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Collecting to the Core — Native American Activism

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Column Editor's Note: The "Collecting to the Core" column highlights monographic works that are essential to the academic library within a particular discipline, inspired by the *Resources for College Libraries* bibliography (online at <http://www.rclweb.net>). In each essay, subject specialists introduce and explain the classic titles and topics that continue to remain relevant to the undergraduate curriculum and library collection. Disciplinary trends may shift, but some classics never go out of style. — AD

Throughout 2016, protests in North Dakota over the construction of the **Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL)** near the northern border of the **Standing Rock Sioux Reservation** placed Native American activism before the national media. Images of protesters fighting for water protection and tribal rights appeared on news broadcasts and feeds, demonstrating the reach, coordination, and media-savvy of today's activist movements. As **Matt Petronzio** of **Mashable** observed, so successful were the social media efforts publicizing resistance to the pipeline that the **Twitter** hashtag #NoDAPL effectively became synonymous with the protest.¹ While such activism is hardly unprecedented, those not attentive to Native American affairs in the United States might think otherwise. Fortunately, there is a vibrant and still-growing scholarship available for exploring the historical context and precedents to contemporary Native American activism. This essay describes a selection of titles on Native American activism published over the last twenty years. This body of research has dramatically broadened the study of activism both chronologically and thematically, and it increasingly spans international boundaries in explicit comparison of the experiences of First Peoples around the globe. While early contributions to the literature discussed protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s, newer works help to illustrate a varied and extensive history of Native American activism. They also remind us of the degree to which the historical record itself is a tool for redress, and how scholarship and activism have long entwined and informed the study of Native American history.

In *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (1996), **Paul Chaat Smith** and **Robert Allen Warrior** concern themselves, nominally, with just three events: the nineteen-month occupation of Alcatraz Island by **Indians of All Tribes** that began in November 1969; the cross-country Trail of Broken Treaties protest and subsequent

occupation of the **Bureau of Indian Affairs** national offices in Washington, D.C., in 1972; and the siege at Wounded Knee on the **Pine Ridge Indian Reservation** by members of the **American Indian Movement (AIM)** protesting corruption and abuses by the elected tribal government and its chair, **Dick Wilson**, in 1973.² Beautifully written and supported with dozens of interviews — so many the coauthors apologize to those whose stories they were unable to include — *Like a Hurricane* is expansive on the consequences of these protest actions, and **Smith** and **Warrior** produce a cohesive narrative exploring the concerted action and, often, disarray inherent in movement politics.

The Alcatraz occupation is the heart of *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk* (1997), edited by **Troy Johnson**, **Joane Nagel**, and **Duane Champagne**.³ The collection ostensibly presents accounts of a decade of activist efforts from the 1969 occupation of Alcatraz Island to the Longest Walk in 1978, but the contributions themselves are almost exclusively concerned with Alcatraz, even as the editors set the event in conversation with dozens of subsequent occupations. Most of the collection's contents are reminiscences and recollections by Alcatraz occupation principals, while several essays afford context and afterward. **Johnson**, **Nagel**, and **Champagne** argue that the Alcatraz occupation served as the nexus of other resistance efforts and pioneered the use of media attention to publicize injustices and promote direct social action.

More recent scholarship has positioned the actions of the 1960s and 1970s within a larger historical context and shifted some emphasis away from the activities of AIM and the **Red Power** movement. **Paul McKenzie-Jones's** *Clyde Warrior: Tradition, Community, and Red Power* (2015) represents an exceptional portrait of a profoundly influential American Indian activist during the **Red Power** era.⁴ Although **Clyde Warrior** died in 1968, his role in crafting the movement's direction had lasting influence.

As **McKenzie-Jones** demonstrates, **Warrior** did not reconcile "tradition" and activism; instead, his commitment to **Ponca** culture grounded his activism, and his intense devotion to his people was a predicate for intertribal organization. **Warrior** was one of the founders and leaders of the **National Indian Youth Council (NIYC)**, which was established in Gallup, New Mexico, in 1961. The NIYC is the focus of **Bradley Shreve's** *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Native Activism*

(2011).⁵ **Shreve** does not dispute the significance of Alcatraz, the **BIA** occupation, and the Wounded Knee incident; instead, he "seeks to illustrate how those episodes, and their main actors, followed in the footsteps of an earlier generation." **Shreve's** work illuminates a previous cohort of activists — one less urban, less male, and pointedly aware of their connection and continuity with tribal pasts, effectively broadening the discussion and scope of the **Red Power** movement.

Often, essay collections or collective narratives can best weave together the seemingly-disparate experiences that exemplify the breadth and diversity of Native peoples' activism. **Frederick E. Hoxie's** *This Indian Country: American Indian Activists and the Place They Made* (2012) seeks to reframe American Indian history by highlighting known and lesser-known players in the political and legal struggle for Indian rights in the United States.⁶ Similarly, the sixteen essays in *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism since 1900* (2007), edited by **Daniel Cobb** and **Loretta Fowler**, are wide-ranging and explicitly provide context, historical perspectives, and contemporary approaches to tribal sovereignty and activism.⁷ The most expansive and extraordinary such collection is *Indigenous Women and Work: From Labor to Activism* (2012), edited by **Carol Williams**.⁸ The seventeen essays in this volume explore place, context, and the role of women via diverse First Peoples communities from across the globe, including the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands, showcasing how work and activism entwine to sustain community and advance survival, dignity, and sovereignty.

The **American Indian Movement** has also been reconsidered in light of a more holistic approach to activism, much like recent studies of the **Black Panther Party** that have emphasized the organization's contributions to health, education, and community welfare. Similarly, **Julie Davis's** *Survival Schools: The American Indian Movement and Community Education in the Twin Cities* (2013) eschews protest to portray community-building actions, detailing AIM's creation of the **Red School House** and **Heart of the Earth** school in the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota, respectively.⁹ **Davis's** account relies extensively on oral interviews to recover the experiences of the activists, teachers, students, and parents involved in this initiative, providing a useful example of how local activism can affect community education, child welfare, and juvenile justice.

Finally, it should be noted that much of the scholarship on this subject is deeply sympathetic to the individuals, organizations,

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and objectives of the activism it describes. It is further important to note that such engagement in no way diminishes the rigor or accomplishment of these works. Perhaps no other work better exemplifies how scholarship can document resistance — or, in its study of the **Kahnawà:ke Mohawk** people, a “grounded refusal” to accede to ongoing settler colonialism — and serve to advance both cause and scholarship than **Audra Simpson’s** *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States* (2014).¹⁰ An exquisite contemporary ethnography and powerful political act, *Mohawk Interruptus* encourages readers to appreciate not merely the tenacity of a people, but the audacity and activism of everyday lives. This and the other works discussed here are complex, sophisticated, and thoughtful scholarly treatments enlarged and enriched by interest, empathy, and in some instances profound commitment to activism and the historical record. They belong in many academic library collections, particularly those engaged with American Indian, civil rights, or social justice studies. 🌿

Endnotes

1. **Petronzio, Matt.** “Indigenous youth used social media to build and sustain the #NoDAPL movement,” Mashable. Accessed March 31, 2017. <http://mashable.com/2016/12/07/standing-rock-nodapl-youth/#0WKEBHGWqRqb>
2. **Smith, Paul Chaat, and Robert Allen Warrior.** *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee*. New York: New Press, 1996.*
3. *American Indian Activism: Alcatraz to the Longest Walk*. Edited by **Troy Johnson, Joane Nagel, and Duane Champagne**. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997.*
4. **McKenzie-Jones, Paul R.** *Clyde Warrior: Tradition, Community, and Red Power*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 2015.*
5. **Shreve, Bradley G.** *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Native Activism*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011.*
6. **Hoxie, Frederick E.** *This Indian Country: American Indian Activists and the Place They Made*. New York: Penguin, 2012.
7. *Beyond Red Power: American Indian Politics and Activism since 1900*. Edited by **Daniel M. Cobb and Loretta Fowler**. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007.
8. *Indigenous Women and Work: From Labor to Activism*. Edited by **Carol Williams**. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012.*
9. **Davis, Julie L.** *Survival Schools: The American Indian Movement and Community Education in the Twin Cities*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.*
10. **Simpson, Audra.** *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.*

Editor’s note: An asterisk () denotes a title selected for *Resources for College Libraries*.

To Blog or Not To Blog — Academic Blogging

by **Pat Sabosik** (General Manager, ACI Scholarly Blog Index; Phone: 203-816-8256) <psabosik@aci.info>

Academics blog. They are fond of writing about their work and about their developments in their field. How does their academic blogging mesh with their more formal research and publication? Let’s look at some active scholarly bloggers and discover why they blog and about what.

Scholarly blogging is becoming important in its own right as a continuation of published research, updated with new information, developments, or commentary as a new paper or presentation is in the works. According to **Sarah Bond**, Assistant Professor of Classics at the **University of Iowa**, and author of the blog *Sarah E. Bond: History from Below*, not enough quality scholarly blogs are cited nor archived. This is a similar theme that was discussed in a panel I moderated at the **Charleston Conference** last November and recapped in a blog post I wrote about the panel: “Why We Blog.” The three issues scholarly bloggers identified as important to their blogging efforts are having their blogs discovered, cited, and archived for future research.

Bond questions in a recent blog post, “Legitimizing the Blog: On Reading, Citing & Archiving Blogposts” why more academic blogs are not cited in the footnotes of journal articles or within academic books. She states: “While there are certainly still specious blogs that abound on the web, the number of trusted, well-sourced, and highly researched academic blogs is on the increase.” She gives a few examples of well-researched blogs in the classics and then describes how to quote blogs, cite them, use citation tools like Zotero, and how to archive blogs. It is a worthwhile and practical guide for scholarly bloggers. **Bond’s** blog post was also published in a recent issue of *Forbes*.

Another academic blogger who provides practical insights into scholarly blogging and the craft of writing is **Lucy Allen**. In a January 2017 post, **Allen**, a Lecturer in Medieval Studies at the **University of Cambridge**, wrote in her blog, *Jeanne de Montbaston: Reading Medieval Books* that blogging helped improve her writing. This comment is frequently made by academic bloggers. **Allen** also suggests that writing blog posts can help to break writer’s block when dealing with difficult concepts in academic research. She provides tips for

academic bloggers and insights into scholarly blogging in addition to insights into her work in medieval studies, feminism, and the topics of gender and memory.

Humanists don’t have a lock on scholarly blogging since we know that scientists also blog. In a novel blog post, represented in fifteen Tweets, **Morgan Jackson**, an entomological researcher at the **University of Guelph**, recounts his seven years as a blogger stating that blogging and other social media activity provided “countless professional and personal opportunities.” His blog, *BioDiversity in Focus*, was selected by *From the Lab Bench*, another science-focused blog, to “help researchers understand how readers use and view science blogging.”

William Yates, a physician and research psychiatrist at the **Laureate Institute for Brain Research**, blogs regularly about aspects of neuroscience in his blog *Brain Posts*. He started Tweeting about his work to sharpen his writing skills and then transitioned to writing blog posts so he could explain complex neuroscientific developments and diseases in clear and simple language. We can read about this contemporary topic in a recent blog post:

“Opioids, Benzos, and Risk for Overdose” where he summarizes the findings of a study by the *British Medical Journal* that found a link between concurrent benzodiazepine prescriptions with opioid overdose, an important step in treating opioid addiction.

What is emerging from the scholarly blog literature is disciplined academic writing that calls for citing and archiving in the scholarly press. Credentialed

academics are writing and publishing outside the formal channels of publication and are looking for ways to have this work recognized as components of their research and scholarly communications. Scholarly blogs are becoming an important component in this research chain. 🌿



Column Editor’s Note: Blogs mentioned in this article can be found in the *ACI Scholarly Blog Index*. “Why We Blog” is published by *ACI* and can be found at <http://aci.info/blog/>. — PS