

JANUARY13 2010 TAH WORKSHOP NOTES

Present: John Daly, Michael Penney, Brian Morse, Kelly Davila, Sandy Gibson-Quigley, Sarah Kaye, Ann Weeks, Tom Doughton, Nora Werme, Henry Zussman,

NATIVE PEOPLES IN THE 20TH CENTURY

What are some of the issues that will affect Native People in the 20th century?

- Health
- Voting rights/land rights---are people subject to Indian law? Federal law? State law?
- Education: gets tied up with some romantic notions about “primitive” peoples (including immigrants) who can “save” civilization
- Independence, sovereignty.....
- Also, who is an Indian? (what is the tribal definition, the federal definition, etc?) The federal definition early on erased “inidian-ness” once there was less than one quarter Indian “blood”.
- Issues of identity was complicated in the regions where Indians held slaves—especially the Five Civilized tribes in Indian Territory. In new England, by the 1860’s the dominant authorities claimed that there were no real Indians because racial admixture had turned them into wandering, drunken, poor people who had no real connection to the original Indians
- Images of Indians in the 20th century: popular Indians before the 1970’s---savage, warlike; crying Indian (anti pollution), Land of Lakes Indian maiden (commercial—“made with maize---you call it corn, we call it maize), “F Troop—dumb Indians”, casinos, “Geronimo!”
- Sports mascots, teams...
- Why do (native)people participate in the popular culture’s images? What do they gain from it?
- Why would Indian men want to leave the reservation and fight in a war? The draft begins after citizenship (1924)...the armed forces were segregated until 1948....

(we read, “Farming and Futility” from, *Native American Testimony*) this selection discussed the damage wrought by the allotment acts of the 19th century....

Tom read a statement by an Omaha Indian from the turn of the 19th/20th century—on loneliness and alienation from the land....sadness over the loss of its beauty.

Another source from the Civil War period (white officer in charge of Indian affairs) stated that putting Indians together (on reservations) would be a great punishment

Just before the Dawes Act—ideas about putting Indians to work as herders/farmers...good 1870's liberals trying to “help” Indians to become independent and self supporting

- Responses to the last (Dawes Act) discussion (from Prucha pg.)--- federal government (driven by liberal constitutional, economic ideals): Indians own desires were not ever taken into account, Indian culture denied, euro-american ideals were considered the norm
- Allotments (and sale of un-allotted tribal lands) were to make Indians independent....
- The ideal behind the reservations was humanitarian—to educate, evangelize, and protect the Indians from exploitation
- The sale of Indian unallotted Indian lands was to be used for a fund to help support the Indians and lift the “burden” of caring for them from the federal government.
- There was some expectation that whites and Indians would be intermixed in the allotment areas and that the Indians would be “positively” affected.....in reality, this rarely happened and whites in areas where there was a significant Indian population did not often recognize their Indian neighbors as equals

John Collier: educated at Columbia and in France..... believed that immigrants brought to the US a healthy, organic, pre-technological mindset—a healthy simplicity (Immigrants and Indians were seen as having a healthy, organic understanding of the need to care for one another—*gemeinschaft*, vs. society's “*gessellschaft*”*)

Collier was a romantic who maintained as early as the 1920's when he was in New Mexico that Indians maintained a deeper, more fundamental connection to???? He was militantly opposed to the assimilationist policies of the BIA and to the boarding schools as destroyers of language and culture.

Collier advocated changes in the educational system (closing boarding schools, limiting the power of denominational groups over Indian education)...stood for “progressive education”bi-lingual

education..... defended native religions and the right of native peoples to practice their religions (including peyote usage)....

The jury is still out as to whether the Indian Reorganization Act was a good thing. Some major tribes (Navajos for example) refused to sign on.

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/Articles/History/TomHopkins/MeriamEducation/> (link to the report)

*ideal types of social organizations that were systematically elaborated by German sociologist [Ferdinand Tönnies](#) in his influential work *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887; *Community and Society*).

Tönnies's conception of the nature of social systems is based on his distinction between the *Gemeinschaft* (communal society) and the *Gesellschaft* (associational society). In the rural, [peasant societies](#) that typify the *Gemeinschaft*, personal relationships are defined and regulated on the basis of traditional social rules. People have simple and direct face-to-face relations with each other that are determined by *Wesenwille* ([natural will](#))—i.e., natural and spontaneously arising emotions and expressions of sentiment.

The *Gesellschaft*, in contrast, is the creation of *Kürwille* ([rational will](#)) and is typified by modern, cosmopolitan societies with their government bureaucracies and large industrial organizations. In the *Gesellschaft*, rational self-interest and calculating conduct act to weaken the traditional bonds of family, kinship, and religion that permeate the *Gemeinschaft's* structure. In the *Gesellschaft*, human relations are more impersonal and indirect, being rationally constructed in the interest of efficiency or other economic and political considerations.

The [alienation](#) and the breakdown of cohesive peasant values attending the rise of industrialization caused many disenchanted intellectuals to romanticize the *Gemeinschaft* after [World War I](#). This misuse of Tönnies's dichotomy constituted a failure to understand that *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* were [ideal types](#) and not categories of classification.

Source: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/228066/Gemeinschaft-and-Gesellschaft>

1940s-1950s—the Era of Termination:

A disastrous period in which the federal government considered within its purview the right to terminate Indian tribal identities—literally giving a tribe a date on which it was no longer considered to qualify for tribal status.

The government would decide on who was an Indian and who was not (1946 Indian Claims Commission)..... and how funds were to be spent/distributed. This was partly a civil rights issue..the paying off of old claims...but with government desire to determine who qualified for payments (whether individual or corporate)

In 1954 the BIA and Congress decided that a large number of tribes were ready to “handle their own affairs”. The lands of these groups was auctioned off. Much of the land was around the Great Lakes (desirable to the copper industry) and Northwest (again important to mining companies and lumber industry)

On one level the government was trying to end civil rights violations (making Indians independent of government (BIA) controls)..... the termination was termination of federal supervision

Native peoples began to form political action committees to deal with this...for the first time these committees were by, of, and for the Indians rather than run by non Indians

Afternoon Session: Participants read and discussed a handout (Arthur C Parker Indicts the Government for Its Actions.), from Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices in the Progressive Era, edited and introduced by Frederick E Hoxie, Bedford/St Martin’s, Boston/New York, 2001

In 1911 in Columbus Ohio a group of educated men and women met as a forum and advocate of Indian causes (variety of backgrounds). This group, The Society of American Indians, met until the 1920’s

Arthur C Parker

Dr Charles Eastman

Charles E Dogenet

Dr. Carlos Montezuma

Henry Red Cloud

Angel Decora

Reverend Sherman Coolidge

Chauncey Yellow Robe

Gertrude Bonnin

Small group discussions about the article—how should we deal with it?

- Source—a highly educated person who makes a clear and pointed argument
- US tries to address physical issues—but ignores the more important spiritual/psychological concerns
- An intellectual vs. visceral response
- The government is wasting money and time—not effective and wasteful

- Very indicative of how people actually lived a century ago and still live today in many place
- His points are still accessible to us today
- The article sets the tone for later activism—rather than asking for the government to give, they will call on themselves to take
- Issues of hurt...loneliness and alienation.....
- The fact that the article comes from 1915 makes it much more “radical” than it would have been at a later date

An overview of coming sessions:

Next session: Indians in sports and film, by the popular culture.....

April or May: A visit to Mashantucket—Jason Mancini lecture on natives of southern new England in the 20th century

A brief visit to the casino for lunch (to see the “Indian” representations and have lunch)

A full tour of the museum

Ann Weeks’ Presentation:

Sources: image of Indian from the cover of the “Last of the Mohicans”; handouts “On Leaving for the Carlisle School”, Picturing America: Understanding History through Art—NEH;

The picture on a cover illustration of “The Last of the Mohicans” doesn’t match up with the descriptions in the book---where the protagonist is almost always described as dressed in buckskins (picture has him bare chested with a symbol on his chest that is essentially meaningless)

A picture of Mandans from the 1860’s with the artist included, tribal dress, etc.

Two scenes painted/sketched by Black Hawk (1880/1881)...native Americans depicted by a native American—colors and stances are very interesting (quite formalized)

Overview of images and points of view: what does the image really represent? Who is the portrayer? Who is being portrayed? What is the agenda?

Also has a video (not presented) of multiple perspectives on Native American life

Importance of multiple perspectives.....

To make this a bit more “real” Ann had students from Asia talk about their own experience of ‘culture shock’ when they came to US and have the class make connections with the stories and pictures of Indians

Evaluation:

Jason Cervone passed out the evaluation for the day’s workshop