. government in exchange for ceding five million acres of land. Over half of this money was set aside to pay claims of slaveholders for property (slaves) lost to the Creeks from 1775 to 1802. <sup>100</sup> In exchange for indemnification, "all right and title to this property - the persons claimed as fugitive slaves and their descendants' in other words, the black Seminoles - was assigned and transferred to the United States, to be held in trust for the benefit of the Creeks." <sup>101</sup>

The U.S. government could not control the Seminoles through the Creek.

The Treaty of Moultrie Creek signed on September 18, 1823, finally acknowledged the Seminole nation. The terms of the treaty forced the Seminoles to cede rich land

in northern Florida for a large barren track of land further south<sup>102</sup> in exchange for a small reservation and money.<sup>103</sup> "As a result of this transfer, the Seminoles, including the Black Seminoles, were forcibly removed from their home in Florida to what is present-day eastern Oklahoma. This forced removal, which occurred from 1838-1842, has come to be known as the 'Trail of Tears.'"<sup>104</sup> It further required them to return "absconding slaves, or fugitives from justice" to a U.S. agent.<sup>105</sup>

The Treaty of Moultrie Creek required the leader of the Seminoles to provide a list of Indian towns and their populations. Neamathla listed 37 towns with 4,883 people but left off the number of blacks to protect them from slave catchers. By this time "Seminole society had blacks of every status born free, or the descendants of fugitives or perhaps fugitives themselves. Some were interpreters and advisers of importance, others were warriors and hunters or field hands. Intermarriage with Indians further complicated black status." 107

The Treaty was signed by Abraham, a Seminole of African descent, who was described as "the prime minister and privy counselor of Micanopy." Osceola, one of the Seminole nation's well known leaders, was married to an Estelusti. Estelusti is the name the Muskogees gave to Black Seminoles, "and engaged in some of his most daring exploits to retaliate for his wife having been stolen and sold into slavery."

The Seminoles did return some of the runaway slaves but the terms of the treaty were not strictly followed. The 1823 treaty created the problems Black Seminoles face today.

#### 6. Second Seminole War: 1835 - 1842

The Second Seminole War was perhaps the longest and most expensive Indian war fought by the United States. General Thomas Jesup, who was the commander of the U.S. troops in Florida, termed it a Negro war not an Indian war because Negroes were involved in nearly every one of its major battles.

In the Second Seminole War, the Seminoles fought with fierce determination and never surrendered. They fought hard because they were a strong red and black nation and they resented the United States. They resented the U.S. because

the U.S. refused to accept their status as an independent nation separate from the Creeks. The Seminoles did not want to leave their land in Florida and the Black Seminoles not only did not want to leave Florida, but they also could not conceive of returning to slavery.

In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. <sup>116</sup> Its terms required most of the tribes to relocate to what is now present day Oklahoma and Kansas. Negotiations to move the Seminoles began in 1832. The tribe sent a delegation of scouts to investigate the land in the west. <sup>117</sup> The delegation was held up in Oklahoma and told that the only way they could be released was to sign a treaty to take the specified land and leave Florida. This was by no means a negotiation. This caused the relationship between the Seminoles and Americans to sour. <sup>118</sup> The Black Seminoles feared moving to the west because they knew they would be met by slave hunters. The other Seminoles were also wary of the move.

This feeling of ill will created the Second Seminole War. As mentioned above, the Black Seminoles were ever present in this costly conflict. They were fighting for their freedom and described as "a most cruel and malignant enemy." The Black and Red Seminoles were nearly inseparable during the war and the American authorities eventually relocated both of them to Indian Territory on land given to the Creek nation. The Creeks captured the Black Seminoles and sold them as slaves in Arkansas. Some of the Black Seminoles fled Oklahoma and moved to Mexico, later returning in 1852 when the Seminole Nation received their own reservation.

#### 7. The Third Seminole War: 1855-1858

Although the United States never really claimed a true military victory over the Seminole nation, they were successful in forcing them to move west. Some of the Seminoles lived with the Cherokee until they were given their own land. Others lived in the Everglades until white settlers insisted on destroying the Indian villages. In the west, until the end of the Civil War, they faced constant slave-catching raids in which black Seminoles, including children, were kidnapped from their homes and sold, regardless of their legal status.

After the Civil War, in 1866, the government entered into a treaty with the Oklahoma Seminoles. One of the most important provisions for Black Seminoles is found in Article 2 of the treaty. It states:

Inasmuch as there are among the Seminoles many peoples of African descent and blood, who have no interest or property in the soil, and no recognized civil rights, it is stipulated that hereafter these persons and their descendents, and such other of the same race as shall be permitted by said nation to settle there, shall have and enjoy all the rights of native citizens.<sup>124</sup>

This treaty was significant for Black Seminoles then and remains significant in today's legal battles. It is also important to the entire Seminole nation. The treaty is said to "guarantee equal rights to black Seminoles, or Freedmen, as they were hereafter known, and is said to reflect the Freedmen's oral history of a promise made by the Seminole Indians that 'as long as grass grows and water flows . . . if the Indian gets a dollar, the Freedmen gets a dollar." 125

The treaty laid a foundation for good interactions between the Freedmen and the blood Seminoles. Freedmen children and blood Seminoles attended school together. Freedmen participated in Seminole nation politics and considerable intermarriage took place. But it is this semantic distinction, that of Freedman and Seminole, which later proved to be a stumbling block to today's political pressures. The other problem lay in the way the US government interpreted this act.

The U.S. government entered into treaties with other tribes who also owned slaves. These treaties emancipated the slaves and incorporated them into the nation "on equal footing with the original members." As usual there was an issue of interpretation that created volatile problems.

... but in the Seminoles' case the problem was not that the law forced the nation to recognize people as citizens in violation of its own standard of membership, but that the U.S. government (despite all evidence to the contrary) interpreted it to mean that all black Seminoles had been slaves prior to 1866 and thus could not have been members of the nation, not that any Seminoles who may have been enslaved as of 1866 were now free citizens.<sup>129</sup>

## D. The Seminole Negro Indian Scouts

After the Civil War, white people moved west crossing through Texas to New Mexico and California. The Texas borders in the 1870's was a dangerous area to approach. Confederate veterans upset about defeat and the emancipation of their slaves were armed and eager to fight anyone who entered the territory. At the same time, the Comanches and Apaches who were relocated to the reservations in New Mexico Territory seized the opportunity to retaliate against their forced move by raiding white settlements. Black Seminoles, in fact, were recruited to protect the Territory. The Black Seminoles had a reputation for being great fighters. In 1870 the army formed a Detachment of Seminole Negro Indian Scouts. In 1870 their service, the military promised salaries, rations, and living quarters at the forts for their families. On July 4, 1870, the men and their families crossed the Rio Grande into Texas.

The scouts were led by a white lieutenant, John L. Bullis. Bullis was a Quaker from New York who enlisted as a Union private in the Civil War. He volunteered to command black troops and was quite the individual. He was married to a Mexican woman, Alicia Rodiriguez. "In Texas, in 1872, this was considered as outrageous as leading Black Indians."

Between 1873 and 1881, the Scouts carried out twenty-six expeditions, engaged in twelve battles without any loss and developed excellent tracking skills. They were excellent marksmen who could perform search missions for months at a time. Another important figure during this time was Chief John Horse. He was a mediator between the scouts and the army. One of his major tasks was not on the battlefield, where he and the Seminoles chalked up a great record while guarding the Texas frontier against the lawless. His most unsuccessful bid was an attempt to garner support for the war department to give the Negro scouts land the government had promised them in return for their services.

After they completed their duty in the military, the scouts were to be given their own land in Texas or in Indian Territory. This never came to fruition despite their own petitions and the support of fellow officers.<sup>139</sup> John Bullis and other

important military leaders gave letters of support to Chief John Horse who delivered them to the Washington bureaucrats. The letters were unpersuasive. The BIA would not honor their request, claiming they were not ethnic Indians. Because registration for Seminole Indian reservation lands was closed in 1866, they were not able to settle on the reservation. 141

The scouts displayed great bravery and battled all types of adversaries - Indians, white people and the hostile desert. The following account tells how one scout died, but not in battle.

Their stay was made even more untenable by the hostility of white towns. The King Fisher band of outlaws killed two of the scouts and almost murdered the old chief, John Horse ... But the final blow for many scouts came during a New Year's Eve dance in 1877 and involved Adam Paine. A Texas sheriff who came to arrest Paine, instead shotgunned him from behind and killed him. So close was the gun blast that Paine's clothes caught fire. Following this murder, Pompey led four other scouts to the Rio Grande. There they washed the dust of Texas from their horses' hooves and rode back into Mexico. 142

By 1880 the scouts' numbers dwindled, along with the rations. An Nonetheless, they continued to live on the military posts. Many of them had to find work off post on area ranches and farms. As the Indian wars ceased the scouts took on work as custodians or in police type work. The scouts finally disbanded in 1914.

An heroic scout, Pompey Factor, was reported to have saved the life of Lieutenant Bullis, for which he received the Congressional Medal of Honor. He could not, however, despite his extraordinary service, receive an army pension. The Army claimed they had no record of his service. Two other scouts received the Medal of Honor—Adam Paine and John Ward. The Seminole Negro Indian Scouts "could survive the Texas desert and savage warfare, but not the traditional racism of the federal government or its citizens." 144

### E. The Dawes Act

The Dawes Act, also known as the General Allotment Act of 1887, annihilated all of the Indian tribal lands<sup>145</sup> and allotted a minimum of 40 acres to each individual, including the Freedmen.<sup>146</sup> The Government took all of the Indian held lands and allotted the worst land to the Indians and sold the remainder to white settlers.<sup>147</sup> In 1901, members of the Five Civilized tribes became United States citizens by an act of Congress.<sup>148</sup>

In 1906, Congress abolished the Seminole government and a commission led by Senator Henry Dawes began an accounting or enrollment of the Seminoles. This list consisted of approximately 3,000 Seminoles, an estimated third of them of African descent or Freedmen. The commission was not required to distinguish Freedmen from the Seminoles but it nonetheless "divided Seminole membership into a "Seminole Blood Roll" and a "Freedmen Roll."

Despite the fact that there had been far more intermarriage between indigenous and African peoples than between Indians and Europeans, the commission applied the "racial" classification rules used generally in the Jim Crow laws of the day to create the "freedmen" roll of persons of visible African ancestry, not identified by "blood quantum," and a "blood" roll of persons of indigenous or Euro-Indian heritage identified as "full-blood," "half-blood," and so on. <sup>150</sup>

The lists were also split along matrilineal lines—those "whose mothers were Freedmen were listed on the Freedmen roll and individuals whose mothers were blood Seminoles were listed on the blood Seminole roll." <sup>151</sup>

After the tribes' governments ceased, an important relationship between the Freedmen and the Seminoles also ceased. In addition, when Oklahoma became a state, segregation laws divided the Freedmen away from the tribes and into a segregated black community. This American political structure prohibited marriage between Indians and Freedmen. It created distance between communities<sup>152</sup> that over several centuries had bonded, protected, and fought for one another.

Following WWII the Freedmen and the tribe reestablished their community. Freedmen participated on equal footing in tribal politics. But it is the Freedmen's

zeal to participate on this equal footing which created the huge rift over the past 10 years and has caused some of the blood Seminoles to want to exclude the Freedmen from the nation. 153

In a doctoral thesis by anthropologist Rebecca Bates, she points out that the major issue going to the heart of the controversies between the two groups is "the competition among all tribal members for a scarce commodity: money." Limited funds must be shared amongst the tribe and quite naturally they are concerned about dividing their "fund pie" into too many pieces.

#### III. THE DAVIS CASES

How is it that persons who are acknowledged to be members of the Seminole nation, a nation that by all historical accounts has been a "red and black" group since its inception, can be denied benefits accruing to that nation solely because of their African ancestry?<sup>155</sup>

The Davis case stems from the fact that all the Estelusti (Black Seminoles) have been excluded from judgment fund programs<sup>156</sup> established by a \$ 56 million dollar award from the U.S. government to the Seminole nation for compensation for land taken from and ceded by Seminole Indians between 1823 and 1832.<sup>157</sup>

When Congress authorized distribution of the funds in April, 1990, the enabling statute required that the SNO establish a plan for distribution and use of the funds. The Seminoles of Florida and Oklahoma divided the funds 27:73. In other words, approximately 25% went to the Florida tribe and 75% went to the Oklahoma tribe. This division came from a recommendation from the BIA based upon a "blood quantum" formula. The BIA found that "all Seminole Negroes and their descendants [including members of] the modern Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, to be ineligible to participate in the subject award [because they] had no interest in the Florida lands in 1823, and ...did not acquire an interest in Oklahoma lands until 1866" (Bureau of Indian Affairs memorandum, November 26, 1976, filed in Davis). This purported to make Freedmen ineligible for any part of the funds because they were not members of the tribe until they were recognized in the 1866

treaty and therefore did not hold a propriety interest in the land taken in 1823. This finding was approved by the BIA. 161

In short, the BIA solution completely disregarded black Seminole membership, recognized the extensive European admixture of the remaining Oklahoma Seminoles, and divided the proceeds by something purporting to correspond to the proportion of "Indian blood." Thus, the settler society again imposed on the Seminoles a racial construction and concept entirely alien to their culture as of 1823.<sup>162</sup>

In response to this finding, two bands of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma—the Dosar Barkus and Bruner Bands and Sylvia Davis<sup>163</sup> on behalf of her son Donnell Davis filed a civil suit in 1996 against the United States and various federal agencies and officials.<sup>164</sup> Plaintiffs did not sue the sovereign Nation. They asserted that "(1) the federal officials wrongfully allowed the Tribe to exclude them from participation in some of its assistance programs, and (2) the BIA improperly refused to issue Certificates of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIBs) to members of the Plaintiff-bands."<sup>165</sup>

The district court dismissed the case for failure to join an indispensable party, the Tribe. <sup>166</sup> The case was appealed by the Freedmen, which was affirmed in part and reversed in part and remanded to the district court in Davis II. <sup>167</sup> The district court, on remand, dismissed the plaintiff's claims again in Davis II. <sup>168</sup> In the most recent case and maybe not the final case, Davis III, the court held that the "district court did not abuse its discretion in determining that the Tribe is an indispensable party with respect to the wrongful exclusion claim, and that the district court correctly ruled that it lacked jurisdiction to hear the CDIB claim because Plaintiffs failed to show that they had exhausted their administrative remedies." <sup>169</sup>

The syllabus of the case goes on to discuss at length the historical background that is included in the previous sections of this article. There is no need to reiterate those details. The following are essential summations of the lengthy discussions in the case that set out the rationale, right or wrong, behind the court's decision.

## A. The Coveted CDIB Card

One of the main issues in this case centers around the Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) card. It is agreed that the Estelusti Seminoles, who are descendants listed on the Freedmen Roll, are tribal members of the Seminoles. They do not, however enjoy full membership benefits. Many of the tribe's programs require a CDIB card.<sup>170</sup>

Any member of the tribe can obtain a card by proving a relationship to a person listed on the Seminole Blood Roll. A person with the same relationship to a person listed on the Seminole Freedmen Roll, on the other hand, is not entitled to a card. The BIA's superintendent gave the following rationale for the differential treatment:

The Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood makes . . . no mention of Tribal Membership. The policy states that my responsibility is to certify one[']s Indian blood when acceptable proof of relationship to an individual enrolled on specific rolls of particular tribes is presented ... There are persons listed on the Freedman roll who were part Indian . . . the Seminole Nation follows maternal lineage ... Our policy is not to deny [Freedmen CDIBs], but to state that adequate proof of relationship to a person with Indian blood has been provided by them . . . if a Freedman...cannot provide acceptable proof or relationship to a Seminole Indian by blood, they will be denied a [CDIB]. 171 Many members of the Dosar Barkus and Bruner Bands (Davis's band) of the Seminole Nation have been denied CDIBs under the BIA's policy and have been

Davis's band was denied access to the judgment-fund programs, the programs supported by the \$ 56 million judgment. As mentioned above, the BIA recommended that it exclude the Estelusti from participation because they were not officially recognized as members until 1866. Congress, however, did not specifically exclude the Estelusti. It allocated the Tribe's share to the SNO for them to distribute according to their own plan as long as it set aside no less than 80% to serve common tribal needs, educational requirements and other purposes the SNO determined.<sup>173</sup> The tribe's counsel adopted a proposed plan to support health,

excluded from programs requiring the card. 172

education and social services. Later the Tribe's counsel established specific programs for the award. They included programs to assist with school clothing, burial expenses, elder care and educational expenses.

The eligibility requirements, as mentioned earlier, contained the exclusionary language "member of the Seminole Nation as it existed in Florida on September 18, 1823." The tribe's eligibility requirements and the CDIB-issuance policy denied most Estelusti, namely Sylvia Davis and her son, access to assistance for school clothes.<sup>174</sup>

The district court dismissed Davis's CDIB Card Claims for failure to exhaust administrative remedies under the BIA's regulations. There was a dispute whether the claims were dismissed under Fed.R.Civ.P. 12(b)(1) or 12(b)(6). The court disposed of this issue by stating that:

We recognize that when resolution of the jurisdictional question is intertwined with the merits of the case, it is necessary to convert a Rule 12(b)(1) motion...into a [motion under] Rule 12(b)(6) . . . or Rule 56. But this is not such a case. When deciding whether jurisdiction is intertwined with the merits of a particular dispute, the underlying issue is whether resolution of the jurisdictional question requires resolution of an aspect of the substantive claim. The substantive issue in Plaintiff's case is whether Plaintiffs were improperly denied CDIB cards, not whether a particular plaintiff has exhausted administrative remedies ... (exhaustion of administrative remedies is "simply not an aspect of [a] substantive claim of discrimination.<sup>176</sup>

# B. Did federal officials wrongfully allow the Tribe to exclude them from participation in some of its assistance programs?

The court answered this question but not in exactly the manner the question was asked. Plain people, as the author termed them in the introduction, ask very direct questions. "Why can't I have this?" "When will I get that?" The court instead exhaustively analyzed a procedural issue that is logical and dealt with the fact that the merits of the case did not really matter because to proceed would be

impossible without including the SNO. The Estelusti did not include the SNO in the case. The SNO maintains sovereign immunity and its immunity prevented its joinder. The court held in Davis I that the SNO was a necessary party but was not necessarily an indispensable one. In Davis II the court found the SNO indispensable to litigation of the judgment-fund claims and in Davis III the court held the same.

The district court dismissed Plaintiffs' judgment-fund claims because an indispensable person, the Tribe, could not be joined as a party. In short, Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 19 requires a two-step analysis before dismissing a claim for failure to join an indispensable person. The first determination is whether a person is "necessary." A person is necessary if:

(1) in the person's absence complete relief cannot be accorded among those already parties, or (2) the person claims an interest relating to the subject of the action and is so situated the disposition of the action in the person's absence may (i)..impair the persons ability to protect that interest or (ii) leave....parties subject to a substantial risk of incurring double, multiple or otherwise inconsistent obligations by reason of the claimed interest.<sup>177</sup>

If a necessary person cannot be joined the court moves to the second step in determining "whether in equity and good conscience the action should proceed among the parties before it, or should be dismissed, [because] the absent person . . . [is] indispensable" to the litigation at hand. Fed.R.Civ.P.19(b). 178

The Davis III court concluded that the district court was correct in considering "the risk of subjecting Defendants to inconsistent legal obligations because such obligations are entirely speculative." They pointed out that "the BIA need not comply with a Tribal regulation that might conflict with a ruling in favor of the Estelusti." More important, however, is that "the Tribe would not be bound by the judgment in this case and could initiate litigation against Defendants if the BIA withheld funds . . . Defendants might . . . be prejudice by multiple litigation or . . . inconsistent judgments if this litigation were to proceed without the Tribe . . . ." 180

There were numerous issues discussed in the case at length, but the overall outcome was "that the district court did not abuse its discretion in determining that

Plaintiffs' judgment-fund claims could not, in equity and good conscience, proceed in the absence of the Tribe." The court ruled in favor of the defendants and affirmed the judgment in the district court.

#### IV. PUBLIC OUTCRY OVER THE RULINGS

Even before Sylvia Davis filed the lawsuits, she had created quite a stir in the Seminole community. While a member of the tribal council she challenged the policies that denied her benefits. The members shot back with the usual "go back to Africa" phrase and called the black Seminoles "cattle . . . while mooing and stamping their feet in the meeting hall." Her attorney, Jon Velie, filed the suits and shortly after that Davis and other members were expelled from the tribe. Davis maintains that the Seminole tribe is getting whiter; "The council was getting whiter and whiter over the years." Shortly after the cases were heard, heated discussions were reported in local Oklahoma media. Both sides of the issue were publicized, as citizens of Wewoka, Oklahoma voiced their opinions. Kenneth Chamber's statement in the opening of the article, "there is no black Seminole," is not an uncommon opinion. "The Seminole was never an Indian tribe," according to Joseph Opala, an anthropologist at James Madison University who has studied the Seminole for many years. "It was a multiethnic tribe to start."

"To me, the crux of this is that the Seminole Nation, Indian people, we have the right to determine our own membership just like other Indian people," said Jackie Warledo, an assistant chief of one of the tribe's 14 bands. "This gets a lot of attention because people want to play it as racism, as not politically correct. Our history is being rewritten here. We were two different races. We had two different cultures and we still do. Just because you go to a Polish festival doesn't mean you are Polish." 187

"It is overly simplistic to say, 'Oh, these people are just being racist because they want to keep all the money," said Circe Sturm, a cultural anthropologist at the University of Oklahoma in Norman who has written on native identity and the experience of Black Indians. "There are deeper forces at work . . . People who have complicated histories like the Seminole have felt for a number of years, the

tension to pick sides."188

"The tribe is turning its back on its history. The irony of all this is that the Seminole were the first people in North America where blacks were at the highest levels of their society," said Jon Velie, the Oklahoma attorney representing Davis. "You can go through your entire life in this country and not know this story." One member summed it up best with the following statement, "This litigation has been a blessing in disguise. All of us Seminole people have gotten an education about the Seminole Nation."

For some, the outcome of the cases is particularly alarming because of "the history of colonialism, slavery, and discrimination members of both these groups have and continue to endure at the hands of Euro-Americans and policymakers and given the reality of close indigenous and African American relations in many parts of the country." <sup>191</sup>

Amidst the Davis cases, other issues and litigation involving the Black Seminoles were being decided. In *Seminole Nation of Oklahoma v. Norton*, <sup>192</sup> the SNO held a referendum election to adopt nine amendments to its Constitution. <sup>193</sup> Several of these proposed amendments were designed to exclude the Freedmen, who are Indians of partial African descent, from membership in the Nation. "In a letter dated September 29, 2000, Department of the Interior (DOI) Assistant Secretary Kevin Grover stated that he would not approve the nine amendments to the Seminole Constitution because they sought to exclude the Freedmen and had not been submitted to the DOI for approval." <sup>194</sup>

The final outcome of the case left the BIA in a position of stepping away from the inner turmoil within the tribe. The BIA did later announce that the Black Seminoles would be entitled to some benefits, including \$ 2,500 for burial assistance, up to \$ 1,000 per family for disaster relief, general assistance based on the state's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families system, and access to child and adult protective services through the BIA. 195

Jon Velie had only been out of law school three months when he accepted the Davis case over eleven years ago. <sup>196</sup> He believes more change is going to come for the Black Seminoles and that it will also have a positive affect on black

Indians everywhere.<sup>197</sup> And finally, Sylvia Davis expresses her eternal optimism by stating, "It'll be OK . . . Once everything is back on track, I think it will bring us closer together. It's a new beginning."<sup>198</sup>

# V. IDENTITY, GENES AND DNA TEST FOR "INDIANNESS"

Blood quantum issues are obviously problematic for many Freedmen. They have primarily based their inclusion in the Seminole Nation on an historical relationship, not on the amount of Indian blood they may or may not have. Those who oppose their membership argue that it was never their choice to include the Freedmen, but they were forced to take them with them when the Seminoles were relocated to Oklahoma. They further assert that the tribe never wanted to incorporate the Freedmen in the same way the 1866 treaty sets out. But to avoid the spirit of a treaty is not a good strategic move for any tribe, regardless of possible misinterpretation. Some argue that the term "Black Seminole" is a term that "tends to obscure more than it clarifies . . . the term implie[s] no degree of Seminole blood."

Another problem which obfuscates the blood quantum issue is the widely held American "one drop" rule. In America it was once enough to have "one drop," no particular numerical number is articulated, of Black blood to be considered purely Black.<sup>203</sup> Freedmen identify themselves as purely nothing; they are, in their opinion, Seminole and Black. Some Seminoles are of the distinct impression that you cannot be both. You are either one or the other.<sup>204</sup>

The *Seminole v. Norton* case was a deliberate attempt at defining "Seminoleness" based on genes as opposed to history or identity.<sup>205</sup> Many other tribes, like the Cherokee, Choctaw and Creek Muscogee, require proof of Indian blood for membership. Therefore, perhaps the Seminole Nation was merely trying to fall in step with the other tribes. But unlike the other tribes, to do this in the Seminole Nation results in excluding a large portion of their members, the Freedmen. If the Freedmen can show they have Seminole blood it is not an issue.<sup>206</sup>

# A. Intermarriage between Blacks and Seminoles

Intermarriage between Blacks and Seminoles occurred, but is often left out of historical accounts or sketchily reported. One account describes the relationship very simply. "Shared hardships, a common enemy, and intermarriage brought the two cultures together." Another account states that black men were "given Indian women as wives, in one case the widow of the principal chief of the Nation." The literature suggests and contradicts claims regarding intermarriage. "Historian Kenneth Porter notes that during the early nineteenth century . . . a prominent person of the nation did not think it beneath their dignity" to marry blacks." He also states in another text that "marriage may not have happened often because Blacks lived independent and separate from the Seminoles." On the other hand, scholar David Littlefield wrote that "before removal to Oklahoma intermarriage did often occur." Anthropologist Wilton Krogman wrote in a 1934 paper that it is "undeniable" and "self evident" that intermarriage occurred "to a considerable extent."

Intermarriage between Blacks and Seminoles should bolster the claims of some Freedmen. If intermarriage took place before the Dawes Rolls were created, it is:

theoretically possible that in this matrilineal tribe both parents of an enrollee could have been classified as Freedmen, even though the grandfathers of the enrollee were Indian. That is to say, two of the four grandparents of a Dawes Roll enrollee could have been blood Seminoles and yet the enrollee and his or her descendents would have been classified as Freedmen on the roll.<sup>212</sup>

Jon Velie believes that numerous Freedmen have genetic Indian ancestry but they just cannot document it.<sup>213</sup>

# **B. DNA Testing**

Mitochondrial DNA testing can be performed to determine "whether or not you have Native American ancestry inherited through a direct line of descent from your mother's maternal side, by looking for one of the five distinct maternal

lineages." <sup>214</sup> A Y-chromosome test for men can trace back through the paternal side, from father to son, to grandfather, etc. Therefore, it is possible for Freedmen to use this type of scientific evidence to prove their "Seminoleness." <sup>215</sup>

Perhaps if the Freedmen stopped emphasizing the identity and "a history based on camaraderie in the face of adversity" analysis for their inclusion in the nation it would calm the fears of many. Because if it is "blood" that the nation is looking for, the test will provide just that. Genetic markers, although they may exclude many, may be the answer to this problem.

The Freedmen . . . relied on the wars . . . fought with the Seminole . . . and a treaty signed in 1866 guaranteeing all Freedmen the rights of Seminole Indians to . . . validate their membership in the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. They have relied on a shared history rather than shared genetic markers to bind them to the blood Seminoles.<sup>217</sup>

Perhaps, even at the risk of some of the Black Seminoles losing their identity and the tribe losing numerous members, it is time for the Seminole Nation to use a genealogical tool to define their future.<sup>218</sup>

#### VI. CONCLUSION

Would it have been so wrong to give Sylvia Davis the \$125 for school clothes or some other form of benefit? No. Will an avalanche of false claims from Black Seminoles flood into the Seminole Nation? Probably not. Would wounds in the Black Seminole community heal if she and her relatives were recognized as Seminoles equal to all members with access to all of the benefits whether it be rights to vote on councils or access to monetary funds? Yes.

The main issue is not about money or benefits. The issue is really about uniting a nation and community which has been torn apart. Not all of the Seminoles are against including Black Seminoles as full members with equal rights. The lawsuits may have even brought a few people together. And, most important, it has educated those who never knew Black Indians existed. Those who never knew the history surrounding multiracial tribes are now aware that perhaps there is more to relationships than bloodlines and genealogy. Shared values, shared experiences,

and common goals of survival perhaps define a group more than anything else. Yes, ancestry is important. But when the truth about ancestry is obscured by manmade constructs and rules that divide people purely along racial lines and the way they look, as in the case of the Dawes rolls, it is imperative that we take time to try to undo those wrongs. It is important to bring legal action not necessarily to win or lose a case but to bring the issues to the forefront.

Too many people have been led to believe that the American frontier is only a tale of white heroism.<sup>219</sup> Hollywood depicts John Wayne whipping the Indians so that we could have a safe America. But another history of the frontier involving two groups of dark people brought together by Europeans, who exploited both, is a real wild-west depiction of life as it was. It is important that we continue to retell the true depiction which includes Africans and Native Americans, who together and separately fought to create their America, too.<sup>220</sup>

At the close of the Tribal Law and Government Conference, Carey Vicenti, a learned attorney, judge, and sociology professor, made the following observation. It is with his eloquent statements I wish to close this article.

From a straight forward legal perspective, tribes are in their best legal position when they can make the claim that our relationship with the United States government is political, and is not race based. The BIA official really has to simply retreat from the attempt to try to make this a race based determination. I would prefer or recommend that the Seminoles would take this to an internal question about what is the political relationship between the Freedmen and the Blood Seminoles and have them work that debate out.

A couple of things trouble me. What we have done as Native people is we often times pick up American pathologies, and we absorb these pathologies from a sociological perspective, and we don't even know it. Before we were a people who believed in relationships; now we are people who believe in individualism, capital and material acquisitions and things like that. A couple of the pathologies that I do see in this context are materialism in terms of the desire to acquire more money and racism which is an evil pathology which

comes from the western world. That is my sociological observation. I want to criticize the absorption of those American pathologies into the context of the Seminole Nation. I would encourage that the Seminole began to look at this in terms of what is the relationship that ultimately comes from the United States thrusting the Freedmen into a permanent relationship with the Seminoles—what is the relationship between the two groups after having been thrust into this odd circumstance? If the Seminoles were more transcendent in their thinking they would set aside materialism and racism as themes of their discussion and start to think about what will be the future relationship. And if they settle it the right way they then turn around and say to the BIA, we settled it and you are obliged to accept the terms of our settlement! <sup>221</sup>

#### **ENDNOTES**

n<sup>1</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *Journal of Negro History*, 1920. (Quoted in WILLIAM LOREN KATZ, BLACK INDIANS, A HIDDEN HERITAGE frontispiece or [i] (1986).

n<sup>2</sup> Andrew Metz, *A Nation Divided, Seminole Rift More Than a Black-and-White Issue* (December 22, 2003), *available at* http://www.newsday.com/news/nationworld/nation.ny-usindi1222, 0,6107773.story?coll=ny-nationworld-utility.

n<sup>3</sup> Jennifer L. Brown, *Between Two Worlds: Blacks seek status as Seminoles, available at* http://www.angelfire.com/mo3/hebrews/News/NL4/indians.html

n<sup>4</sup> Aaron R. Brown, *Judgments: "Brothers " Fighting Over Indian Money: The Right of Seminole Freedmen to a Portion of the Indian Claims Commission Judgment Fund*, 11 AM. INDIAN L. REV. 111 (1983).

n<sup>5</sup> Davis v. U.S., 343 F.3d 1282 (10th Cir. 2003). See also Davis v. U.S., 199 F. Supp. 2d 1164 (W.D. Okla. 2002); Davis v. U.S., 192 F.3d 951 (10th Cir. 1999). For the remainder of this article I will refer to the 1999, 2002 and 2003 cases as Davis I, Davis II, and Davis III, respectively.

n<sup>6</sup> BRUCE EDWARD TWYMAN, THE BLACK SEMINOLE LEGACY AND NORTH AMERICAN POLITICS, 1693-1845 1 (1999). Africans and Native Americans met one another in the early 1500's. See HANDBOOK OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS, vol. 14, 753 (Smithsonian Institution 2004). Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto had African slave crew members aboard when he landed in Florida in 1539.

n<sup>7</sup> NATSU TAYLOR SAITO, RED, BLACK, AND DIVIDED. FEDERAL RECOGNITION AND THE IMPOSITION OF IDENTITY ON THE SEMINOLE NATION, IN NATIVE AMERICANS 92 (Donald A. Grinde, Jr. ed., 2002).

n<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 89.

n<sup>9</sup> Brown, *supra* note 4, at 111.

n<sup>10</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 93.

n<sup>11</sup> Id. at 89.

n<sup>12</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>13</sup> Id. at 94.

n<sup>14</sup> Id. See also Treaty with the Seminole Indians, March 21, 1866, U.S.-Seminole

Nation, 14 Stat. 755.

n<sup>15</sup> Eric Beckenhauer, *Redefining Race: Can Genetic Testing Provide Biological Proof of Indian Ethnicity,* 56 STAN. L. REV. 161, 163 (2003).

n<sup>16</sup> This term "histories" is used by the author to express that any group, tribe, or race of people or religious sect can have more than one true history. History has many points of view and several observers may note very different things about the same event. Surely the Seminoles have more history than the one cited in these particular sources. I deliberately changed or extrapolated from the quote "The Seminole story begins in the context of European competition for the North American continent..." to the phrase I used because I firmly believe that the history of the Seminole began well before European competition for the North American continent began.

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n<sup>17</sup> TWYMAN, supra note 6 at, 1.
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n<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at 23.

n<sup>19</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at 24.

n<sup>21</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 25.

n<sup>23</sup> *Id.* PHILIP NICHOLS, SIR FRANCIS DRAKE REVIVED (1628), reprinted in IRENE A. WRIGHT, DOCUMENTS CONCERNING ENGLISH VOYAGES TO THE SPANISH MAIN, 1569-1580 245 (vol. 71, ed. 1932) *cited in* TWYMAN, *supra* note 6, at 4 n.4; *see also* TWYMAN, *supra* note 6, at 4. Nichols also served as Drake's chaplain on the voyage.

n<sup>24</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>25</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>26</sup> *Id.* at 28.

n<sup>27</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 90.

n<sup>28</sup> After Columbus sailed to the West Indies, Ponce de Leon laid claim to Florida for Spain. See TWYMAN, supra note 6 at, 31. But before Spain began settling Florida, the British also claimed areas of North America in 1497 through voyages and exploration by John and Sebastian Cabot to Newfoundland. The British and Spanish continued to rival for a stronghold on America over the centuries.

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n<sup>29</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 90.
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n<sup>30</sup> TWYMAN, supra note 6, at 32.

n<sup>31</sup> *Id.* at 38.

n<sup>32</sup> Josephine Johnston, Resisting a Genetic Indentity: The Black Seminioles and Genetic Tests of Ancestry. 31 J.L. MED. & ETHICS 262, 263 (2003).

n<sup>33</sup> DANIEL F. LITTLEFIELD, JR., AFRICANS AND SEMINOLES FROM REMOVAL TO EMANCIPATION 3 (1977).

n<sup>34</sup> TWYMAN, supra note 6, at 11.

n<sup>35</sup> *Id.* at 13.

n<sup>36</sup> *Id.* at 3.

n<sup>37</sup> LITTLEFIELD, supra note 33, at 8.

n<sup>38</sup> Johnston, *supra* note 32, at 263.

n<sup>39</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>40</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>41</sup> LITTLEFIELD, supra note 33, at 8.

n<sup>42</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>43</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>44</sup> *Id.* at 8-9.

n<sup>45</sup> *Id.* at 8.

n<sup>46</sup> *Id.* at 9.

n<sup>47</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>48</sup> KENNETH W. PORTER, THE BLACK SEMINOLES: HISTORY OF A FREEDOM-SEEKING PEOPLE 6 (Alcione M. Amos & Thomas P. Senter eds., 1996).

n<sup>49</sup> WILLIAM LOREN KATZ, BLACK INDIANS: A HIDDEN HERITAGE 58-59

(1986).

n<sup>50</sup> TIYA MILES &CELIA E. NAYLOR-OJURONGBE, *African-Americans in Indian Societies*, HANDBOOK OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS, SOUTHEAST 753, 755 (William C. Sturtevant, ed., 2004).

n<sup>51</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>52</sup> TWYMAN, *supra* note 6, at 38.

n<sup>53</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>54</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>55</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>56</sup> *Id.* at 34.

n<sup>57</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>58</sup> *Id.* at 36.

n<sup>59</sup> *Id.* at 38.

n<sup>60</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>61</sup> *Id.* at 38-39.

n<sup>62</sup> *Id.* at 39-40.

n<sup>63</sup> *Id.* at 39.

n<sup>64</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>65</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>66</sup> KATZ, *supra* note 49, at 50.

n<sup>67</sup> Johnston, *supra* note 32, at 264.

n<sup>68</sup> *Id.* 

n<sup>69</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 90.

n<sup>70</sup> KATZ, supra note 49, at 50.

- n<sup>71</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>72</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>73</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>74</sup> *Id.* at 51.
- n<sup>75</sup> *Id.* at 52.
- n<sup>76</sup> *ld.*
- n<sup>77</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>78</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>79</sup> PORTER supra note 48, at 13.
- n<sup>80</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>81</sup> *Id.* at 14.
- n<sup>82</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>83</sup> *Id.* at 15.
- n<sup>84</sup> KATZ, supra note 49, at 53.
- n<sup>85</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>86</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>87</sup> *Id.* at 54.
- n<sup>88</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>89</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>90</sup> *Id.* at 55.
- n<sup>91</sup> Johnston, *supra* note 32, at 264.
- n<sup>92</sup> KATZ, *supra* note 49, at 55.
- n<sup>93</sup> *Id.*

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n<sup>94</sup> Id.
n<sup>95</sup> LITTLEFIELD, supra note 33, at 7.
n<sup>96</sup> Id.
n<sup>97</sup> Id. at 7-8.
n<sup>98</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 92.
n<sup>99</sup> Id.
n<sup>100</sup> Id.
n<sup>101</sup> Id.
n^{102} Id.
n<sup>103</sup> Johnston, supra note 32, at 264.
n<sup>104</sup> Davis v. U.S., 199 F.Supp.2d 1164, 1168 (W.D. Okla. 2002).
n<sup>105</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 92
n<sup>106</sup> Id. at 93.
n<sup>107</sup> Id.
n<sup>108</sup> Id.
n<sup>109</sup> See LITTLEFIELD, supra note 33, at 4. ("When the Seminoles were removed
from Florida between 1838 and 1843, nearly five hundred persons of African
descent accompanied them to the West. Some of the blacks, whom the Muskogee
speaking Indians called estelusti, had only recently joined the Seminoles through
purchase, theft, or escape from nearby plantations.")
n<sup>110</sup> SAITO. supra note 7, at 93.
n<sup>111</sup> Johnston, supra note 32, at 264.
n<sup>112</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 92.
n<sup>113</sup> Id.
n<sup>114</sup> PORTER, supra note 48, at 107.
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n<sup>115</sup> SAITO. supra note 7, at 92.
n<sup>116</sup> Johnston, supra note 32, at 264.
n<sup>117</sup> Id.
n<sup>118</sup> Id.
n<sup>119</sup> Id.
n<sup>120</sup> Id.
n<sup>121</sup> Id.
n<sup>122</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 93-94.
n<sup>123</sup> Id. at 94.
n<sup>124</sup> Treaty with the Seminole Indians, March, 21, 1866, U.S.-Seminole Nation, 14
Stat. 755, 756.
n<sup>125</sup> Johnston, supra note 32, at 264.
n<sup>126</sup> Id.
n<sup>127</sup> Id.
n<sup>128</sup> Treaty with the Seminole Indians, March, 21, 1866, U.S.-Seminole Nation, 14
Stat. 755, 756.
n<sup>129</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 94.
n<sup>130</sup> Betty L. Jenkins, The Black Seminoles' Long Road to Freedom, at
http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/library/News/seminoles2.html (last visited Feb. 11,
2005).
n<sup>131</sup> KATZ, supra note 49, at 78.
n<sup>132</sup> Jenkins, supra note 130.
n<sup>133</sup> Id.
n<sup>134</sup> Id.
n<sup>135</sup> KATZ, supra note 49, at 80.
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n<sup>136</sup> Jenkins, supra note 130.
n<sup>137</sup> KATZ, supra note 49, at 83.
n<sup>138</sup> Jenkins, supra note 130.
n<sup>139</sup> Id.
n<sup>140</sup> Id.
n<sup>141</sup> Id.
n<sup>142</sup> WILLIAM LOREN KATZ, THE BLACK WEST 237 (1987).
n<sup>143</sup> Jenkins, supra note 130.
n<sup>144</sup> KATZ, supra note 142.
n<sup>145</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 94.
n<sup>146</sup> Johnston, supra note 32, at 265.
n<sup>147</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 94.
n<sup>148</sup> Id.
n<sup>149</sup> Id.
n<sup>150</sup> Id.
n<sup>151</sup> Johnston, supra note 32, at 265.
n<sup>152</sup> Id.
n<sup>153</sup> Id.
n<sup>154</sup> Id.
n<sup>155</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 95.
n<sup>156</sup> Id.
n<sup>157</sup> Johnston, supra note 32, at 265.
n<sup>158</sup> SAITO, supra note 7, at 95.
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n<sup>159</sup> Id.

n<sup>160</sup> Id.

n<sup>161</sup> Johnston, supra note 32, at 266.

n<sup>162</sup> SAITO. supra note 7, at 95.
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n<sup>163</sup> Sylvia Davis is an enrolled member of the Dosar Barkus band of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. She traces her ancestry to the legendary Seminole Chief Billy Bowlegs, a warrior who helped battle the United States to a draw during the Florida Indian wars of the 1800's. See Metz, *supra*, note 2 at 2. She also traces her family back to William Augustus Bowles, an actor and deserter from the British Army who joined the tribe and became a minor chief in the 1700's. See Brent Staples, *The Seminole Tribe, Running From History, at* http://www.racematters.org/seminolesrunningfromhistory.htm

The Dosar Barkus band is named after a leader of the Seminole Nation by that same name. See, (no author) *Dosar Barkus*, at <a href="http://www.african-nativeamerican.com/BioDosar.htm">http://www.african-nativeamerican.com/BioDosar.htm</a> Dosar Barkus emerged as a leader in the Seminole Nation who acted as spokesperson for African Seminoles going through the admissions process. According to documented records from the Dawes Commission, his parents were known only as Charley and Tema. He married a woman named Sookey. They had five children, Daniel, Sango, Amey, Dolley, and Jackson. By the time of the Dawes Commission hearings he was 50 years old. He witnessed over 50 interviews for the Dawes Commision and was part of numerous Seminole Indians' final interview process, vouching for the character and reliability of the data provided for the commission. "It is clear by this respect accorded him at the hearings that his word was to be listened to and followed. He alongside other band leader Caesar Bruner, both became leaders so strong to have had bands named after them. See id.

Caesar Bruner was born in Indian Territory in the 1830's. His Father, William Bruner and his mother Affie Bruner were manumitted by Tom Bruner. Caesar lived all of his life as a free man. By the time of the Dawes Commission Bruner was an elder leader of the Seminole. Like his compatriot Dosar Barkus, he was highly respected and revered amongst his people. The Bruner band carries his name today. See, (no author) *Caesar Bruner, at* <a href="http://www.african-nativeamerican.com/BioBruner.htm">http://www.african-nativeamerican.com/BioBruner.htm</a>

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n<sup>164</sup> Davis v. United States, 343 F.3d 1282, 1285 (10th Cir. 2003).

n<sup>165</sup> Id.

n<sup>166</sup> Davis v. United States, No. CIV-96-1988M, slip op. at 10 (W.D.Okla. Mar.20, 1998).
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n<sup>167</sup> Davis v. United States, 192 F.3d 951 (10th Cir.1999).
n<sup>168</sup> Davis v. United States, 199 F.Supp. 2d 1164 (W.D. Okla. 2002).
n<sup>169</sup> Id.; supra note 5, at 1285.
n<sup>170</sup> Id. at 1286.
n<sup>171</sup> Id. at 1287.
n<sup>172</sup> Id.
n<sup>173</sup> Id.
n<sup>174</sup> Id.
n<sup>175</sup> Id. at 1294.
n<sup>176</sup> Id. at 1296.
n<sup>177</sup> Id. at 1289.
n<sup>178</sup> Id.
n<sup>179</sup> Id. at 1292.
n<sup>180</sup> Id.
n<sup>181</sup> Id. at 1294.
n<sup>182</sup> Brent Staples, The Black Seminole Indians Keep Fighting for Equality in the
American West, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 18, 2003, at A24.
n<sup>183</sup> Id.
n<sup>184</sup> Id.
n<sup>185</sup> METZ, supra note 2, at 2.
n<sup>186</sup> Id. at 3.
n<sup>187</sup> Id. at 4.
n<sup>188</sup> Id. at 2.
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n<sup>189</sup> Id. at 3.
n<sup>190</sup> Id. at 4.
n<sup>191</sup> David Wilkins, Wilkins: Red, Black, and Bruised, INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY,
Oct. 21, 2003, at http://www.indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1066749827.
n<sup>192</sup> 206 F.R.D. 1 (D.D.C. 2001); see also Seminole Nation of Oklahoma v. Norton,
223 F.Supp.2d 122 (D.D.C. 2002).
n<sup>193</sup> 223 F. Supp. 2d, at 125.
n<sup>194</sup> Id.
n<sup>195</sup> Melissa Beggs, The Black and the Red, OKLAHOMA GAZETTE, Nov. 6, 2003,
at 21.
n<sup>196</sup> Id. at 24.
n<sup>197</sup> Id.
n<sup>198</sup> Id.
n<sup>199</sup> Johnston, supra note 32, at 266.
n<sup>200</sup> Id.
n<sup>201</sup> Id.
n2<sup>02</sup> Id.
n<sup>203</sup> Id. at 267.
n<sup>204</sup> Id.
n<sup>205</sup> Id.
n<sup>206</sup> Id.
n<sup>207</sup> THROUGH INDIAN EYES: THE UNTOLD STORY OF NATIVE AMERICAN
PEOPLES 65 (Bryce Walker et al. eds., 1995).
n<sup>208</sup> Johnston, supra note 32, at 264.
n<sup>209</sup> Id.
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- n<sup>210</sup> *Id.* n<sup>211</sup> *Id.* n<sup>212</sup> *Id.* n<sup>213</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>214</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>215</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>216</sup> *Id.* at 269.
- n<sup>217</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>218</sup> *Id.*
- n<sup>219</sup> KATZ, supra note 49, at 14.
- n<sup>220</sup> *Id.* at 16.

n<sup>221</sup> Videotape: Conference on Tribal Law and Government, comments of panelist Professor Carey Vicenti (Nov. 13, 2003) (on file at the University of Kansas Wheat Law Library).

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# Real Africans, Real Natives, Whoever They Might Be: Refiguring the Mixed-race Concept by LaRose Davis

LaRose Davis provides a literary analysis of mixed-race heritage in American culture. Davis argues that mixed-race literature is often misread or misunderstood because current scholarship does not consider mixed-race identity outside a racial framework constructed through biology. With a broader understanding of mixed-race literature as a subgenre of American literature that can stand on its own, Davis suggests a rereading of novels that have been categorized either African American or Native American. Reexamining such novels will lead to a better understanding of intersections between these two groups within literature and a deeper understanding of mixed-race literary characters.

Pauline Hopkins' Winona: A Tale of Negro Life in the South and Southwest (1902) opens with this description of Judah, one of the main characters of the novel:

The lad who handled the paddle so skillfully might have been mistaken for an Indian at first glance, for his brown body lacked nothing of the suppleness and grace which constant exercise in the open air alone imparts. He wore moccasins and his dress otherwise was that of a young brave, save for feathers and paint. His flashing black eyes were fixed upon the island toward which the canoe was headed (289).

In this single passage, Hopkins begins to trouble the long-held notion of race as biologically determined. Judah's sinewy grace, his lean form, and his attire mark him as Native American, so that from a distance, he might be mistaken for an "Indian." Indeed, neither skin tone nor action distinguishes this young man from the other Native Americans who populate his small community. Only one aspect of his physical appearance seems to suggest something other than Native American heritage. Hopkins writes, "as the sunlight gleamed upon his bare head it reveals the curly, crispy hair of a Negro" (289). This telltale aspect of his physical appearance, presumed to be the result of a particular type of biology, seems to place him squarely in the African American

race. With this detail about the texture of his hair, Hopkins subtly and artfully reinscribes the notion of race as biology for the purposes of more forcefully subverting this notion later in the novel.

Pauline Hopkins is a prominent and often-studied figure, not only because of her many literary contributions but also because of her social and political activism, which created opportunities for other African American women in the literary field. Perhaps most well-known for her novel *Contending Forces*, Hopkins also published three serialized novels in the early 1900s in *Colored American Magazine*. Hopkins' literary publications are, among other things, explorations of race that attempt to problematize contemporaneous (and still common) notions of racial identity formation. Particularly her magazine novels, Augusta Rorhbach argues, are a working through of this question. Winona is one of these and is less often studied. However, this novel is particularly fascinating because of its depictions of the intersections between African American and Native American communities, a topic that is markedly different from the way that Hopkins explores race in the other novels of this serialized trilogy. My reading of *Winona* will add particularly to Rorhbach's work, as it theorizes the implications of the mixed-race identities that Hopkins postulates in the text.

Mixed-race literature is an important subgenre to American literature broadly and African and Native American literary studies specifically. Scholars commonly categorize literature as mixed race if either the authors or the central characters of the literature have a mixed-race ancestry—or to use the nineteenth-century term, "blood." Often, both characteristics apply to texts in the body of mixed-race literature. Throughout three centuries of American literary production, the mixed-race figure has remained an ever-present source of fascination for African American, Native American, and Euramerican authors alike. The reasons behind this fascination are neither mysterious nor unprecedented. Many authors, past and present, consider the mixed-race figure a uniquely American mixture. Moreover, the figure seems to embody the articulation of American potential, for better or for worst. However, current mixed-race literary scholarship leaves veiled much of what the genre can contribute to on-going conversations about American literature and American identity. Jonathan Brennen asserts that mixed-race texts are misread and, therefore, misunderstood for two primary

reasons.<sup>2</sup> First, and most importantly for my argument, he argues mixed-race texts are misread because the scholars working with these texts do not recognize them as mixed-race texts. Secondly, even when scholars encounter an identifiable mixed-race text, current criticism is not equipped to interpret them. Because existing mixed-race literary scholarship is so reliant on the notion that race is biologically determined, works like *Winona* receive little critical attention as mixed-race literature.

Winona is the story of a young girl, the title character, who stands at the center of a plot, formulated by Colonel Titus and Bill Thomson, to steal the fortunes and titles of her father, White Eagle. Warren Maxwell, an English attorney, comes to America in search of Captain Henry Carlingford, who is missing and thought dead. If Warren cannot find the missing captain and his heirs, the estates and fortunes will be transferred to Colonel Titus. With the looming threat of Warren discovering White Eagle's identity, Colonel Titus murders White Eagle. The last direct heir to the fortune as a result of her father's murder, Winona is the final obstacle to Colonel Titus's successful revenge plot. He enslaves Winona and Judah, hoping that if they cannot be found, he will finally inherit the fortune for which he has long schemed. Winona's appearance, like that of her half brother, inspires confusion. Also dressed in Native American garments in her first appearance in the novel, the "truth" of her race is even more difficult to discern than Judah's, for she has an olive complexion with a wide brow and hair that clusters together in "rich dark ringlets," characteristics that do not lend themselves to such easy classification (291-92). Later in the novel, the reader discovers that, like Judah, Winona has no Native American ancestry. Judah and Winona live in a region of Canada that Hopkins describes as a "mixed community of Anglo Saxons, Indians, and Negroes" (289).

As Winona unfolds and the characterization of Judah builds, Hopkins—despite the early admission of Judah's African American heritage—continues to destabilize notions of race as simply biological. Hopkins makes it clear that Judah's connection to Native American culture extends beyond the superficial aspects of his attire and appearance. Soon after this opening scene, Judah and Winona, his sister, are taken to Missouri and enslaved. During his enslavement, Judah works on a horse farm. In this occupation, Judah's Native American identity is illustrated in a way that is far more

compelling than the physical description above, as Hopkins details a scene in which Judah helps to break a wild horse. Judah, Hopkins writes, "Then began an exhibit of mind over instinct. The power of the hypnotic eye was known and practiced among all the Indian tribes of the West. It accounts for their wonderful success in subduing animals" (324). Moreover, after hypnotizing the horse with his "Indian" gaze, Judah mounts the beast to finish the process of breaking the wild horse's spirits. Hopkins writes, "Rising in his stirrups, Judah, while keeping perfect control of the animal, converted the four acres of enclosure into a circus arena in which the horse was forced to gallop under the sting of a whip, and in the true style of reckless Indian riding of the Western plains" (326). Though Judah is originally from the northeastern United States, and thus his practice of western "Indian" horse-taming skills seems geographically and culturally misplaced, Hopkins' characterization of Judah is important for several reasons. She links Judah specifically to a Native American culture, showing that he possesses traits and abilities that he could have only learned through connection to a Native American community.

More significantly, Hopkins' Judah illustrates a different type of racial identity. Though we learn early in the novel that Judah is a "mite of black humanity," with no Native American ancestry, he lives and embodies a mixed-race experience through displaying specialized knowledge and particular modes of expression, dress, and behavior (290).<sup>4</sup> My reading of these passages from Hopkins' novel points to a gap in scholarship about mixed-race literature. Current mixed-race scholarship does not consider the possibility that mixed-race identities are more than just an issue of biology. In fact, much of mixed-race scholarship assumes that a particular type—or types—of biology is necessary in formulating a mixed-race identity. With her characterization of Judah, however, Hopkins is able to articulate a different type of mixed-race experience that is not solely the product of biology.<sup>5</sup>

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Current models of scholarship are limited, primarily because their understanding of what constitutes a mixed-race text is decidedly narrow. Much mixed-race scholarship, as I will show, is predicated on the notion that race is inherently, and ultimately, biological. These narrow definitions of mixed-race unwittingly refract ideas popularized

during the nineteenth century by "race scientists." The indebtedness of current critical models to biological notions of race is implicit in the very language these models employ to discuss these texts. Many of the terms used to designate mixed-race characters and authors—such as "mulatto," "half breed," "mixed-blood," and so on—are heavily invested in the biological language of blood and breeding. Such language abounds in the seminal works of mixed-race literary criticism and theory. Harry J. Brown uses the term "mixed blood," as does Louis Owens. Sharon Holland and Gerald Vizenor use "cross-blood," while Judith Berzon and William Schieck use "mulatto" and "half-breed," respectively. What all of these terms have in common is that they seek to identify and categorize individuals of a mixed-blood heritage, thus grounding the mixed-race experience in biology, metaphorically figured as blood. Another commonality that these terms share is that they all—implicitly, even if not intentionally—exclude other mixedrace experiences that are not founded in biology. Each term uses a particular type of blood mixture as the point of departure for examining the mixed-race identity. As such, this language precludes the idea that mixed-race identities exist outside of those specific types of blood mixture.

Grounding definitions of mixed-race in biology necessarily limits the corpus of mixed-race literature. This biological criterion especially complicates the identification of African American and Native American mixed-race texts because of the notion of hypodescent, the practice of assigning individuals who claim multiracial heritages to the group with the lowest social status. Many texts that articulate a mixed-race experience are discounted because of the rigid definitions of mixed race. Literary scholars need to expand this definition of mixed race. By moving the notion of mixed race away from this biological referent, we can expand the mixed-race canon to include texts that might otherwise be excluded. Since the beginning of the twentieth century anthropologists, sociologists, and other scholars have been advancing theories that attempt to replace the biological definition of race with cultural, historical, social, or linguistic definitions. Literature, too, has seemingly always reflected an understanding of race that is much more complex than simple heredity.

The biological definition of race therefore provides an inadequate tool for writing about race and mixed-race identities in literature. For that reason, we must reassess

what constitutes racial and, consequently, mixed-race identities. Certainly, we might even look to the literature itself to guide our new formulations of race. I propose a definition of "mixed race" wherein biology, manifested in the physical appearance, is not the defining criterion. In this new definition of mixed race, experiential identities, which work to create particular types of sociological and psychological perspectives, are as important to defining race as biology. These perspectives, forged through particular types of experiences, are not merely tragic, which is a common motif for discussing the mixed-race character, but also allow the mixed-race person to have access to multiple sources of knowledge and philosophies of being. Race, rather than alluding to the seemingly tangible elements of physiognomy, is redefined to reflect the more intangible elements of existence that play crucial roles in the ways that we formulate both identity and community. Such a definition of race would be reflective of more than a century's worth of scholarship about race that has discredited biological notions. This new definition would also reflect, more completely, the literature itself, which has long questioned the validity of biologically determined race.

Creating new understandings of race as a cultural and experiential construction immediately broadens the canon of mixed-race texts. Albery Whitman's *Twasinta's Seminoles: Or, The Rape of Florida* (1885) becomes a mixed-race text though none of the characters claims a mixed-race heritage, and Whitman's own biological antecedents are not completely known. Similarly, *Meridian* (1976) and *Temple of My Familiar* (1989), by Alice Walker, become mixed-race novels. From this expanded canon, we can produce multidimensional readings of mixed-race literature, readings that reflect and theorize a variety of experiences. While the tragic mixed-race figure—so frequently discussed in existing models—would continue to be an important figure in a more expansive mixed-race criticism, new figures will emerge as a counterbalance to the notion that the mixed-race figure is most often tragic or liminal.

Existing critical models, in general, cannot accommodate readings that recognize the resistance that texts such as these offer to traditional notions of biology. A more expansive model, however, would begin to account for such resistance in these texts, because such moments would be a part of the narrative of simultaneity that an expanded canon would support. Crucial in shifting from a paradigm wherein biology is a

defining factor of race is creating new language for discussing mixed-race literature. Throughout this article, I have deliberately used "mixed race," as opposed to the many other terms that are used to describe this type of literature. "Mixed race" is not new terminology; scholars such as Jonathan Brennen and others working specifically with African and Native American literature have used this term. Unlike other terms used to designate this literature, the characters who people it, and the authors who create it, "mixed race" is the only term that has the potential to accommodate the types of ideological shifts that I propose.

First, "mixed race" moves away from the issue of blood and, thus, biology. In contrast to mulatto and half-blood, a term like "mixed race" does not explicitly refer to the biological. Though popular understandings of race still posit it as embedded in and a function of biology, the term "mixed race"—in and of itself—has the potential to be reworked in ways that others, such as "mulatto" and "half blood," cannot be. Secondly, "mixed race" can refer more easily to Native/European, African/European, and Native/African/European people. While, as Jack Forbes demonstrates, terms like "mulatto" have been used to refer to all of these racial mixtures, the popular connotation of "mulatto" limits it to referring to just African European people. "Mixed race," however, because it is sufficiently ambiguous, escapes the tendency to be linked to a particular type of mixture. Finally, "mixed race" extends beyond the binaries implicit in the abovementioned terms. Using a term such as "mixed race" does not insist on binaries but, rather, has the potential to subvert them.<sup>6</sup>

In order, however, for this terminology to effectively create a more expansive canon of mixed-race literature and, consequently, produce more nuanced understandings of mixed-race literature, we must alter our understanding of race. While attempting to redefine race, I will not abandon the term altogether. Like W. E. B. Du Bois, I find the notion of race useful for understanding community formation across the globe. Literature, as a product of these communities, is in some ways inflected by this mode of community formation. In addition, race, despite the many attempts to refute its existence, persists as a method of categorization and as a facet of identity formation. As noted earlier, in the face of almost a century of attempts by scientists to provide scientific proof that race was biological, early twentieth-century anthropologists and

sociologists begin to advance notions of race as divorced from biology. W. E. B. Du Bois, Kwame Appiah, and Stuart Hall represent the continuum of this thought within the race debate of the twentieth century.

W. E. B. Du Bois, with the 1897 publication of "The Conservation of the Races," became a touchstone for all scholars who would theorize race in the twentieth century. In this essay Du Bois offers proof, both anecdotal and statistical, that race as a biology is an idea that fails repeatedly in the face of corporality. Du Bois argues that ties that bind races together are a common history and a shared social status, not a shared phenotype; these ties are socio-historical, not biological. By positing race as a social and historical construction, rather than a biological construction, Du Bois restores, to our understanding of race, the mutability that biological notions stripped from it. Appiah's *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* and Hall's "Race the Floating Signifier" build on Du Bois' work, adding to it their own reconfigurations of the race concept.

Kwame Appiah, in *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (1992), adds to Du Bois' socio-historical construction, the dimensions of geography and politics. Appiah argues that any definition of race should allow for the transcendence of particular categories so that people might align themselves with groups whose political, social, economic, and cultural experiences correspond most exactly to their individual experiences. Finally, Stuart Hall, in his video "Race the Floating Signifier" (1996), also suggests that the concept of race must be redefined so that is no longer constrained by biology. Arguing that skin color, like language, signifies different meanings depending on the context in which it is presented, Hall suggests that race functions more as a linguistic signifier than anything else. Taken together, the writings of Du Bois, Appiah, and Hall construct a definition of race that moves beyond biology. In bringing these three thinkers together, I can construct a new definition of race that allows the term "mixed race" to achieve its inherent potential.

In this new definition, culture, history, politics, and geography take the forefront. A definition of race that includes social, historical, cultural, and political elements allows for mutability that strictly biological definitions inherently deny. Race functions not to describe a fixed state but reassumes the linguistic fluidity that it once possessed. It also

addresses and reflects more accurately the ways that race is constructed in literature. Rather than mapping the mixed-race identity solely onto the body, as a manifestation of differences in the blood, mixed-race identity is refigured to include a variety of factors. Individuals' social, political, and cultural experiences figure into their racial identities as much as their biological heritages or their physiological appearances. Moving the concept of mixed-race away from biology also allows a genuine and thorough study of those sociological and psychological aspects of the mixed-race experience, in which scholars such as Berzon, Scheick, Sollors, and Brown are interested, without limiting the study to those individuals who fit a narrow biological and even physiological profile. With these new definitions, a space for pondering a different type of mixed-race experience also emerges. Characters who are not mixed race as defined by biological explanation can be understood as mixed race because of their experiences that create a particular psychological and sociological perspective.

Furthermore, this definition broadens the canon of mixed-race literatures. The new canon is comprised of two types of texts. The first group of texts are defined as mixed race because the central characters have a mixed heritage or the authors who produce the texts have a mixed heritage. However, neither are mixed race because of specious biological definitions, but rather they are mixed race because of identities forged in a crucible of melding experiences. Mixed-race characters and authors engage all aspects of their heritage as it is defined by their experience. The other group that contributes to this body includes what I call mixed-race texts. Mixed-race texts do not necessarily include mixed-race figures at their center, and sometimes these texts contain no mixed-race characters at all. Mixed-race texts are such by virtue of the way that they engage with multiple racial experiences. Lastly, redefining race will help to redefine how mixed-race characters themselves are discussed.

Mixed-race characters and texts are another way that African American and Native American literary traditions converge. Examining how African American and Native American authors are writing about mixed-race characters and mixed-race experiences will offer much insight that will be helpful in reshaping the definition of mixed race. First, perhaps because there is often less of an investment among these communities in maintaining rigid definitions of race and racial hierarchy, African

American and Native American authors have generally understood race to be more fluid than most Euramerican authors and texts propose. Additionally, with the general absence of such hierarchies—or at least the hierarchies often seem less divisive—other aspects of the mixed-race identity and experience come to the forefront. Mixed-race identities and experiences as they are articulated in texts by Native American and African American authors might possess the key to more effectively escaping race's biological chains.

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Returning to *Winona* with this new definition of mixed race, the ways in which Hopkins' text falls within these new parameters become immediately clear. Though Judah and Winona are not African Native American by virtue of biological lineage, other aspects of their biography create a mixed-race identity nonetheless. As Hopkins notes at the outset of the novel, Judah and Winona were raised in a heterogeneous town of African Americans, Native Americans, and Euramericans. Hopkins writes,

Many strange tales of romantic happenings in this mixed community of Anglo Saxons, Indians, and Negroes might be told similar to the one I am about to relate, and the world stand aghast and try in vain to find the dividing line supposed to be a natural barrier between the white and the dark skinned race. No; social intercourse may be long in coming, but its advent is sure; the mischief is already done (287).

Hopkins begins by disavowing the uniqueness of the story that she is about to tell, positioning the characters and the incidents as the rule rather than the exception. At the same time, she—with one sentence—eradicates the barriers between races, creating her text as a space of simultaneity from the outset of the novel.

In this small community, everyone is Indian. From White Eagle, an Anglo Saxon from England, to Judah—the "mite of black humanity"—all consider themselves and are considered by others within the community to be Seneca. Hopkins writes,

other nationalities . . . had linked their fortunes with the aborigines. Many white men had been adopted into various tribes because of their superior knowledge, and who, for reasons best known to themselves, sought to conceal their identity in the safe shelter of the wigwam. . . . the free Negro was seen mingling with

other settlers upon the streets, by their presence adding still more to the cosmopolitan character of the shifting panorama (288).

So thorough is the intermixture in this community that the boundaries that are generally assumed to separate and define the races are nonexistent. Indians, Negroes, and Anglo Saxons meld together into one amorphous race. The heterogeneity of appearance, which is generally accepted as a marker of racial difference, is of no consequence here. Immediately, it becomes clear that race is conceived differently by the members of this small community. This environment facilitates the interaction necessary to deem Judah and Winona mixed-race characters.

Through Winona and Judah, Hopkins illustrates a mixed-race identity that is the function of culture, education, and geography rather than biology. Their father—Judah's adoptive and Winona's biological—lives as a Seneca, though he is, in fact, Anglo Saxon. Known as White Eagle, he is highly respected by other members of the Seneca nation. Hopkins writes, "He had come among them when cholera was decimating their numbers at a fearful rate. He knew much of medicine. Finally, he saved the life of the powerful chief, was adopted by the tribe, and ever after reverenced as a mighty medicine man" (288). Winona and Judah live their entire young lives as a part of the Seneca nation. Growing up in the mixed community described at the outset of the novel, which lies on the borders of the US and Canada, both children formulate a Seneca identity. Furthermore, both characters continue to embody that upbringing throughout their lives and, in this way, are qualitatively no different from other mixed race characters such as Cogewea, titular character of Mourning Dove's 1927 novel—who is biologically Native and European American.

Winona is, in fact, a mixed blood, as this problematic term is commonly understood; she is a union between an African American woman and an Anglo Saxon man. However, the mixed-race identity that Winona evinces is that of an African/Native girl. Like Judah, though she has no Native American ancestry, circumstances of Winona's experience—such as the town in which she lives—create opportunities for her to formulate a Native identity. For example, a Seneca woman, Nokomis, teaches Winona as a child. Early in the text, Hopkins offers a passage that illustrates the ways that her education shapes the young girl's thoughts and understanding of the world

around her. Speaking about a particular type of wild flower, Winona says, "but we will leave them here where they may go away like spirits; Old Nokomis told me" (292). A conversation ensues in which Judah mocks Winona with the threat of convent school, where everything that Nokomis has taught her will be disproved. Judah taunts Winona, saying, "Old Nokomis! She's only a silly old Indian squaw. You mustn't mind her stories. ... 'When you go to school at the convent next winter, the nuns will teach you better. Then you will learn what you do not know now" (292). Troubled by Judah's cavalier dismissal of Nokomis's teachings—a product of his own boarding-school experience— Winona adamantly refuses to go to the convent school. This moment of distress, though short-lived and swiftly forgotten by the youthful and light-hearted girl, echoes the same sort of cultural and educational threat experienced by authors such as Zitkala-Sa and characters including Archilde in Darcy McNickle's *The Surrounded*.<sup>8</sup> Nokomis's teachings continue to resonate with Winona, even after her removal from the mixed community of her childhood. Years later, after her enslavement and escape, Winona continues to quote Nokomis's truths to Judah and others. Judah, too, embodies mixedrace experience, which is intrinsic to his character. As the horse-taming passage detailed above illustrates, Judah—even enslaved—retains fundamental lessons that he has learned because of his mixed-race upbringing.

The other facet of both Winona and Judah's mixed-race identity is African American. The formulation of this component of their racial identity results from their enslavement early in the novel. Prior to their enslavement, both children lack an extensive understanding of themselves as African American. Ebenezer Maybee, a resident of their community, reveals as much to Warren Maxwell, the English attorney, saying, "Truth is,—neither of them forlorn critters realizes what 'bein' a nigger means" (310). Until this point, neither Winona nor Judah voice a sense of themselves as anything more than members of the Seneca nation. After their enslavement, however, they have a new and heightened awareness of themselves as African American as well. During their enslavement Winona and Judah acquire the shared history, politics, and geography that cement their individual African American identities.

While enslaved, Judah and Winona become familiar with the plight and experience of millions of other African Americans and begin to understand themselves

not only as Seneca but also as African Americans. Taken from the freedom of the Northeast and introduced into bondage in the southern Midwest, the pair grow all too conversant with the language of degradation and the general contempt for African American lives in the United States. During this time, they also both grow to abhor slavery and see themselves as a part of the larger group that has been victimized by that institution. The experience greatly alters both characters' understanding of their identity. Toward the end of the novel, when confronting the man who took such glee in his torture while he was enslaved, "Judah smiled. It was a terrible smile, and carried in it all the pent up suffering of two years of bodily torture and a century of lacerated manhood" (414). Behind the smile is not only Judah's two years of suffering but also the hundred years of suffering experienced by millions of Africans and African Americans before him. He is psychologically linked to them because they all share the common history of enslavement. The retribution that he seeks belongs to them as well. Judah's actions and demeanor reflect that he now understands himself as not only Native American, specifically Seneca, but also African American.

The development of the African American part of their identities is facilitated by a change in geography. In the North, residing on an island that is neither the United States nor Canada, the realities of slavery and a government and legal system that enforce the perpetual servitude of most African Americans are kept largely at bay. In this location, Winona and Judah are Seneca. They are surrounded by Seneca. They live according to Seneca ways and their ideas, thoughts, and lives are molded by a Seneca ontology. When they are whisked away to Missouri, they encounter a different world ruled by slavery, an institution whose mores are inextricably intertwined with the people and the law of the United States. There, Winona and Judah are perceived to be African American by virtue of their appearance, despite Judah's early assertion that they are "Indian." As a result of this perception, Winona and Judah can be enslaved, which serves as an introduction to what it means to be African American in the United States. Of Winona, Hopkins writes, "She had passed from childhood to womanhood in two years in captivity. . . . The time seemed centuries long to the helpless captives, reared in the perfect freedom of Nature's woods and streams" (320). In drawing the sharp contrast between Winona's current captivity and the forests of her youth, Hopkins

distinctly delineates the two primary experiences that have shaped Winona's identity: her time on the Seneca reservation and her time in Missouri. Within each experience, different geographies, different social histories, and different politics are in play; all of these are core elements in the way that Hopkins defines race.

Hopkins further cements the notion of race as the product of experience within the bounds of Warren and Winona's conversation about marriage. Winona believes that Warren, whom she loves, will never love her because of her African American heritage. She says as much to Warren, who replies, "'Nonsense . . . mere birth does not count for more than one's whole training afterward, and you have been bred among another race entirely" (406). Warren's assertion states emphatically the underlying theoretical foundation of the novel. Lived experience is as crucial to the formulation of racial identity as heredity. Warren argues, a bit blithely perhaps because of his different experiences, that Winona is more than the sum of her African American mother and her Euramerican father. Her racial identity is shaped not only by birth but also by the race in which she is bred. Even more importantly, Warren undermines the inherent hierarchy of this dichotomy, implying that experience is as important as biology, if not more so, in shaping racial identity.

Both Winona and Judah have a mixed-race identity that stems not from biology but from experience. Because the text troubles the notions of biological race, it is also able to disrupt predominant narratives about the mixed-race identity. Instead of reinscribing the discourse of nineteenth-century "race" scientists—a discourse that is predicated on notions of inferiority and white supremacy and in which the mixed-race figure is torn because civilization and barbarism are somehow traits passed on in the blood—Hopkins daringly asserts a different way of considering the mixed-race identity. Rather than exhibiting the troubled vacillation of other mixed-race characters, Judah and Winona are able to bring together all aspects of their individual identities in a space of simultaneity. In this space of simultaneity, Winona and Judah can access the knowledge formulated with both arenas of racial experience at the same time and employ this knowledge to their advantage. With simultaneity, synthesis is possible. The mixed-race character ceases to occupy a liminal space in between two worlds and, instead, is able to occupy his or her own world more successfully because of that

identity.

Judah's mixed-race identity serves him well later in the novel, as he and Winona, with the help of friends, escape from Missouri and discover the secret of Winona's lineage. Hopkins writes, "Judah, standing upright in the boat, caught Winona in his arms as deftly as a ball is caught and tossed from one player to another. His Indian training in managing canoes made him fearless now. . . . " (344). Judah's childhood among the Senecas equips him with an arsenal of physical and intellectual abilities that make him a great asset to their escape and, later, to John Brown's army. He becomes a scout for the group of escapees and abolitionists, as they make their way back toward New York. Conversely, Judah's sense of justice and purpose in the battles that ensue stems from his understanding of himself as African American and part of an unjustly maligned and cruelly exploited race.

Late in the novel, Judah forces Bill Thomson to jump off a cliff at gunpoint. Of this act, Hopkins writes,

To him his recent act was one of simple justice. . . . An eye for an eye was a doctrine that commended itself more and more to him as he viewed the Negro's conditions in life, and beheld the horrors of the system under which he lived. Judged by the ordinary eye Judah's nature was horrible, but it was the natural outcome or growth of the "system" as practiced upon the black race. He felt neither remorse nor commiseration for the deed just committed. To him it was his only chance of redress for the personal wrongs inflicted upon Winona and himself. . . . (417-18)

Judah aligns himself psychologically, intellectually, and emotionally with African Americans, while continuing to embody and evince a Seneca identity. All of Judah's actions and subsequent positions are determined by this mixed-race identity. Because he is able to bring together all pieces of his mixed-race experience, that identity equips him with the tools that make him a more able leader and a stronger warrior.

From Winona and Judah, we can begin to construct a new definition of the mixed-race identity that is affirmative for these characters rather than destructive. First, both of these characters are central to the plot of the novel. Significantly, Hopkins opens the novel with the image of these two mixed-race children, and they continue to figure

prominently in the narrative, integral to the action of the novel, even until the final pages of the story. This is a significant departure from typical mixed-race characters such as Cora Munro and Hobomok, who appear only briefly and are marginal actors in the action of the novel. For characters like these, their fleeting appearance serves to reinforce the notion that mixed-race characters are marginal in all ways. The prominent figuring of Winona and Judah, in itself, begins the work of banishing discourses of marginality about these two mixed-race characters. The centrality of mixed-race characters alone does not negate themes of marginality that sometimes exemplify the literature in which mixed-race characters appear; however, it conveys the sentiment that mixed-race stories are worth telling and mixed-race identities are worth exploring.

Furthermore, neither character embodies the typically divided psyche of the tragic mulatto/half-blood figure. For Winona, quoting Nokomis's words continues to be as natural as quoting her ideas or her father's teachings. She does not struggle with the source of her knowledge, an old Seneca woman, nor does she attempt to eschew those teachings for the sake of appearances or the approval of others. Toward the end of the novel, Winona and Warren converse about Winona's prospects when she is once again on free soil. Winona tells Warren that perhaps she will never marry, saying,

"I should not be happy if I married. . . . It would depend upon a man who must know my past. Nokomis used to say 'they are all the same—the men. When you are beautiful they kill each other for you; when you are plain they sneer at you." (407)

Nokomis's saying speaks both to internal and external beauty. Because of her enslavement and the degradation that she suffered while enslaved, Winona believes that men will now find her plain, her physical and spiritual beauty tarnished by her past. Warren, like Judah, scoffs at Nokomis's belief, saying, "Old Nokomis! She spoke of red men, not white men" (407). Warren attempts to invalidate Nokomis's teaching by suggesting a rather limited understanding of men on the part of the Native American woman. Echoing Judah's epithet exactly, Warren's words suggest that Nokomis's teachings are obsolete and not in keeping with the world that he and Winona inhabit. However, even after her enslavement, Winona unwaveringly asserts the truth of Nokomis's words, saying, "Yes; all the same Nokomis said: men are men" (407).

Winona embraces all of the experiences that have shaped her racial identity and is not engulfed by despair because of those experiences.

Finally, that both characters survive and thrive is also of crucial importance in refiguring existing definitions of the mixed-race character. Neither Winona nor Judah is tragic in any sense of the word. They certainly suffer hardships, but they do not lose sight of themselves over the course of the novel, nor do they spiral downward into madness or death. Both retain a firm sense of themselves as a product of the miscegenated community in which they were raised and the mixed-race experience that they have lived, as Winona's conversation with Warren illustrates. The end of the novel finds Judah and Winona married into some of the finest families in England. As the novel concludes, we learn of Judah's eventual fate, which too is facilitated by this mixed-race identity. Hopkins writes:

Judah never returned to America. After the news of John Brown's death had aroused the sympathies of all Christendom for the slaves he gave up all thoughts of returning to the land of his birth and entered the service of the Queen. His daring bravery and matchless courage brought its own reward; he was knighted; had honors and wealth heaped upon him, and finally married into one of the best families of the realm (435).

Hopkins effectively challenges the notion that mixed-race characters are doomed to unproductive lives capped off by an early death. She presents, in Judah, a character whose very prosperity—both material and existential—is owed to his mixed-race identity rather than one element of his heritage or the other.

Even as the novel illustrates that race is much more fluid than many of that time believe and that mixed-race experiences can arise from a multitude of circumstances, the conclusion of the text demonstrates its pragmatism about the impact of such narratives. Both Winona and Judah ultimately emigrate to England and never return to the United States. They make this choice for a multitude of reasons, among them the understanding that their African American heritage places them in danger in the United States and even in Canada. The novel, while pragmatic, is not entirely pessimistic about the efficacy of its message. The beginning of the novel, where Hopkins positions Winona and Judah's story as one of many such tales, suggests that eventually the

understanding of race that she attempts to advance will become commonplace.

Hopkins, in *Winona*, offers an alternative understanding of mixed-race identities that only becomes apparent once we dismiss the notion that race is solely the product of biology. In reading Winona and Judah as mixed-race characters, it becomes clear that the sociological and psychological perspectives that many scholars of mixed race reference are forged not in the blood but in experience. Accepting this fact, we can perform readings of *Winona* that bring the whole of scholarship about mixed-race identities to bear on the text, which will lead to more thorough understandings not only of Winona and her brother but also the text as a whole. From there, we can begin to examine other texts where characters' mixed-race identity stems from experience, wherein culture, politics, geography, and history are influential factors. We can also begin to critique the veracity of labeling characters mixed race by virtue of their biology.

The other idea that becomes equally clear in *Winona* is that the mixed-race experience is not always as bleak as much mixed-race scholarship tends to suggest. Hopkins articulates the idea that mixed-race identities are a source of strength. Mixed-race characters draw knowledge from multiple sources or worldviews. The strength of the mixed-race identity lies not only in drawing multiple knowledges from multiple sources but also in synthesizing that knowledge. The mixed-race characters in *Winona* are able to do this in such a way that they become more successful at navigating the world around them. Hopkins' novel illustrates the ways that new criteria for assigning mixed-race identities create new understandings of how mixed-race experiences are defined.

\* \* \*

Refiguring the mixed-race identity, by redefining notions of race, is of crucial importance in literary studies. Such a designation immediately augments our understanding of the texts as a whole by providing a frame for understanding the choices that authors such as Hopkins make. For instance, identifying *Winona* as a mixed-race novel, with mixed-race characters, brings to the foreground the significant alternative conceptualization of race offered by the text in ways that reading *Winona* from the perspective of a fixed notion of race would not. This new understanding adds dimensions to *Winona*. More than just a morality tale about the injustices of slavery, the

novel becomes a rigorous criticism of systems of thought that prevailed even in the wake of the dismantling of that institution.

Such a move also demonstrates and begins to close gaps in current discourse about mixed-race literature. Hopkins' novel illustrates the ways that African Americans and Native Americans are refiguring the mixed-race concept by depicting a mixed-race experience that extends beyond biology to encompass social, political, historical, and geographical components. This refiguring project spans at least a century within both traditions, of which *Winona* is but one example. These novels also demonstrate the ways that African American and Native American authors are challenging the narrative of tragic liminality, which characterizes mixed-race literature discourse, by portraying mixed-race characters or creating mixed-race texts that operate from a position of strength and wholeness rather than weakness and fragmentation. This alternative narrative about mixed-race identity serves to complicate notions of liminality and tragedy that seem to surround mixed-race discourse.

Scholars, for decades, have pointed to the failings of biological conceptions of race and advocated a definition of race that takes into consideration elements of culture, geography, linguistics, and history. Yet these same scholars have struggled to put their own assertions into practice and, thus, inadvertently perpetuate the very modes of thinking that they seek to dismantle. In identifying these texts as mixed race, by being attentive to the alternative understandings of what race is and how it is formed, I challenge the notion that biological definitions of race are ultimately inescapable. Biological definitions of race are only inescapable if literary scholars continue to use biological criteria in identifying mixed-race texts. Moving away from the biological notions of mixed race may bring us closer to understanding the reality of America, wherein the shared histories and generally common perspective creates mixed-race identities that supercede biological mixture.

# **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> See "To Be Continued: Double Identity, Multiplicity and Antigenealogy as Narrative Strategies in Pauline Hopkin's Magazine Fiction" (1999) by Augusta Rorhbach.

- <sup>2</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the problems implicit in mixed-race literary study, see Jonathan Brennen's *Mixed Race Literature*.
- <sup>3</sup> His skills, which Hopkins states are practiced among the western tribes, are problematic because the practices and skills of Native American nations necessarily differ according to geography, resources, and other cultural factors. Judah, originally from the northeastern section of the country, should not—generally—be familiar with or adept at the practices of the western tribes.
- <sup>4</sup> While it is possible to read instances, like the example from Hopkins, as moments of stereotypical appropriation, such a reading overlooks the importance of what Hopkins accomplishes with her characters, which is the destabilization and restructuring of notions of race; that work cannot and should not be so easily dismissed.
- <sup>5</sup> When I talk about race as biology, I am not simply talking about race as it is manifested in appearance, but I am also talking about race as ideas, moralities, intellect, and actions that, the writings of "race scientists" posit, are directly influenced by biology.
- <sup>6</sup> I recognize that "mixed race"—specifically race—is, in itself, a problematic term. In using this term, I face the threat of evoking the biological definitions even as I try to escape them. However, I use race as an idea and a term that continues to shape discussions about African American and Native American literature and because I see the potential for the meaning to be reconfigured in useful ways.
- <sup>7</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, writes in "Conservation of the Races," "Although the wonderful developments of human history teach that the grosser physical differences of color, hair, and bone go but a short way toward explaining the different roles which groups of men have played in human progress, yet there are differences—subtle, delicate, and elusive though they may be —which have silently, but definitely separated men into groups"(40).

- <sup>8</sup> Zitkala-Sa authored *American Indian Stories* (1985), a series of autobiographical narratives about her experiences on the reservation and in boarding school. Archilde is the main character of Darcy McNickle's *The Surrounded* (1936). Both Zitkala-Sa and McNickle construct a dichotomy between Native education and the assimilationist agendas of boarding schools such as the infamous Carlisle boarding school. This dichotomy is the source of much tension for Native Americans who are forced to leave their homes and reservations as a part of the Euramerican attempt to assimilate Native Americans. Winona experiences a similar trepidation, as Judah taunts her with the looming apparition of convent schooling.
- <sup>9</sup> Here, Maybee is using "nigger" interchangeably with "black" or "African American."
- <sup>10</sup> Slavery, of course, represents only one type of African American experience and thus one of many possible shared histories that could play a role in the formulation of a racial identity.
- <sup>11</sup> For a more developed discussion of this notion of simultaneity, see Harry J. Brown's *Injun Joe's Ghost: The Indian Mixed-Blood in American Writing* (2004).
- <sup>12</sup> Even though the text consistently and unrelentingly advances the notion that race is not merely biological but also experiential, it does not attempt to suppress the conflict between this understanding of race and biological definitions. In the novel, biological understandings of race are evident in many of the characters, and the notion of race as biology plays a key role in shaping Judah and Winona's fates. The threat of enslavement and further degradation remains a constant threat as long as they remain in the United States. Furthermore, neither Winona nor Judah desires to live in a county where women and men are so treated because of physical appearance, which is why both, ultimately, choose expatriation to England.

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One of his short stories is included in the volume *Nuevas Voces Hispanas* ("New Hispanic Voices"), Prentice Hall, 2000; pp.109-26. In addition to the short story, this volume includes an interview with Bravo de Rueda. He has also published a novel, *Hacia el Sur* ("Southward"), La Yapa, 1992, and a short story collection, *El hombre de la máscara* ("The Man in the Mask"), APJP, 1994.

# (Dis)Connections: African and Indigenous Peoples in Peru by José A. Bravo de Rueda

José Bravo de Rueda argues that Peruvian identity has been commonly established by examining Spanish, indigenous, and mestizo heritage. The focus on these lineages has allowed the identities of Peruvians of African descent to be hidden, but Bravo de Rueda presents evidence of Afro Peruvian populations through an overview of descriptive imagery in literature, art, and music. This essay presents a series of flashpoint narratives and images of African-descended peoples in an attempt to recover these populations from invisibility and place them in Peruvian historical narratives.

Traditionally, Peruvian identity (or lack of it) has been defined through the heritage of the Spanish, the indigenous or their offspring, the mestizo, but modern approaches see Peru as a multicultural, multiethnic country. Slowly, the presence of Afro Peruvians and other groups is being acknowledged by writers when dealing with cultural and historical issues in Peru.<sup>1</sup>

This work deals with the interaction between indigenous peoples and Afro Peruvians. In this relationship we must consider their interaction with the dominant group, the Spanish, which in (modern) terms of race may be identified as "white."<sup>2</sup>

We should not think of these groups as coherent or homogeneous entities. Alberto Flores Galindo has pointed out the division between people within the same group: Spanish/Spanish "criollos" (born in America); black "bozales"/black "criollos"; native Indians/foreign Indians (133, 153). "Indians" may also include different ethnic groups.

The multiethnicity of Peru may be seen as the face of a divided, fragmented country. Tension permeates the relationships among the groups, which may not identify with a national project. Let's examine the historical circumstances behind these dynamics.

The extermination of indigenous peoples was well underway by the sixteenth century. By 1528 the slave trade was made official and large numbers of Africans were brought to America as slaves

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Guamán Poma' s illustrations from the seventeenth century exposed the brutality towards Indians and blacks.
Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno (1615)*,(GKS 2232 4to),936, 720 (Courtesy of The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark)

to replace the decimated indigenous labor force.

It is estimated that ten to fifteen million people were brought as slaves to America during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The areas with the largest concentration of slaves were Brasil and the Caribbean (Lovejoy; Becker). Around half a million slaves arrived in the viceroyalty of Peru.

By 1570 there were more blacks than Spaniards in Peru. Edgar Montiel asserts since these times blacks have been rooted in the country (222).



The viceroyalty of Peru, before the partition of the territory with the creation of the viceroyalties of Rio de la Plata and Nueva Granada in the eighteenth century. (Courtesy of EDUCARED)

Following Montiel and Aldo Panfichi, for Lima, the capital, we have these numbers:

The slave population jumped from 4,000 to 20,000 in 54 years (1586 -1640).

By 1713, 15,000 people were black or from African ancestry (out of a population of 28,000). By this time new generations of blacks were being born in Peru.

By 1790, approximately 45 percent of Lima's population had African ancestors.

In 1826, slaves were 4 percent (41,228) of the total population in Lima (1 million).

According to the 1876 National Census, blacks were 1.95 percent of the total population. (Indians: 57.6 percent; whites and mestizos: 38.55 percent).

By 1940 Afro Peruvians were 0.47 percent of the total population.

Afro Peruvians vanished through miscegenation ("mestizaje"); according to Montiel, they are part of the genetic substance of the Peruvian nation.<sup>3</sup> This fact is not acknowledged by the Peruvian institutions and the general population, which results in discrimination toward them.

But mestizaje is the social fabric of Peru. Carolyn Dean, analyzing the series of paintings related to the celebration of Corpus Christi, states that on the documentary level, "the canvases emphasize the diversity of an anonymous Cuzqueño society in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Portrayed are representatives of the three "racial" groups inhabiting seventeenth-century Cuzco: indigenous Andeans, people of European descent, and people of African descent. Ethnic heritage is not always clear-cut, of course, and certainly persons of mixed ethnicity are portrayed" (90).

(Dis)Connections: African and Indigenous

Speaking about Lima, Flores Galindo states that mestizaje and cross-culturation increased during the eighteenth century and that no less than 20 percent of the population was mestizo (80).

Montiel says voyagers were surprised about the many ethnic types found in colonial Lima, and one described it as populated by a "race of monsters" ("raza de monstruos") (245).

Currently the majority of the country's population is mestizo, although racial categories are no longer considered in the national census.

In Peru slaves were concentrated mainly on the shore, but they also worked in low valleys in the highlands after they could not adapt to work in the mines.

The Spanish implanted the colonial economy, based on exploitation of land and people, profiting from natural resources through forced labor. In Peru, slavery had an economic foundation: slaves could buy their freedom. Those with special skills (artisans, carpenters, musicians, cooks) were able not only to be free but also to buy other people's liberty (Aguirre 65).

Ethnic classification mandated the social and economic status of people. The Spanish were at the top of the pyramid with the Africans and indigenous peoples at the bottom. Presently, these dynamics still persist, with different groups trying to be at the top.<sup>4</sup>



Lima, 1680. Street vendors were mostly black people. (Courtesy of EDUCARED)



"Arrogant Spanish or criollo or mestizo or mulatto of this kingdom [assaults a native villager]." Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno (1615)*,(GKS 2232 4to),552 (Courtesy of The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark)

In 1540 chronist, explorer, and conquistador Pedro Cieza de León (1520?-1554) wrote *Crónica del Perú*. In it, he describes the encounter of the natives with a black man in what is now Tumbes, on the northern coast of modern Peru.

The natives were surprised by the man's color. They made him wash to see if it was paint or real skin color amid the black's laughter. So many gathered

around him that he could not eat what the natives had brought. But they were also surprised by the whiteness and beards of the Spanish ("Al español mirávanlo cómo tenía barvas y era blanco" [61]).

Father Bartolomé de las Casas (1484?-1566) wrote *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* in 1552, in which he details the crimes committed by the Spanish. In his *Historia Universal de la Infamia*, Jorge Luis Borges summarized a common view of de las Casas as an advocate of slavery to ensure the protection of the Indians (295). This perspective has been revisited (Pérez Fernández).

In the text *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno*,<sup>5</sup> finished toward 1615 by Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, a multilingual and Christianized Indian from the central Andes of Peru, are examples of the interaction between and among Spanish, Indians, and people of African descent.

Chapter 25 is devoted to "Negros africanos"; it covers pages 717-25 and includes three illustrations. On other pages there are also references to blacks and mulattos.



"The Spanish lord invites the mestizo, mulatto and Indian for dinner."



"Bozales, who make good Christians, pray the Rosary in front of the Virgin Mary."



"The Black criollos steal money from their masters and give it to Indian prostitutes."

Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno (1615)*,(GKS 2232 4to) 509, 717,723. (Images courtesy of The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark.)

Guamán Poma does not condemn slavery. He states that "bozales" (Africans with no knowledge of the Spanish culture) made better slaves than "criollos" (slaves born in America or those ones indoctrinated in the Christian creed and Spanish customs). For him the "good slave" is Christian and married, and through the master he will serve both the king and God. (For slave owners, "criollos" were better slaves than "bozales" since they were familiar with the Spanish way of life.)





"Negro" and "Negra." Watercolors by Bishop Baltasar Martínez Compañón, Trujillo, 1780. (Courtesy of <u>EDUCARED</u>)

Guamán Poma denounces the evil masters who abuse and neglect their slaves and calls for punishing them. He also opposes separating slaves' families. He envisions a "good" slavery with masters treating their slaves well, letting them have crops and educating them. Guamán Poma comments that bad treatment encourages slaves to escape and to turn into thieves and criminals ("cimarrones").

The writer is alarmed by the racial mixing that is happening. He states that slaves—with consent of their masters—force Indian women into sex and then have children with the mother's color ("mulatos y mulatas"); also, the Spanish have children with Indian women. This will be the end of the indigenous race: "y ancí se acauan los yndios" (724).

The author continues detailing the miscegenation process, and, even though he condemns it, in a confusing statement he claims the child of an Indian (or Spanish) male and a black female should be "half-freed." 6

He states blacks should not get authority positions if they are not married to black women and calls for fines for those who marry Indians.

Guamán Poma concludes his text by addressing slaves, asking them to suffer like Jesus Christ (he earlier mentioned a saint, San Juan Buenaventura, who was a slave), and he reiterates the bad treatment given by masters, which can ignite a revolt.

# Castas

The offspring of the Spanish, Indians, and Africans were called "castas." They were seen as inferior by the three main groups and were feared by the Spanish who considered them a threat.

José de Acosta in 1585 and brothers Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa in 1749 wrote similar observations:

- The association of "castas" with a licentious, sinful life.
- Indians and blacks losing their "distinctive" physical features and transforming themselves into Spanish.
- The possibility of castas and blacks and Indians uniting and taking over power.<sup>7</sup>

The multiplication of castas proved the absurdity of this social system. More than 300 castas were recorded; their names make reference to the color of the skin, the nature of the hair, or are associated with animals (Romero 72-75; Ruano Gutiérrez ).

Some of them reflect on the complexity of the system: "No te entiendo" (I don't understand you); "Salta pa' tras" ([black] –Return-Backwards); "Tente en el aire" (Hold yourself in the air).

The term "castas" is derogatory by nature, even though its treatment in paintings from the eighteenth century is idealized.

In 1770, Viceroy Manuel Amat y Junet sent King Carlos III a series of paintings detailing the main "castas." They show happy couples with healthy babies. To avoid confusion, the paintings specified the "casta" to which a person belonged.

# (Dis)Connections: African and Indigenous Peoples in Peru



Español, India: mestizo



Español, Negra: mulato



Negro, India: Sambo de Indio



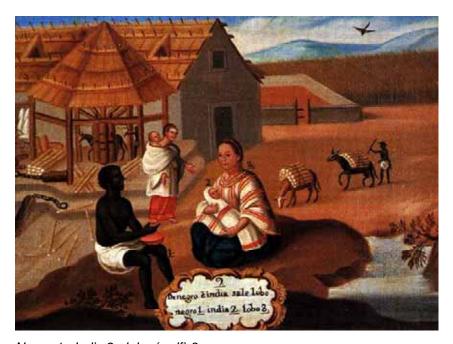
Español, Requinterona de mulato: Genteblanca "Gente blanca": White people. The black "blood" from the child's ancestors is "lost."

(Courtesy of EDUCARED)

Another collection from Mexico is also idealized. One painting shows a black male and a white woman, romantically walking through the woods, while their mulatto child rides a sheep. Birds and a paradise-like landscape are consistently the background. Here the artist refers to numbers in addition to the names to identify the respective castas.



Negro 1. Española 2. mulato 3



Negro 1. India 2. lobo (wolf) 3



Mulato 1. Española 2. Morisco 3. (Courtesy of Bakewell).

Since castas were seen as inferior by the "pure" races, "mestizos," "mulatos," "zambos" and their offspring were subject to verbal slurs and physical aggression (Flores Galindo 136; Stavig 221).

Miscegenation had an impact on the economic structure since zambos, the offspring of Indians and blacks, were neither black (slave) nor Indians and therefore not subject to pay tribute. This fostered interracial marriage. In 1572 Viceroy Francisco de Toledo asked King Felipe II to make "mulatos," "zambaigos" and blacks pay tribute. Law 8 of <u>Leyes de Indias</u> 8 states that the children of marriages of freed blacks or slaves with Indians should pay tribute.

Montiel discusses a number of provisions in *Leyes de Indias* that deal with blacks and their relationships with Indians. Blacks were prohibited from living with Indians because they supposedly harmed them, taught them vices, and robbed and abused them. Toledo enforced this regulation in Peru in 1580; he also declared that Indians could not own blacks and vice versa (in 1575) and that blacks must be out of the coca crops because they would harm and force the Indians to work with no pay:

"Among the Indians who work in the coca fields there are mestizos, mulattos and freed blacks who hurt them . . ."

"When the women go to feed their husbands, the masters or their foremen, freed or slave, make the women work against their will."

("Entre los indios que benefician la coca andan mestizos, mulatos y negros horros vagamundos, de los que reciben daños . . ."

"yendo las mujeres de los indios alquilados a dar de comer a sus maridos . . . . los duenos a sus mayordomos, criados o esclavos, hacen trabajar a las mismas mujeres contra su voluntad.") (In Montiel 233-34)

Leyes established physical punishment for blacks who harmed Indians and liability for the owners (Montiel 228-37).

These mandates were not always followed. As Panfichi asserts, since the conquest there have been many social, economic, religious, and other links between Indians and blacks, and they are the groups that mixed the most (230-31).

For the period 1795 -1820, Jesús Cosamalón states that in Lima marriages between black males and Indian women were common in "parroquias" (urban districts organized around a church) with high concentration of those groups like San Lázaro, Rímac; Sta. Ana and Barrios Altos (Panfichi 138).

This tendency continued into the twentieth century. From 1908 to 1931, Susan Stokes shows that 59 percent of marriages of black males were with black females. And 79 percent of marriages of black females were with black males (Panfichi 139).

The fear of a revolt prompted the Spanish crown to implant a geographic and labor division: blacks on the shore worked on plantations or as domestic servants in cities; Indians in the mountains worked in haciendas and mines. This separation prevented Indians from working in vineyards and rum production (there were allegations they would get drunk and not work).

The infamous saying "gallinazo no canta en puna" <sup>9</sup> is a remnant of this artificial separation. Blacks from highlands would have had fewer problems in adapting to the mountains in Peru. Slaves brought to Peru were mainly from warm lands, and many of them settled in low valleys, where they wouldn't feel the cold and atmospheric pressure of the mountains. The Yungas still live in Perú

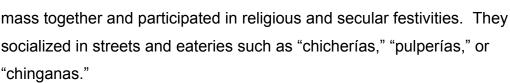
and Bolivia. They are black but culturally indigenous. Also, until 1784, only Indians were allowed to work in fishing, in what was the continuation of a pre-Hispanic activity (Flores Galindo 149).

Also, the clergy in the mountains needed slaves. Jean-Pierre Tardieu has pointed out the significant role of the church in owning and administering slaves (1993). In the city of Cusco, for the period 1655-1682, he cites the records of one notary: out of 292 slaves, 109 (37 percent) belonged to the church (1998: 72-73).

The forced separation pictured blacks and Indians as irreconcilable foes. As Maria Rostworowski points out, the separation was fostered by the Spanish, who encouraged the slaves to attack or punish the Indians (31-35). Many blacks had jobs as foremen, enforcers, and executioners.

# Socialization

Despite these efforts, blacks and Indians shared work and domestic premises. They attended



The "chingana" is a modest taberna where people eat and drink. The word may come from quechua. It means "dark cave" (Panfichi 141), although Romero suggests a possible African root of the word (108-109). According to Panfichi, in Lima, in 1846, 45 percent of the "chinganas" of the city belonged to Afro Peruvians. They also owned 20 percent of "pulperías" (141).



"The royal administrator orders an African slave to flog an Indian magistrate for collecting a tribute that falls two eggs short." Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno (1615)*,(GKS 2232 4to) *503*. Courtesy of The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark.

In places like these ("chicherías") the rumor originated of a revolt that terrified the population of Trujillo on the northern coast in 1812. A concerned citizen informed the authorities that slaves from houses and haciendas would kill the Spanish and Pardos and with the help of Indians and blacks from other towns would take power. One of the accused men said he saw, in the "chicherías," 100 blacks and sambos and some Indians drinking and plotting to kill a notary if he didn't acknowledged that slaves' freedom had been decreed (which it had not).



San Sebastian Parish. From the Corpus Christi series (seventeenth century). The procession of Corpus Christi in Cusco—which celebrated both the transformation of the body of Christ and the conquest of the Inca empire—was organized according to the political and religious hierarchy. (Courtesy of Carolyn Dean.)

After weeks of investigating and questioning several suspects, the authorities concluded that this rumor was unsubstantiated. This is only one of the numerous episodes that year, which Bernard Lavalle names "La Grande Peur," the Big Scare (196-204).

Ambrose O'Higgins, who was Viceroy of Peru from 1796 to 1800, dismissed the possibility of an alliance between Indians and blacks due to their well-known mutual animosity ("son irreconciliables"). The writer Esteban Terralla y Landa, who died in 1797, expresses the same idea ("indios y negros . . . se profesan . . . total aborrecimiento"; "Indians and blacks . . . they absolutely hate each other) (Flores Galindo 133-34).

#### Cimarrones

As Guamán Poma points out, the masters' abuse of the slaves could make them run away and turn into "cimarrones." This form of resistance has always been the companion of slavery. In Peru, James Lockhart (189-90) and Frederick Bowser (242) have recorded cases since the 1540s.

Lima and Trujillo were cities with a considerable number of "cimarrones." In Trujillo, they would hide in the rugged geography of the surroundings, in strongholds called "palenques" or, with the complicity of slaves, in haciendas

(Lavalle 154-57); in Lima, they hid in "palenques" in marshes around the city but also in the city itself (Flores Galindo 95-97).

To survive, "cimarrones" would rob Indians who, in turn, would assist the Spanish in their capture. But more friendly contacts have also been documented. Sometimes "cimarrones" would buy products from Indians or hide (with their permission) in their properties (Lavalle 147, 152, 157, 160).

"Cimarrones" would inevitably turn into bandits. Even though the composition of some of the bandit gangs was multiracial, for the central coast, Flores Galindo states there were few Indians among them (114).

For the Cusco area, besides cases of complicity in banditry between Indians and Afro Peruvians, Tardieu notes friendship, solidarity, and marriage (1998: 159-60). This author states that the relationship between both groups depended on the status of the black person (160). For example, if the black person was a slave, the master could be an Indian. In spite of the prohibitions many chief Indians owned blacks as slaves. Tardieu mentions several cases (161). But if the black person was not a slave, sometimes under the complacency or encouragement of the Spaniards, he would harm the Indians. Blacks would identify and imitate the Spanish when attacking the Indians.

#### Micaela Bastidas

In this context of resistance it is important to mention Micaela Bastidas, wife and military aid of Tupac Amaru II, who revolted against the Spanish in 1780. Bastidas was called derogatively "zamba" by her enemies. Her mother was Indian and her father a black "criollo."

Tupac Amaru II proclaimed the freedom of slaves and called for an alliance of blacks, Indians, and mestizos. Another of Tupac Amaru's assistants was a black named Oblitas. After months of battling the Spanish, the revolution was crushed, and they were captured, tortured, and killed. Some versions state that Micaela Bastidas' father was Spanish. Idealized, whitened portraits of her may be accessed at <a href="https://www.cbi.edu.pe/.../proyecto%20web/micaela.htm">www.cbi.edu.pe/.../proyecto%20web/micaela.htm</a>.

# **Music Connections**

After slaves couldn't adapt to work in the mountains, for example, in the Potosí and Layqaqota mines in what is now Bolivia, they were resettled in lower areas, called "yunga." Descendants of these people, the "Yungas," still live there, and also in



Dancers getting ready for Morenada. Lima, 2006

Puno, Peru. They assimilated to the indigenous culture, and their music combines native "huayno" with African beats.

A dance typical of the highlands in Peru and Bolivia is "morenada" (from "Moreno/a": dark color [of skin]). The dance recreates the slaves' slow and tragic walk from the port of Buenos Aires, Argentina, to the mines in Bolivia. The chains are musically expressed through the rattle of the maracas. It includes a masked black king and women, all richly dressed. The spirit of the dance is festive rather than sad.

Other dances that show links between the indigenous and the African cultures are "saya," "tundiki," "coplas," and "bailes de tierra" (Angola Maconde 100-105; Oregón Morales 174-78).

The lyrics of a "vals" (waltz), a creole musical genre, synthesize the feelings and relationship between Indians and Afro Peruvians. The song is "Jarana" by Lucho de la Cuba and Benjamín Cisneros. A version is performed by Eva Ayllón. Montiel (259) shows an image of an Indian woman and a black male dancing.

Valsecito criollo
Tranquito cortado
Zambo guaragüero
Cholita mimosa

(Dis)Connections: African and Indigenous Peoples in Peru

Dibujan figuras de alegre compás

Y van separados

Mientras que en el alma

Hay mutuos deseos de acercarse más

Creole little vals

Cut-backed step

Cheerful Zambo

Loving Cholita

They draw happy beat figures

They are separated

But deep in their souls

They both want to be close to each other.

# **Linguistic Links**

John M. Lipski has stated that there was widespread use of indigenous languages by African slaves since the mid-sixteenth century, although the earliest documentation is from the late eighteenth century. These texts are two plays written by unknown nuns to be performed in their convents during Christmas celebrations. The first one is *Entremés del Huamanguino entre un Huantino y una Negra para la Navidad en el Monasterio del Carmen del Huamanga, año de 1797.* Huanta and Huamanga are towns in the Ayacucho province, in the central mountains of Peru.

The play is written in Quechua and Spanish and includes speeches by a black woman, who expresses herself in "bozal," or Africanized Spanish, but it also uses some Quechua words and expressions ("Y patacuna tamana?"). The woman demands justice because an Indian stole her food:

Justicia pide seño
una probe negra, conga,
porque toda mi mondonga
Huamanguino se comió . . .

```
ra mondonga con ají
con seborbola y maní
para que tú me yeba? . . .
yo son nengra, yo son ñata,
pero no conoce maccta.
Burbe pue lo que roba,
mi asarona, mi casuera
con que hace yo buñuera
para fieta Navidad . . . <sup>11</sup>
```

Another text is *Entremés para la Navidad que se ha de representar en el Monasterio del Carmen, siendo recrecionera la señora Sor Manuela Gálvez.* 12 It was written in Ayacucho in 1828; nothing is known about the author.

In this play the character, also a black woman, uses more (broken) Quechua and introduces Quechua words into Spanish discourse. There are also switches from one language to another. The character demands her shoe from the repairman, but he can't find it. Upset, she says she needs it so she can go and see the child Jesus, who will give freedom to all slaves.

```
Don Camacho, bueno ría . . . ¿zapato ya ro has cosiro?
Ra zapato ro cosió?
Eso re pregunto yo . . . aronde está ra zapato opa macho, malo trato . . . sua opa vieco, qué remonio . . . te voy a atá y fuete te ha de apretá remonio macho roguero . . . ya etá, vieco malo trato . . . . ya donde etá ra zapato? . . .
```

```
ar fin, ar fin zapatero . . . ¿tamarito quiere uté?
Ra remonios te raré . . . ¿traguito ra? Ra remonio . . . de ra corera me muero con este vieco mañero . . . Santa Rita mamayay de ra corera me muero vieco ra zapato quiero . . . aca cabayero . . . <sup>13</sup>
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Lipski gives additional examples of linguistic contact between Indians and Blacks from Bolivia and Ecuador.

#### **Current Conditions**

Indigenous and people of African descent interacted in all possible ways, often controlled and manipulated first by the Spanish and later by local oligarchies. Independence (1821) and abolition of slavery (1855) did not bring structural changes to how society was organized.

In the 1970s, following a coup d'etat, General Juan Velasco Alvarado tried to incorporate largely ignored social sectors into the national political arena. Now it is not unusual to find indigenous or black people in Congress. Alejandro Toledo, called "cholo," was the first indigenous president of Peru (2001-2006).

In a limited way, communal, nonprofit organizations have done the government's job of protecting the peoples' basic rights. The oldest one is Confederación Campesina del Perú—Peasant Confederation of Peru (CCP), founded in 1947. Another one is Confederación Nacional Agraria—National Agrarian Confederation (CNA), founded in 1974.

Peoples from the Amazonas area organized under Asociación Interétnica de Desarrollo de la Amazonía Peruana—Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Jungle (AIDESEP) in 1980.

Aymara peoples, in Puno, formed Unión de Comunidades Aymaras—Aymara Communitties Alliance (UNCA) about 1985.

The Afro Peruvian movement "Francisco Congo" was founded in 1986. It began promoting Afro Peruvian culture and later inspired the birth of similar organizations within the country.

Another, Asociación Negra de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos—Black Association for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (ASONEDH) was founded in 1990.

In 2001, President Toledo created Comisión Nacional de Pueblos Andinos, Amazónicos y Afroperuanos—National Commission of Andean, Amazonian and Afro Peruvian Peoples (CONAPA)—an organization whose goal was to promote the integration and the political and financial advancement of these peoples.

Toledo's wife, Eliane Karp, headed the project. Unfortunately, CONAPA was canceled in 2005, under allegations of misuse of the money and lack of qualified work. The project was funded by a loan from the World Bank.

The same law that Toledo signed to kill CONAPA gave birth to its successor Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo de los Pueblos Andinos, Amazonicos y Afroperuanos – National Institute for the Development of Andean, Amazonian and Afro-Peruvian Peoples (INDEPA) with goals similar to CONAPA's.

The current government of President Alan García has just reduced the status and autonomy of INDEPA (February 2007), annexing it to the Ministry of Women Ministerio de Promoción de la Mujer y del Desarrollo Humano – Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Human Development (PROMUDEH). This has been called an unconstitutional move and is the subject of a lawsuit by ASONEDH. This lawsuit shows the permanent tension in the relationship between the state and underrepresented groups.

Although some progress has been made in the political field, the social arena still shows evidence of the colonial way of thinking expressed through authoritarism, intolerance, and racism, which involves practices such as domestic service and labor division. These factors in turn foster ethnic poverty.

The different groups are still divided; they compete for government appropriations. Sometimes they do not want to be associated with each other, under the risk of being labeled minorities. (Indigenous peoples, numerically, are a majority; Afro Peruvians are not.)

Although in some cases it may be relevant to categorize people according to ethnic distinctions, the core of the Peruvian nation is racially mixed. To acknowledge it, and to value the different cultural contributions by all groups, may help overcome prejudice and stereotypes and foster better connections instead of misunderstandings.

## **Endnotes**

- Some authors whose work focuses on Afro-Peruvians include Carlos Aguirre et al, Emilio Hart-Terré, Cristina Hűnefeldt, Edgar Montiel, Fernando Romero, Nicomedes Santa Cruz, Jean-Pierre Tardieu (see Bibliography.)
- <sup>2</sup> The term "white" was not used until later. Interestingly, Spaniards were called "bermejos," or "brick-colored."
- <sup>3</sup> "... el <u>mestizaje</u>... incluye también a los negros, que se han ido desdibujando a lo largo de cinco siglos, pero que forman parte del capital genético contemporáneo" (Montiel 228).
- <sup>4</sup> The ethnic tension is evident in the media and the Internet. See "Comentarios" in <a href="http://peru.indymedia.org/comment\_latest.php">http://peru.indymedia.org/comment\_latest.php</a>.
- We will follow the edition by Adorno et al, available as a Web page http://www.kb.dk/elib/mss/poma/
- <sup>6</sup> "El hijo de mulato en la negra o mulata es esclabo fino; el hijo de español o de yndio en la negra es esclabo fino porque toca la mitad de negro catibo. A buena rrazón a esta casta se la quieren ahorrar; se le a de dar parte, ahorralle la mitad y la mitad es suya. Questo es la ley pura; hijo de la catiba mulata y el hombre mulato es catibo fino. Es la pura justicia y ley de cristiano." (724).
  The child of a mulatto with a black or mulatto woman, is a true slave; the
  - The child of a mulatto with a black or mulatto woman, is a true slave; the child of a Spanish or Indian and the black woman is a true slave because it is half-black-slave. With a reason, they want this casta to be free; he should be given a fraction, give him half of his value. This is the law; a child of mulattoes is a true slave. It is fair and the law of Christ.
- José de Acosta wrote: "Throughout this realm there are many Blacks, mulattoes, mestizos and many other mixtures of people, and every day their number increases . . . These people grow up with great vices and [excessive] liberty, without working nor having any trade, and they are often to be found drinking or engaging in witchcraft. Those [Spaniards] who reflect on this matter with care, fear that in time the number of these [castas] will become much larger than that of the children of Spaniards born here (who are called criollos) . . . and that therefore they will be able to raise a city in revolt; and if they so raise one city, an infinite number of Indians would join them, since they are all of one casta, and understand each others' thoughts because they have been raised together . . . and if so many joined together, it would be easy for them to take all the cities in this realm [Peru] one by one . . ."

- Recopilación de las Leyes de Indias was published in 1681. It included the major regulations concerning Indians established in previous years (1512-1628). It has more than 6,000 laws.
- <sup>9</sup> Literally, "A buzzard doesn't squeak in the mountains." In a racist way this tells about the alleged incapacity of black people to live in the highlands. This stereotype is artistically contradicted by a glassed piece of pottery from Cusco, seventeenth century, in the Inca style, showing a black person. Romero includes this piece in the cover of his book *Quimba, fa, malambo, ñeque: Alfronegrismos en el Perú.*
- "Dramatic piece of the Huamanguino, between a Huantino and a black woman, for Christmas celebration in the Monastery del Carmen of Huamanga, year 1797." Huamanguino is a natural from Huamanga and Huantino, from Huanta. This text and the next one were originally published by Manuel Ugarte Chamorro.
- My lord, I ask for justice,
  Me a poor and black Conga
  A Huamanguino ate all my food . . .
  All night long I cooked
  The tripes with chile
  With onion and peanuts.
  So you will take my food?
  I'm black, my nose is flat.
  But I do no harm.
  Return what you stole.
  My pans and pots
  With which I bake pastries
  For Christmas night . . .
- <sup>12</sup> "Dramatic piece for Christmas to be performed in the Monastery del Carmen, written by Sister Manuela Gálvez" (1828)
- Good morning, don Camacho, Have you fixed my shoe? That's what I'm asking. Where is my shoe? You old devil I'm going to tie you up Really hard You old devil Where is my shoe? Do you want a tamal? I'll give you hell. Do you want a drink?

I'll give you hell. I'm so mad I can die. Mother Santa Rita I want my shoe, you old fool, Give it to me.

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Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1615) http://www.kb.dk/elib/mss/poma/

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http://www.congreso.gob.pe/ntley/LeyIndiaP.htm

Eugene "Jean" Foggo Simon, Bermuda Pequot, is a native of St. David's Island, Bermuda. She was educated at Bermuda College, Wilberforce University, and Kent State University. She is an internationally certified municipal clerk and serves as the clerk of council/city clerk for the Oberlin, Ohio, City Council. She also is the chair for the City Records Commission and volunteers community service with the Oberlin Heritage Center, where she serves as the Executive Board's second vice-president.



Simon is the principal researcher for the St. David's Island Indian Committee, Bermuda. In doing a personal genealogy and family history as a hobby, she found a connection from her family to the Native American tribes in New England. After several additional years of research, she made connections with the Pequot Tribe of Mashantucket, Connecticut; the Narragansett Tribe of Rhode Island; and the Wampanoag Tribes of Mashpee and Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. She was invited to meet with members of the tribes and consequently arranged for them to visit Bermuda. In addition to educational exchanges, three Native American festivals have been held on St. David's Island and a reconnection has been made with the Native Americans of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Simon has researched and made numerous presentations on Native American slavery in Bermuda.

# The Legacy of St. David's Islanders, Bermuda: Their Voices Are Not Silent By Eugene "Jean" Foggo Simon

While celebrating its 500th anniversary in 2005, the government of Bermuda recognized for the first time its native inhabitants among its early settlers. In this personal reflection, Eugene "Jean" Foggo Simon explores the diversity of ethnic groups that have made up the populations of St. David's Island in Bermuda. Through intermarriage and enslavement, native cultures have struggled to maintain a distinctive identity in an otherwise mixed population of St. David's Islanders. Using geneology research, Foggo Simon establishes an important link among her family members to the once-thought-extinct Pequot tribe in New England, and she describes the reunion in 2002 among "cousins," descendents from indigenous peoples of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and native St. David's Islanders.

Bermuda is an isolated island chain in the Atlantic Ocean, 580 miles east of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, and about 1,000 miles north of the Lesser Antilles. It is southeast of New England. The Gulf Stream, which flows between Bermuda and the North American continent, keeps the climate temperate. The islands are composed of limestone from shells and coral built on ancient volcanic peaks rising to about 200 feet below the ocean surface. There are about 350

smaller islands; the seven largest of them are connected by bridges and causeways and comprise the land area inhabited of about twenty-one square miles. The population is about 65,000.

Just off the east coast of Bermuda is an island called <u>St. David's Island</u>. Centuries ago, this island was considered to be a holding place for captive Natives. The people of St. David's Island were referred to as "Mohawk," "savage," "wild people who lived on that isolated island," "half breeds," "ducks." We were considered outcasts of society. How did we get there?

My name is Jean Foggo Simon, and I am a Native of St. David's Island. I write from a personal level, but I could write for all of the St. David's Islanders. Most can tell this same story, with a few variations and a few name changes. Some members of our family are descendants from Native slaves who were either stolen, purchased, or traded, brought by ship and inserted into the fabric of slavery. All were encouraged to adapt to their circumstances and to forget where they came from.

My research took me first to another continent. On May 26, 1637, a fight broke out in Mystic Fort in Connecticut. It was on a Friday, a memorable day, and in little more than one hour, the Pequot Indians who were in the fort were nearly all destroyed. The deaths numbered 600-700 of elders, men, women, and children. Their protectors, the warriors, were away from the fort at the time. Not able to destroy them in combat, British Major John Mason made a rash decision to set the village ablaze and burn down the fort.

Seven were taken captive, seven escaped. On Saturday, May 27, 1637, the British soldiers, after their victory, marched from inland, where the fort was located, to their boats in Mystic Harbor. On Sunday, May 28, 1637, they rejoiced in church, saying it was the "Lord's Doings," and the day ought to be remembered as a significant date. This story has many twists and turns and is all laid out in the book *A Brief History of the Pequot War*. The narratives were written by Major John Mason and published in 1736. Major John Mason was the chief captain and commander of the Connecticut forces during this era.

This marked a war of retaliation. The Narragansets and Mohegans of the area and the Puritans were fighting against each other. Not able to distinguish who was from what tribe (although the Narragansets and the Mohegans had assisted the Puritans by fighting against the Pequots earlier), the Puritans launched a preemptive war against a nonaggressive people (the Pequots) while allowing the actual culprits (the Narragansets) to escape without punishment for the murder of one of the British captains.

In the battle that followed, 300 Pequot men were slain including their sachem, Sassacus, and many fled to Mohawk lands for protection. The Mohawks, who had a treaty with the British, instead killed some of the Pequots and sent their decapitated heads back to Captain Mason as a token of friendship. Two hundred noncombatant Pequots accepted amnesty and were forced into personal servitude by the soldiers who had butchered their sons, husbands, and fathers. Unwilling to submit to such indignities, some of the Pequots infiltrated other tribes and were ordered to forget their nationality. Some of these proud servants were eventually sold by their captors into a more draconian plantation slavery on St. David's Island in Bermuda.

As a tribe, the Pequot Nation was supposedly erased from the map. For forty years there was peace until an even bloodier war erupted in 1675. This was called the "King Philip War." "King Philip," as he was called by the British, or Metacom, was a famous Wampanoag chief who led the "King Philip War" in 1675. There was a significant Native American resentment toward the British, who stripped them of the sovereignty they held so dear in their own lands.

I now pick up the story of the slaves who were shipped to St. David's Island, Bermuda. During the seventeenth century, many slaves of Bermuda lived on a remote island called St. David's Island. Many resources indicate that Pequots were taken to Bermuda and particularly to St. David's Island, after the "Pequot War" (1637), as well as after the "King Philip War" (1675-76). Birth, marriage, and death records indicate that Natives, other slaves, and indentured servants (Irish and Scottish) all came eventually to be called "Colored,"

"Mustees," "Mulatto," "Half-casts," and "Negroes." The words "Native" or "Indian" were early on removed from the records.

Historians claim that the Pequot Tribe most influenced Bermuda. During those years, smuggling of all sorts of merchandise, even humans, was the underground economy of Bermuda. At times even the Bermuda government and its council looked the other way and did not record human cargo by name. A dollar figure and designation of male or female and an approximate age labeled most Native slaves. Tribal affiliation was not often noted.

The four-hundred-year old story I am about to share with you is authentic, not strictly academic, but it comes from the heart as I speak for my elders, who attempted to keep the past alive by relating stories and traditions in our yard around the black iron pot where we often shared our meals.

Historians have traced the arrival of colonists at Plymouth Rock and the ensuing battles that took place throughout New England between Natives who had lived on this land for thousands of years. There were battles over territories, rights of ancestral lands, hunting and fishing areas.

During these years, as the British continued to send colonists to the New World, Bermuda was officially colonized. The first settlers were the result of a shipwreck of the "Sea Venture," commanded by British Admiral Sir George Somers, which was on its way to the colony of Jamestown, Virginia, with new settlers and supplies. Sir George Somers was caught in a hurricane and separated from the other eight ships, wrecking on Bermuda's reefs. All survived and 150 passengers and crew came ashore on July 28, 1609. By 1610 they had crafted two ships out of cedar wood growing on the island and were on their way to Jamestown. Once there, they found that only sixty of the 500 settlers had survived but were starving. A month later they returned to Bermuda remembering the abundance of food on the island. The ship was again commanded by Admiral Somers. It was a hard trip and Somers died a few days after reaching Bermuda. His heart was removed from his body by his nephew, Matthew Somers, and was buried in what is now called Somers Garden in St. George's. Matthew Somers did not return to Jamestown as promised, but instead

sailed to England with his uncle's body leaving behind three men, Waters, Chard, and Christopher Carter.

In 1612 the Virginia Company was sent out from England to colonize Bermuda with its first governor and sixty settlers. Their instructions were to find pearls, ambergris, and gold. Ambergris, a waxy grayish substance that formed in the intestines of sperm whales and was used in the making of perfume as a fixative, was found on the island. This was an extremely valuable find for these three men.

When the new colonists arrived, the governor set about carrying out his charge, while Waters, Chard, and Carter made secret inquiries with the ship's captain and sought to bargain with him to take the ambergris aboard, and they would split the fortune with him. They were found out, and the ambergris was taken in the name of the crown. All three men were tried, one telling on the others—one was jailed, one was sent back to England, and Christopher Carter was set free for his part in revealing the plot. Even though he was originally offered the land east on the isolated island of St. David's Island, he turned it down, instead choosing the land west where Carter House was built. Carter House is now the St. David's Island Historical Society Museum and plays a major part in the island's history.

Bermuda is at times called "Somers Isle" or "The Isle of Devils." It is still a British dependent territory. However, there is early evidence of the presence of the Spanish on the island as well. Spanish ships wrecked on the reefs as they sailed near the island in the sixteenth century trying to reach shore. In 1505 the Spanish spent three weeks on the island, and the words "La Bermuda" appeared on their maps as early as 1511. Juan de Bermudez, a Spanish explorer, had visited the islands in 1505 but failed to claim the chain of islands for his country. Even so, Bermuda is named for Juan de Bermudez. Spanish marks have been found on the south side of Bermuda, which is the most treacherous area for ships. A crudely carved inscription in the coral in a place called "Spanish Rock" was found centuries later, with the date "1543," and some indefinite initials

ravaged by time and sea further led most historians to believe that an early Spanish or Portuguese explorer landed there.

History indicates that the Spanish left pigs on the island, or some could have swum ashore from other shipwrecks. Sailors often avoided the islands due to screeching and grunting noises that could be heard far out to sea. The grunting noises were later discovered to have come from wild boar living on the island. This is how the island got the name "Isle of Devils." In 1616, Hog money—Bermuda's first minted currency and first coinage for any overseas British colony—circulated until 1624. The coin was graced with the picture of a Bermuda hog. These coins are now collectors' items of high value.

Bermuda celebrated its 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2005. For the first time in its history, the Bermuda government recognized its Native Americans inhabitants publicly. Because of my research, I was chosen to ride in their anniversary parade with three other grand marshals who represented the four nationalities who were among its early settlers.

When the British captured Native Americans during their period of attempted colonization on the coast of North America, some captives were shipped to Bermuda as slaves. These captives were taunted with insults because of their differences in language, customs, food, and skin color.

Many captured Natives were placed on St. David's Island because it was isolated from the main island. There was no means of escape early on. My people lived in isolation for many decades. For centuries my family had been referred to as "Mohawks," and we accepted that name. In my research, I have not found any records of the Mohawks arriving as slaves in Bermuda. This to me became very frustrating, because the stories with which we had grown up and their relationship to the Mohawks did not mesh. I learned that the word "Mohawk" came into being when respectable Britons became upset that bands of Natives were roaming the streets of St. David's Island, "making nuisances of themselves." The record indicated that their behavior was so violent and uncontrollable they were first called "savages." Later, the British gave us a more conservative name "Mohawks." The British sought to form a parallel between

themselves and the American Native slaves with whom they had to cope. The record further indicates that in the 1600s and 1700s, about 500 Natives from various tribes were brought to Bermuda.

Over the years and after settling into a pattern of a new lifestyle, the Natives began to carve a life out of an island home they had inherited many miles from their own families. This was a strange, but beautiful land. There were blue waters, pink and white sandy beaches, and birds, and it was lush with cedar trees and flowers. There were hundreds of screeching birds, as well as grunting and squealing hogs running wild. This was a strange atmosphere, strange food, and a bounty. The island is so small that the ocean and the horizon can be seen north, south, east, and west. I often wonder if our ancestors thought the sea, which burst continually against the dark ragged rocks, would swallow them up? I try to imagine the fear they endured.

The centuries came and went, and for nearly 400 years our families were still there surviving. Why did it take so long for us to recognize who we really were? Perhaps because the families had intermingled with the Irish, Scottish, Carobs, and West Indians, as well as the Dutch and Spanish. There were many skin colors among the St. David's Island families. There were different colors and textures of hair and a variety of eye colors. We were an odd, but "distinguished-looking lot." So odd, perhaps, and so mingled and mixed, that it was impossible to zero in on any particular nationality or race.

Early on, there was little, if any, research. There was no desire or need to prove anything. Survival was the order of the day. There was no way to get off that tiny island of 510 acres without permission of the slaveholders and that would not have been likely. There were no roads and no bridges to link to the other islands that make up Bermuda until the twentieth century. Slave records indicate that there were stringent punishments for any violation of the rules set forth by the slaveholders. How did St. David's Islanders survive in such an isolated situation?

There was a ferry service that began to operate between the smaller, isolated islands in the late 1930s, but the first bridge was built in 1942 when the

US Air Force base was constructed there and linked St. David's Island to the rest of Bermuda. I remember my family saying, "Now that the Bermuda Government has linked St. David's Island to the rest of the islands, the Bermudians can come across." Neither my family nor other inhabitants ever referred to St. David's Islanders as Bermudians. The "Bermudians," as we referred to the other inhabitants, were not welcome on St. David's Island either.

St. David's Islanders did not do well as slaves. Intuition told them there was more to life than what they were experiencing. History dictates that our ancestors tried to give the next generations a better life than they had experienced, and early on they sought to buy their freedom. Education became an important factor. Saved pennies turned into shillings, shillings turned into pounds, and pounds turned into books. Books were sought from the captains of the great ocean liners and early on these classic books, such as Shakespeare and Lord Tennyson, were willingly accepted and widely shared and read by those who could do so, among the families. Books brought knowledge and knowledge brought curiosity. In the 1990s I ventured to the Bermuda Government Records Center/Archives to learn about our ancestry. A good portion of our history was located there because the British had kept excellent written slave records. I have found other evidence at the W.E.B. Du Bois Research Library at the University of Massachusetts—Amherst.

My research revealed that we had to have come from somewhere other than St. David's Island. The negative treatment that we continued to receive as inhabitants of St. David's Island has caused me to understand more about the differences in our ancestry. We did not rise from the ocean. We crossed it, but from where? It became a search for me that led from the birth of our people, doing wondrous things, marriages, and crossing over and then starting again.

Who were these people before us? Who were our ancestors? Their lives were just as important as ours. Their stories were interesting and waiting to be discovered.

That was the start of many years of research. I found words in the documents that I never heard of before. The words associated with captured

Natives were Wampanoag, Pequot, Mohegan, Pokonoket, and Narragansett. Who were these people? Where did they come from? How did they survive? Nowhere in those documents did I find the word "Mohawk" associated with the St. David's Islanders in the early centuries, except for the fact that that is what we called ourselves, and what I was led to believe that some researchers and reporters who had written about us indicated we were throughout the years. This told me that their research had not been extensive, but that they merely believed what other Bermudians said about us and went away with their stories, not bothering to interview anyone from St. David's Island. This threw off many early researchers who came and went away from Bermuda without even seeing or knowing the St. David's Islanders existed just off the east coast of Bermuda. I began to investigate further.

Many books have been written over the centuries about the capture of Native Americans along the coast of Massachusetts and Connecticut. There were lists of Natives who were sold and shipped into slavery, some to Bermuda and some to other parts of the world. What caught my attention the most was the record about "King Philip's War." After his death the Massachusetts authorities had dispatched to Bermuda forty-fifty of their most able-bodied young warriors, who were placed on St. David's Island. Some books indicated that shipment of slaves included King Philip's wife and young son. King Phillip was the son of Massasoit, the Wampanoag chief who ruled over most of the land in New England during the "Pequot War" in 1637.

As a child listening to the elders talk, I remembered a story they told about this young Indian boy growing up on St. David's Island. They often visited a cave where they related he had been hidden from the British. This is the story that heightened my interest, as I had never actually seen this story written anywhere. As children, we would visit that same cave and sit looking out to the horizon. It was dangerous to even get to the entrance of the cave. We had to hold onto the sharp salt-beaten coral rocks, and step by step proceed to the entrance, trying all the while not to look down at the treacherous ocean, pounding against the hard coral rocks. One slip would mean instant death. Why we went there consistently

we never understood until recent years. It was to make contact with the spirit of an ancestor. I am convinced that the British would never have made this journey or would even realize such a sanctioned place existed without the knowledge coming from the early Native slaves.

I then discovered that one of my great-great-grandfathers was "a native Bermudian of strongly marked Indian features, reputed to be of Indian descent, and probably descending from one of the Pequot captives." He died in 1875 at the age of eighty-four years. His name was Jacob Minors II. Jacob married Ruth Fox, a half Irish/half Native woman. However, before they were permitted to marry, many of their children were born out of wedlock and were blessed with the surname "Fox." Their children who were born after they married were mostly male children and were christened with the surname "Minors." This truth was never related to us as children. We were only told that a "Fox" should never marry a "Minors" and were given no reason why.

These rumors interested me, and with more research, I found birth records that indicated that their children carried both the Fox and Minors surnames, but were indeed blood brothers and sisters. These are still some of the surnames of the families who live on St. David's Island, including my own family, both paternal and maternal. With further research, I discovered my fifth-generation grandfather, Jacob Minors I, had not been born in Bermuda, but had been "picked up in a canoe off the east coast of New England with a wife and three children." Captain Fox was the name of the commander of the vessel. On the back of Jacob Minors' portrait, I discovered the word "Pequot" handwritten in small lettering. That portrait is now in the Bermuda Government Archives.

"Fox" is the surname of my mother and both grandmothers. In my immediate family, I often wondered where the blue eyes of both my grandmothers and father came from among the mostly dark-eyed family members. The Fox families are descendants of Irish indentured servants. My father was born from the reunion of a Fox (his mother/Irish-Native) and a Foggo (his father/Scottish-Native).

For decades, the only names in our St. David's east-end Native families were: Minors, Fox, Foggo, Pitcher, Lamb, Burchall, and Millett, or the combination of any of these surnames. My growing-up years consisted only of immediate family members. During these years, I had the comfort of my paternal grandfather, Fred Foggo. We spent days on the edge of the island. On the lookout point of St. David's Head, I began to look toward the horizon and wonder if there was anything beyond it. My grandfather was a reserved Scottish/Irish gentleman. I enjoyed the wisdom and voice of "Papa Fred." I also loved his Scottish accent and the stories he related to me while we sat on a cliff overlooking the horizon. He pointed out visions to me in the clouds and related stories of the sea that he had experienced on the pilot boats. He talked to me about how to plant a garden and to read the wind and tides. We read Shakespeare together. We milked the goats and his one cow together. He encouraged me to stretch and to go beyond the horizon in my mind at an early age. I have never forgotten him and little did I know then, but he prepared me for what I do today. I credit my research to the influence he had on me as a child.

Descendants of well-to-do families who arrived to colonize the island and whose names were listed on a 1716 map are still prevalent today, but they, being descendants of slave holders, lived on the west end of St. David's Island. In some cases, their surnames were the same as the east-enders. It became clearer to me who had been the slaves and who had been the slave holders, and indeed, who were descendants of those us who were in between. There was a line of demarcation between the east and the west of St. David's Island, one that we were not allowed to cross. Slaves lived on the east end, and slaveholders lived on the west end of St. David's Island.

I was more determined than ever to seek understanding, to find someone who would listen to my story and who would believe me. My personal interest in history and research had grown, and my intent was to advise the Pequots of New England that some of the family members who had been taken away many centuries ago had survived through their descendants in a place other than Connecticut.

Armed with the knowledge of Jacob Minors I and Jacob Minors II, documentation, pictures, and verbal traditions with which I grew up and that I found in centuries-old books, my first research took me to the Pequot reservation in Mashantucket, Connecticut. The one person who showed the most interest in my story was a man called "Tall Oak," an absentee Mashantucket Pequot/Narragansett. He offered to take me to the Pequot reservation.

I discovered, in New England, that the Pequot Nation was a strong and powerful tribe residing in Connecticut during the invasion of the Pilgrims who competed for territory. Conflict split the nation into two opposing tribes. Those wishing to ally themselves with the British followed Chief Uncas and were called Mohegans. Those who resisted remained with Chief Sassacus and to this day are known as Pequots.

I further learned that in 1637, the Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies joined forces with their Indian allies to exterminate the Pequots. They set fire to a fort at Mystic (Connecticut) killing about 700 Pequots in an hour. The following year about 180 survivors were given as slaves to the area tribes, a few were turned over as slaves to the colonists, and a few more were sold as slaves to Bermuda and other places to help finance the war. The Pequot Nation was effectively over---or was it?

By 1655, the remaining Pequots of Connecticut were being treated so badly that they had to be removed from the tribes and settled into two villages of their own, where their descendants still reside. The Pequot slaves and descendants from other New England Native tribes that went to Bermuda not only survived but blossomed under the worst conditions.

Nearly all of the born Native descendants of St. David's Island descend from these New England Indian slaves and are held together by a strong sense of community. They also have an uncanny resemblance to the New England Indians because of many years of the "mixing of the inhabitants in a closed, forced society."

I was invited to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst campus to speak to their students and also to serve as a historian in residence for two

weeks in 2004 by the Native American Studies and Anthropology Departments. This afforded me the opportunity to do research at the W.E.B. Du Bois Research Center. There I found extensive documentation on both the New England tribes, as well as the slave movement to Bermuda.

Ninety-three of the St. David's Island descendants and friends visited New England in 2001 to be introduced to the Native Americans who were also familiar with the story of the slave movements. One of their first statements to us was: "What took you so long!" The people of St. David's Island had not reached out to anyone beyond the shores of Bermuda until 2001 and in doing so were elated to learn that descendants of the Native Americans from whom we had been taken away many centuries ago as slaves had also survived. Family traditions and stories were passed down throughout the generations on both sides. Through research, we now know more about who we are and where we came from.

In June 2002, we celebrated the First Reconnection Ceremony on our beloved island, and we celebrated again in June 2003 with our cousins from Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. We also observed our first Grand Entry at the Mashantucket Pequot Schemitzun in August 2003. Most of us had never witnessed a powwow before, and all were in awe at the dancing and the regalia worn by our Native Americans cousins.

One memory that will stay with me forever was the time we invited the Pequots, Narragansets, and other tribal members to a place called Dark Bottom. This ground for centuries had been the meeting, worship, and play place for St. David's Islanders. What better choice than to hold our first reconnection ceremony in more than 375 years at Dark Bottom? A fire was prepared in the middle of the area using cedar wood. No cameras were allowed, and ashes from such a reconnection were taken from a pouch that Tall Oak (the first Native I met who believed my story) had in his possession. He had brought them with him from a previous reconnection that had taken place in Guatemala of Natives, and these ashes were united with the ashes of our own cedar-wood fire. The symbolism was that a reconnection was starting to take place worldwide of those who had been taken from their ancestral land.

Two circles were formed, one with our New England family in an outer circle and one with the St. David's Islanders in an inner circle. After a moving and emotional ceremony, with Mystic River (a drum group from the Mashantucket Pequot reservation) drumming a soothing welcome song, we joined in one big circle. We were snubbed with smoke from white sage, given Wampanoag-grown tobacco to add to the ashes, and we approached the fire one by one. In doing so, we called on the spirits of the ancestors to join us and to bless us. We were not alone in Dark Bottom that day. Silence was heavy in our ears. It felt as if nature had stopped breathing. No one could speak for a long period of time, and gentle weeping could be heard around the entire circle. Our ancestors were truly there with us.

The edge of the horizon could be seen from Dark Bottom, and as we glanced towards the ocean, all of us seemed to share the same feeling in our hearts—that our ancestors had crossed that ocean, having been taken away from their families in shackles as slaves, leaving behind what was left after a bitter, no-single-cause, no-simple-answer Pequot War and King Philip War, leaving their homes, charred bodies, their customs, their ancestral lands, smoldering villages, misunderstandings, personal ambitions and cultural differences—all of which contributed to the conflict in the 1600s of those unnecessary wars. The voices of our ancestors were weeping in our ears. After 375 years we were together in person and in spirit for the first time. The moments turned into minutes before anyone could speak or move away from the circle of life.

Over the years more friendships have been formed, and a lasting bond had been cemented among our families at a place called Red Hole in St. David's Island. Red Hole is a sheltered, deep bay situated below high cliffs that surround the bay and is named for its red sea grasses, which look to the naked eye like pink carpets and dull red clumps of sea grasses on the ocean floor. There are generally strong surging currents that wash over the bay's rocks. Some days the ocean is calm there. To further cement the strengths we have experienced

among our family members, we decided to have a libation in honor of our having found each other.

Our local minister was invited to administer the words of the ceremonial libation. While the words were spoken, a fern wreath was decorated individually with beautiful flowers by family members who came forward in remembrance of their loved ones and ancestors. Flower by flower the wreath took form and was then taken to the edge of Red Hole with throngs of people walking slowly in unison, while a member of our family played "Amazing Grace" on a pan flute from the top of the cliff over Red Hole. The wreath was lowered gently in the waters and slowly floated towards the horizon. This was a calm day and the sun glistened on the ocean. We sobbed in memory of loved ones who had crossed the Atlantic Ocean centuries ago. This was the beginning of four days of reconnection celebration, dancing, information sharing, and getting to know each other at the St. David's Island first reconnection festival.

We also discovered the regalia, dance steps, and the beat of the drum of the Native Americans who were closely associated with that of our own dancers that we call the "Gombey." The "Gombey," who had early roots in the St. David's Island history, also accompanied us to the first Schemitzun in Connecticut. Their many performances were met with thunderous applause, and they were a popular addition to the thousands of Grand Entry performers, as well as those in attendance who indicated further interest in our history.

This is a testament to the strength, courage, and longevity of the Pequot, Wampanoag, Mohegan, and Narragansett nations, who survived in spite of adversity, not only on the island of St. David's, but also on the reservations in New England.

I am a survivor of the "First" and the "Forced." I am alive and able to tell this story because a very strong-willed, brave, displaced Native woman, whose "voice would not be silent," and out of sheer medical necessity was determined to give birth in the only hospital in Bermuda, where she knew she was not welcome. Ursula Fox-Foggo walked into the lobby "unannounced" at the King Edward VII Hospital many miles from the isolated St. David's Island. How did she get there?

Not able to give birth naturally on St. David's Island, where my grandmother, Helen Fox-Foggo, the local midwife, had full sway with births and herbal healing in our immediate family but was unable to help with my birth, my mother, in labor and at a dangerous stage eight-months pregnant, knew she needed help and thus had to take matters into her own hands. She began her journey by walking one mile to the ferry boat from her home, then traveled two miles to the next island (St. George's), then rode seventeen miles on a slow-moving train to the main stop in the city where the hospital was located, and walked another two miles from the train stop to the hospital. She sat in pain while British doctors discussed whether to help "one of those Mohawks from St. David's Island," with no insurance, who was a walk-in and in great need of a caesarean-section birth. She sat with tears streaming down her face while they openly discussed whether to save her life or the life of her unborn child.

My mother, Mary Ursula (Fox) Foggo, was eighteen-years old and carried her first child. I was given the name "Eugene" because one doctor stepped forward and took charge, one doctor who cared that my mother was a human being, not just "one of those Mohawks from St. David's Island." That doctor was Dr. Eugene Harvey.

My voice will never be silent as I speak at various places about a centuries-old story, and a long-silenced embarrassment to the Bermuda government about the plight and the history of St. David's Islanders. I do not research other nationalities or Native Americans of Bermuda's history. I research ancestry of only my immediate family. My story is figuratively speaking the tip of the ancient volcanic peaks from which Bermuda is formed. There is so much more to relate, but it helps to get our story told.

Bermuda is a successful island, a mere dot on the map in the Atlantic Ocean, but it is wealthy beyond belief. This island was built on the backs of slaves in the seventeenth century through the nineteenth century—Native, Scottish, Irish and Carobs. I am a slave descendant who has survived to tell this story.

The Natives of St. David's Island are my immediate family. They were captured or stolen during two "no nonsense, unreasonable and unnecessary" wars in New England—The Pequot War and the King Philip War—and transported to an isolated island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean in chains centuries ago.

Most of my Native ancestors were burned in a fort, and those who survived were stripped of their identity, forbidden to speak their Native language, hair cut, ingrained in the Church of England and British schools, and forced to never speak of their true tribal affiliation until that tribal affiliation became so distant in memory that it was nonexistent until recent years. We were called "Mohawk" until 2001, wiping out our history and genealogy for many centuries. Ironically, it was the Mohawks who helped the British track down and find the Pequot fort. The Mohawks soon learned that they had been tricked into believing the British only wanted to find the fort when they began to set fire in strategic places around the fort to burn it down. The Mohawks watched in disbelief as the fire killed those 700 women, elders, and children in 1637. Survivors were forced onto ships, taken from our homeland, taken in chains, traded as cattle for supplies to sailors and explorers as they crisscrossed the Atlantic Ocean, given no identity except a first name, a designation as slave, and an average age in some slave records.

In early records I discovered the Natives on St. David's Island were referred to as "Native Americans," then "Indians," then "Indian/Negro," then "Mulattos," and finally in my generation (the twentieth century), our birth certificates are marked "Negro."

Today, I celebrate life, life given to me by a strong, determined, ninety-seven-pound Native woman and an equally determined doctor who cared about all people, regardless of race or nationality. My personal story is an example of the opposition the people of St. David's Island lived with for many centuries. For almost 400 years we were called "Mohawks" in a derogatory manner. We could never understand why the designation "Mohawk" meant "we were the underdog, we were descendants of slaves, warriors, people to be feared, people with no

roots, faceless and nameless, people without ancestry, people with no identity." We embraced being Mohawks because that was all we knew. That name followed us until 2001 when research took me in a direction that we could finally call home—Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts with the Pequots, Wampanoag, and Narragansets, who have opened their hearts to us and likewise with whom we have opened our homes, hearts, and history.

St. David's Islanders were the first Native enslaved inhabitants of Bermuda, having been forced from our homeland, New England, in 1638 and again in 1677. Our survival was based on ingenuity, skill, and old-fashioned know-how. We were whalers, fishermen, planters of lily and tobacco fields, boat builders, net makers, rope makers, sea pilots, and sailors whose skills amongst the jagged reefs saved thousands of lives over the centuries from shipwrecks.

We were a force to be reckoned with. We were eventually left alone to produce and provide for our own, at our own pace, but we still remained the "feared, crazy Indians," for centuries in the minds of other inhabitants. No one was aware of how skillful and resourceful we had become until we revealed our true selves to others. St. David's Islanders had reasons to remain silent amongst themselves regarding their capabilities. They had saved money and learned to read and write. When slavery ended, they were ready to meet the world without fear.

Produce from our gardening skills fed the early colonists and our boatbuilding skills were taught to us by the shipbuilders, but we soon surpassed the slave owners in their field, becoming some of the best boat builders, shipbuilders, shipwrights, and carpenters on the island. We built our own homes and built up businesses, honing skills and recipes that are still used.

After emancipation in 1834 in Bermuda, St. David's Islanders did it on our own. By then we owned land among the families, 510 acres that no one wanted. We owned businesses; we hardly ever worked for anyone else in later years.

It was important to academically educate our youth to give them a better chance in the twentieth century. We now have doctors, lawyers, ministers, international sportsmen, school teachers, college professors, administrators,

political leaders, elected officials, police and prison officers, restaurant and resthome owners, airline pilots, and musicians in our families.

Out of the ashes, out of resistance, and out of slavery bloom beautiful flowers. We have in our family a variety of first success stories. I count myself among them. Educated in Bermuda and the United States, I am one of four administrators in city government in the City of Oberlin, Ohio—the first appointed minority female, but not the first minority. I follow in the steps of John Mercer Langston, who was educated and lived in Oberlin. He was the first elected African American official in Oberlin and the first African American lawyer in Ohio. His mother was part Native American from the Narragansett tribe. Many similarities have crossed my path. Mercer helped start Langston University, was vice-president and later president of Howard University, and was instrumental in starting its law school, and also ambassador to Haiti for the United States government. Oberlin is billed as the "city that started the Civil War" in 1864 between the North and the South, and was Stop 99 on the Underground Railroad for runaway slaves from the South on their way to Canada to freedom. I am second vice-president and have been very active for the past ten years in the Oberlin Heritage Center.

Research often takes many twists and turns, but I encourage you to give credence, honor, and justice to your ancestors by keeping their memories and their stories alive. Do not let your ancestors "voices become silent." No matter what road we take, eventually we learn who we are in our hearts and our actions. Intuition often speaks volumes, but we do not literally listen to the "voices" of our ancestors. Our family stories are told over and over and kept alive generation after generation for a reason. Those reasons often do not fill our early memories in life, but they surface when we least expect them to do so.

There is a statement that I embrace wholeheartedly from the book *Slavery in Bermuda*, written in 1976 by history professor James Smith from Bermuda College, that says: "Slavery in any form can never exonerate the crimes of robbing people of their birthright, of perpetuating our inferior status and neglecting our education and moral welfare." We can overcome the invisible

shackles of slavery and we can move on with our lives. The boundaries of these invisible shackles can be removed mentally. I urge you to live and grow outside your boundaries.

As I journey along the Red Path, my moccasin tracks are filling in historical gaps. It is my intention to help elevate the status of North American's First People and in doing so, elevate the voices of my own people. Their voices instruct me to inspire hope in all Native people who are still struggling for recognition across the globe. One of my Native American sisters counts me among our women warriors, and that is what makes me proud to tell this story. There are other stories among our people that have not yet been told. These stories do not yet have a forum, and it is my pleasure to try to help give them a forum without boundaries.

Whether my ancestors were picked up in a canoe from the ocean, came in a privateer, bound in chains, or came on a ship, the fact remains that they did come to St. David's Island or were taken there. They did not swim 1,000 miles from shore to shore. They landed with nothing but their memories. They carved a life out of what they found. When life finally settled down for them and they realized they could not escape without leaving their families, they cared for each other and eventually were able to educate their youth.

In summary, I imagine it does not happen often, but if you have a feeling of not belonging to any race or nationality as we did, there is often a paper trail that can lead you to your ancestors. The former editor of *The Pequot Times*, Trace deMeyer, told me: "Jean, who we are, is in our hearts, it is in our actions. Intuition speaks volumes, family stories are kept alive generation after generation for a reason. Somehow, it feels right when it is right." As I filtered through volumes of documents, I was both grateful and forgiving to the writers and researchers, who came, saw, interviewed, left our shores, and wrote stores from their perspective, not ours. We have never really seen much of those results until recently. St. David's Islanders have existed since 1612. That is 395 years. Or, at least that is what history dictates. That is a long time to have kept history and tradition alive and well.

I would never trade my walk in this skin. It has taught me tolerance, fringing on impatience at times, and gives me understanding as to why our Creator keeps His arm around my shoulder, and His hand over my mouth at times when I feel it necessary to speak up and out about injustices to my family members. Thank you.

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**William Loren Katz** is best known for his forty exciting history books — including such award-winning classics as *Black Indians*, *The Black West*, and *Black Women of the Old West*.

After graduating from Syracuse University with a BA in history in 1950 and from New York University in 1952 with an MS in secondary education, Katz taught social studies in New York City and State secondary schools and served as a curriculum consultant for fourteen years.

Since 1967 he has been a lecturer and consultant for boards of education from Seattle, Washington, to Dade County, Florida, including the Inner London Education Authority and the Education Departments of North Carolina and New York.

William Katz has been a consultant to the Smithsonian Institute, a committee of the British House of Commons and a committee of the US Senate. He has served as a scholar-in-residence at Columbia University Teachers College and at New York University.

### "Black Indians": From Concept to Birth by William Katz

William Katz reflects on his lifetime of interest in African American and Native American histories and the ways that peoples from both groups have intersected. Katz chronicles his early influences and motivations for his interest in these areas, including his father's jazz record collection and advice from Langston Hughes. It has been more than twenty years since the publication of his important book Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage. In this essay Katz discusses the book's continuing relevancy. He also provides insights into the plans that shaped this pioneering monograph.

"Your work has not only coined the term 'Black Indians,' it has inspired an intellectual wave. Thank you from someone who has learned from your vision and research."

Professor Tiya Miles (November 10, 2006, at "The First and the Forced" Conference on Black Indians, Lawrence, Kansas)

#### Introduction

2006 marks the twentieth anniversary of *Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage* published in 1986. For these twenty years it has remained in print with its only publisher, Atheneum Books for Children, which also issued a paperback edition five years later under the publisher's Alladin imprint (also still in print).

During my attendance at this fascinating conference (The First and the Forced) devoted to the growing interest in the new discipline of Black Indians (and

also participating as a keynote speaker), I was asked by Professor James Leiker to submit a contribution to the conference's e-book.

My presentation at this conference was a PowerPoint lecture based on my large collection of photographs. I thought that those who plan to enter this field of study might wonder how this concept "Black Indians" arose to a particular author in the first place, and how it took shape as a published book. I decided that the time and setting of the conference were appropriate to discuss the origin and eventual birth of *Black Indians*.

Black Indians as a concept and book was born out of a melding of four disparate elements: 1) a consuming interest in little-known aspects of African American history that began during my high school days in World War II, 2) an immersion in the pioneering research of Professor Kenneth Wiggins Porter in the 1960s, 3) a surprise conversation with Langston Hughes about my first book, and 4) the unforgettable faces of people of African lineage who peered at me from my collection of Native American photographs.

#### My Interest in People of African Descent in the Americas

My interest in the history of people of African descent in the Americas began with a love of jazz that sprouted in high school and by my senior year led to a 200-page thesis that used documents and photographs. In this pursuit I had followed my father, Ben Katz, whose love of jazz began in the 1930s and led to a unique record collection (78s), an avid interest in "Negro History," and a growing number of books on the subject. This passion to unearth a buried past also led him to collect articles and pictures from nineteenth-century magazines and by the late 1930s brought him and this young kid to the Schomburg Research Center in Harlem.

After graduating from Syracuse University in 1950 with a BA in history and New York University two years later with a MS in secondary education, I taught social studies for fourteen years in New York public schools. Appalled by the neglect and consistent distortion in school history texts and the complete absence of the subject in the state curriculum, I began to introduce African American

materials to my classes. By 1967 I found a publisher willing to publish my collection of materials and pictures in a black history text for secondary schools called *Eyewitness: The Negro in American History.* I felt the information was too startling for a straight narrative, so I relied heavily on first-person accounts, antique prints, and old photographs to prove the validity of the story. It was an early contribution to what would soon be called Black Studies.

#### The Research and Kenneth Wiggins Porter

In December 1967, when Eyewitness had just appeared, I was contacted by the president of Arno Press, a *New York Times* Company that issued scholarly reprint series for libraries. I was asked to create and serve as general editor for a reprint series of 212 historic accounts on African American history. I appointed a distinguished editorial board of seven African American researchers and archivists and white scholar James M. McPherson to assist in the selection process. In 1970, as this publishing effort wound down, I suggested, and the editorial board approved, publication of the most salient essays of University of Oregon professor Kenneth Wiggins Porter, a Kansas poet and Harvard-trained historian and expert on African Americans in US Western history. His book The Negro on the American Frontier appeared in 1971, with my introduction, the same year as my The Black West: A Documentary and Picture History. My introduction to his fine book of essays and The Black West acknowledged the scholarly importance of and my enormous debt to Porter's ground-breaking labors. Professor Porter and I never met, but our dozens of phone conversations made it clear that he was a gracious, diligent professional with unmatched knowledge, understanding of, and devotion to his subject.

On Professor Porter's death in 1981, his widow, Mrs. Annette T. Porter, whom I found equally gracious and charming, asked me to serve as curator of his unpublished manuscripts, and collections of microfilm, notes, and books. I agreed and soon informed Mrs. Porter that I thought the Porter collection's permanent home should be New York City's Schomburg Center, where the public and scholars would have access to them. She was very pleased with the choice.

Almost as soon as they arrived at the Center and were catalogued, the Porter papers became the most-used Schomburg collection, and this continued for at least a decade.

#### **Langston Hughes' Good Advice**

To backtrack in time for a moment: in 1966, in the course of seeking official permission to use various authors' writings in my Eyewitness documentary, I wrote to Langston Hughes. One evening at dinner time in late 1966 or early 1967, my phone rang, and it was Langston Hughes. Before he gave his permission to use his words, he asked the nature and scope of the book. I had hardly finished telling him that it was designed as a school history text when he said, guite firmly, "Don't leave out the cowboys!" He may have said it twice. I told him, somewhat defensively, that I had included two chapters on black westerners in *Eyewitness*, and he responded, again quite firmly, "Good, good, that's very important!" His one bit of advice hit me as a directive, and my brief telephone conversation with Langston Hughes was over. However, his firm words stayed with me. As I read about his life, I found he had grown up in Lawrence, Kansas, and had an Ohio frontier lawyer relative, John Mercer Langston, who defended Underground Railroad agents (including his own brother!). Another Langston Hughes relative was Lewis Sheridan Leary, a harness maker and student at Oberlin College in Ohio, who became one of the five African Americans to join John Brown in his 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry. I had also read that Langston Hughes could trace his ancestral tree back to the legendary Pocahontas.

So Langston Hughes, speaking from his own personal experience, as well as his knowledge of history, was informing me that exposure to the role of African Americans in the West should be a priority for school children and for Americans of all ages and races. As I wrote in the introduction to the 2005 edition of *The Black West*:

If African American youths were to feel a part of the country, and if whites were to see them as a part, Langston Hughes was saying, the West's real cast of characters had to be revealed. African American men and women

had to ride across the pages of textbooks just as they rode across the western plains. His insight inspired *The Black West* (p. xii).

Langston Hughes' prodding command helped push me to a book, this time one about the history of black Indians.

## The Faces of People, African American Lineage in Native American Photographs

Another thrust to research and write *Black Indians* came from many antique photographs I had collected for use in *The Black West*. Staring out at me—haunting me—from my father's antique picture collection and my own discoveries across the country, were a host of African faces among Navahos, Apaches, Kiowas, Cherokees, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. Like Langston Hughes on the West, they seemed to be asking that the story of their survival and contributions be told to all Americans.

#### Genesis of a Book

In 1983 these four forces seemed to unite within me, and I wrote a proposal for a young adult book on *Black Indians* and sent it off. I wanted to write a book for young people, one that would also attract adults who might turn away from the language and complexity of a scholarly publication. After *Eyewitness*, I had written ten more books for young adult audiences, and this medium appealed to me for this project. Although I sent my proposal to three young adult publishers, only Athenaeum's Marcia Marshall responded. She had edited previous books in African American history, and this project intrigued her. When we met, she told me the ground rules for young adult titles. The book should be limited to 200 pages, should clearly explain basic concepts, engage students from grades five to ten, use dramatic pictures, and should not include footnotes, sources, nor an extensive bibliography. Aimed at the US public school market, the book should focus on the United States almost entirely. Though I accepted the conditions, through this book I would capture the attention of interested adults and reviewers and might stimulate further investigation of the subject. With the manuscript I submitted a two-page

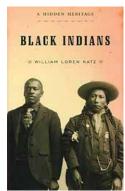
introduction stressing the significance of the subject, and a short annotated bibliography.

I began to reread my research materials and turned to my typewriter, since I did not have a computer. The result was a cut-and-paste manuscript that editor Marcia Marshall returned each time with severe criticisms. I began to realize the criticisms largely stemmed from the manuscript's messiness and illegibility, and I bought a Macintosh computer to finish the manuscript.

However, a few problems lay ahead. Seeking a US school market, the publisher insisted that the three chapters devoted to African and Indian alliances in the Caribbean and Latin America had to be reduced to one chapter. I considered the total American connection too significant to truncate so drastically and instead compressed my material into one and a half chapters. This was the first instance of many in which I found that the dramatic, even poetic nature and magnitude of the subject influenced my choices and organization of material. The result was both a more emotional and less thoroughly organized work than my previous books. My previous books for children observed a rigid chronology, but not this time. Even the chapter titles within *Black Indians* did not follow the simple, clear categories (such as The Civil War or Presidential Reconstruction) of previous books but were fragments of moving quotations used in the chapters.

I was forever learning something new about my topic. Around the time I began my writing, some old friends taught me something about the personal impact of the issue for people of color, particularly those who considered themselves African Americans. Before we left for a winter vacation, my future wife, Laurie, and I invited friends to a small party at our apartment. When someone asked what project I was working on, I mentioned *Black Indians*. All of my African American friends present, whom I had known for years, revealed something new: their family trees had Indian branches. As people who grew up during the era of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, they were proudly African American. They described how talk of the Indian connection was not trumpeted to the general public and usually confined to family gatherings. I began to hear this response from so many friends, and others who shared this dual lineage, that I decided the book should mention it (p. 18):

Children of the black awareness of the 1960s have rarely cared to mention an Indian ancestry because this might be seen as a denial of their African origins and the value of blackness.

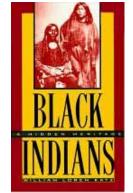


#### The Publication of Black Indians

Black Indians first appeared in 1986 bearing a cover featuring a photograph of John Taylor and a Ute friend, and a back cover featuring a Brady photograph of Etla and Lone Wolf, who were Kiowa. In the discussion leading up to this choice, I had requested the two covers be reversed, and Etla (who reminded me of my dear friend Nellie, whom I had known as a friend and fellow teacher for many years and attended her wedding) and Lone Wolf appear on the cover. However, the publisher overrode my suggestion, stating it unwise (in 1986) to feature a woman prominently on a cover for a general children's book.

In 1986 black history, despite belated recognition as a part of United States growth and development, was still struggling for more than a token place in the school curriculum, textbooks, movies, and the public consciousness. Except for those who shared this biracial lineage, few scholars knew much about the book's subject, and few teachers had heard about African and Indian mixtures or alliances. Dr. Carter G. Woodson studied the topic in his *Journal of Negro History* as early as 1920 and for decades had published articles by Professor Porter, and other scholars (including himself), but white academics showed little interest. There

was no discernable black Indian presence in textbooks or Hollywood movies. My goal was to break this barrier and show how two peoples of color were able to join in families, to defy white "divide and rule" tactics, and to unite as our first freedom fighters. My book was intended to show that in many locales and sometimes for decades, Africans and Indians were able to defeat European armies and halt the invaders' triumphant march across the Americas.



Though I had to operate within the ban on footnotes, I wanted to persuade readers that this was a well-documented American story, and that required more than my word as a narrator. I began *Black Indians* with a frontispiece citing three historic quotations: Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835, Carter G. Woodson in 1920, and Black Seminole Joe Phillips in 1930. Within the text I indicated where readers could locate my sources, for example, on page 88 a document by John Horse of the Seminoles cites the files of the National Archives. I also used my large collection of historic prints and rare photographs as part of my evidence. Along with the annotated bibliography, I hoped these would inform interested readers that here was an historically accurate work based on documents from several centuries. However, some critics feigned unawareness of the dictates of young-adult publishing policy and used the absence of footnotes to question the book's veracity and conclusions.

Many people found the book's title controversial or problematic. *Black Indians* made more sense to me than other possibilities such as "Africans and Indians." Although many of the contacts were between the two people of color, I felt the mixture of two peoples through family and blood was the book's most significant contribution. White critics, and scholars in particular, criticized the title. My rejection of a host of commonly accepted US history terms, such as "tribe," and particularly my definition of black Indians caused sparks among people devoted to racial purity: "I have defined Black Indians as people who have a dual ancestry or black people who have lived for some time with Native Americans" (p. 7).

As a believer in national self-determination, I also concluded that each individual in a racist society had a right to define, deny, or distort his or her racial category, since both survival and success might be at stake. Our racial language and hierarchy are derived from European imports of the 1500s and have been used to oppress people of color in a variety of ways for 500 years. Most Americans have tended to accept their society's odd, arbitrary, definitions about race though their original intent was to replicate how Europeans regulate "others." We have to tried to live with prejudicial and flawed terms such as "racial purity," "full blood," and "mixed blood." offered us by authorities including census takers and

politicians, as well as Hollywood epics. Today these classifications are still used to justify dehumanization and/or disfranchisement of people of color.

Americans have been trained by an educational system so mired in racialist fears and anger that children learn a harmful worldview of various people. One significant result is a weak or damaging assessment of the contributions of people of color that "hide a heritage worth exploring" and "divide people today who could benefit from unity" (p. 7). For the book's many partisans, I soon found, the title and the book's key definition became a vehicle that connected their family to a history few knew but were eager to grasp.

The Introduction to *Black Indians* cited (p. 5) Carter G. Woodson's statement that "relations of the Negroes and the Indians" constitute "one the longest unwritten chapters in the history of the United States," and declared the author's intention to "tackle the chapter." And it conceded (p. 8), "This is a subject that deserves further investigation and synthesis and far greater study."

Though the publisher saw this volume as aimed at young adults and schools, privately I hoped it might also find its way into adult hands and challenge common public perceptions of early US history. My previous books on African Americans charged into this contested territory and in the late 1960s were used in schools and colleges. *Black Indians* sought to explore early racial relations from a fresh perspective, to explode the view of New World slavery as monoracial, to cast new light on the multiracial fight for liberty, and to reveal how Africans and Indians together braved the advance of European "civilization" since the time of Columbus.

I hoped *Black Indians* would help lead to a needed revaluation of the complexities of race so clearly stated in 1988 by Professor Jack D. Forbes, a brilliant, early authority:

Long ago, when first working with my own Powhatan-Renape people of Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and surrounding areas, I discovered that the meaning of racial terms was a controversial issue.

As the reader will see, there is hardly a racial term which has a clear and consistent meaning over time (and space). (Jack D. Forbes, *Africans* 

and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993, p. 2).

Black Indians' viewpoint was clearly stated: "I have never sought a bland neutrality and have consoled myself that unbiased history has yet to be written in our world" (p. 8). On page 19 these paragraphs further articulated my goals:

The ancestors of Black Indians often created—or died in the attempt—an American sisterhood and brotherhood we have tried to attain. They did this under terrible circumstances and in the face of armed opposition.

Had we paid attention to their unique model of friendship and loyalty, our common American history, from Hudson Bay to Cape Horn, might have been different, more peaceful. Our problems might have been more easily solved. Even at this late date we owe ourselves a rereading of this fascinating legacy. Perhaps we can still act on its lessons.

*Black Indians* appeared in late 1986 and almost immediately stirred debate and controversy. But this is another chapter of its story.