

A WAR OF WOR(L)DS: ABORIGINAL WRITING IN CANADA
DURING THE 'DARK DAYS' OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

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By

Brendan Frederick R. Edwards

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ABSTRACT

From the late fifteenth century onward the new world has been described, imagined, and created via the written word and the printing press. Europeans and Euro-North Americans laid claim to the new world through print culture, both politically (through written treaties and legislation) and culturally (through popular fiction and non-fiction), creating and defining popular and widespread notions of land ownership and cultural otherness. This thesis examines, from an historical-cultural point-of-view, the efforts of five early twentieth century Aboriginal writers in Canada, Charles A. Cooke, Edward Ahenakew, Bernice Loft Winslow, Andrew Paull, and Ethel Brant Monture. These individuals were writing in the period after 1915 (the death of E. Pauline Johnson) and before 1960 (roughly when the modern cultural renaissance of Aboriginal peoples in Canada began), and each used print and literary endeavour as a means of writing-back to the widespread stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples and land ownership which permeated non-Aboriginal writing about Indians in this era. The period between 1915 and 1960 has been described by previous scholars as having been void of Aboriginal literary production, but this thesis shows that some Aboriginal peoples used print and publishing, for perhaps the first time, to communicate with other Aboriginal peoples provincially, nationally, and in some cases, internationally. Writing and print were used as a kind of “call-to-arms” in the early twentieth century by the Aboriginal writers discussed in this work, and their efforts demonstrate that there has been a continuum of Aboriginal writing in Canada from the early nineteenth century through to contemporary times. Through the adoption and careful articulation of western print culture, Aboriginal peoples have made efforts at laying claim and asserting control over the cultural and political literary (mis)representations of Indians in Canada.

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INTRODUCTION

The Indian of imagination and ideology has been as real, perhaps more real, than the Native American of actual existence and contact. As preconception became conception and conception became fact, the Indian was used for the ends of argument, art, and entertainment by White painters, philosophers, poets, novelists, and movie makers among many.¹

Rather little effort has been extended by historians in exploring or interpreting the historical relationship of First Peoples, literacy, and print culture in the new world. The Canadian experience has been particularly neglected. Most early European explorers, missionaries, and settlers described the Indigenous peoples of the new world as having no written languages and therefore interpreted them as peoples without history. Indeed, the Indigenous peoples of the new world did not possess alphabetic literacy or technologies equivalent to the European printing press at the time of Columbus' arrival in the Americas, but they did employ unique forms of literacy, knowledge dissemination, and ways of remembering their histories that European newcomers largely misunderstood or ignored. European scholars and chroniclers largely maintained the point of view that Indigenous histories were of the "pre-historical" era well into the twentieth century, employing dichotomies such as literate and pre-literate to describe the Indigenous relationship with European print culture. In the last half century historians have begun to explore in greater depth the place of Indigenous cultures in the new world, but with the exception of a few recent studies, the Indigenous relationship with European print culture has received scant attention.² With the recent surge of scholarly interest in the histories of literacy,

¹ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. *The White Man's Indian: images of the American Indian from Columbus to present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978) 71.

² These studies include: Joyce M. Banks, "'And not hearers only': books in Native languages" *History of the Book in Canada*. Volume 1: Beginnings to 1840, Ed. by Patricia Lockhart Fleming, Gilles Gallichan, and Yvan Lamonde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) 278-289; Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, *Paper Talk: a history of libraries, print culture, and Aboriginal peoples in Canada before 1960* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2005); Edwards,

reading, and printing, spurred largely by several national histories of the book, the time is right to re-examine how these histories have affected and been shaped by the experiences of Indigenous peoples.³

Working Towards a History of Indigenous Writing

The power of alphabetic literacy and writing has been enormous within the contexts of European-Indigenous relations in the new world. From a Euro-Canadian standpoint, writing and print culture have been the chief means by which a collective memory of the Americas and the very nation of Canada have been framed and perpetuated. Through writing and publishing, newcomers reinvented a new world history to fit old world ideologies. All the while, Western writers assumed a non-Indigenous audience, allocating First Peoples to what Steven Conn has called “History’s shadow.”⁴ In part because they have largely been allocated to the shadows, and because most scholarship has worked to set up a dichotomy between literate and oral-based

“‘To Put the Talk Upon Paper’: Aboriginal communities,” *History of the Book in Canada*. Volume 2: 1840-1918, Ed. by Yvan Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Fleming, and Fiona A. Black (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) 481-488; Edwards, “Reading on the ‘Rez’” *History of the Book in Canada*. Volume 3: 1918-1980, Ed. by Carole Gerson and Jacques Michon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 501-505; Albert Furtwangler, *Bringing Indians to the Book* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005); Cornelius J. Jaenen, “Native oral and inscribed discourse” *History of the Book in Canada*. Volume 1: Beginnings to 1840, Ed. by Patricia Lockhart Fleming, Gilles Gallichan, and Yvan Lamonde (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) 13-18; Jaenen, “Aboriginal communities” *History of the Book in Canada*. Volume 2: 1840-1918, Ed. by Yvan Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Fleming, and Fiona A. Black (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) 33-40; Maureen Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations: Native intellectuals and the politics of historiography 1827-1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004); Blanca Schorcht, “Intersections between Native oral traditions and print culture” *History of the Book in Canada*. Volume 3: 1918-1980, Ed. by Carole Gerson and Jacques Michon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 29-34; Cheryl Suzack, “Publishing and Aboriginal communities” *History of the Book in Canada*. Volume 3: 1918-1980, Ed. by Carole Gerson and Jacques Michon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 293-307; Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians: literacy, Christianity, and Native community in early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).

³ Multi-volume national histories of the book and print culture are currently under way (or recently completed) in Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland, and the United States.

⁴ See: Steven Conn, *History’s shadow: Native Americans and historical consciousness in the nineteenth century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

cultures, Aboriginal writing (in both the traditional and contemporary sense) has been largely overlooked by historians. Because scholars have too often assumed that the First Peoples of the new world belonged to oral, rather than literate cultures, little attention has been given to Indigenous responses to Western print culture. Bibliographers, however, have been an exception. There are several bibliographies of Aboriginal writing and publishing, providing a basis to the historical understanding of Indigenous writing.⁵ Some interdisciplinary studies have touched upon the historical responses of Aboriginal peoples to Western writing and print culture, including works by James Axtell, Germaine Warkentin, and D.F. McKenzie.⁶ Similarly,

⁵ Some notable bibliographies of books printed in Indigenous languages in Canada, and early books printed for the use of First Peoples include: Joyce M. Banks, *Books in Native languages in the Rare Book Collections of the National Library of Canada*. Revised and enlarged edition (Ottawa: National Library of Canada and the Ministry of Supply and Services, 1985); James P. Danky, ed. *Native American periodicals and newspapers, 1828-1982: bibliography, publishing record, and holdings*. Compiled by Maureen E. Hady (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984); Barry Edwards and Mary Love, *A Bibliography of Inuit (Eskimo) linguistics in collections of the Metropolitan Toronto Library* (Toronto: Metropolitan Toronto Library Board, 1982); Karen Evans, *Masinahikan: Native language imprints in the archives and libraries of the Anglican Church of Canada* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985); John Murdoch, *A Bibliography of Algonquian syllabic texts in Canadian repositories* (Québec: Project ASTIC, Gouvernement du Québec, Ministeres des Affaires culturelles and Direction regionale du Nouveau Québec et service aux autochtones, 1984); John Murdoch, *A Bibliography of Algonquian roman orthography texts in Canadian repositories* (Rupert House PQ: Project ASTIC, 1988); John Murdoch, *Bibliography of Inuktitut roman orthography texts in Canadian repositories* (Rupert House PQ: Project ASTIC, 1988); David H. Pentland and H. Christoph Wolfart, *Bibliography of Algonquian linguistics* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1982); James Constantine Pilling, *Bibliography of the Algonquian languages* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891); James Constantine Pilling, *Bibliography of the Eskimo language* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1887); James Constantine Pilling, *Bibliography of the Iroquoian languages* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888).

⁶ See, for example: James Axtell, "The Power of print in the Eastern Woodlands," *The William and Mary Quarterly* S3-44 (1987): 300-309; Joyce M. Banks, "The Church Missionary Society Press at Moose Factory: 1853-1859" *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* XXVI.2 (1984) 69-80; Joyce M. Banks, "James Constantine Pilling and the literature of the Native peoples" *Bibliographical Society of Canada: Colloquium III: National Library of Canada, 19-21 October 1978* (1978) 59-70; Marie Battiste, "Micmac literacy and cognitive assimilation," *Indian Education in Canada, volume 1: the legacy*, Eds. Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert and Don McCaskill (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1986) 23-44; Edwards, *Paper talk*; Bruce Greenfield, "The Mi'kmaq hieroglyphic prayer book: writing and Christianity in Maritime Canada, 1675-1921," *The Language encounter in the Americas, 1492-1800: a collection of essays*, ed. Edward G. Gray and Norman Fiering (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000) 189-229; D.F. McKenzie, "The Sociology of a text: orality, literacy and print in early New Zealand." *The Book history reader*, eds. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (New York: Routledge, 2002); Bruce Peel, "Early mission presses in Alberta" *Alberta Library Association bulletin* 11.1 (1963) 3-6; Bruce Peel, "How the Bible came to the Cree" *Alberta historical review* 6 (1958) 15-19; Bruce Peel, "Rossville Mission Press: press, prints and translators" *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 1 (1962) 28-43; Penny Petrone, *Native literature in Canada: from the oral tradition to the present* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990); Elizabeth Rockefeller-MacArthur, *American Indian library services in perspective: from petroglyphs to hypertext* (Jefferson, NC:

contemporary post-colonial and literary scholars have provided some insight into this field, but their work has been void of much historical context.⁷ Many scholars generally assumed that any evidence of literacy within Aboriginal cultures was the result of successful European efforts to assimilate or civilize First Peoples.

The codification of language was directly linked to the sustainability and recognition of new world history. The European understanding of History, as an academic discipline, is rooted in Greek philosophy and myth. Clio, the Muse of history – and her eight sisters, the Muses of epic poetry (Calliope), lyric poetry (Erato), music (Euterpe), tragedy (Melpomene), mime (Polyhymnia), dancing (Terpsichore), comedy (Thalia), and astrology (Urania) – were born of the union between Mnēmosynē, the Goddess of Memory, and Zeus, the supreme ruler of ancient Greek gods. Thus the academic notion of History, the discipline, is rooted in notions of power and memory. Ultimately power is in the hands of those who have some control or influence over historical memory. Writing has been the primary means of possessing history, of holding power over the past. The European cultures that occupied and settled the new world had an advantage over the Aboriginal cultures of North and South America in that their languages (mainly English, French, and Spanish) were, for the most part, codified. A generally literate populace in Europe meant that the writings of European new world explorers, settlers, and missionaries were widely dispersed and internalised in European memory. Aboriginal cultures, on the other hand were

McFarland and Company, 1998); Shef Rogers, “Crusoe among the Maori: translation and colonial acculturation in Victorian New Zealand,” *Book history* 1.1 (1998) 182-195; Michael Rose, ed., *For the record: 160 years of Aboriginal print journalism* (St. Leonards, New South Wales: Allen & Unwin, 1996); David L. Schmidt and Murdena Marshall, *Mi'kmaq hieroglyphic prayers: readings in North America's first Indigenous script* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1995); Nan Shipley, “Printing press at Oonikup,” *The Beaver* (Summer 1960) 48-53; Germaine Warkentin, “In search of ‘The Word of the Other’: Aboriginal sign systems and the history of the book in Canada” *Book history* 2.1 (1999) 1-27; Peter Wogan, “Perceptions of European literacy in early contact situations,” *Ethnohistory* 41.3 (1994): 407-429; Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians: literacy, Christianity, and Native community in early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).

⁷ See for example: Bill Ashcroft, et. al. *The Empire writes back: theory and practice in post-colonial literatures* (1989; New York: Routledge, 2002).

more geographically and linguistically diverse than those in Europe. Furthermore, Aboriginal populations were weakened by European disease and military technologies and Indigenous means of recording and maintaining their histories were as diverse as their languages and geography. This diversity was a detriment as far as any literary consciousness was concerned.⁸ In his Pulitzer Prize winning popular history, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Jared Diamond briefly identifies writing and literacy as having “marched together with weapons, microbes, and centralized political organization as a modern agent of conquest.”⁹ Indeed, alphabetic literacy, along with gunpowder and disease, was one of the main elements that allowed Europeans to conquer the new world. Claude Lévi-Strauss hypothesized that the ultimate function of writing and alphabetic literacy was “to facilitate the enslavement of other human beings.”¹⁰ But the distinct role that alphabetic literacy played in the conquest of the new world has to date rarely been explored. Diamond sets aside one chapter (Chapter 12, Blueprints and Borrowed Letters) in *Guns, Germs, and Steel* to do so, but in this author’s opinion, largely misses the mark. His theory that the spread of language codification systems, literacy, and the printing press was spurred by variations in the onset of food production, barriers to diffusion, and population size, is interesting and useful, but generally assumes the stance that the Indigenous peoples of the new world, except those of Mesoamerica, did not possess any system of writing prior to the arrival of Europeans.¹¹

⁸ The codification of the Slovak language in the nineteenth century, for example, was an essential element in the development and survival of a Slovak national and cultural consciousness, which otherwise might have been overshadowed and drowned-out by Czech, German, and/or Hungarian influences. See Stanislav J. Kirschbaum, *A History of Slovakia: the struggle for survival*, Second edition (1995; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 89-105.

⁹ Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: the fates of human societies* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997) 215-216.

¹⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*. Trans. by John Russell (New York: Atheneum, 1969) 292.

¹¹ See: Diamond 215-243, 259-261.

While historical memory thrived within traditional Aboriginal cultures, the challenges imposed by the European occupation of their lands and the subsequent devastation that European diseases and warfare brought on Indigenous populations meant that traditional knowledge and memory suffered. It is for this reason that several Aboriginal peoples adopted and articulated Western literate forms in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Writing (mainly in English, but also in their own languages) in alphabetic and syllabic scripts allowed Aboriginal writers to express and sustain their political, historical, and cultural views – to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audiences. Writing in English or French was not inherently oppressive or even alien for Aboriginal peoples. By adopting and articulating European languages, literary technique, and literacy, Aboriginal peoples were “reinventing the enemy’s language.”¹² European languages themselves were not necessarily oppressive because many Aboriginal peoples actively sought to learn English and French, for example, in an effort to equip themselves with the tools necessary to survive and thrive in an economy and changing world that was becoming increasingly Euro-Canadian or American. Where Euro-Canadian languages were oppressive and tools of colonialism, however, was in the sub-standard education provided to Aboriginal peoples at the Indian schools and in the rejection of Aboriginal writing by Euro-Canadian critics, publishers, and many readers. As Bernd Peyer, scholar of American Indian non-fiction writing points out, “the history of American Indian literature is, by virtue of the technical requirements of the skill of writing [in alphabetic script, at least], inextricably tied to developments in the field of Indian education.”¹³

Aboriginal methods of communication and cultural method have been largely

¹² See: Ashcroft et. al. *The Empire Writes Back*; Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird, eds., *Reinventing the Enemy’s Language: contemporary Native women’s writings of North America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

¹³ Bernd C. Peyer, ed., *American Indian Nonfiction: an anthology of writings, 1760s-1930s* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007) 4.

characterised as oral, rather than written. While it is true that First Nations cultures were primarily oral-based, they were not exclusively so. Written forms of communication, including birch bark writing and scrolls, hieroglyphic and early syllabic writing forms, petroglyph and pictograph writing, were evident in numerous North American Aboriginal cultures before European contact and influence. Nonetheless, such writing forms have been labelled pre-literate or pre-historic, effectively devaluing them as legitimate and living forms of knowledge dissemination and preservation. That Aboriginal peoples in Canada in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries showed a distinct interest in articulating and adopting European alphabetic literary forms should therefore not be entirely surprising, nor should such interest be interpreted as proof of the success of European assimilation policies. A changing social, political, and cultural reality, whereby people of non-Aboriginal descent were becoming more and more prevalent, led to a realisation by First Nations cultures that their traditional methods of disseminating and preserving knowledge and history were no longer fully effective or relevant in the current reality. The deluge of alphabetic literacy, primarily in the English language, and the predominance of government policy which was expressed in alphabetic text, led to a situation whereby Aboriginal peoples in Canada came to recognise the importance of learning such texts in order to ensure the very existence of their people. Adapting to the hard reality of continued European presence on North American lands meant that Aboriginal cultures who had for centuries employed their own unique forms of communication, both oral and written, had to articulate and adopt European communication methods to ensure their very survival. In other words, Aboriginal literary endeavour should be regarded as “creative accommodation to social change.”¹⁴ For better or for worse, the acquisition of European alphabetic literacy became more

¹⁴ Bernd C. Peyer, *The Tutor'd Mind: Indian Missionary-Writers in Antebellum America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997) 1.

and more necessary to Aboriginal peoples in their continued relationship with the newcomers. Alphabetic literacy, in fact, was a tool of colonialism, allowing the non-Aboriginal newcomers to lay claim over Aboriginal lands and resources and to issue and administer laws and policies affecting Indian affairs. Thus, a kind of war of words began.

Although subtle, and not fought in any dramatic or highly visible form, this war of words, or the Euro-Canadian process of laying claim to Aboriginal lands, resources, and the very future of Indians, came through writing and publishing. First Nations naturally responded, and the literary achievements of individuals like E. Pauline Johnson and George Copway, for example, stand as evidence to this fact. Aboriginal prose (in English, at least) is rooted in First Nations' cultural, religious, and educational relationships with European missionaries, particularly (but not exclusively) of the Protestant denominations, from the seventeenth century onward. Although rooted in oral traditions, First Peoples adapted and articulated alphabetic literacy and writing to suit their own cultural, historical, and political needs. Indigenous articulation of Western writing forms took firm root in the nineteenth century, resulting in texts for Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences alike. Aboriginal writing (or literary endeavour) using the Western alphabet took many forms, be it personal note taking, journaling, and diary writing (which may or may not have been intended for an audience other than the writer themselves), to writing that was explicitly public: newspaper and magazine articles, petitions, letter writing, and monograph length studies and/or stories. This early body of Aboriginal writers included George Copway (Kahgegahbowh), Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby), and E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake).¹⁵ Although the writing of popular figures like Johnson and Copway

¹⁵ See, for example: Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag, eds., *E. Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake: collected poems and selected prose* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Charlotte Gray, *Flint and feather: the life and times of E. Pauline Johnson Tekahionwake* (Toronto: HarperFlamingo, 2002); E. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and

was not overtly political, the popularity and audience that each achieved enabled an Aboriginal voice through the printed word which had previously been the exclusive domain of Euro-Canadians.

Anyone who has studied Canadian literature, even casually, is aware of the achievements and popularity of E. Pauline Johnson (1861-1913), the poet and performer of Mohawk ancestry who entertained international audiences with her original poetry and lore.¹⁶ But following Johnson's death, scholars have noted that there is an apparent fifty-year gap in Aboriginal writing.¹⁷ Modern Canada, since the late 1960s, has boasted an ever growing array of Aboriginal literary talent. The re-emergence of popular literary works by Aboriginal writers was in part spurred by the National Indian Brotherhood's 1972 policy paper, *Indian Control of Indian Education*, which recommended that schools and educators make reading materials relevant to the experiences of Native children, and to foster literacy in Aboriginal languages, encourage literary expression, and adapt traditional oral languages to written forms for instructional and literacy purposes.¹⁸ In the 1960s and 1970s, Aboriginal communities across the country began to establish libraries successfully, and widely read Indigenous writers emerged.

Donald B. Smith, eds., *Life, letters and speeches*. George Copway (Kahgegahbowh) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: the Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson, *Paddling her own canoe: the times and texts of E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

¹⁶ Studies on the life and work of E. Pauline Johnson include, Gerson and Strong-Boag, eds., *E. Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake*; Charlotte Gray, *Flint and feather*; and Strong-Boag and Gerson, *Paddling her own canoe*.

¹⁷ See: Cecilia Morgan, "Performing for 'Imperial Eyes': Bernice Loft and Ethel Brant Monture, Ontario 1930s-60s," *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and settler women in Canada's colonial past*, Ed. by Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005) 67-89; Morgan, "Private lives and Public Performances: Aboriginal women in a settler society, Ontario, Canada, 1920s-1960s" *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 4.3 (2003); Petrone, *Native Literature*; and Armand Garnet Ruffo, "Out of the Silence – the legacy of E. Pauline Johnson: an inquiry into the lost and found work of Dawendine – Bernice Loft Winslow," *Literary Pluralities*, Ed. by Christl Verduyn (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1998) 211-223.

¹⁸ National Indian Brotherhood, *Indian control of Indian education: policy paper presented to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development* (Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood, 1972), 10, 16.

This period saw a dramatic rise in federal services to First Peoples. Aboriginal cultural and communication initiatives and institutions benefited from this funding, resulting in the development of friendship centres and encouraging the publication of magazines and newspapers. The cultural renaissance of First Peoples through the 1970s and the emergence of an increasingly aware non-Aboriginal Canadian public, helped to foster an environment where Aboriginal journalism thrived, coinciding with an unprecedented output of poetry, fiction, history, and children's literature by Aboriginal writers, read by Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals alike.

But what happened to Aboriginal literary endeavour and writers in Canada after E. Pauline Johnson's literary career ended and before the emergence of contemporary Indigenous writing in the 1960s? Contemporary Ojibwa writer, Armand Garnet Ruffo, refers to this period as the "dark days," scholar Penny Petrone called it a "barren period," and Cecilia Morgan says this time was the "nadir of Native-white relations" in Canada.¹⁹ Popular contemporary Aboriginal writer and academic, Thomas King, notes that "there appears to be a gap of some fifty-odd years in which we do not see Natives writing" after E. Pauline Johnson. But King says that "this is, most probably, an optical illusion," because although there appear to be no Aboriginal novelists, short story writers, poets, or playwrights from this period, there were many "making speeches, producing articles, writing poetry, stories, and autobiography." King asserts that while it could be that there is little Aboriginal writing in this period, he says it is also possible that most of the writing of Indians at this time appeared in periodicals and newspapers, or major works may have been lost or misplaced.²⁰

¹⁹ Ruffo 212; Petrone, *Native literature* 95; Morgan "Performing" 70.

²⁰ Thomas King, "Native Literature in Canada" In *Dictionary of Native American Literature*, Ed. by Andrew Wiget (New York: Garland, 1994) 357-358.

All agree that the impact of the Federal Government's residential schooling policy served to silence many Aboriginal voices, and the climate in Canadian publishing at that time simply was not interested in writing by Canadians of non-European descent. Aboriginal populations at this time in Canada were also believed to be in steady decline – at least from a Euro-Canadian perspective – with the notion that their populations would very soon be completely irrelevant to the larger Canadian society. Even during the time that Johnson was writing, few other Aboriginal writers were able to capitalise on her popularity. This was mainly the result, again, of the government mandated education system which taught Euro-Canadian ways and prohibited Aboriginal students from speaking their native languages. Petrone noted that only a few “isolated” educated Aboriginal peoples existed during this period because the system of education that Indians were subjected to was not a literary one.²¹ Few learned more than manual labour skills or trades. With few exceptions, most Aboriginal peoples did not acquire sufficient language or literacy skills in English or French to be inspired to write, and because they were prohibited and punished for speaking their own languages, they became isolated from their home communities when they completed school.²² Thus, it is little wonder that few Indians wrote between 1860 and 1960 in Canada. But to say there were no other Indian writers, except E. Pauline Johnson, during this period would be incorrect and misleading. Both King and Petrone identify some that were writing at this time, but even in their excellent works on Aboriginal

²¹ Petrone, *Native literature* 71.

²² The living conditions and nature of studies in the schools are well-documented, for example in: Jean Barman, et. al., eds. *Indian Education in Canada*. Volume 1: The Legacy (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986); J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: a history of Native residential schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); John S. Milloy, “A National Crime”: *the Canadian government and the residential school system, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999).

writing several individuals are not discussed.²³ Furthermore, the contexts within which these Aboriginal peoples were writing are only briefly discussed in Petrone's otherwise groundbreaking work. The work presented in the pages that follow aims to shed some light on the writing aspirations of some Aboriginal peoples who were either ignored or silenced in their lifetimes.

There were a number of Indigenous writers who have been largely neglected by historians. Lesser known First Peoples who articulated alphabetic literacy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Canada include Catherine Sutton (Nahnebahwequay) (1824-1865), Lydia Campbell (1818-1905), Charles A. Cooke (Thawennensere) (1870-1958), Reverend Edward Ahenakew (1885-1961), Andrew Paull (1892-1959), Ethel Brant Monture (1894-1977) and Bernice Loft Winslow (Dawendine) (1902-1996). These, and several other Indigenous writers, were involved in an unofficial effort to regain some of the power over voice and memory held largely by Euro-Canadian commentators. Each employed writing and publishing, to varying degrees of success, in communicating with government and wider Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences. By framing the efforts of Cooke, Ahenakew, Paull, Monture, Winslow, and others within the larger contexts of their respective social and political times, outlining and exploring how each was an intermediary figure between Indigenous and newcomer peoples, and how each employed public writing as a tool in their political and cultural struggles, it will be possible to build a more complete history of Indigenous writing in English in Canada.

Sutton (Ojibwa) was deeply concerned with issues of land rights and her status as an Indian woman in Upper Canada in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Campbell (Labrador

²³ See Petrone, *Native literature*; as well as Petrone, ed., *First People, First Voices* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); and Petrone, ed., *Northern Voices: Inuit writing in English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988). King mentions mainly, K'HHalserten Sepass (Chilliwack, 1840-1945), Edward Ahenakew (Cree, 1885-1961), Deskaheh (Cayuga, 1873-1925), Dan Kennedy (Assiniboine, 1877-1973), and autobiographies by Anauta (Inuit) and Charles James (Kwakiutl, 1870-19--). See: King 357.

Metis) was spurred to write by Reverend Arthur Waghorne at the age of 75, and was published regularly in the Saint John's *Telegram*. Cooke (Mohawk) was an employee of the Indian Affairs department for more than thirty years, working closely with Duncan Campbell Scott, and later with the anthropologist Marius Barbeau. Ahenakew (Plains Cree) was an Anglican minister from Saskatchewan who worked closely with Paul Wallace and the American Philosophical Society in compiling ethnographic works on the Plains Cree, but he was not widely published until after his death. Paull (Squamish) was a leading political figure in the struggles of British Columbia Indians with regards to land title and rights who wrote often in Vancouver newspapers. Winslow (Mohawk), daughter of William D. Loft, and niece of Frederick O. Loft, set down on paper her "word pictures" and poems about the Six Nations largely at the encouragement of the historian and academic, Paul Wallace.²⁴

The vast majority of what constitutes human knowledge, be it written or spoken, can be expressed through language, art, or dance. Where Aboriginal cultures have been confined by history as oral or preliterate cultures (thus prehistoric, or savage), Western cultures have been characterised as cultures of the book, as literate, historical, and civilized. However, such characterisations are too simplistic and inaccurate. No culture is strictly oral, or strictly literate.

²⁴ The existing literature on these individuals includes: Marius Barbeau, "Charles A. Cooke, Mohawk scholar." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 96.4 (1952): 424-426; Lydia Campbell, "A bit about my life." *Them Days* 2.3 (1977): 51-57; Lydia Campbell, "Excerpts from Lydia Campbell's diary." *Them Days* 2.4 (1977): 46-51; Lydia Campbell, *Sketches of Labrador life*. Foreword by Doris Saunders (1980; St. John's: Killick Press, 2000); Stan Cuthand, "Introduction to the 1995 edition." Edward Ahenakew. *Voices of the Plains Cree*. Edited by Ruth M. Buck (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995); Herbert Francis Dunlop, *Andy Paull: as I knew him and understood his times* (Vancouver: The Order of the O.M.I. of St. Paul's Province, 1989); Celia Haig-Brown, "Seeking honest justice in a land of strangers: Nahnebawequa's struggle for land." *Journal of Canadian studies* 36.4 (2002): 143-170; E. Palmer Patterson, "Andrew Paull (1892-1959): finding a voice for the 'New Indian.'" *Western Canadian journal of anthropology* VI.2 (1976): 63-80; E. Palmer Patterson, *Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian resurgence*. Doctoral thesis. (University of Washington, 1962); E. Palmer Patterson, "Andrew Paull and the early history of British Columbia Indian organizations." *One Century Later: Western Canadian reserve Indians since Treaty 7*. Ian A.L. Getty and Donald B. Smith, eds. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978); Donald B. Smith, "Nahnebawequa." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. Volume IX 1861-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976); Donald B. Smith, "Nahnebawequa (1824-1865): 'Upright Woman'" *Canadian Methodist Historical Society papers* 13.1 (2001): 74-105; Bernice Loft Winslow, *Iroquois Fires: the Six Nations lyrics and lore of Dawendine (Bernice Loft Winslow)* (Ottawa: Penumbra Press, 1995).

Written language has been held by Western authorities as the more accurate form of communication, one which allows for less ambiguity and misinterpretation, particularly in reference to history. But as Jacques Derrida most clearly expressed, all language, every word, phrase, and the way they are placed in sentences, begets blurring ambiguities. All language, whether it be written or spoken, eludes precise clarity and precision, as every word has its own meaning, or meanings. However, spoken language may allude to the double meanings of words in its intention, through the placement of emphasis and with the help of body language. The words on the page are equally ambiguous, open to the individual reader's interpretation, attitude, and intention. Writing is thus more ambiguous and less rigid than is commonly thought, and likewise, oral cultures are generally more literate than assumed.

Despite Derrida's seemingly obvious points about the ambiguity of all language (poets and artists have been fully aware of such ambiguities since the dawn of literature) most Western thought seeks to impose a metaphysical presence of absolute truth upon language.²⁵ The modern difficulties of treaty interpretation serve to demonstrate this point. The Canadian Government had long insisted that the treaties were strictly written documents, which must be interpreted exclusively from the text. Aboriginal peoples, on the other hand, insist that the textual treaties are only one part of the agreement, and that oral promises were made in addition to the guarantees which were written down. Further, much debate surrounds the meaning of what is written. Aboriginal groups tend to interpret the texts in relation to the stories of oral promises made by treaty negotiators, which have been passed down through the generations orally; government interpreters insist that which is written is all that can be interpreted, and read the treaty texts as narrowly as possible. This process of treaty interpretation, and reinterpretation,

²⁵ See: Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Trans. by G.C. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). For a primer on Derrida, try: Paul Strathern, *Derrida in 90 Minutes* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000).

has been ongoing from the moment the documents were written. This example, of the complications of interpretation between Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian cultures over language, provides some understanding of the motivation behind First Nations' efforts in acquiring alphabetic literacy.

The dilemma of meaning that language (both written and spoken) presents us is what Derrida calls the “pharmakon” – literally a drug which can be used to heal, but also to poison. Language is a pharmakon, a joker, which can be used to unite, but also to create difference. Thus words are difference, not identity. Nonetheless, western cultures have perpetually insisted upon the universal truth of written language. The notion that if it is written it must be true is one that has very nearly permeated western society until at least the advent of the internet. Of course, this notion is informed by the inherent assumption that alphabetic writing reveals “the truth.” Non-western cultures, such as North American Aboriginal peoples, have been labelled “preliterate” and strictly oral cultures for good reason: if these communities are understood as non-literate and oral, then the knowledge they possess can more easily be labelled as in flux, without grounds, and therefore untrustworthy, thus allowing the written culture of the western world to take precedence and be held in higher value.

Through an exploration of the implications of literacy and the written word, within the contexts of Indigenous histories, a broader understanding may be gained concerning the development of literacy, printing, and literature within the Canadian context. Alphabetic literacy and writing provided new avenues for the expression of Indigenous ideas, but implicitly this study will necessarily consider the possibility that literacy and writing may have changed the very nature of the ideas First Peoples were attempting to express.

What follows is not an all-inclusive study, but rather a selection of stories and examples

demonstrating the literary endeavour and publishing activities and motivations of Aboriginal peoples in Canada in the period after the passing of E. Pauline Johnson and before the cultural renaissance and explosion of Aboriginal publishing in the 1960s. The bulk of this writing discussed in the pages that follow is in English, however Cooke also wrote in French and Mohawk, and Ahenakew in Cree.²⁶ The roughly fifty-year period discussed here is rife with examples of Aboriginal literary activity, but these examples do not regularly take the form of novels or poetry. Rather, the writing evident in this period is largely newspaper and periodical-based. Creative writing, in the form of poetry and at least one attempt at a novel, is evident, but not the norm. Some of this writing was self-published, on the initiative of Aboriginal people themselves, perhaps explaining its relative obscurity and absence in the histories of Canadian writing. Non-Aboriginal Canadians in the early twentieth century expected that Indians would very soon cease to exist. Further, it was widely felt that the romance and nobility, which Euro-Canadians attributed to Aboriginal cultures, were traits long since lost. Therefore, few non-Aboriginal Canadians showed much interest in the words and stories of Indians during this period. Largely ignored and believed to be vanishing, Aboriginal peoples began taking it upon themselves to write, publish, and educate their people. The intended audience of most of the Aboriginal writing during the period under discussion was not Euro-Canadians, or even government necessarily, but Aboriginal people themselves. This writing and publishing activity, therefore, served as a kind of call-to-arms, a rallying call to Indians nationwide, the ultimate result being the Aboriginal cultural renaissance of the 1960s and 70s, previously discussed as having appeared largely out-of-the-blue.

²⁶ Admittedly very little effort has been exerted by the author to look at Aboriginal people who may have been writing in French during this era. This is an area left open for future study. A good place to start is: Diane Boudreau, *Histoire de la littérature amérindienne au Québec* (Montreal: Editions de l'HEXAGONE, 1993); and Claude Gélinas, *Les Autochtones dans le Québec post-confédéral, 1867-1960* (Sillery, Québec: Septentrion, 2007).

The individuals discussed here were certainly not the only Aboriginal peoples during this period to use literacy as a political and cultural tool. Others included Reverend Peter Kelly (or Klee-Als, The Orator), Henry George Pennier, Edward Williams, Mike Mountain Horse, Joseph Dion, William Henry Pierce,²⁷ and Chief William (K'HHarlsernten) Sepass, naming only a few. Edward Williams (Mi'kmaq) and Chief Sepass were both published in *Indian Time* (1950-59), a news magazine established by Doug Wilkinson in 1950 at the University of British Columbia, and edited by Eloise Street.²⁸ Williams published a serialised novel in *Indian Time*, entitled “Council in the Sky,” beginning in the spring of 1954.²⁹ But what is intended here is a selective survey of some of the more prevalent Aboriginal literary activity during the period.³⁰ Further, by telling the stories of a few, select individuals this work intends to paint a closer picture of Native-

²⁷ See: William Henry Pierce, *From Potlatch to Pulpit: being the autobiography of the Rev. William Henry Pierce, Aboriginal missionary to the Indian tribes of the Northwest Coast of British Columbia*. Rev. J.P. Hicks, ed. (Vancouver: The Vancouver Bindery, 1933). For insight on Pierce, see: Gail Edwards, “‘The Picturesqueness of His Accent and Speech’: Methodist Missionary narratives and William Henry Pierce’s autobiography.” In *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples: representing religion at home and abroad*, Alvyn Austin and Jamie S. Scott, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) 67-87.

²⁸ Although published under his name, William Sepass (K'Hhalserten) cannot technically be considered a writer. Sepass approached Eloise Street in 1911 to translate and record his family’s stories in English so they could be preserved. A year after Sepass’ death in 1943 Street submitted the resulting manuscript to Ryerson Press, but the press rejected it on the grounds that it was not considered to be authentic. Marius Barbeau, for one, accused Street of embellishing and romanticising the original stories. As Keith Carlson and Kristina Fagan reveal in the notes to ‘*Call Me Hank*,’ Street later confessed to having elaborated upon several of the Sepass stories. Unable to find a publisher for the work, Street self-published the collection in 1957 as *Sepass Poems*. A later version was published in 1963 by Vantage Press (re-issued in 1974). See: Henry Pennier, ‘*Call Me Hank*’: a Stó:lō man’s reflections on logging, living, and growing old. Keith Thor Carlson and Kristina Fagan, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006) 118 n 3; and Kharlsernten Sepass, *Sepass Poems: the songs of Y-Ail-Mihth*. Recorded by Eloise Street (New York: Vantage Press, 1963).

²⁹ See: Queen’s University Archives, Lorne and Edith Pierce Collection, Box 23, File 13, Item 14-16, Eloise Street [Editor, *Indian Time*] to Lorne Pierce, 27 May, 1954; John Napier-Hemy, “Student Seeks to Promote Education of B.C. Indians” *The Ubyyssey* XXXIII.27 (November 24, 1950) 2; Petrone, *Native Literature*, 24-25; and Petrone, *First People, First Voices*, 143-146.

³⁰ See: Cecilia Morgan, “Performing” 67-89; Other enlightening texts on Aboriginal writers of the day include: Joseph Dion, *My Tribe the Crees*. Hugh A. Dempsey, ed. (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1979); Mike Mountain Horse, *My People the Bloods*. Hugh A. Dempsey, ed. (Calgary: Gelnbow-Alberta Institute, 1979); Alan Morley, *Roar of the Breakers: a biography of Peter Kelly* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967); Henry Pennier, ‘*Call Me Hank*’: a Stó:lō man’s reflections on logging, living, and growing old. Keith Thor Carlson and Kristina Fagan, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Kharlsernten Sepass, *Sepass poems: the songs of Y-Ail-Mihth*. Recorded by Eloise Street (New York: Vantage Press, 1963).

Newcomer relations in Canada. What follows is not an attempt at literary criticism, but rather a discussion of five aspiring Aboriginal writers, the historical context of their efforts, and an exploration of their successes and failures. This work aims to use literacy and print culture as windows through which Native-Newcomer relations in the early twentieth century can be viewed and interpreted. The stories which follow, while informed by the history of public policy and institutions in Canada as they relate to Aboriginal peoples, aim to show how the literary efforts of individuals worked to destabilise racial categories and expectations of what it meant to be an “Indian.”

CHAPTER ONE

Discovery, print, and European memory

There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.

Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.¹

In approximately 1438, Johannes Gutenberg, a German goldsmith and inventor, conceived the idea of the printing press and moveable type. In 1455 the “42-line Gutenberg Bible” was printed, and by the early 1470s the printing press had spread throughout most of Europe.² Christopher Columbus is credited with the discovery of the new world in 1492, and the first printing press crossed the Atlantic to the new world (Mexico) in 1540.³ The invention of the printing press and the discovery of the new world in the fifteenth century were the most important events of the Renaissance period. The historian Loys Le Roy noted near the end of the sixteenth century, “Do not believe that there exists anything more honourable to our or the preceding age than the invention of the printing press and the discovery of the new world; two things which I always thought could be compared not only to Antiquity, but to immortality.”⁴ The combined influences of the printing press and the new world forever changed Western culture and dramatically affected Western understandings of history. The printing press facilitated wide dissemination of European interpretations of the new world and the unknown peoples who inhabited these new lands. Furthermore, Western ideologies and a European sense

¹ I Corinthians 14:10-11.

² Bill Katz, *Dahl's History of the Book*. Third English ed. (Metuchen and London: Scarecrow Press, 1995) 141, 148.

³ Katz 148.

⁴ Loys Le Roy, *De la vicissitude ou variété des choses en l'univers* (Paris: 1579) 98-99.

of history as solely the product of the written word greatly affected new world peoples. Together, the printing press and Columbus' voyages changed the world forever. Europe was never the same after the discovery of the new world, and the new world itself was almost totally transformed.⁵

With the discovery of the new world, traditional European assumptions and beliefs about history, geography, theology, and the sciences were seriously challenged and had to be modified.⁶ Le Roy heralded the discoverers of the Americas as deserving “no less praise than the famous Hercules,”⁷ and European intellectuals in general agreed that the discovery was both novel and unique.⁸ However, the meanings of the discovery were not immediately understood. European society in general was faced with the difficult task of articulating the meanings of the new world into the understood human dimensions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. How did this new hemisphere, two new continents, and new peoples with an unknown history fit into the European understanding of the known world as consisting of only three continents, four monarchies, and six ages? The repercussions of the discoveries and explorations of the Americas were great: the world was proven to be a globe, inhabited by diverse peoples about whom “universal” historians had known nothing.⁹

Anthony Grafton notes that with the discovery of the new world, Western thinkers ceased

⁵ Colin G. Calloway, *New worlds for all: Indians, Europeans, and the remaking of early America* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) xiii.

⁶ Cornelius J. Jaenen, *Friend and foe: aspects of French-Amerindian cultural contact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976) 10.

⁷ Le Roy 98.

⁸ Donald R. Kelley, *Faces of History: historical inquiry from Herodotus to Herder* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 156.

⁹ Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*. Second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) 178.

to believe they could find all important truths in ancient books. The discovery of the new world was an inconvenient fact that collided and destroyed a beautiful theory that had been embodied in previously authoritative texts. Having read Aristotle, the Jesuit José de Acosta for example, believed that when he crossed the equator it would be unbearably hot and inhospitable, but instead he found it not only habitable, but temperate. In the Renaissance period books were regarded as the most powerful sources of knowledge and guides to behaviour in the world. Print culture held a high status in the eyes of readers, and books were social tools of the Renaissance. But when confronted with the challenge of the new world, available texts proved either too sterile to be useful or so useful as to survive unchanged.¹⁰ With their faith in ancient texts shaken following the discovery of the new world, Renaissance intellectuals went about writing new histories and accounts of the world to correct the discrepancies of earlier writings. But where some classical writers had been proven wrong in their descriptions of the world, the insightful and useful messages of others, like Herodotus, were too often ignored after 1492. Herodotus drew from his experience of cultural difference the lesson that societies could differ absolutely, but that the experience of what seemed to be bizarre beliefs and practices could impose tolerance on intelligent observers.¹¹ Westerners in general rarely applied such lessons as they went about discovering, writing, and colonising the world.

The new world was initially understood and described through the mythologies and culturally limited categories and languages of existing European historical tradition. In this tradition, new world peoples were represented as either “virtuous savages” (the Noble Savage) or bad barbarians (bloodthirsty villains), as both images fit into the classical tradition and

¹⁰ Anthony Grafton, *New worlds, ancient texts: the power of tradition and the shock of discovery* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992) 1-10.

¹¹ Grafton 256.

interpretation of ancient conceptions of barbarism.¹²

Anthony Pagden has noted that the new world was for all Europeans a “discovery.” Because Europeans had no prior knowledge of the new world, it had to be incorporated into the cosmographical, geographical, and anthropological understandings of the world as they knew it.¹³ To protect themselves from the unknown, most Europeans carried with them to the new world a number of notions and preconceptions about what it was they would encounter there. After discovery, the new world had to be transformed into a likeness of the old. The new world and its peoples had to be made to fit into the old understandings and categories of human development and history. Pagden asserts that this process was inevitable, rather than demonstrating a simple prejudice or unwillingness to understand. All Europeans who travelled to the Americas in the first three centuries following the discovery were from an intellectual culture which was convinced that everything in the world conformed to a pre-ordained set of laws, and that everything could be made explicable in terms of that law.¹⁴ “The Americas,” in this light, were as much invented as they were discovered – they were founded as well as found. The new world became an imagined space that needed to be filled with European understandings and preconceived notions of the world. All Europeans who were compelled to encounter the Americas were also driven by the need to make sense of the beliefs and ethical lives of others, which resulted in an attempt to construct “others” within the contexts of the observers’ own

¹² Daniel Francis outlines some of the contemporary consequences of these images in his book, *The Imaginary Indian: the image of the Indian in Canadian culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1995). Similarly, Carol Spindel discusses the contemporary controversies surrounding the imaginary Indian as mascot in, *Dancing at halftime: sports and the controversy over American Indian mascots* (New York: New York University Press, 2000). See also: Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage: and the beginnings of French colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984).

¹³ Anthony Pagden, *European encounters with the new world: from Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 5.

¹⁴ Pagden 10.

particular beliefs and ethics.¹⁵

The vehicle of expression for European understandings, preconceptions, and inventions relating to the new world was print culture. The idea of the Americas had a history, tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary all its own that gave it reality and presence in the imaginations of Europeans. Writing was one way in which Europeans took possession of the new world, placing it firmly within the known universe. Print culture provided a public vehicle which gave the new world official standing, and made its discovery an “historical” event. A discursive strategy thus created the new world.¹⁶

The European discovery of the Americas generated a vast body of literature, including travellers’, missionaries’, and naturalists’ reports. Print culture made possible the encounter between Europeans and Aboriginal peoples, and retold such meetings to those who had never been to the new world. Through the printed word Europeans came to ideologically and politically define the Americas – writing brought the Americas into being, so to speak, for an increasingly literate Western audience. The earliest European writing about the new world was not determined by the new world itself but by the need to maintain an imperial continuum of understanding and to construct a point of view whereby the new world experience would be intelligible and make sense. With increasing contact and exploration, the number and kind of texts increased. Thomas More’s *Utopia*, for example, which appeared in 1516, purported to be an account of a sailor who had participated in Amerigo Vespucci’s 1497-98 voyage to the new world. Shakespeare’s last comedy, *The Tempest* (1611), effectively illustrated many of the anxieties, fears, and a dread of the exotic and the unknown that permeated European attitudes

¹⁵ Pagden 184.

¹⁶ Margaret E. Turner, *Imagining culture: new world narrative and the writing of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995) 8; Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Marvellous possessions: the wonder of the new world* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 58.

about the new world. Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, published in 1626, was situated in the Pacific Ocean, and Jonathan Swift's Island of Houyhnhnms in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) came with an imaginary map of its South Atlantic location.¹⁷ Indeed, through writing about the new world, the English, for one, came to articulate and define a sense of nationhood through the colonial project of laying claim to distant lands. English writing with regards to the new world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, narrated events in the colonies while referring to the desires of English culture and nationhood.¹⁸

With particular reference to what would later become Canada, the example of Alexander Mackenzie's use of alphabetic literacy in laying claim to the northwest in 1793 almost speaks for itself. Although there was sufficient evidence that he was not the first European to reach the Pacific by land, Mackenzie "mixed up some vermilion in melted grease, and inscribed, in large characters, on the South-East face of the rock...this brief memorial – 'Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three.'"¹⁹ As Laura J. Murray notes, "while this was a familiar European ritual of discovery, it is important to note that the rocks of the Pacific Coast were covered with such inscriptions," usually left by Aboriginal peoples in the form of pictographs and hieroglyphics.²⁰ Almost a

¹⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Revised edition (London: Verso, 1991) 69; Emory Elliott, *The Cambridge introduction to early American literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 1-3; and Turner 3-22.

¹⁸ Thomas Scanlan, *Colonial writing and the new world, 1583-1671: allegories of desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 3. See also: I.S. MacLaren, "English writings about the New World" in *History of the Book in Canada: Volume I: Beginnings to 1840*. Patricia Lockhart Fleming, Gilles Gallichan, and Yvan Lamonde, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) 33-43.

¹⁹ Alexander Mackenzie, *The Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie*. W. Kaye Lamb, ed. (Toronto: Macmillan / Hakluyt Society, 1970) 378.

²⁰ Laura J. Murray, "The Uses of Literacy in the Northwest" in *History of the Book in Canada: Volume I: Beginnings to 1840*. Patricia Lockhart Fleming, Gilles Gallichan, and Yvan Lamonde, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) 192.

century later, when Hudson's Bay Company Officer and Doctor, William Fraser Tolmie, asked Aboriginal peoples to show him Mackenzie's inscription, they instead took him to "some Indian hieroglyphics marked with red earth." While Tolmie considered this apparent misunderstanding proof of his Indian guide's simplicity and stupidity, the act was just as likely a less-than-subtle effort to demonstrate to Dr. Tolmie that Mackenzie's accomplishment was no great feat and his was not the only written claim to "discovery."²¹

Even Columbus' so-called "discovery" was largely a product of print culture. There is clear evidence that earlier old world peoples had discovered or visited the new world several hundred years before Columbus. The Norse, for example, landed in what is now Canada around 1000 AD, and possibly even earlier; St. Brendan of Kerry may have reached Newfoundland around 530 AD; and legend says that Prince Madoc (Madog ab Owain Gwynedd) of Wales discovered America in 1170. The Madoc legend goes so far as to claim that a colony of Welsh settlers was established in what is now Alabama or Florida, before eventually settling in the Midwestern U.S.²² The legendary voyage of Saint Brendan has never been confirmed, but manuscript materials and a ninth century text give details of Brendan's voyage in the Atlantic Ocean in search of the "Garden of Eden," where it is said he encountered a "blessed island covered with vegetation." Columbus, in fact, took inspiration from the legends of Saint Brendan in making his argument that it was indeed possible to voyage to Asia by crossing the Atlantic.²³

²¹ William Fraser Tolmie, *The Journals of William Fraser Tolmie, Physician and Fur Trader*. Howard T. Mitchell, ed. (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1963) 297-298.

²² See, for example: Richard Deacon, *Madoc and the Discovery of America: some new light on an old controversy* (New York: Braziller, 1966); and Gwyn A. Williams, *Madoc: the making of a myth* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1979).

²³ See, for example: *The Voyage of St. Brendan, journey to the promised land / Navigatio Sancti Brendani abbatis*. Translated by John J. O'Meara (Mountrath, Ireland: Dolmen Press, 1985); *Navigatio Sancti Brendani abbatis, from early Latin manuscripts*. Carl Selmer, ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959); and Gearóid Ó Donnchadha, *St. Brendan of Kerry, the navigator: his life and voyages* (Portland: Four Courts Press, 2004).

But for most Europeans the arrival of Columbus marked the discovery of the new world. The writings of Columbus generated a vast literature of exploration, fiction, and description that contributed greatly to Western perceptions and understandings of the new world and sparked a sustained and systematic interest in its exploration and exploitation. Earlier accounts of exploration of the new world by St. Brendan and the Norse were also disseminated through writing, but these were in manuscript form only. With the invention of the printing press only years earlier, Columbus' voyage and "discovery" quickly became the most widely known and came to be popularly known as the definitive first voyage to the new world. The invention of the printing press meant that books could be printed much faster and distributed in larger numbers. Furthermore, with the invention of the printing press, European literacy rates increased, and slowly reading became a pastime of more than just the educated and religious elite.²⁴ Therefore, the stories and lore surrounding Columbus' voyage to America spread faster and more widely through literate Europe than had earlier exploration tales.

Similarly, the naming of "America" was rooted in print. "America" was named after Amerigo Vespucci, whose exploration successes and contributions are highly debatable. Generally considered an obscure figure, there are many documents supposedly written by Vespucci, but few are considered authentic. Even those that have been authenticated as originating from Vespucci's hand are filled with a mixture of truth and outright falsehood, often difficult to distinguish. One of Vespucci's biographers, Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, considers the notorious merchant and navigator to have made no significant contribution to art or science. Nonetheless, it is he after whom America is named, not because of any great achievement or contribution to European discovery, but because of his success as a writer in convincing his

²⁴ Katz 190-191.

readers that his sensational narratives were based in truth. His writings about apparent voyages he participated in to South America between 1497 and 1504 – *Mundus Novus* (1502 or 1503) and *Lettera al Soderini* (1504 or 1505) – convinced many Europeans that he was a genius pilot and astrologer who had discovered the new world before Columbus. Between 1502 and 1529, Vespucci's letters were published in sixty editions in a number of cities in what are today the countries of Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy, The Netherlands, and the Czech Republic. None appeared in Spain, suggesting possible censorship. Thirty-seven of the editions were published in the vernacular, and almost half of these were in German, suggesting financial as well as scholarly interest in Vespucci's apparent discoveries.²⁵ Among those that his writing convinced was the mapmaker Martin Waldseemüller, who labelled a vast area now known as Brazil as "America" (the feminine form of "Americus," the Latinized version of "Amerigo"). Waldseemüller's map was included in the 1507 bestseller on geography, *Cosmographiae introductio*, and not long after other mapmakers were labelling both continents in the new world, "America." Vespucci's importance, therefore, had little to do with his actual achievements as an explorer, real or fabricated, but with his ability to convince the public of these achievements through the publication of his letters. It was from these letters that many Europeans learned of the discovery of the new continent of America for the first time.²⁶

The power of the printing press and increasing degrees of literacy amongst Europeans in the late fifteenth century and beyond cannot be overstated. As Olive Patricia Dickason notes, "The comparative speed with which news of the New World was diffused in Europe becomes

²⁵ Dickason 7.

²⁶ See, for example: Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Amerigo: the man who gave his name to America* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006); Roscoe R. Miller, *Amerigo and the naming of America* (New York: Carlton Press, 1968); and Amerigo Vespucci, *Letters from a New World: Amerigo Vespucci's discovery of America*. Luciano Formisano, ed. David Jacobson, trans. (New York: Marsilio, 1992).

clearer when it is realized that during the late sixteenth century, it took approximately ten days for news to travel from Paris to London. Before the printing press, when dependence had been greater on word of mouth, it had not only taken longer for news to be disseminated, but its acceptance had been very slow.”²⁷ Greenland, for example, while discovered during the tenth century, only began appearing on maps during the fifteenth century. Neither Marco Polo’s voyages to the orient, nor those of the Franciscans in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, had any influence on medieval cartography. Not until the fifteenth century was Marco Polo’s influence noticeable, the century in which the printing press was invented.

Indigenous Literacies and Ways of Remembering

When Europeans arrived in the new world, they did not recognize any traces of a formal or civilized expression of written language or printed materials in any Aboriginal cultures. What Europeans did see were pictorial inscriptions that they understood to be, at best, supplementary aids to a predominantly oral tradition of communication. Aboriginal peoples throughout the Americas in fact had their own unique means of communicating and disseminating knowledge, and although not recognized as such by early explorers, settlers, and missionaries, new world peoples demonstrated degrees of literacy in their own scripts.²⁸ Methods of knowledge transfer and communication within Aboriginal contexts included oral traditions, dances, “art,” astronomy and the spiritual, articulated through such means as birch bark scrolls, winter counts, hieroglyphics, and wampum, to mention only a few. Each of these represented a

²⁷ Dickason 8.

²⁸ The author adheres to what John DeFrancis labels as an “inclusivist” definition of writing and communication, meaning that writing includes any system of graphic symbols used to convey some degree of thought. See: John DeFrancis, *Visible speech: the diverse oneness of writing systems* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989) 3-7. See also: Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, *Paper Talk: a history of libraries, print culture, and Aboriginal peoples in Canada before 1960* (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005).

unique communication form and demanded a familiarity (or kind of literacy) on behalf of their creator and the reader or listener.²⁹ With the obvious exception of oral traditions, each of these represented a decipherable form of written or recorded information that acted as a means of preserving and communicating knowledge to contemporary and future generations. European newcomers did not recognize Aboriginal sign systems as other forms of writing equal to their own because within their Western understandings writing was thought of as the literal transcription of speech. Linguistic and literacy scholars now recognize that writing is not adequately thought of as the transcription of speech, but rather as a means of preserving and communicating information.³⁰ Birch bark scrolls, hieroglyphics, winter counts, calumets, and wampum belts all acted as historical documents, representing cultural expressions and events which were meant to be interpreted by contemporary and future members of the community.

The Iroquois, for example, encoded details of their agreements with neighbouring tribes and European powers on wampum belts. Upon reaching an agreement, the wampum belts were designed and then hung in the council house as testimony to the terms of the agreement, where they could be examined by members of the community and explained. After a period of time, when the community was well aware of the agreement or treaty, the wampum would be removed from the council house and entrusted by the chiefs to a designated wampum keeper. The wampum keepers were members of the community who were noted for their keen memory and upright character, who could be called upon to interpret (or read) the belts and teach younger generations. Ethnologist William N. Fenton, noted that the use of wampum in council lapsed in

²⁹ Pictographs and petroglyphs could also be included in this list. However, their usage would appear to be based more firmly in the spiritual realm, where the meaning of inscriptions may be intentionally opaque and not intended to be understood by everyone.

³⁰ See Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter D. Mignolo, eds., *Writing without words: alternative literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994); Roy Harris, *The Origin of writing* (London: Duckworth, 1986); David R. Olson, *The Word on paper: the conceptual and cognitive implications of writing and reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

the late nineteenth century, and many of the belts fell into the hands of collectors and museums, where their encoded symbolism and meanings were often lost. But in the 1990s, the Onondaga council began to recover surviving wampum from museums and private collectors, seeking to restore something of the glory and recorded history of the League of the Iroquois.³¹

Wampum, in pre-contact times, took the form of necklaces, strings, belts, or aprons, mainly, but was always constructed of two kinds of shells, threaded with deerskin. White wampum, which was associated with positive events (such as a peace agreement), was made of shells collected from periwinkles. Purple or black wampum, collected from quahogs, was usually associated with death or war. After contact with Europeans, the Iroquois began to use glass beads in making wampum, but shells were still the preferred form, particularly in recording diplomacy. Wampum served as a mnemonic device, which could be read to retell important transactions. Wampum served as a kind of document, or archive, and wampum keepers could be described as early archivists or librarians. Early diplomatic relations between the Iroquois and Europeans involved the regular exchange of wampum, and the European parties generally recognised the important role that wampum served. In short, if a message or agreement was accompanied by wampum, then the events were understood to be of great significance. And on the other hand, if such a message was not accompanied by wampum, then it was not regarded as serious or binding.³²

Such systems of communication were comparable to Western notions of the printed word in that they were relatively permanent and functioned for their communities as documents to establish and record ideas and events. Generally not recognising these as legitimate or parallel

³¹ See Fenton's chapter on wampum in: William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: a political history of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998) 224-239.

³² For discussion with regards to European-First Nations relations and wampum, see: J.R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal treaty-making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, [forthcoming] 2009), Chapter 2.

writing forms, or as valid methods of communicating and preserving knowledge, explorers, settlers, and missionaries often assumed that the new world peoples were peoples without history, with no concern for recording their own histories. Thus, Europeans came to term the period before their “discovery” of the new world, “prehistory,” implying that the new world was without history until the arrival of Europeans and Western notions of the written and printed word.

Although not the same as European understandings of literacy and ways of knowing and remembering, Indigenous peoples of the new world were not without means of remembering and communicating their histories. The Neapolitan scholar, Giambattista Vico (1670-1744), first touched upon such ideas regarding the nature of memory, literacy and how these relate to oral cultures.³³ Vico analysed ancient texts for what they revealed about so-called “preliterate” cultures. Key to Vico’s understanding of the nature of memory was the direct correspondence between image and idea in preliterate languages. Through the examination of ancient texts, Vico asserted that image and idea were one and the same in oral cultures. In other words, in an oral culture, memory is arranged metaphorically. Vico theorised that memory was an act of interpretation that enabled an individual to establish connections between the familiar images of the present with the unfamiliar images of the past.³⁴ As an important historian of the oral tradition, Vico sought to understand the interchanges between orality and literacy. In this light, he did not limit “letters” to alphabetic literacy. Rather, Vico interpreted speaking and writing as coextensive in their historical development because they both drew on a “mental dictionary”

³³ For an insightful look at Vico and his work as it relates to the study of memory, see: Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an art of memory* (Hanover and London: University of Vermont and the University Press of New England, 1993) 32-39.

³⁴ *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, third ed. Trans. and ed. Thomas G. Bergin and Max H. Fisch (1744; Ithaca, 1970) passim.

common to all humanity.

If we accept Vico's theory, then the age which preceded literacy was "literate in another way."³⁵ Vico worked to strip down the barrier or dichotomy between orality and literacy, but unfortunately his ideas were not taken seriously by historians until the mid-twentieth century. Along with Walter Ong and other twentieth-century grammarians, historians (right or wrong) have worked to re-establish the dichotomy between text and author that Vico worked hard to strike down.³⁶ But Vico's notion that "preliterate" societies were "literate in another way," has stirred much debate, if not confusion, as to the ultimate meanings of "literacy." Perhaps an easier way of tackling these issues is to consider that all societies, literate and "preliterate," are in actual fact, all oral. No society is strictly "literate," without also demonstrating instances of orality. From this perspective, the binary between orality and literacy is more clearly revealed to be misleading, if not false.

Nancy Shoemaker, Professor of American Indian History at the University of Connecticut asserts that both Europeans and Indians "cultivated the fiction that writing and speaking were the core differences between them and that Europeans were better at writing while Indians were better at speaking."³⁷ Reminding us that every culture is an oral culture, and no culture survives on the written language alone, Shoemaker demonstrates that an insistence on the opposition of "oral traditions" with "literature and history," makes it difficult to see that "all

³⁵ Hutton 38.

³⁶ See: Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: the technologizing of the word* (1991; London: Routledge, 2002). For useful criticism of Ong's theories, see: Tim Ingold, *Lines: a brief history* (London: Routledge, 2007). Ingold critiques Ong's claim that orality and literacy are separate technologies, that oral cultures evolved into writing cultures.

³⁷ Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: becoming red and white in Eighteenth-Century North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 76.

parties at Indian-European councils pursued the same end.”³⁸ Each endeavoured to preserve the memory of what was said in the form of a material object that could be displayed, ceremonially exchanged, stored with other records, and later retrieved as a perpetual reminder of an agreement. Europeans did so with written documents – on paper, sometimes in book form – and while Aboriginal cultures may have recounted history through oral performance, such performances also entailed producing a material record (wampum, calumets, etc.).³⁹

A War of Words (and Memory)

After the fall of the Aztec city, Tenochtitlán, to Hernán Cortés in 1521, the conquest of Mexico by the Spanish became, in part, a battle of print cultures – the written histories of the Aztec versus the Christian Bible. Print culture arose in Meso-America at least one thousand years before the arrival of Columbus. In Mayan writing for example, a glyph could be a calendrical designation, a name, or a phonetic symbol for a syllable. Meso-American writing materials varied, from stones to leather. The Aztecs wrote on deerskin or paper made from the fibres of the agave plant; their script was painted in vibrant colour, and covers were often made of jaguar skin. Most Aztec histories were composed in the form of calendars, the most fundamental of all Meso-American ordering systems. Aztec calendrical annals incorporated history, divination, biography, and myth, reflecting both Meso-American religion and history. Aztec libraries consisted mainly of these calendrical annals, and were revered for the religious and divinatory knowledge they imparted. Recognising the great importance these works held to the Aztec, Spanish conquerors burned all the Aztec painted books they could find, failing to separate their historical value from the religious, cultural, and ideological threat they posed.

³⁸ Shoemaker, 64.

³⁹ See: Shoemaker, 61-81.

Shortly after this destruction, Spanish priests and missionaries began teaching the Aztec to use the Western-approved Roman alphabet. Thus began a process of rewriting history, composing a newly imagined Meso-American past. The Spanish destroyed Aztec astronomical and calendric knowledge, and effectively eliminated traditional Aztec scribes who had once recorded Aztec history.⁴⁰

Walter D. Mignolo's *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* examines the role that print culture, literacy, and language played in the colonisation of Latin America. Following in the footsteps of such literacy scholars and theorists as Harold Adams Innis, Marshall McLuhan, Jacques Derrida, Harvey Graff, and Jack Goody,⁴¹ Mignolo's interdisciplinary study seeks to reinterpret the history of print culture and literacy as a tool of Occidentalism. The "darker side of the Renaissance" that Mignolo speaks of is the rebirth of the classical tradition as a justification for colonial expansion. Earlier histories of the new world, and in particular Latin America, focussed on the interaction between Western cultures and the cultures of Indigenous peoples, however, Mignolo argues that more than just the lands of the First Peoples were colonised by the Spanish. Indigenous intellectual understandings of the world were ignored and discredited, and then replaced by Western conceptions of knowledge, literacy, and history. It was the book, not gunpowder, which ultimately led to European victory in the contest for

⁴⁰ Matthew Battles, *Library: an unquiet history* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003) 42-45; Brian M. Fagan, *Clash of Cultures*. Second edition (Walnut Creek CA: AltaMira Press, 1998) 88.

⁴¹ See for example: Harold Adams Innis, *The Bias of communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951); Harold Adams Innis, *Empire and communications* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950); Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg galaxy: the making of typographic man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962); Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding media: the extensions of man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Harvey J. Graff, *The Labyrinths of literacy: reflections on literacy past and present* (New York: Falmer Press, 1987); Harvey J. Graff, *The Literacy myth: cultural integration and social structure in the nineteenth century* (1979; New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991); Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The consequences of literacy." *Comparative studies in society and history* 5 (1963): 304-345; Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the savage mind* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

colonial control with Indigenous peoples in the new world. Mignolo's work serves to remind scholars that First Peoples had their own unique ways of knowing and understanding history before the introduction of alphabetic literacy. Picking up on some of the theories of Vico, Mignolo debunks the common (mis)understanding of Indigenous and Western communication forms as strict dichotomies. Like Vico's, Mignolo's work serves to set up a theoretical context where there is more movement between oral and literate forms of communication and ways of remembering.

Although a few Spaniards, like José de Acosta and Juan de Tovar, recognised that through images and memory the First Peoples of Latin America maintained sources of knowledge that yielded history, the majority of Spanish intellectuals who visited and lived in the new world during the sixteenth century did not recognise these Indigenous methods. The belief that only alphabetic literacy allowed for reliable recording of the past persisted amongst most Spaniards, and Indigenous recording practices were discredited and then replaced by histories written by the Spaniards in alphabetic script. Through writing their histories of the new world in alphabetic script, the Spanish colonised Indigenous memories and languages, contributing to the larger process of Occidentalism in the new world.

Similarly, although perhaps less dramatically, European missionaries in North America sought to convert First Peoples to Christianity and to eliminate Indigenous methods of communication with at least a reading ability in alphabetic scripts. With the introduction of Western alphabetic literacy and European efforts to erase Indigenous voices, the colonisation of new world languages and memory began. Western print culture was held as the warranty of truth and embodied the foundations for European assumptions about relations between alphabetic writing and the truth. New world peoples, largely seen to be people without letters,

were interpreted and presented as people without history. New world oral narratives and sign systems were looked upon by Europeans as incoherent and inconsistent, while alphabetic writing and print culture became elevated as the most desirable systems of communication.⁴² Christianity is one of the so-called “religions of the book.” Thus, in basing their teachings on the Bible and related tracts and hymns, Western missionaries and colonisers in the new world promoted the idea of the book as a human container and expression of knowledge and the divine word. Non-book forms of writing were outward signs of an uncivilized people, who lived without order and reason. Through alphabetic literacy, access could be gained to Christianity, a religion seen to be based on unchanging truths. Order and reason could be brought to the lives of perceived “savage” converts through providing access to reading and writing in the Western tradition, preferably in English, French, or Spanish. From a European perspective, there existed a clear connection between language, Western literacy, and cultural change. In fact, one could not be considered “civilised” (in Canada) if one spoke an Indigenous language even as late as the early twentieth century.⁴³

While Western understandings of the written word and print culture were often imposed upon new world peoples by Europeans, some Aboriginal peoples willingly embraced Western literacy. Learning to read and write in the Western tradition provided Aboriginal peoples with the skills and knowledge to deal with the strange new world that was emerging. Learning to read, for instance, was a way of acquiring knowledge about the European newcomers, as well as about their God; it could be used to understand treaties, laws, and deeds as well as the Bible.⁴⁴

⁴² Mignolo 3.

⁴³ See, for example: John S. Milloy, *“A National Crime”: the Canadian government and the residential school system, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999) 143.

⁴⁴ Calloway 77.

But when new world peoples began to master and articulate Western literacies, European colonisers often became uneasy. As a companion of empire, the power of language depended entirely on who had mastered it and who could understand its script fully.⁴⁵ In an early example of missionary censorship in New France, Pierre Maillard, a cleric of the Spiritan order, feared that access to secular and political materials inscribed in the Roman alphabet might foster an anti-French sentiment amongst the Mi'kmaq of the Gaspé region. He said, if the Mi'kmaq “should be in a state to use, as we do, our alphabet, be it to read or to write, they inevitably would abuse this knowledge through this spirit of curiosity ... which hurriedly drives them to know bad things rather than good.”⁴⁶ He continued, saying that “they would surely emancipate themselves ... if they could make use of our alphabet ...; they would not hesitate strongly to persuade themselves that they knew much more than those who are intended to instruct them.”⁴⁷ Further, Maillard was certain “that to ... substitute the alphabet for the [hieroglyphic] characters which the Indians use to read and write, this would work very badly, for them as for us.”⁴⁸ Moreover, Maillard believed that alphabetic literacy could make the Mi'kmaq a strategic threat to the French influence in the region: “they would be capable of causing great harm amongst the

⁴⁵ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: the question of the other*. Translated by Richard Howard (New York: Harper & Row, 1984) 221.

⁴⁶ Translations of Maillard from Bruce Greenfield, “The Mi'kmaq hieroglyphic prayer book: writing and Christianity in Maritime Canada, 1675-1921,” *The Language encounter in the Americas. 1492-1800: a collection of essays*, ed. Edward G. Gray and Norman Fiering (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000) 198: “S'ils étoient une fois en état de se servir comme nous de notre alphabet soit pour lire, soit pour écrire, ils abuseroient infailliblement de cette science par cet esprit de curiosité, que nous leur connaissons, qui les domine pour chercher avec empressement à sçavoir plutôt les choses dans leurs mémoires”; Pierre Antoine-Simon Maillard, “Lettre de M. L'Abbé Maillard sur les missions de l'Acadie et particulièrement sur les missions Micmaques,” *Les Soirées Canadiennes: recueil de littérature*, troisième année (Québec City: Brousseau Frères, 1863) 358.

⁴⁷ Greenfield 198: “Mais s'ils s'émanciperoient bien ... s'ils pouvoient faire usage de notre alphabet, soit pour lire, soit pour écrire; ils ne tarderoient pas à se fortement persuader qu'ils en sçavent beaucoup plus que ceux qui sont faits pour les instruire”; Maillard 360.

⁴⁸ Greenfield 198: “De vouloir substituer notre alphabet aux caractères don't nos sauvages se servent pour lire et pour écrire, ce seroit fort mal travailler et pour eux, et pour nous”; Maillard 362.

people, as much with respect to religion and behaviour as with respect to politics and government.”⁴⁹ Protestant missionaries, on the other hand, were often enthusiastic promoters of literacy.⁵⁰

Print culture was therefore a crucial, yet potentially contestable, element of European colonial control in the new world. The written word and the book were conceived by Europeans as containers in which knowledge from the new world could be deposited, and as vehicles by which this knowledge could be transmitted to other Westerners.⁵¹ Perhaps even more importantly, print culture provided Europeans with a vehicle for the “truth” and a means by which law could be imposed over perceived chaos. The literacies and methods by which new world peoples maintained their own histories and memories were largely unrecognised or worse, devalued, by Europeans. Western print culture at once defined the new world in the imaginations of Europeans, and worked to colonise traditional Aboriginal methods of communicating history and knowledge.

Alphabetic literacy was thus the third weapon of colonial rule in the new world. In addition to gunpowder and disease, alphabetic literacy was a critical tool that aided European powers in the conquest of the Americas. With literacy and print, Europeans successfully claimed and conquered the new world and its peoples, writing into existence their claim to “discovery” and rights to rule and possess. Similarly, it was through literacy and print that Europeans claimed superiority over the Indigenous peoples of the new world, and devalued existing Indigenous literacies and knowledge.

⁴⁹ Greenfield 198: “Seroient-ils capables de causer de grands maux parmi la nation, tant par rapport à la religion et aux bonnes moeurs, qu’au gouvernement politique”; Maillard 361.

⁵⁰ For more on this, see: Edwards, *Paper Talk* 57-59, 87.

⁵¹ Mignolo 122.

CHAPTER TWO

History and memory through writing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

Books have been written of the native American, so distorting his true nature that he scarcely resembles the real man....So, through the very agencies that reach the mass of people, that purport to instruct, educate, and perpetuate true history – books, schools, and libraries all over the land – there have been graven false ideas in the hearts and minds of the people.¹

European literary (mis)conceptions of the Indian

As Robert Berkhofer Jr. noted in 1978, “the basic images of the good and bad Indian persist from the era of Columbus up to the present without substantial modification or variation.”² What he meant was that there have generally been only two conceptions of the Indian since the time of Columbus and the invention of the printing press: the “Noble Savage” (this conception includes the Indian Princess) and the “bloodthirsty” villain (including the intoxicated Indian and lascivious squaw). Depending on literary styles or political goals, these two conceptions have altered remarkably little. Very soon after Columbus’ “discovery,” as information about the new world was dispersed and became more widely known in Europe, Aboriginal peoples became a permanent fixture in the literary and imaginative works of Old World writers. The voluminous Jesuit *Relations*, for example, provided the French, and in turn other European scholars, a basis on which eighteenth-century deists and philosophers could draw in their moral and political writings. Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, among others, used the conception of the enlightened Noble Savage to critique French and European societies and social institutions of the day. The

¹ Luther Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (1933; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978) 227-228.

² Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: images of the American Indian from Columbus to present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978) 71. Part Three of *The White Man's Indian* discusses the image of the Indian in literature, art, and philosophy. See Berkhofer Jr. 71-111.

idea of the Noble Savage, for European philosophers and critics, represented the possibility of progress by “civilised” society if allowed the freedom to escape outworn social institutions.³ By the end of the eighteenth century, the Noble Savage convention had become so widely used to criticize European institutions, that the supporters of those institutions were compelled to attack the conception of the enlightened Noble Savage, often evoking the other idea of the Indian, the bloodthirsty villain.

The idea of nobility, in relation to new world peoples, could be seen in how Aboriginal people were often depicted in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries: for the most part, they were described as part of the North American environment, something which European colonists had to overcome in their cause of progress and the task of nation-building. So harmonious was the relationship between the Indian and nature that outsiders viewed the two elements as an integrated part of the new world. Thus, Euro-Americans and Euro-Canadians felt a need to conquer and dominate Aboriginal peoples (and their environment) and to remould them in old world conceptions. As historian Cornelius Jaenen explains in relation to French-Aboriginal relations, “it was the French who sailed to America and established contact with the aborigines, not the Micmacs or Iroquois who sailed to Europe and established contact with the Bretons, Normans and Rochelais.”⁴ Therefore, in European ideology of the time, Europe was assumed to be the centre of the world and civilisation, and its cultures more advanced and older than the cultures of other parts of the world. Such Eurocentrism permeated the old world’s

³ See, for example, Roger L. Emerson, “American Indians, Frenchmen, and Scots philosophers,” *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 9 (1979) 211-236; Paul Honigsheim, “Voltaire as Anthropologist,” *American Anthropologist* XLVII (1945) 104-118; Honigsheim, “The American Indian in the Philosophy of the Enlightenment,” *Osiris* X (1952) 91-108; Carla Mulford, “Benjamin Franklin, Native Americans, and European cultures of civility,” *Prospects* 24 (1999) 49-66.

⁴ Cornelius J. Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: aspects of French-Amerindian cultural contact in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976) 10.

understandings of the new world and the relationships that were forged there. The myth of the Noble Savage, and its binary opposite, the depraved barbarian, were thus present in all cultural contact between Europeans and North American Indians. Although such views were a polarization, they coexisted. When European cultures were dependent on Aboriginal peoples for safety and sustenance, the dominant view of Indians was that of the Noble Savage. But when Indians got in the way of proposed European settlement, or sided with a competing European competitor or enemy, then Aboriginal people were portrayed as barbarian and savage. Jaenen, in the context of French-Aboriginal relationships, describes the French view of Indians as both friend and foe, depending entirely upon the immediate circumstances.⁵

Of course, the very basis of what is “civilized” and what is “savage” is entirely unclear. Eurocentric attitudes and assumptions led Euro-North Americans to assume that the cultures of Europe were the pinnacle of civilization and that Aboriginal new world cultures stood in opposition to this. Yet, as the historian and journalist Olive Patricia Dickason explains, “The word ‘civilized’ is usually applied to societies possessing a state structure and an advanced technology.... The term ‘savage’ is applied to societies at an early stage of technology, a stage at which they are believed to be dominated by the laws of nature. Its use implies that Amerindian societies did not match the refinements of those of Europe, and that they were more cruel.”⁶ But as she goes on to elucidate, neither premise stands up under close examination: to suggest that Peruvians or Mexicans, for example, lacked sophistication is absurd. Clearly they (and other Indigenous North American societies) were highly developed, but their value systems were clearly very different from those of the French, English, or Spanish. To say that Aboriginal

⁵ Jaenen passim.

⁶ Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage: and the beginnings of French colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984) xi.

peoples were crueller also fails to stand up to examination – on both sides of the Atlantic public executions were practiced. For Europeans, public execution and torture were regarded as necessary for the administration of justice and inspiring respect for authority. Most Aboriginal cultures that practiced public execution and torture (and not all did) used it against outside enemies as a means of consolidating their own communities and dominating outside hostile forces. To say one form of execution or torture is less cruel than the other, is impossible, if not foolish. Thus the classification of Aboriginal peoples as savage was a conscious tactic by which Europeans were able to create the ideology that helped make colonization of the new world possible.⁷

As had the French Revolution, the American Revolution inspired the conception of the Noble Savage as a critique on the social ills of the day. But by the nineteenth century a more romantic, rather than enlightened, image of the Noble Savage took hold in the arts and literature. In England, the conception of the romantic Noble Savage was best expressed in Thomas Cooper's long poem, *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809),⁸ the first popular English poem set in North America and including Aboriginal characters. In France, François-René de Chateaubriand published, *Atala, ou les amours de deux sauvages dans le desert* (1801).⁹ Both works imagined picturesque and mysterious landscapes, combined with the confrontation of the “civilised” and “savage.” Each volume was published in several editions, producing a romantic and primitive image of the Indian that would speak to generations of Europeans. The successes of these literary works encouraged other European writers to draw on the new world for “picturesque

⁷ Dickason xiii.

⁸ Thomas Campbell, *Gertrude of Wyoming, a Pennsylvania tale, and other poems* (London: Bensley, 1809).

⁹ François-René de Chateaubriand, *Atala, or, The love and constancy of two savages in the desert*. Caleb Bingham, trans. William Leonard Schwartz, ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1930).

people and sublime nature.”¹⁰ In an 1884 introduction to the English translation of *Atala*, Edward J. Harding expresses a familiar tone, noting that the “red Indian” has all but vanished and been forgotten; “to-day the red man’s war whoop resounds only in literature of the ‘dime novel’ school. But it was not so in 1801, the year that witnessed the publication of ‘Atala’....After all, who knows how the primitive red Indian thought and spoke? Certainly Chateaubriand is not alone in representing him as courteous, eloquent, tinged with sentiment....”¹¹ Chateaubriand himself describes Chactas, Atala’s lover, as “a savage more than half civilized, since he knows not only the living but also the dead languages of Europe. He can therefore express himself in a mixed style, suitable to the line upon which he stands, between society and nature.”¹² The character of Atala, similarly, is that of a half-Indian princess whose love for Chactas cannot be realized because she is Christian and he is not. Told as a quasi-Homeric narrative by Chactas in his old age, *Atala* was embraced as an exciting and exotic piece of literature when it was published in 1801. Its “strange blend of primitive ‘Homeric’ simplicity and a brooding Romantic melancholy,” as David Wakefield notes, “set the fashion for literary heroes and their pictorial counterparts for the next half century.”¹³ *Atala* served as a major influence in the work of several artists and writers in the nineteenth century, such as the French painter, Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson (1767-1824), whose famous piece, *The Burial of Atala*, was first exhibited in 1813.¹⁴

¹⁰ Berkhofer, Jr. 79-80.

¹¹ Edward J. Harding, “Introduction,” *Atala: by Chateaubriand*. Trans. by James Spence Harry. Illust. by Gustave Doré (New York: Cassell Publishing Company, 1884) 7, 8, 9.

¹² Chateaubriand, “Preface to the First Edition,” *Atala: by Chateaubriand*. Trans. by James Spence Harry. Illust. by Gustave Doré (New York: Cassell Publishing Company, 1884) 17.

¹³ David Wakefield, “Chateaubriand’s ‘Atala’ as a Source of Inspiration in Nineteenth-Century Art,” *The Burlington Magazine* 120.898 (1978) 13-24.

¹⁴ See: “Girodet: Romantic Rebel.” February, 2006. The Art Institute of Chicago. 21 January, 2008,

Following the American Revolution, a similar imaginative transformation of Aboriginal peoples took place, from the Indian of contact to a mythic and symbolic Indian. Like the European conception of the Indian, the American literary idea of Aboriginal peoples was one part romantic and enlightened Noble Savage who stood for the potential freedoms of humankind, and conversely, the bloodthirsty villain that stood in the way of progress and manifest destiny. The nineteenth century saw an explosion in the popularity of captivity narratives, many of which were bestsellers. All included the basic premise of the pains and horrors that Euro-North Americans suffered under the enslavement of Aboriginal peoples. Obviously, the bloodthirsty villain conception of the Indian prevailed, but more importantly the captivity narratives reached readers from both high and low cultures. The best known of the captivity narratives was Samuel Drake's, *Indian Captivities; Or life in the wigwam*, first published in 1839.¹⁵ Canadian captivity titles from this era included Theresa Gowanlock's, *Two months in the camp of Big Bear* (1885), John R. Jewitt's, *The Adventures and sufferings of John R. Jewitt* (1824), and Samuel Goodrich's, *The Captive of Nootka* (1835).¹⁶ The sensationalism and violence of these commercially-gearred texts were a direct influence and precursor to the popular dime novels and

<<http://www.artic.edu/aic/exhibitions/girodet/>>. For more on French writing in general – particularly from Quebec – which included discussion of Aboriginal peoples, see: Donald B. Smith, *Le Sauvage: the Native people in Quebec historical writing on the Heroic Period (1534-1663) of New France*. National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Historical Division, Paper No. 6 (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1974).

¹⁵ Samuel G. Drake, *Indian Captivities; Or Life in the Wigwam: being true narratives of captives who have been carried away by Indians, from the frontier settlements of the United States, from the earliest period to the present time* (1839; Auburn: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1854).

¹⁶ Theresa Gowanlock, *Two months in the camp of Big Bear: the life and adventures of Theresa Gowanlock and Theresa Delaney* (Parkdale: Times, 1885); John Rogers Jewitt, *The Adventures and sufferings of John R. Jewitt, the only survivor of the ship Boston, during a captivity of nearly three years among the savages of Nootka Sound: with an account of the manners, mode of living and religious opinions of the natives* (Edinburgh: Archd. Constable & Co., 1824); Samuel G. Goodrich, *The Captive of Nootka, or, The adventures of John R. Jewitt* (New York: J.P. Peaslee, 1835).

cowboy and Indian movies of the early twentieth century.¹⁷

Yet, “captivity,” in the words of historian John Demos, “meant ‘contact’ of a particularly vivid sort.”¹⁸ In other words, captivity narratives were, at their heart, stories of the encounter between Euro-North Americans and Aboriginal peoples. So while they may have been sensationalised, and certainly fictionalised, they said something of the innermost feelings of Euro-North Americans towards Aboriginal cultures. They portrayed a very real sense of fear, of difference (and attempts at bridging or eliminating difference), and most of all they usually maintained a Eurocentric point of view, assuming Indians to be inherently, if not forever, unredeemable. At the heart of captivity narratives was the interplay and conflict between “civilization” (i.e., the European newcomers, who were normally the authors of such texts) and “savagery” (the Indians). Historian Sarah Carter notes that captivity narratives served to construct (and maintain) a perceived threat posed by Indians to “civilized” Euro-Canadian behaviour, particularly in relation to the honour of white women, and to maintain the need to pursue strategies of exclusion and control. Such stories (real or imagined) fed newcomer fears that Aboriginal people (mainly predatory males) were lying in wait to pounce on white children (usually girls) and spirit them away. Captivity narratives, therefore, served as literary barriers, segregating Euro-North Americans (the writers and readers of such stories, overwhelmingly) from Aboriginal populations. They created and fed into an “us versus them” mentality, buttressing (often false) stereotypical images of Indians and European women as a means of

¹⁷ For more on the Indian captivity genre, see: Pauline Turner Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: the politics and poetics of colonial American captivity narratives* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999); Rebecca Blevins Faery, *Cartographies of Desire: captivity, race, and sex in the shaping of an American nation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narratives, 1550-1900* (Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan, 1993); Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: the manipulation of cultural imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); Gordon M. Sayre, ed., *American Captivity Narratives: selected narratives with introduction* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000).

¹⁸ John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: a family story from early America* (1994; London: Papermac, 1996) xii.

establishing social and spatial boundaries between settlers and Aboriginal peoples, and to justify repressive measures against Indian populations.¹⁹ Newspaper and media reports in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century glorified and fed a kind of hysteria about Aboriginal people capturing Euro-Canadians, particularly women. In several cases, newspaper reports actively made-up stories about white women who had been subject to “nameless horrors of Indian indignity and savage lust,” when in reality the women suffered little and in some cases had actively chosen to stay amongst their Aboriginal friends. In other words, they could hardly be called captives at all.²⁰

Such captivity narratives were a direct precursor to popular early-twentieth century dime novels, comic books, and cowboy and Indian films. Both the romantic and savage images of the Indian were popular in such media, but most romantic of all was the notion that Aboriginal peoples were rapidly disappearing. The vanishing race conception was embraced and wholly believed by not only the average European or North American reader, but also by the Canadian and American federal governments who administered policy relating to Indians. As a literary device, the idea of a vanishing race before the onslaught of “civilisation” inspired in audiences feelings of nostalgia, pity, and tragedy. As Berkhofer, Jr. notes, “the tragedy of the dying Indian, especially portrayed by the last living member of a tribe, became a staple of American literature.”²¹ The most famous of this genre was, of course, James Fenimore Cooper’s, *The Last of the Mohicans*, originally published in 1826, and still considered a classic by contemporary

¹⁹ See: Carter passim.

²⁰ Quoted in Carter 87. Carter provides examples, particularly the stories of Theresa Delaney and Theresa Gowanlock, who were reportedly held captive and subjected to horrors in Big Bear’s camp at Frog Lake in 1885.

²¹ Berkhofer, Jr. 88.

audiences and scholars.²² But Cooper's so-called masterpiece was only one of forty such novels published in the United States alone between 1824 and 1834 which included Indian episodes and portrayed Aboriginal cultures as vanishing. U.S. literary historian, G. Harrison Orians, noted that several of these novels could have been titled "The Last of..." as all, to various degrees, tapped into a sense that Indians were fleeting figures on the North American landscape.²³

Combined with the idea of the vanishing race, the Noble Savage in literature and art was generally only found in the "wild west," beyond the corruption of advancing Euro-American and Euro-Canadian "civilisation." Thus, eventually the Aboriginal peoples of the Plains became, in the minds of most European and Euro-North American readers and authors, the quintessential "Indian." And as the west was won, so to speak, or settled and "civilised" by Euro-Canadians and Americans, the Noble Savage, and thus the Indian, came to be seen as safely dead and historically past in the minds of most. Poets and writers, such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (*The Song of Hiawatha*, published in 1855), thus began to romanticise the safely dead Indian.²⁴ The main theme of such literature was the battle between savagery and civilisation, with the too often inevitable outcome of "civilisation" triumphing. In these stories, Indians, both noble and savage, were eventually eliminated through disease, alcohol, war, or simply the passage of time.

²² James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans; a narrative of 1757* (Philadelphia: H.C. Carey & I. Lea, 1826). Cooper's classic novel has been republished innumerable times, translated into several languages, and has inspired countless theatre, television, film, and comic book renditions. In film alone there have been at least 17 productions, the most famous being that directed by Michael Mann in 1992, starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Madeleine Stowe, and Russell Means. Martin Baker and Roger Sabin refer to *The Last of the Mohicans* as a "book that everyone knows but that few have read." Nonetheless, its inspirational and influencing qualities (right or wrong) apparently know no bounds. For more, see: Baker and Sabin, *The Lasting of the Mohicans: history of an American myth* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995).

²³ George Harrison Orians, *The Cult of the Vanishing American: a century view, 1834-1934* (Toledo: H.J. Chittenden, 1934). See also: Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White attitudes and U.S. Indian policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1982) 21-25.

²⁴ Henry Wordsworth Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1855). Longfellow's poem initially received widespread success and praise, but after a decade it became a popular source of ridicule and popular satirical imitation—another sign of its widespread appeal and notoriety.

Books and poems sharing these sentiments were widely read and enormously influential, with their themes spilling over into film, radio, television, and even school textbooks. The image of the Noble Savage or bloodthirsty Indian villain was not merely literary, but also a staple of popular culture.

Thus, the Indian of reality was eliminated, in the eyes and minds of many, by the printing press, the stroke of a pen, and the turn of the page. Much like Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, Euro-Canadian and Euro-American print cultures helped to define the new world by creating Aboriginal peoples as "the other."²⁵ Widespread literacy and publishing by a non-Aboriginal populace effectively vanished the Indian of reality.²⁶ Historian Brian Dippie has argued that the "vanishing American" has been a constant in Euro-American thinking since at least the early nineteenth century, becoming something of a self-perpetuating cultural myth. In Dippie's words, "It was prophecy, self-fulfilling prophecy, and its underlying assumptions were truisms requiring no justification apart from periodic reiteration.... The point was no longer whether or not the native population had declined in the past but that its future decline was inevitable. The myth of the Vanishing American accounted for the Indians' future by denying them one, and stained the tissue of policy debate with fatalism."²⁷

²⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1979).

²⁶ A distinctly Canadian literature that worked to achieve this included works by missionaries such as John Maclean, John McDougall, and Egerton Ryerson Young. Their most influential works included: John Maclean, *The Hero of the Saskatchewan: life among the Ojibway and Cree Indians in Canada* (Barrie: Barrie Examiner Printing & Publishing House, 1891); Maclean, *The Indians of Canada* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1889); McDougall, *Indian wigwams and northern campfires: a criticism* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1895); Young, *By Canoe and dog-train among the Cree and Salteaux Indians* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1890); Young, *Stories from Indian wigwams and northern camp-fires* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1893). Daniel Francis discusses the influence of missionary writers in early Canada in *The Imaginary Indian: the image of the Indian in Canadian culture* (1992; Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1995) 44-60.

²⁷ Dippie xii.

Storybook Indians

Perhaps the most influential and popular writers at that time, who employed Indians as their main subject or characters, were James Fenimore Cooper, Ernest Thompson Seton, and Karl May. Ask almost any modern central or eastern European (particularly in those countries bordering Germany) what they know about North American Aboriginal peoples, and they will likely make some reference to Winnetou and the novels of the German fiction writer, Karl May. Although May did not visit North America or meet a real Indian until after he had done the bulk of his popular writing, his ideas and the imagined characteristics with which he designed his characters held popular in the European imagination for much of the twentieth century. A series of popular films, filmed in the former Yugoslavia, and featuring Slav and Italian actors, have assured the continued influence of May's books. His novels are still widely read and continue to be published in new editions in several languages. Young and old, male and female, enjoy May's stories. May's image of the Indian has inspired popular "Indian Hobbyist" clubs and activities, particularly in Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic.²⁸ In the Slovak Republic, a popular reality TV programme featured an "Indian" character in the 2005-06 season. The audience and cast of *Vyvoleni'* (similar to the American *Big Brother* programme) consisted overwhelmingly of young people, but middle-aged Jaroslav Marcinka, alias "Indian," was one of the programme's most popular characters.²⁹

In the characters of Old Shatterhand and Sam Hawken, May portrayed Germans as the pinnacle of enlightenment, civilization, and Christianity, and "as Old Shatterhand represents the

²⁸ See: Jacek Matwiejczyk, "Going Tribal / Pióropusze nad Wisłą" *Kaleidoscope* 82.8 (August 2005): 50-56; Joe MacDonald, John Paskievich, and Ches Yetman, *If Only I Were an Indian*. ([Montréal]: National Film Board of Canada, 1995).

²⁹ "Do vily sa nastahoval u'aj Indian." *Atlas.sk* (2006). 18 January, 2006, <<http://dnes.atlas.sk>>. Similarly, the popular Slovak ska-punk band, ska pra šupina, references Karl May's Winnetou in their song, "Barbie" (from their 2000 album "Zbliži a poteší," music and lyrics by ska pra šupina).

highest ideal of the German nation, so Winnetou embodies the nobility to which the Native American can rise, assisted by enlightened whites.”³⁰ It is Winnetou’s willingness to embrace the best of European (i.e. German) culture and blend it with the best qualities of his own culture, his ability to speak unaccented English, and to read and write which ennoble him. Even before the sealing of his friendship and blood-brotherhood with Old Shatterhand, Winnetou is at one point described by the narrator (Old Shatterhand, who many early readers assumed was May himself) as “wearing a white linen robe...a book was under his arm, and I could read part of the title ‘—OF HIAWATHA’ in large gold letters. This son of the ‘savage’ race of Indians could not only read, but had a taste for classic literature, in this case Longfellow’s epic poem celebrating noble and romantic characteristics of his race. Poetry in the hands of an Apache Indian!”³¹

In European countries like Slovakia, the Indian characters of Karl May have been so internalised that they are part of the everyday fabric of the lives of old and young. As the popular Slovak satirical author and essayist, Milan Lasica, explains,

Karl May was, when I was a child, perhaps not directly forbidden, but not a recommended author. That was why we all read him. And then we played Old Shatterhand and Winnetou out in the streets.... Adventure and thrill, that was what attracted us to the books. We were happy to forgive May, that the most perfect, the most invulnerable, the wisest and cleverest man of all time in the Far West and Far East, was a German.... But yet...what we read as children, stays in us, and not just as a memory.³²

³⁰ Cracroft xvi-xvii.

³¹ Karl May, *Winnetou*. Translated and abridged by David Koblick (1892-93; Pullman: Washington University Press, 1999) 138.

³² Milan Lasica, “Bodka” *Týždeň* 40 (2007). Translation by Jana Plulíková. 21 January, 2008, <<http://www.tyzden.sk/sk/osobnosti/lasica40.php>>.

Grey Owl's literary origins

Synonymous with Indians in Canada in the late 1920s and throughout much of the 1930s, was Grey Owl. Tremendously popular as an orator and writer internationally, Grey Owl was not an Aboriginal person at all, but Archie Belaney, an Englishman. But not until his death in 1938 was Grey Owl's secret revealed. From the late 1920s until his death, Archie Belaney successfully presented himself as Grey Owl, the supposed son of an Apache mother and a Scots father who had been formally adopted by the Ojibway of the Temagami district in Ontario. In his writing and speeches Grey Owl spoke with passion about the need to protect the Canadian wilderness and for fairer treatment of Canadian Indians. His wilderness message was wildly popular, spawning an early notion of environmentalism throughout North America and the United Kingdom. But his message with regards to Aboriginal peoples was not as well received, often falling on curious, but largely deaf ears. With the exception of Aboriginal peoples themselves, many of whom guessed Archie Belaney's secret, much of the world viewed Grey Owl as an "authentic" Indian. Prime Ministers, governors general, statesmen, literary figures, and other prominent individuals all bought into the idea of Grey Owl, and many initially refused to believe in the hoax once it was revealed upon his death.³³

Belaney's popularity was due in part to his physiognomy: in other words, he fit the popular public conception of the noble savage, he looked precisely like a storybook Indian, as if he walked out of the pages of a James Fenimore Cooper or Karl May novel. Canadian literary historian, W.H. New, attributes the public's widespread fascination with Grey Owl to "the continued public willingness to accept picturesque versions of wilderness life and native people

³³ The best biographical work on Grey Owl is, to date: Donald B. Smith, *From the Land of Shadows: the making of Grey Owl* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1990).

as empirical realities.”³⁴ The public’s willingness was directly related to the popularity of such writers as Ernest Thompson Seton, Cooper, May, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Donald Smith, in his biography of Grey Owl, notes that as an English boy, Archie Belaney devoured such books, idealising North American Indians: “He had never met one, or even seen one, but he had books about them. In the margins of these books he sketched feathered braves in buckskins – youthful drawings very similar to those he later used to illustrate his books. He longed to live amongst the noble red men of James Fenimore Cooper’s and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s imaginations.”³⁵ As a schoolboy, Belaney regularly played Indians with his usually much less enthusiastic friends, modelling himself on the noble savages from his books. Grey Owl had a lifelong love of Longfellow’s poem, *Hiawatha*, even using it as a learning tool in his efforts to speak Ojibwa, and he later modelled himself during his international speaking tours as the “modern Hiawatha.”³⁶ Belaney also read the stories and nature essays of Ernest Thompson Seton, and certainly showed familiarity with them in later life as Grey Owl, referring to Seton, for instance, in *Tales of an Empty Cabin* (1936). Belaney’s childhood library included a copy of Seton’s *Two Little Savages* (1903), the story of two young Euro-Canadian boys who choose to live as Indians. The boys discover Indians, of course, through books, and Seton’s text would in turn influence a generation of North American and English children to act out their fantasies as Indians through woodcraft activities, and later, the Boy Scouts.

Seton’s books also had a wide appeal abroad in the non-English speaking world, and through to the twenty-first century are cited as major influences by Indian hobbyists in such

³⁴ W.H. New, *A History of Canadian Literature*. Second Edition (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003) 110.

³⁵ Smith, *From the Land of Shadows*, 17.

³⁶ See: Smith, *From the Land of Shadows*, 41. Longfellow included a 150 word Ojibwa vocabulary at the end of *The Song of Hiawatha*, using the writings of former American Indian Agent, Henry Schoolcraft.

countries as Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia. Young Archie Belaney's life in many ways mirrored that of Yan's, the central character in *Two Little Savages*: "Yan was much like other twelve-year-old boys in having a keen interest in Indians and in wild life, but he differed from most in this, that he never got over it. Indeed, as he grew older, he found a yet keener pleasure in storing up bits of woodcraft and Indian lore that pleased him as a boy."³⁷

Grey Owl, who at the time was still considered an Indian (by non-Aboriginals, at least), was present at a Carlton, Saskatchewan celebration in honour of the signing of Treaty No. 6, in August, 1936. While the Plains Cree claim that it was at this ceremony that they knew once and for all that Grey Owl was not whom he claimed, another internationally famous writer was present at the Indian Diamond Jubilee celebrations. John Buchan, then known to Canadians as Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor General of Canada, was honoured at the Carlton ceremony by the Sweet Grass Band of Cree as "Chief Teller of Tales" (Okemow Otataowkew), partly for his role as governor general, representative of the Crown, but also in honour of his international fame and respect as an author. Tweedsmuir's honouring was witnessed by more than 5,000 spectators, and the ceremony included traditional gift giving and dancing.

Tweedsmuir showed a great interest in Grey Owl at the Carlton ceremony and agreed to visit him at his cabin in Prince Albert National Park in the future.³⁸ When the two met a month later, Grey Owl used that opportunity to secure as much help as he could for the Indians of

³⁷ Ernest Thompson Seton, *Two Little Savages: being the adventures of two boys who lived as Indians and what they learned* (New York: Doubleday Page & Company, 1903) 1.

³⁸ "Grey Owl Lionized," *The Daily Herald* [Prince Albert, Saskatchewan] (August 14, 1936) 1. It is interesting and significant to note that it was at the Carlton Treaty No. 6 celebration that the Plains Cree confirmed their doubts about Grey Owl's authenticity. Although the Cree honoured Grey Owl as a brother, and showed him much attention, his behaviour and manner at the celebration gave them a clear indication that he did not have the "genre and ethos of an Indian." Euro-Canadians and non-Aboriginals, like Lord Tweedsmuir, were as yet still utterly convinced of Grey Owl's Indian background. For more, see Donald Smith's biography, *From the Land of Shadows* 160-161.

Canada, proposing the idea that they should become official guardians of Canada's wildlife and forests. One of Grey Owl's biographers, Donald Smith, writes that Grey Owl impressed the governor general and his family, playing the role of "Modern Hiawatha." Tweedsmuir is said to have greatly admired Grey Owl's remarkable knowledge of wildlife and the power of his writing in his books. Grey Owl's accounts of their meeting indicate that Lord Tweedsmuir was an astute audience. He listened to Grey Owl's pleas for greater Indian sovereignty in Canadian life with apparent attention and sympathy.³⁹ Euro-Canadians, like Lord Tweedsmuir, believed wholeheartedly that Grey Owl was an authentic Aboriginal person, and Buchan's interest in Grey Owl was more than camaraderie between literary types. As an articulate, literary "Indian" figure, Grey Owl fit the romantic notion of noble savage, and an example of an Indian partaking positively in civil society.

The honouring of governors general by Aboriginal peoples was not unusual, but the acknowledgement that Tweedsmuir received for his dual role as the Crown's representative and a popular author is significant. Names like "The Scribe," which Tweedsmuir received from a group of Huron at Indian Lorette, Quebec (alternatively known as Loretteville or L'Ancienne-Lorette, now a suburb of Québec City), and "Chief Teller of Tales" suggest that some Aboriginal peoples considered Buchan's literary successes as at least equally important to his role as viceroy. The growing literary awareness of Aboriginal peoples during this era suggests that members of the Plains Cree and Huron, at least, who gave Tweedsmuir these particular honorary titles, were aware of the power of the written word and in particular, the power that Tweedsmuir's pen could wield. Tweedsmuir never made Aboriginal peoples his exclusive interest, but his varied career of statesmanship, political endeavour, research, and writing

³⁹ Smith, *From the Land of Shadows* 155, 163-164.

indicate that he was interested in a very wide range of topics, peoples, and historical periods. His books range from stories of contemporary Britain to ancient Rome, from South African adventures to fictional accounts of the Canadian North. But it is significant to note that Tweedsmuir's last two works of fiction, *Sick Heart River* (1941) and *The Long Traverse* (alternatively known as *Lake of Gold*, 1941), were inspired and related to his time in Canada. His depiction of Aboriginal peoples in each is varied, but of note because his stories of Canada might have easily avoided mention of Aboriginal peoples at all. That Tweedsmuir included Aboriginal peoples (in a largely positive light) is significant, and a circumstance that Aboriginal people held considerable interest in hoping to influence.⁴⁰

Aboriginal Literacy in the Western Script Begins To Take Root

By the mid-nineteenth century, when such Western conceptions of the Indian were firmly in place, Aboriginal peoples themselves began picking up their pens, in an effort to counter some of the stereotypes and misinformation that was a popular theme in most Euro-Canadian writing. The nineteenth century was a relatively prolific period in terms of print production for Aboriginal communities in Canada. Missionaries and special interest groups produced books, newspapers, and newsletters with Aboriginal audiences in mind. Some publications were in Aboriginal languages, in alphabetic and syllabic or hieroglyphic texts, and others were designed with English or French instruction in mind. And in a growing number of cases, Aboriginal people themselves began producing these print materials. A number of Aboriginal writers emerged in the nineteenth century, and Indian school children were engaged in printing activities

⁴⁰ For more on John Buchan's relationship with Aboriginal peoples, see: Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, "'Chief Teller of Tales': John Buchan's ideas on Aboriginal peoples, the Commonwealth, and an emerging idea of Canada, 1935-1940," Forthcoming feschrift in honour of J.R. Miller, Ed. by Myra Rutherford and P. Whitney Lackenbauer.

in the residential and day schools. Nonetheless, while there was ample evidence to suggest that Aboriginal peoples wanted to learn to read and write, there is less proof that their literacy skills became widespread. Although missionary and government reports frequently cited evidence of Aboriginal peoples reading and writing as proof of the successes of colonial education policies, in reality the Indian schools generally provided a very limited literary education.

Despite the fact of Aboriginal interests in acquiring literacy skills, access to relevant reading materials was difficult. The choice of books available to Aboriginal peoples at the time in their own languages was almost entirely evangelical in nature and presented largely in the Roman alphabet. However, the nature of the education provided at the missionary and government-run schools was not very literary in nature, and without adequate schooling few Aboriginal peoples took an interest in reading materials. Although many Aboriginal children were sent by their parents to schools in order to learn “the whiteman’s magic art of writing,”⁴¹ the schooling they received was generally not well suited to this kind of learning. Mike Mountain Horse, a day school student in the north west in the late 1890s, recalled, “I do not remember any book learning acquired there.”⁴² With an educational curriculum rooted firmly in religious, mechanical, and agricultural training suited to assimilate – through preparing the boys to work as tradesmen, and the girls to be efficient housewives or domestic workers – the reading abilities of most graduates were questionable at best. Low quality education did not produce many highly skilled readers, in any language.

A few Indians, like Reverend Peter Jones, were strong proponents of reading and writing, although perhaps not for the same reasons as those envisioned by the missionary organizations,

⁴¹ Dan Kennedy, *Recollections of an Assiniboine Chief*, ed. James R. Stevens (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), 54-55.

⁴² Mike Mountain Horse, *My People the Bloods*, ed. Hugh A. Dempsey (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute & Blood Tribal Council, 1979), 15.

like the Religious Tract Society. Jones was among convert Indian Protestants who touted the benefits of the Society's efforts and the benefits of books and writing. The Society quoted the Ojibwa minister in 1850 as proof of their progress and good will among Aboriginal peoples:

Before the gospel entered the hearts of some of the people, there was no book in the Chippeway tongue – there was no written or printed language among us; but since we have found the Great Spirit – the True God – we have tried and succeeded in making books. It makes the heart of the poor Indian rejoice to see his child read in a book; to see him put the talk upon paper, and to see the talk go to a distance, makes him rejoice. I will give you one instance. At the river Credit we have a station. A chief had a son who was instructed in our Mission-school; afterwards he was employed as a teacher in another school, and went away more than a hundred miles from his father. After a time, he wrote a letter to his father in the Indian tongue, which he did not know how to read; the father brought it to me to read it for him, and while I read the tears ran down his eyes, and he rejoiced to hear the talk of his son on the paper coming from a distance, and he blessed and praised God that his son was instructed in reading and writing.⁴³

Jones' comments resemble those of his contemporary non-Aboriginal missionary colleagues regarding the perception of the civilizing values of reading and writing. Jones, however, and other First Peoples who worked in the service of the Christian faiths, like Charles Pratt (Askenootow), a Cree Church Missionary Society catechist, and George Copway (Kahgegahbowh), an Ojibwa Methodist missionary, understood the political and social benefits that could be gained for their people in publicly praising the perceived values of Western literacy. Articulating Western methods of communication for their own purposes, the likes of Jones, Copway, and Pratt hoped that these efforts would establish First Peoples as contemporaries and equals in the eyes of the colonial governments and settlers who had invaded their territories and cultures.⁴⁴

⁴³ Quoted in William Jones, *The Jubilee Memorial of the Religious Tract Society: containing a record of its origins, proceedings, and results. A. D. 1799 to 1849* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1850), 581.

⁴⁴ See: Winona Stevenson, "The Journals and voices of a Church of England Native catechist: Askenootow (Charles

Reverend Jones, in addition to encouraging literacy amongst his people, was also one of an emerging group of Aboriginal authors. Others included Peter Dooyentate Clarke (1810-1870) (mixed blood Wyandott), George Copway (Kahgegagahbowh) (1818-1869) (Mississauga), Francis Assikinack (1824-1863) (Ottawa), Catherine Sutton (Nahnehahwequay) (1824-1865) (Ojibwe), and Lydia Campbell (1818-1905) (mixed-blood Inuit). Despite having no formal schooling, Campbell's writings were published in 1894 and 1895 in the St. John's *Evening Telegram* and marked the first known published writings of an Aboriginal Labradorian.⁴⁵ Campbell's memoirs have been credited with encouraging several Newfoundland and Labrador settler (i.e. mixed-blood) women to write down their reminiscences, but her writing was not published with an Aboriginal audience in mind.⁴⁶ Like much of the writing by Aboriginal authors of her day, Campbell's was directed mainly at a Euro-Canadian audience. Most Aboriginal writers in this period wrote primarily for Euro-Canadian readers, often expressing Aboriginal struggles for land and treaty rights. Most expressed nationalist identities and wrote against the oppression of Indigenous peoples in an effort to incorporate the histories and knowledge of First Peoples into the larger Canadian social and cultural fabric. Early Aboriginal writing was mainly utilitarian and functional in nature, apparently devoid of literary aesthetic, and was often deemed unsophisticated by Western literary critics and scholars.⁴⁷

Pratt, 1851-1884," *Reading beyond words: contexts for Native history*, edited by Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1996), 304-329; and Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians: literacy, Christianity and Native community in early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).

⁴⁵ Reprints of some of her writing appear in: Lydia Campbell, *Sketches of Labrador life* (Happy Valley-Goose Bay: Them Days, 1980); and a later edition, published by Killick Press (St. John's) and Them Days (Happy Valley-Goose Bay) in 2000 (with a foreword by Doris Saunders and original art by Labrador artists).

⁴⁶ See: Melvin Baker and Robert H. Cuff, "'Down North': an historiographical overview of Newfoundland Labrador," *Newfoundland Quarterly* LXXXVIII.3 (1993): 2-12.

⁴⁷ See: Penny Petrone, *Native literature in Canada: from the oral tradition to the present* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson, *Paddling her own canoe: the times and texts of E. Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

The two most prevalent Aboriginal writers of this early period were, with little doubt, Reverend Peter Jones and George Copway. Each was a precursor to the individuals discussed later in this work. Jones (1802-1856), the first Aboriginal person in Canada to be ordained a Methodist minister, was a Mississauga Ojibwa raised partly amongst his mother's band (his father was a white land surveyor) in the vicinity of Credit River, and on his father's farm on the Grand River (with his father's Mohawk wife and their family). Jones became a fully ordained Methodist minister in 1833. Travelling extensively, Jones founded missions amongst bands around Rice Lake, Lake Simcoe, and Lake Huron, where he taught farming and urged the people to adjust to a growing European presence. Before long, Jones became a sought after public speaker, entertaining audiences at missionary meetings in Upper and Lower Canada, the U.S., and Great Britain. On his trips overseas, Jones attracted large crowds and on separate occasions had an audience with King William IV and a young Queen Victoria, to whom he presented a petition in the interests of Aboriginal land claims.

In addition to his fame as a speaker and preacher, Jones published rather extensively. Several of his sermons and speeches, which he gave during his tours of Britain, were published in pamphlet form in Methodist periodicals and local newspapers. Jones also translated into Ojibwa several religious and educational texts, and translated the Gospel of St. Luke into Mohawk. Posthumously, Jones' wife, Eliza Field, assembled and published *Life and Journals of Kah-Ke-Wa-Quo-Na-By (Rev. Peter Jones) Wesleyan Minister* (1860). Included in *Life and Journals* is a first-hand account of Jones' conversion to Christianity, as well as content dealing with the apparent physical hardships and spiritual desolation of the Ojibwa before they found Christianity. Another posthumous publication, *History of the Ojibwa Indians with Especial Reference to Their Conversion to Christianity* (1861), speaks more directly to Ojibwa origins,

religious beliefs, councils, languages, and ways of life. There remains some debate, however, as to how much Eliza Field (Jones' British-born wife) was involved in the writing of these posthumous texts.⁴⁸ Regardless, Jones was certainly a master of the English language, and as the scholar of Aboriginal literature, Penny Petrone, has observed, "Besides his two books, a number of his letters, journals, and sermons are extant and reveal his competence in a number of literary genres."⁴⁹

George Copway (1818-1869), who was also Mississauga Ojibwa, and a Methodist missionary, has been referred to as "the most widely acclaimed Indian writer" of the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁰ But his acclaim seems to come predominantly from an American readership and scholarly community, perhaps because Copway published the bulk of his work, including an autobiography, *The Life, History and Travels of Kah-ge-gah-Bowh* (1847), and three other books, *Organization of a New Indian Territory, East of the Missouri River* (1850), *The Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* (1850), and *Running Sketches of Men and Places, in England, France, Germany, Belgium, and Scotland* (1851) in New York City (where he was living at the time). Copway's tenure in New York also produced a weekly newspaper, entitled *Copway's American Indian*, which ran for approximately three months in 1851.⁵¹ But if Copway's authorial genesis emerged in the United States (he moved

⁴⁸ Petrone 36-37. For more on Jones, see: Smith, *Sacred Feathers*.

⁴⁹ Petrone 37-38.

⁵⁰ Bernd C. Peyer, *The Tutor'd Mind: Indian missionary-writers in Antebellum America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997) 224.

⁵¹ Peyer provides a good overview of Copway's writing, and the secondary resources related to it, in Chapter Six of *The Tutor'd Mind*, "George Copway, Canadian Ojibwa Methodist and Romantic Cosmopolite" 224-277. See also: A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, "The Literary and Methodist Contexts of George Copway's *Life, Letters and Speeches*" In *Life, Letters & Speeches*. Ed. by A LaVonne Brown Ruoff and Donald B. Smith (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) 1-21; Donald B. Smith, "Copway, George (1818-69): Mississauga Ojibwa writer and lecturer" *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*. Ed. by Frederick E. Hoxie (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996) 134-135; and Smith, "Kahgegahbowh: Canada's first literary celebrity in the United States" In *Life, Letters & Speeches*. Ed.

there in 1846, only returning to Canada shortly before his death in 1869), his writing was heavily influenced and guided by his upbringing in Upper Canada amongst the south-eastern Ojibwa of Rice Lake, his schooling by Canadian Methodists (notably, Copway was schooled by Reverend James Evans at his Rice Lake mission in 1828 – Evans later applied his experiences amongst the Ojibwa in developing a Cree syllabic form of writing),⁵² and his profession as a Methodist Church worker in the Lake Superior District. Copway was raised traditionally as a young boy by his Ojibwa parents, until their conversion to Methodism in the late 1820s. Copway wrote in his autobiography that his parents' conversion had much to do with the common human values shared by the Indian and Christian faiths, and the Methodists' abstention from alcohol. Copway was motivated by a desire to achieve equality with his Euro-Canadian Christian neighbours, a fact which motivated him in his own spirituality and was evident in his efforts to be treated fairly and equally by his Methodist colleagues.

Copway married British-born Elizabeth Howell, in Upper Canada in 1840, just before taking up his first posting as an Indian missionary in Minnesota. Perceived unfair treatment by his Euro-American colleagues prompted Copway to return to Upper Canada in 1842, where he served at the Ojibwa Methodist mission at Saugeen on Lake Huron. But financial troubles soon plagued him (Aboriginal preachers were commonly paid less than their non-Aboriginal counterparts), as both the Saugeen band and Rice Lake band accused him of embezzling funds. Jailed briefly by the Department of Indian Affairs, and later expelled from the Canadian Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, an alienated and bitter Copway moved with his wife to the United States in 1846. It was in New York where Copway took up writing and soon

by A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and Donald B. Smith (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) 23-60.

⁵² For more on Evans and the Cree syllabic's contributions to Aboriginal literacy, see: Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, *Paper Talk: a history of libraries, print culture, and Aboriginal peoples in Canada before 1960* (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005) 49-52, 102-103, 151-152.

found himself a celebrated author and lecturer. The German-Swiss scholar of early Aboriginal writing, Bernd C. Peyer, has attributed Copway's overnight success largely to the good luck of the right time and the right place, noting that "The betrayal of the Cherokees and the other 'civilized' tribes still weighed heavily on the American reformists' conscience, and they were consequently grateful for any indication that their policies had also borne fruit. Furthermore, the eclipsing American romantic movement still left a profitable forum for flesh-and-blood noble savages."⁵³ Like Jones, Copway has often been accused of benefiting from the unaccredited assistance of his English wife.⁵⁴ In Copway's case, he acknowledged the assistance of a "friend," whom he never identified, to whom he submitted the manuscript of *Life, History, and Travels*, and who then corrected grammatical errors. But as historian Donald B. Smith notes, "Evidence in the manuscript indicates that he himself supplied the information."⁵⁵

Life, History, and Travels was an instant success following its publication in New York in 1847. By the end of 1848, it had gone through no less than seven printings. A successful lecturing career throughout the eastern U.S. and parts of Europe followed, as did three more books and an epic poem, *The Ojibway Conquest* (1850). But the poem was almost certainly written by a former Indian agent, Julius Taylor Clark, who later claimed its authorship. Clark apparently gave the manuscript to Copway with the understanding that Copway would use the

⁵³ Peyer 243.

⁵⁴ In a similar fashion, William Henry Pierce was also thought to have received considerable authorial assistance from his English wife, Margaret Hargrave, in the writing and eventual publication of the half-Tsimshian Methodist missionary's autobiography, *From Potlatch to Pulpit: being the autobiography of the Rev. William Henry Pierce, Aboriginal missionary to the Indian tribes of the Northwest Coast of British Columbia*. Rev. J.P. Hicks, ed. (Vancouver: The Vancouver Bindery, 1933). See: Gail Edwards, "'The Picturesqueness of His Accent and Speech': Methodist Missionary narratives and William Henry Pierce's autobiography." In *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples: representing religion at home and abroad*, Alwyn Austin and Jamie S. Scott, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) 67-87.

⁵⁵ Smith, "Kahgegagahbowh" 34.

royalties earned to promote and establish an Indian territory west of the Mississippi River.⁵⁶ But Copway's writing career dried up almost as quickly as it emerged.

Although touted early-on by such famous American writers and intellectuals as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Francis Parkman, Copway is not known to have written or published anything after 1851, and the later part of his life is shrouded in mystery and he eventually died in obscurity. It appears as though his literary star faded in large part because he was constantly soliciting loans from his New York literary acquaintances and because audiences soon learned that Copway's lecturing material was limited and often recycled. Peyer also notes that by 1851, American literary tastes were changing, and the public's fascination with the image of the Noble Savage was beginning to waver; "In the end he failed to realize his own aspirations to grandeur as an Indian leader and author, partly because of inherent weaknesses in his character and limited literary talents but primarily as a result of the fickleness of a late-romantic American audience grown weary of Indian stories, who first lured him into the limelight as an exotic curiosity and then abruptly let him fall into oblivion."⁵⁷ Smith, for one, questions Copway's mental stability after 1851, noting that between August 1849 and January 1850 he had lost three of his four children to illness, he was nearly bankrupt, and had been forsaken by his literary friends.⁵⁸ Although Copway remained in New York for another decade and desperately tried to regain his lost fame, he was never again taken seriously and his behaviour became increasingly erratic. Nonetheless, Copway's writing initiated something of a new trend in Indian literary activity of the day, moving away from explicitly religious and missionary themes to highly readable, worldly, and politically charged topics.

⁵⁶ Smith, "Copway, George" 135.

⁵⁷ Peyer 277.

⁵⁸ Smith, "Kahgegahbowh" 44.

At around the same time George Copway was finding success in the United States as a writer and lecturer, we find early accounts of distributing books and textbooks to Aboriginal communities in Canada in the early annual reports of the Indian Department. For instance, a Sabbath school library at the Chippewas of Saugeen community at French Bay on the Bruce Peninsula was reported in 1864, with a collection of some 150 volumes.⁵⁹ In his writing directed at a Methodist audience in the late nineteenth century, John McLean acknowledged that schoolmasters were using Sunday school hymn books and “Sabbath School libraries” at the Red River settlement and other settlements on the Saskatchewan River.⁶⁰ Similarly, Methodist missionary Egerton Ryerson Young made reference to books employed in the mission Sunday school at Rossville and at other missions to the Cree and Saulteaux in the Northwest in the 1890s, and noted the degree to which the Cree were literate and apparently eager to get their hands on more books.⁶¹

Bibliographers, like Joyce M. Banks, Karen Evans, and James Constantine Pilling, in their extensive listings of books printed in Aboriginal languages in Canada, note that the nature of literature printed for Aboriginal peoples until the mid-twentieth century was mainly evangelical. With only a very few exceptions, these books were mainly Bible translations or devotional works written or translated by missionaries and printed by religious societies.

⁵⁹ Indian Affairs, Province of Canada, *Report for the half-year ended 30th June, 1864* (Quebec: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1865), 25.

⁶⁰ Indian Affairs, Province of Canada, *Report for the half-year ended 30th June, 1864* (Quebec: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1865), 25.

⁶¹ Egerton Ryerson Young, *Stories from Indian wigwams and Northern camp-fires* (Toronto: William Briggs, 189?), 104-108, 287-288; and Young, *On the Indian trail: and other stories of missionary work among the Cree and Saulteaux Indians* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1897), 87, 187; High literacy rates among the Cree in the nineteenth century are confirmed in: J. A. H. Bennett and J. W. Berry, *Cree Syllabic Literacy: cultural context and psychological consequences*. Tilburg University Monographs in Cross-cultural Psychology. (Tilburg: Tilburg University Press, 1991); and Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: a history of founding peoples from earliest times* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994), 241.

Missionaries were by far the most prolific in producing printed materials in Aboriginal languages.⁶² Many of these titles were also intended for missionary and non-Aboriginal audiences, but the same titles were often used in the Indian schools and had an indelible effect on their students.

Cree literacy in syllabic writing became widespread in the late nineteenth century after Reverend James Evans adapted what was possibly a traditional Cree writing form to print Biblical and hymn translations at the Rossville Mission near Norway House in 1840.⁶³ Evans worked with the Ojibwa preachers Peter Jacobs (Pahtahsega) (1807-1890) and Henry Bird Steinhauer (Sowengisik) (1818-1884) in developing a syllabary for the Cree language. Use of the Cree syllabary spread so quickly among the Aboriginal population that Evans and company could not produce enough hand-written copies. After designing their own printing press, Evans, Jacobs, and Steinhauer printed their first book, a hymnal, in syllabics at Rossville on 15 October, 1841. The syllabic hymnal was the first book printed in western Canada.⁶⁴

From at least 1677 to the mid-twentieth century, the Mi'kmaq people used a hieroglyphic

⁶² See: Joyce M. Banks, *Books in Native languages in the Rare Book Collections of the National Library of Canada*. Revised and enlarged edition (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1985); Karen Evans, *Masinahikan: Native language imprints in the Archives and Libraries of the Anglican Church of Canada* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985); James Constantine Pilling, *Bibliography of Algonquian languages* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891); Pilling, *Bibliography of Eskimo language* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1887); Pilling, *Bibliography of the Iroquoian languages* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888).

⁶³ It is debatable if the Cree syllabary designed by Evans was in fact “invented” by the missionary, or if he and his Ojibwa assistants adapted an existing Cree sign system. The speed at which Evans seemingly “invented” the script, leaves some suspicion in this author’s mind.

⁶⁴ The Cree translations and syllabary prepared and printed by Evans at the Rossville Mission Press are listed and discussed at length in: John D. Nichols, “The composition sequence of the first Cree hymnal,” *Essays in Algonquian bibliography in honour of V. M. Dechene*, edited by H. C. Wolfart (Winnipeg, 1984), 1-21; Bruce Peel, “Early mission presses in Alberta,” *Alberta Library Association Bulletin* 11.1 (1963): 3-6; Bruce Peel, “How the Bible came to the Cree,” *Alberta Historical Review* 6 (Spring 1958):15-19; Bruce Peel, “Rossville Mission Press: press, prints, and translators,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 1 (1962): 28-43; Bruce Peel, *Rossville Mission Press: the invention of the Cree syllabic characters, and the first printing in Rupert’s Land* (Montreal: Osiris Publications, 1974); and David H. Pentland, “The Rossville Mission dialect of Cree,” *Essays in Algonquian bibliography in honour of V. M. Dechene*, edited by H.C. Wolfart (Winnipeg, 1984), 23-45.

form of writing to record Catholic prayers, liturgies, and hymns taught to them by French missionaries who lived among the people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The hieroglyphic texts were written in blank ledgers or thin sheets of birch bark, and prayer leaders read from hieroglyphic books on holy days, and baptism, marriage, and funeral ceremonies. The glyphs were also used for writing original secular messages, and were therefore more than mere memory prompts. Father Christian Kauder, a Catholic missionary to the Mi'kmaq near Tracadie, Nova Scotia in 1845, noted that most community members were literate in the hieroglyphic script. Observing that their leaflets were in poor repair from constant copying, Kauder arranged for copies to be printed at Vienna, resulting in *Buch das gut, enthaltend den Katechismus, Betrachtung, Gesang (The Good Book, Containing the Catechism, Meditations, Hymns)* in 1866. Unfortunately the bulk of the shipment from Europe was lost at sea and few copies reached Mi'kmaq readers in Nova Scotia. Community members thus continued to read from their manuscript leaflets, and when these became worn, scribes were commissioned to draft new copies.⁶⁵

Aboriginal reading materials were becoming more widespread by the late nineteenth century with the establishment of libraries in some of the Indian schools, but the nature of such publications changed dramatically as missionaries and teachers unapologetically sought to assimilate Aboriginal children by eliminating their languages and replacing them with English or French. In 1884 T.P. Wadsworth, Inspector of Indian Agencies in the North West Territories for treaties four, six, and seven, recommended that a library be established at the Battleford Industrial School, “containing interesting tales for boys; for the larger boys, the ‘Boys Own

⁶⁵ David L. Schmidt and Murdena Marshall, eds., *Mi'kmaq hieroglyphic prayers: readings in North America's first indigenous script* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1995), 14. See also: David L. Schmidt and B. A. Balcom, “The Règlements of 1739: a note on Micmac law and literacy” *Acadiensis* 23.1 (1993) 110-127.

Annual’; for the smaller, ‘Chatterbox,’ and similar books, in which they would, during the long winter evenings, be able to find both amusement and instruction.”⁶⁶ Nine years later, in 1893, the library was finally established and the Inspector noted that it contained “111 volumes of useful reading; and the pupils are reported as making good use of the books. Rev. Mr. Clarke obtained these books from friends in England.”⁶⁷ The Battleford school was under the missionary direction of the Anglican Church, but largely funded by the Dominion government. Reverend Clarke’s efforts in procuring books from England almost certainly guaranteed a religious and moral leaning to the volumes. However, it is noteworthy that while a representative of the government recommended a library be established in 1884, the Department of Indian Affairs was not involved in the selection or purchasing of the books – such responsibility was left fully in the hands of the Anglican missionary. Reluctance on behalf of the government to procure books or establish libraries, either within the schools or elsewhere for Aboriginal communities, was an important characteristic of the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and print culture through to the mid-twentieth century. Book collections with Aboriginal readers in mind that emerged in this period resulted through the efforts of the missions, individual philanthropists, or Aboriginal peoples on their own.

Following the lead of the Battleford Industrial School, numerous Indian schools began reporting the emergence of libraries in the late 1890s. C.W. Whyte, Principal at the Crowstand Boarding School, North West Territories in 1896, reported “We have a library of upwards of one hundred and fifty volumes, containing many of the very best and latest publications for

⁶⁶ Dominion of Canada, *Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended 31st December 1884* (Ottawa: 1885), 155.

⁶⁷ Dominion of Canada, *Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended 30th June 1893* (Ottawa: 1893), 187; Annual report 1898, 290.

children.” The Crowstand library was said to be particularly popular during the winter months.⁶⁸ Also in 1896, A.J. McLeod, Principal at the Round Lake School in the North West Territories, reported “school libraries are used to advantage outside of school hours,” and noted that it is one of the intentions of the school to “foster a love for reading.”

Students at the Round Lake School, under the direction of a teacher, also issued a semi-monthly school newspaper, significantly entitled *Progress*, of which a thousand copies were regularly printed. Edited by a teacher, the paper was reportedly “eagerly read by the children.”⁶⁹ Newspaperman P.G. Laurie provided equipment and instruction in typesetting and printing for a time during the 1890s at the Battleford school, and in other western and northern schools the printing trade was also taught. Students at Port Simpson published *Na-Na-Kwa*; at Alert Bay, *The Thunderbird*; at Blue Quill’s, *Mocassin Telegraph*; at Kootenay, *The Chupka*; at Alberni, *Western Eagle*; and at Chooutla, *Northern Lights*.⁷⁰ At the Kitimaat Residential School, some of the girls were taught aspects of the printing trade and produced a six- or eight-page quarterly which included local news with “printed historical sketches, Indian legends, church news, shipping news, births, marriages, deaths, and railway surveys.”⁷¹ The Regina Industrial School in this same period boasted skilled trade instruction for boys as printers, and in 1898 reported that “The daily papers are made use of and an interest fostered in present history. The books of the school library, all carefully selected, are in demand, especially during the winter.”⁷²

⁶⁸ *Annual report 1896*, 330.

⁶⁹ *Annual report 1896*, 351.

⁷⁰ Miller 160. See also: Petrone 84-86.

⁷¹ Isobel McFadden, *Living by bells: a narrative of five schools in British Columbia, 1874-1970* (Toronto?: Committee on Education for Mission and Stewardship, United Church of Canada, 1971), 9.

⁷² *Annual report 1898*, 312.

In almost every case where books and libraries were reported by the Indian agents, superintendents, and school officials from the 1890s onward, their use was framed in the context of reading for recreation and during leisure time. The winter season was repeatedly cited as the most likely time for the students to use school libraries, pointing to the notion that reading and books were deemed recreational and leisurely pursuits when outdoor activities and instruction were limited. The winter time is also traditionally the time that Aboriginal Elders, particularly in the west, told stories to the young in their communities. From the perspective of the mission and school officials, it was important that Aboriginal children be busily involved in “useful” and “morally acceptable” recreational pursuits that would supplement the goals of their classroom instruction. Evidence of Aboriginal children reading and showing interest in books and libraries for recreational purposes within the controlled setting of the schools was cited by school and government officials as proof positive of the progressive and lasting effects of an education curriculum whose purpose was that of assimilation. As tools of Western understandings of literacy, knowledge, history, communication, and religion, books and evidence of reading were central agents in the civilising, assimilatory, and conversion endeavours of the Indian schools.

Certainly a desire for reading material was evident in Aboriginal communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but suitable reading materials were not widely accessible. Newspapers, in fact, were more widely read than books, in part because they were accessible and cost less. Most of these publications, however, were published and written by non-Aboriginal missionaries and school teachers, with the sole intent of converting to Christianity and/or “civilising” Indian students. In the early part of the twentieth century, the federal Department of Indian Affairs, which was responsible for financing and providing education for First Peoples, did a poor job of encouraging and fostering an interest in literary

pursuits. Requests for libraries were repeatedly refused. Individual schools undertook efforts to establish libraries, but these were not widespread, and depended entirely on donated books and the efforts of individual teachers and missionaries.⁷³

Although the activity or encouragement of reading was most prevalent in the schools, First Peoples had their own reasons for embracing Western print culture. Many Aboriginal peoples recognised that the ability to read and write in English or French was critical if their cultural and economic relations with the ever-growing and powerful non-Aboriginal population were to be of any value. Likewise, some Aboriginal peoples, such as the Mi'kmaq, Cree, and Carrier, had histories of literacy in their own languages.⁷⁴ The implicit goal and effective result of federal Indian education, however, was to eliminate Aboriginal languages and knowledge. Existing literacy in Aboriginal languages very nearly disappeared, but the schools were slow to foster effective skills in English or French. Nonetheless, teachers and missionaries noted that outside of a classroom setting, reading was a popular pastime amongst some Aboriginal schoolchildren.

One Indian Agent in British Columbia, in making a case for the establishment of a Department-run travelling library for the province noted, "The reading material of most villages consists almost entirely of the type of magazines found on the coast steamer newstands, generally speaking a far from appetizing type of reading material for Indians."⁷⁵ Similar requests to establish travelling library services were made by Indian Agents on behalf of

⁷³ For examples, see: Edwards, *Paper Talk*.

⁷⁴ Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, "'To Put the Talk Upon Paper': Aboriginal communities" In *History of the Book in Canada*. Volume II 1840-1918. Ed. by Yvan Lamonde, Patricia Lockhart Fleming, and Fiona A. Black (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) 483-484.

⁷⁵ Library and Archives Canada RG10, Volume 3251, File 600,533, Letter to Major D. M. MacKay, British Columbia Indian Commissioner, from F. Earl Anfield, 24 February 1944.

communities in Bella Bella and Kitamaat in British Columbia, and Rama, Mud Lake, and Alderville in Ontario. The Fort St. James Indian Homemakers' Club established a library for its members and for neighbouring families on the Nak'azdli Reserve in British Columbia in 1954 with little or no Department assistance or supervision. This collection was created to serve Aboriginal women whose interests were rooted in homemaking, childcare, and health issues. In the late 1950s, Angus McGill Mowat (father of famed author, Farley Mowat), Ontario Director of Provincial Library Services, worked tirelessly for Aboriginal library development in that province. His efforts resulted in the establishment of a public library for the Ojibwa and Cree at Moose Factory, and the expansion of travelling library services to the communities at Shoal Lake, Whitefish Bay, Alderville, Curve Lake, Gibson, Golden Lake, Mississauga, Muncey, Parry Island, Rice Lake, Tyendinega, and Craigeleith.⁷⁶ In each of these cases, members of the communities repeatedly articulated a desire to read, and to build functioning libraries for the use of both adults and children.

However, despite repeated pleas from across the country to extend library services to Aboriginal communities, the Department of Indian Affairs stalled all initiatives, limiting the extent of libraries to the Indian day schools, apparently for reasons of control and supervision. In the day schools, libraries and book collections could be supervised and selected by teachers or Indian Affairs' departmental officials, minimising the opportunity for Aboriginal people to seek out their own choices of information through books and printed materials. Indian Affairs administrators apparently feared that any free choice with regards to education (including reading materials) would strengthen Aboriginal resistance to government dictated policy.

Certainly one of the main motivations for Aboriginal people to pick up their pens, was to

⁷⁶ For additional details see: Edwards, *Paper Talk*, 145-147, 149-153.

write themselves into Canadian history and to remind the non-Aboriginal population of their continuing existence. Aboriginal writers, whether they found publishers or not, sought to participate in the post-Confederation process of writing, constructing, and imagining twentieth-century Canada. From a postcolonial standpoint, they were aspiring self-consciously to reclaim the cultural and social territory subordinated and occupied by Canadians of European descent. In almost every case, Aboriginal writers' audiences were simultaneously Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian. Like the most famous of all Canadian Aboriginal writers, E. Pauline Johnson, the writers discussed in the pages that follow embodied nationalist identities, and each, in their own way, sought to denounce oppression and incorporate the histories and knowledge of First Peoples into the larger Canadian social and cultural fabric.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ See: Strong-Boag and Gerson, *Paddling her own canoe*. Aboriginal writer and teacher, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn (Crow Creek Sioux) states that Aboriginal writers have always reacted to what she calls, "anti-Indianism," which has permeated American arts and literature from the arrival of the first settlers. For more, see: Cook-Lynn, *Anti-Indianism in modern America: a voice from Tatekeya's earth* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

CHAPTER THREE

Literary conception becomes political reality:
the bureaucratic and political environment of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries¹

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone.... Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department....²

An uncountable number of European, Canadian, and American writers in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century were working to change the popular conception of “the Indian” and new world history through their published writings. In Canada this phenomenon was supported indirectly by government policy which consciously shifted after 1815 from a utilitarian plan of using Indians as military and economic allies, to a paternal program for incorporating them into Euro-Canadian society. A “civilising” policy developed in part as a result of shifting relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples following the cessation of the War of 1812, propaganda in North America by Protestant sects stressing the need to “civilise all people,” and British humanitarian movements like the Aborigines’ Protection Society which advocated the need to protect and civilise Indians and instruct them in European civilisation. As the following discussion in relation to some of the more restrictive aspects of Indian policy will demonstrate, Aboriginal peoples in Canada were the most legislated

¹ The bulk of the work for this chapter was originally completed by the author in 2004 as part of a research project completed for the National Film Board of Canada on the *Indian Act*, and as part of a reading course on the history of Indian policy in Canada, supervised by Professor J.R. Miller.

² Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, addressing a Parliamentary Committee to consider Bill 14 (an amendment to the *Indian Act*, including compulsory enfranchisement), March 1920. Quoted in John Leslie, *The Historical Development of the Indian Act*. Second Edition (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Treaties and Historical Research Branch, 1978) 114. See also: E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the administration of Indian affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986) 48-50.

people in Canada – their nearly every move was under close scrutiny by Indian Agents and the Department of Indian Affairs. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were periods of dramatic and coercive political efforts by the Canadian federal government to assimilate, if not eliminate altogether, Aboriginal peoples, who were seen to be impeding the Euro-Canadian settlement and economic advancement of the country.

An investigation into Indian affairs in Upper Canada by Sir James Kempt in 1829-1830 suggested that (1) Indians should be collected and settled in villages with land for cultivation; (2) the government should provide for their religious improvement, education, and instruction in husbandry; and (3) the government should provide assistance in building homes and procuring seed and agricultural implements. Kempt's recommendations were approved by the Secretary of State and by the Lords of the Treasury of the British government, providing the essence of Indian reserve policy, and a formal policy of protection, civilization, and assimilation was adopted. Between 1842 and 1844, Governor General Sir Charles Bagot oversaw a comprehensive investigation of the government's Indian department in Canada East and Canada West. The Bagot Commission basically reaffirmed the existing government policy of civilisation and assimilation, and popularized manual labour schools, an early form of residential school. Such reaffirmation was a necessary step after Sir Francis Bond Head's deviation from original government policy in relation to Indians between 1836 and 1838. Bond Head, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, proposed that Aboriginal peoples in southern Ontario should be relocated to Manitoulin Island, and he used Romantic notions of primitivism and the "noble savage" to justify this plan.³ Aboriginal peoples were, for the most part, not opposed to the

³ See: Theodore Binnema and Kevin Hutchings, "The Emigrant and the Noble Savage: Sir Francis Bond Head's romantic approach to Aboriginal policy in Upper Canada, 1836-1838" *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39.1 (2005) 115-138.

schools, but disagreed over who would control them – the government or Indians themselves. Of course, Indian education was heavily influenced and under the control of the Imperial government and religious institutions, rather than Aboriginal people.⁴

By the time of Confederation in 1867, a clear administrative pattern had emerged in the Imperial government's management of Indian affairs, particularly in Canada West (later Ontario), which provided a model for the Dominion government's handling of Indian affairs. Section 91 of the *British North America Act* effectively gave the newly formed Dominion government authority to legislate on matters relating to "Indians and lands reserved for the Indians." By the early twentieth century almost every aspect of Aboriginal life was subject to legislation by the federal government, with particularly fierce restrictions and requirements placed on matters relating to education, governance, lands, economic sustenance, freedom of movement, and Indian status.⁵

The first major policy change made by the newly formed Dominion government came in 1869, when the three-year elective system was implemented in the central provinces as part of the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act*. The goal of this policy was precisely to destroy Indian self-government. It allowed for the election of Chiefs and Councillors, but the Superintendent

⁴ For more on Canadian Indian policy and education, see for example: Robert S. Allen, *His Majesty's Indian allies: British Indian policy in the defence of Canada, 1774-1816* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1992); Douglas J. Leighton, *The Development of federal Indian policy in Canada, 1840-1890*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 1975; Robert Moore, John Leslie, and Ron Maguire. *The Historical development of the Indian Act*. Second edition. (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, P.R.E. Group, Indian and Northern Affairs, 1978); R.J. Surtees, "The Development of an Indian reserve policy in Canada." *Ontario History* 6.2 (1969) 87-98; John L. Tobias, "Protection, civilization, assimilation: an outline history of Canada's Indian policy." In *Sweet Promises: a reader on Indian-White relations in Canada*, Ed. by J.R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 127-144; L.F.S. Upton, "The Origins of Canadian Indian policy." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8.4 (1973) 51-61.

⁵ For a general overview of Indian policy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see in particular: Robert Moore, John Leslie, and Ron Maguire, *The Historical Development of the Indian Act*. Second edition (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, P.R.E. Group, Indian and Northern Affairs, 1978); and John L. Tobias, "Protection, civilization, assimilation: an outline history of Canada's Indian policy." In *Sweet Promises* 127-144.

General of Indian Affairs had ultimate control and final say. The independent authority of Chiefs was circumscribed, and all rules and regulations set out by Band Councils were subject to the approval of the Governor in Council. Life Chiefs were allowed to remain as such until death or resignation, but they were subject to removal at the discretion of the Governor in Council for “dishonesty, intemperance, or immorality.” The *Act* ushered in federal control of on-reserve governmental systems and strengthened gender discrimination inherent in the definition of “Indian,” by providing that a woman who married a non-status or non-Indian man would lose her status (and so would her children). This discriminatory provision remained a part of the *Indian Act* until 1985, and the governance provisions of *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* remained at the core of federal Indian policy for the next century.

Following a wave of federally initiated treaty negotiations in the 1870s, mainly in the west, the Canadian government took a position that it did not want to negotiate for more lands until Euro-Canadian settlers demanded access to Aboriginal lands for economic purposes. Such a position was inspired in large part by the onerous and expensive negotiations of the numbered treaties during the 1870s on the prairies, and it explains in part why British Columbia remained almost totally out of treaty until 1899. It is important to note that except for fourteen small treaties covering limited tracts near Victoria, Nanaimo, and north Vancouver Island, British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871 with its territory uncovered by treaty. While Canada attained its territorial objective during the 1870s through treaties, it paid a far higher price than it had intended. Aboriginal leaders, on the other hand, believed they had been successful in securing a formal relationship with the Canadian government, despite having fallen short of their bargaining objectives.⁶

⁶ See: J.R. Miller, *Canada and the Aboriginal Peoples 1867-1927*. Historical Booklet No. 57 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1997) 8-9.

In 1876 the first comprehensive *Indian Act* was created, consolidating earlier legislation and broadening government powers to depose hereditary Chiefs for perceived “dishonesty, intemperance, immorality, or incompetency.” Hereditary or life Chiefs still alive could continue as such until their death or resignation, or until removed by the Governor-in-Council. The ultimate aim was to eliminate traditional Indian governments and replace them with Indian Agent-controlled models of Euro-Canadian government. The powers of tribes were effectively reduced to less than that of municipalities. Although very limited, three First Nations people were consulted about the 1876 *Indian Act*, which spelled out extensively, and in complex terms, the political and financial control of the Canadian government over Indian affairs. Until 1880, the *Indian Act* conferred automatic enfranchisement on any Indian man who had graduated from university or became a lawyer or clergy. The *Act* also contained unprecedented legal definitions of what constituted (under Canadian law) “bands,” “irregular bands,” a “non-treaty Indian,” an “enfranchised Indian,” a “reserve,” a “special reserve,” and “Indian lands.” In short, *Indian Act* measures generally sought to decrease the number of “Indians” through enfranchisement, schooling, and attacking Indian cultures and traditions. Assimilation (or, in the eyes of some contemporaries, “liberation” to make Indians full citizens) was the *Act*’s ultimate goal, and it granted the Superintendent General and his representatives considerable powers, ensuring that Indians were increasingly subjected to bureaucratic regulation. The *Act* was amended several times over the years, but its general thrust and intent would remain the same.

The phase that followed the treaty-making efforts of the 1870s was characterised by measures referred to as “the policy of the Bible and the plough.” This policy consisted of a mix of programmes which relied on missionaries for implementation and which were aimed at converting Aboriginal people into “self-sufficient individuals who would earn their living in

ways similar to, and compatible with, those of Euro-Canadians.”⁷ Central to the overall policy was the concept of enfranchisement, which remained a part of the *Indian Act* until 1985 and sought to reduce the number of “Indians,” either through marriage outside the community, voluntarily giving up Indian status, or loss of status through advanced education. In other words, enfranchisement sought to convert “Indians” into citizens, thereby eliminating the monetary burden on the Indian Affairs department and eliminating the need for treaties. From the 1880s onward, a clear hardening of attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples was evident as bureaucrats and missionaries resorted to coercion in their efforts to control and reshape Indian behaviour.

The Indian department in the later part of the nineteenth century, was controlled by men who, in historian Douglas Leighton’s words, “accepted Victorian ideas or standards,”⁸ who initiated great transitions within the Indian department and its policies. Much of their priorities determined the nature of government-Indian relations in the twentieth century. The Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the period 1874 to 1893, was Lawrence Vankoughnet, a firm Tory who held John A. Macdonald in high regard. Vankoughnet was famous for his attention to detail, even demanding that he personally read all correspondence to the Indian department. He was also an economizer, with strong tendencies towards centralized control. Vankoughnet’s personal characteristics left a great mark on the Indian department, particularly with regards to centralized control and economy. Perhaps Vankoughnet’s most enduring legacy on Indian Affairs was his tendency to place fiscal concerns ahead of human ones. While many administrators in the field, particularly in the west, were sympathetic to the plight of the Indians, they found little support from Ottawa. Vankoughnet’s tendency towards economy and

⁷ J.R. Miller, *Canada and the Aboriginal Peoples* 10.

⁸ Douglas Leighton, “A Victorian Civil Servant at Work: Lawrence Vankoughnet and the Canadian Indian department, 1874-1893” In *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: a reader in Canadian Native studies*. Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier, eds. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983) 105.

centralized control meant that the often serious needs of the western Indians were generally ignored. Similarly, his tendency to read every piece of correspondence greatly reduced the speed at which matters were dealt with. As Leighton elaborates, “Vankoughnet cut back expenses wherever possible, keeping staff and salaries to a minimum,” and he was particularly adamant that telegrams only be used in the case of emergency. While such an arrangement was adequate for Ontario and Quebec, where mail service to Ottawa was relatively quick, it had detrimental effects on the requests of Indians and Indian Agents in BC, the western territories, and the Maritime provinces.⁹

Between 1879 and 1885, through vigorous implementation of the *Indian Act*, Edgar Dewdney, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the North West Territory, deprived the Plains Cree of their principal leaders (Big Bear and Poundmaker) and their autonomy, subjugating the Cree into an administered people, while weakening and starving them in the process.¹⁰ This period also saw new powers given to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, who was empowered to impose the elective system of Band government when he thought the Band was ready, effectively depriving traditional Indian leaders of recognition. This was seen by the government as a means of destroying the old tribal systems which were thought to be an impediment to the policy of civilization and assimilation. No Band could have more than six Chiefs, twelve Second Chiefs and Councillors, and life-Chiefs were prohibited from exercising power in any form unless elected.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier’s Liberal government in 1898 revoked the *Franchise Act* (implemented by John A. Macdonald’s Conservative government in 1885, despite much protest),

⁹ Leighton 106.

¹⁰ See: John L. Tobias, “Canada’s subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885.” In *Sweet Promises* 212-240.

which had briefly extended the right to vote in federal elections to adult Indian males east of Lake Superior (a regulation rarely employed). The Liberal government claimed that allowing adult Indian males to vote was “a derogation to the dignity of the people and an insult to free white people in the country to place them on a level with pagan and barbarian Indians.”¹¹

Laurier’s government appointed Clifford Sifton as Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in 1896. But Sifton’s role as an administrator of Indian affairs was only secondary to his higher rank as Minister of the Interior. With only a very casual interest in Aboriginal peoples prior to his appointment, Sifton’s term as head of the Indian department (1896-1905) was marked generally by inattentiveness towards the interests of Indians. The Indian department was closely associated with the Department of the Interior, which was the principal instrument through which the federal government implemented its developmental policies in the prairie west. This meant that during Sifton’s tenure, Aboriginal peoples were generally viewed only in the context of their relationship to western development.¹²

Policy changes in 1883 called for the creation of “industrial schools,” which were to be operated by the missions and funded by Indian Affairs, with the goal of training Indian children in trades, farming, and domestic skills. An extensive school system was thus developed, with eighty schools in operation by the 1920s, run by a variety of religious missions. Industrial schools increased steadily in number after 1883, co-existing alongside smaller boarding or residential schools which had existed previously, as well as on-reserve day schools. Initially aimed at Aboriginal communities on the prairies, the industrial school system spread quickly to British Columbia and Ontario. The early twentieth century saw the significant expansion of

¹¹ Quoted in Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada’s First Nations: a history of founding peoples from earliest times* (1992; Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994) 289.

¹² D.J. Hall, “Clifford Sifton and Canadian Indian Administration, 1896-1905” In *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: a reader in Canadian Native studies*. Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier, eds. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983) 120-121.

industrial schools in northern and north-western Ontario. Except for the south shore of James Bay, no residential schools (i.e. “industrial” or “boarding” schools) existed in Quebec until the middle of the twentieth century, and similarly the Maritimes did not see any such schools until 1929. The federal government and missionary point of view was that residential schools were not as needed in the east because Indians in those provinces lived closer to Euro-Canadians and were therefore assumed to be sufficiently acculturated without the need of custodial institutions. The bulk of the residential schools were concentrated in north-western Ontario, the prairie provinces, British Columbia, and the Territories.¹³

Education provisions were usually central aspects of the treaties, and the government encouraged missionaries to provide the teachers, supplies, and initiative to school Aboriginal peoples. Some Aboriginal leaders accommodated religious education for practical reasons; others, such as Chief Shawahnahness of St. Clair River, hoped that their people would acquire literacy skills, but not European religion. Shawahnahness told Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) in 1833 that his people would never abandon their traditional religious beliefs, but added “we agree to send our children to school that they may learn to read, put words on paper, and count, so that the white traders might not cheat them.”¹⁴

Although only about one-third of all status Indian children attended the residential schools through to the 1950s, their impact was devastating. Surviving oral and written evidence suggests that most of the schools were aggressively assimilative and employed inadequate care. Their primary aim was to convert Indian children into Euro-Canadians. In the process they denigrated Indian cultures, not allowing children to speak their own languages and forced

¹³ J.R. Miller, *Canada and the Aboriginal Peoples* 12-13.

¹⁴ Quoted in J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: a history of Native residential schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1996) 77-79.

Christian views and values. Assimilation took precedence over academics, and the failure of the schools to provide useful instruction caused many parents to reject the institutions.¹⁵ An 1894 amendment to the *Indian Act* empowered the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to pass regulations to make attendance at school compulsory for all Indian children. In 1906 another amendment reiterated these regulations and granted Indian Agents the power to withhold annuities to parents if they did not send their children voluntarily. Further amendments in 1919 made school attendance compulsory for all Indian children between the ages of seven and fifteen, authorizing truancy officers to enter any place where they had reason to believe there were Indian children between these ages and prescribe their parents with penalties.

Indians in the west were particularly fenced-in by government policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1884, the *Indian Act* was amended to outlaw the potlatch, a traditional sharing ceremony of Aboriginal peoples on the North-West coast. This was the first of a number of blatant attacks on Aboriginal cultural and religious practices. Later *Indian Act* amendments, in 1895, outlawed ceremonial activities relating to “giving-away” and mutilation. In effect, the Blackfoot sundance and the thirst dance of the Cree and Salteaux were outlawed, although they were not explicitly mentioned in the amendment. Further changes in the *Indian Act* in 1906 explicitly outlawed the potlatch, sundance, and thirst dance, and extended the ban to include all types of Indian dancing and festivals. The law proved difficult to enforce, however, and these cultural and religious practices continued in hiding. *Indian Act* bans on “give-away” ceremonies like the potlatch were further strengthened in 1914 to prohibit Indians in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and the Territories from appearing in

¹⁵ For historical detail on Indian residential schooling in Canada, see: J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: a history of Native residential schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); and John S. Milloy, “A National Crime”: *the Canadian government and the residential school system 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999).

Indian dress and performing traditional dances at fairs or stampedes, unless given departmental approval in writing.

As a response to the North West Rebellion/Resistance of 1885, an emergency measure was introduced stating that no prairie Indian was allowed off-reserve without the permission of an Indian Agent. This restriction persisted after the hostilities ended, and came to be known as the “pass system.” The pass system had no basis in law, either by the *Indian Act*, or by Order-in-Council, but such restrictions on the movements and customs of Aboriginal peoples (chiefly on the prairies, but elsewhere also) remained in place well into the twentieth century.¹⁶

Between 1889 and 1897, Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed, devised and implemented two distinct though related agricultural policies, directed mainly towards western reserves. The first was known as “severalty,” and was designed to subdivide reserves into individual plots. Based on the Dawes Act in the U.S., Reed’s idea was that independent ownership would encourage entrepreneurship amongst Aboriginal people and it was enforced on some western reserves. The second policy, known as “peasant farming,” was based on theories of social evolution. This policy was designed by Reed to gradually raise the Plains people from a migratory hunting people (i.e. savage or barbarian) to peasant farmers (following a strictly outlined step-by-step process), and eventually to full-fledged modern farmers with large-scale commercial farms and modern machinery (i.e. civilized and self-sustaining). But because Reed subscribed to contemporary theories of social science, which held that people had to proceed (or evolve) through successive stages of economic development, restrictions on the farming methods Indians could use were implemented and enforced. Such restrictions sank the policy, pushing reserve farmers into apathy and dependency on government rations. Reed’s agricultural policies

¹⁶ Dickason 314-315.

thus inadvertently created hardship rather than development.¹⁷

During the First World War the *Soldier Settlement Act* was implemented, with significant effects on Indian lands. The *Act* was a means of furthering agricultural settlement and serving the needs of some returning soldiers. It authorized the Minister of the Interior to reserve Dominion lands for soldier settlement, and the most suitable lands were in the prairie provinces. In 1918, the *Indian Act* was amended to accommodate what was known as “the greater production campaign.” The campaign was designed to increase agricultural production in response to war needs, and breaking new or “idle” ground was encouraged. A good deal of Canada’s perceived “idle” ground was in the west, particularly on Indian reserves. Indians in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta were encouraged to place larger areas of their lands under cultivation. Reserve lands not being used by a Band, or an individual land holder, were leased by the Superintendent General to non-Indians for farming purposes without any surrender from the Indians.

Given that the bulk of the *Indian Act*’s most restrictive policies were aimed at Aboriginal groups on the prairies, one might expect that this was where Indian political organization emerged. But this was not the case. Historian J.R. Miller explains that the Indians of the prairie region certainly had more than their share of grievances and problems during this period, “but for a long time they were demoralized by the aftermath of the Rebellion of 1885. Both the western Indians and the Métis were adversely affected by heavy agricultural settlement after 1895, becoming steadily more impoverished and marginalized.”¹⁸ Because very little of the province had been covered by treaties, and due to ongoing land disputes, Indian political movements

¹⁷ See: Sarah Carter, “Two Acres and a Cow: ‘peasant’ farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-1897” In *Sweet Promises* 353-377.

¹⁸ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: a history of Indian-White relations in Canada*. Revised Edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 214.

emerged in British Columbia with force in the twentieth century. The first of these organized political protest bodies was the Indian Tribes of the Province of British Columbia, formed by twenty Bands in 1909. A short time later, the Nisga'a of the Nass River region established the Nisga'a Land Committee, forwarding a petition to Ottawa in 1913 outlining their land claim. In 1916, the Nisga'a joined with southern Bands and the Interior Salish to form the Allied Tribes of British Columbia. Under the leadership of Peter Kelly and Andrew Paull, the Allied Tribes pressed the federal government for settlement of land claims for a decade. Although their protests did little to change the federal government's mind with regards to BC land claims, their political efforts did not go unnoticed. In the interwar period, Indians from other regions of Canada joined their brothers and sisters in British Columbia in organizing the first national Indian political movement, culminating in the first congress of the League of Indians of Canada in Sault Ste. Marie in late 1919, led by Ontario Mohawk leader (and veteran of World War I), F.O. Loft.¹⁹

Disputes between Aboriginal peoples, the federal government, and the provincial government over lands not covered by treaty in British Columbia led to the establishment of a joint royal commission to review the allocation of reserve lands in the province. The McKenna-McBride Commission, as it came to be known, released its recommendations in 1916, suggesting that 47,000 acres of existing reserve land be made available to non-Aboriginal settlers. In return, Indian bands were to be compensated with 87,000 acres of poorly located and less valuable lands. These recommendations, naturally, did not sit well with Aboriginal communities, galvanizing many BC First Nations into combining forces and resulting in the formation of the aforementioned Allied Tribes of BC. The Allied Tribes energetically combated the McKenna-

¹⁹ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers* 214-217.

McBride recommendations, culminating in an appearance before a parliamentary committee to investigate the Commission's proposals in 1926. But despite their efforts, parliament rejected the Allied Tribes' case and confirmed the McKenna-McBride recommendations.²⁰ A direct result of the Allied Tribes efforts at agitation was a 1927 revision to the *Indian Act* which outlawed Aboriginal people from giving, receiving, requesting, or soliciting funds with the intent of pursuing land claims. In effect this meant that Indians could not hire lawyers since they could not afford them (but the *Act* did not prohibit explicitly the hiring of lawyers, as often reported). This amendment stayed in place until it was repealed in 1951.

Between 1913 and 1932, the Aboriginal people's main opponent in terms of political and social endeavour, was Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Although he was widely known by Euro-Canadians as an important national poet and writer, Scott was to the Indians of Canada a fierce and narrow-minded administrator. As his biographers and historians of Indian policy have pointed out, "Scott's behaviour towards them [the Indians] always seemed to be determined by prosaic considerations of economy. Indians were too demanding in treaty negotiations, too uncooperative about sending their children to residential schools, too obdurate about not adopting the DIA's preferred model of band governance, the elective system."²¹ If Aboriginal peoples would not voluntarily do what the Department of Indian Affairs knew was best for them, then Scott's approach was the heavy application of compulsion in forcing Indians to comply.

The federal government's opposition to recognising Indian land claims during the early

²⁰ J.R. Miller, *Canada and the Aboriginal Peoples* 18-19.

²¹ J.R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal treaty-making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, [forthcoming] 2009) 235. For additional discussion of Duncan Campbell Scott in relation to his work as an administrator in the Department of Indian Affairs, see: Titley, *A Narrow Vision*; and Stan Dragland, *Floating Voice: Duncan Campbell Scott and the literature of Treaty 9* (Concord, ON: Anansi, 1994).

part of the twentieth century was articulated most bluntly by Scott. His assertion that “our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic” exemplified the unwillingness of the Department of Indian Affairs, and thus the federal government, to enter into meaningful negotiation with Indian political organizations like the Allied Tribes of BC or the League of Indians of Canada. Scott’s main tools of assimilation were enfranchisement and compulsory education. Many planners in the federal government assumed that Aboriginal populations in general were decreasing because of disease, assimilation, and enfranchisement. In short, “the cultural elimination of Indians was the unifying feature of Canadian Indian policy for a century after Confederation.”²² But in reality, the government planners were wrong. Aboriginal populations may have wavered, but they did not significantly decrease. Scott sensed the failure of the Indian department’s assimilation policies, and this increased his hostility towards Aboriginal peoples.

Policies of enfranchisement were particularly ineffective. Even after being subjected to residential school educations, Aboriginal peoples did not enfranchise in large numbers. Education policies were certainly damaging, stripping Aboriginal children of parental influence, their languages and traditions, leaving them demoralized. But this did not lessen enthusiasm for maintaining an Indian identity. Similarly, attacks on Aboriginal spirituality did little to effect cultural change. Large numbers of Aboriginal peoples adopted Christian beliefs, but these did not much shake their sense of Indian identity. Prominent Indian activists and leaders, such as Andrew Paull and Edward Ahenakew, were devout Christians. But instead of reacting to these failures by changing Indian policy, under the leadership of Scott the Department of Indian Affairs applied increasing measures of coercion in the application of existing policy.

For a short time in 1920-1921, “involuntary enfranchisement” was introduced, allowing

²² Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant* 247

the Department of Indian Affairs to enfranchise any Indian male they deemed was ready. Although repealed by William Lyon Mackenzie King's Liberal government in late 1921, involuntary enfranchisement would be reintroduced, in a slightly modified form, by R.B. Bennett's Conservative government in 1933, remaining in place until 1951 when the *Indian Act* was revamped. Revisions to the *Indian Act* in 1927 said that any unmarried Indian woman of the age of twenty-one years, or any Indian widow and her minor unmarried children, could be enfranchised in the same manner as a male Indian and his children.²³ Despite such measures, however, the full extent of how many Aboriginal peoples were in fact enfranchised, against their will, is unknown.

In 1946 a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons was created to review the relationship between Indians and the federal government, and to make recommendations for revising the *Indian Act* and Indian administration. Aboriginal leaders and spokespeople, such as Andrew Paull and Peter Kelly, gave evidence to the Committee, but their input went largely unheard. Not addressed in the review were the crucial issues of the power and authority of Chiefs and Band Councils on reserves, funding mechanisms, jurisdictional disputes with the provinces, and self-government. In the end, the Committee reported that the Indian Affairs administration process was problematic which accounted for many of the difficulties and disputes experienced between Indians and the government, rather than any fundamental philosophical difference between the two. The Committee recommended that assimilation should still be the goal of Indian administration and the *Indian Act*, but it advised new methods to achieve this goal.²⁴

²³ See: John Leonard Taylor, *Canadian Indian Policy during the Inter-War Years, 1918-1939* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1984).

²⁴ See: Canada. Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Treaties and Historical Research Centre. *Indian Acts*

In 1951 the *Indian Act* underwent a major revision. Although at first glance it appeared to be very different from earlier Indian Acts, the goal of assimilation remained. The authority of the Minister of Indian Affairs was greatly reduced, but the principle of self-government was absent and enfranchisement was actually made easier by eliminating a probation period.²⁵ However, the 1951 revision did eliminate a number of the more repressive features of the *Indian Act*, including the 1927 ban on fundraising for land claims. The removal of such elements facilitated the more effective formation of Aboriginal organizations in the post-1951 era. Nonetheless, the emergence of an effective and authentically national Indian body took longer than provincial organizations, according to J.R. Miller, “largely because of the scope of the challenge.”²⁶ Andrew Paull’s North American Indian Brotherhood, established in the 1940s, although continent-wide in scope, was in reality primarily a British Columbian organization, and F.O Loft’s League of Indians of Canada, although initially successful, had failed. After 1951, the political environment was such that a truly national Indian organization could be attained, and by the late 1960s the National Indian Brotherhood had emerged (the Brotherhood continued until 1982, at which time the Assembly of First Nations became the national Aboriginal voice).

The 1951 overhaul of the *Indian Act* came as a result of a general waning and growing discomfort in the 1940s on the part of Euro-Canadians in relation to the explicit policy of assimilation as an effective approach to Indian affairs. It was clear by the 1940s that assimilation

and Amendments, 1868-1950 (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1981).

²⁵ See: Canada. Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. Treaties and Historical Research Centre. *Contemporary Indian Legislation, 1951-1978* (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1981); and Ian V.B. Johnson, *Helping Indians to Help Themselves—a Committee to Investigate Itself: the 1951 Indian Act consultation process* (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1984).

²⁶ J.R. Miller, *Lethal Legacy: current Native controversies in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) 79.

methods simply were not working. Children left the government-sponsored and mission-run schools educated ineffectively and they failed to enter Euro-Canadian society on equal footing. Perhaps even more alarming to administrators, Aboriginal birth rates were increasing rapidly, meaning a greater financial burden on the government and a need for more Indian-focussed schools. Post World War II attitudes with regards to ideological notions of racism began changing as well, and the growing number of provincial and regional Aboriginal political organizations throughout the first half of the twentieth century worked to seriously undermine existing Canadian Indian policy.²⁷

Through the first half of the twentieth century, the Federal government's explicit goal was to transform the Indian into a productive individual and respectable citizen through the vehicles of religion and education. The ultimate effect of more than 100 years of a policy of civilisation and assimilation did not succeed in eliminating Aboriginal peoples, as the government planned, but it did succeed, in many ways, in eliminating the Indian from the Euro-Canadian public consciousness. Increasingly pushed to the public and social backburner, Indians, in the minds of many Euro-Canadians, became caricatures of the representations they read about in popular fiction. In history textbooks of the day, Aboriginal peoples were mentioned usually within a paragraph or two at the beginning of the first chapter, and then they vanished.

Given the constraints under which Aboriginal people lived during this period, it is little wonder that we begin to see the formation of modern political organization on behalf of some Indians. A great tool of protest and resistance was, of course, the written word. Despite the poor literary education that most Aboriginal peoples received at the government-funded mission-run schools, newspapers, newsletters, and periodicals – often compiled and edited by Aboriginal people themselves – began to appear. At a time when Aboriginal peoples perhaps suffered the

²⁷ See: Miller, *Lethal Legacy* 253-254.

most from discrimination and relative invisibility, writing and publishing became one of the tools employed in fighting/writing back. For decades the federal government wrote legislation confining and defining Indians, attempting to erase their presence altogether. But in the early twentieth century, a small number of Aboriginal peoples began using writing, the same tool that had been used against them by Euro-Canadian administrators, to communicate and rally their people politically and socially. For perhaps the first time in Canadian history, Aboriginal writers began using and articulating the alphabetic printed word to communicate amongst their own people, rather than adopting the script to simply communicate with a non-Aboriginal public.

CHAPTER FOUR

Charles A. Cooke (Thawennensere):
Mohawk scholar, civil servant, amateur anthropologist, performer, and writer

To the short list of native Iroquois scholars – J.N.B. Hewitt and A.C. Parker – must now be added the name of Charles A. Cooke....¹

Although he did not learn English until the age of 12, Charles Angus Cooke (Thawennensere) (1870-1958), was one of the first Aboriginal peoples to work for the Federal Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. Hired in March, 1893, Cooke worked for the department as a writer, clerk, translator, interpreter and document classifier, until his retirement in 1926.² Cooke was born Thawennensere or Da-ha-wen-nen-se-re, at Kanehsatake, Quebec on 22 March, 1870, to Adonhgnundagwen (later Angus Cooke) and Thiweza (Katrine). He attended the Methodist Mission school at Oka and worked with his father on the family farm until the family moved in 1881 to the Muskoka area of Ontario. Cooke's family was one of a group of Protestant Mohawks who left Kanehsatake in 1881, relocating to Gibson, near Gravenhurst, Ontario.³ It was here that Angus Cooke was engaged by the Methodist Missionary Society to preach at the Gibson Reserve. Charles was sent to the Mount Elgin residential school at Munsie, Ontario amongst children of Algonkian decent, but failing to learn proper English, he later

¹ Marius Barbeau, "Charles A. Cooke, Mohawk Scholar" *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 96.4 (1952) 424.

² Library and Archives Canada, RG 10, Volume 2675, File 135480, Reel C-11261, Headquarters - Ottawa - Personnel file on extra clerks working for the Department of Indian Affairs, 1893-1897; Barbeau 424-426. The Department's *Annual Report* between 1897 and 1899 lists Cooke as a "writer," employed since 1 March, 1893, with an annual salary between \$425 and \$475. In 1901, the *Annual Report* lists him, for the first time, as a "Junior Second Class Clerk," with a salary of \$600 per year. See: Canada. Library and Archives Canada. *Indian Affairs Annual Reports: 1864-1990*. 22 May, 2007. 21 January, 2008, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/indianaffairs/>>.

³ Cooke wrote about the experience of the Iroquois who left Oka for Gibson in October, 1881, in a letter, which his granddaughter, Nona Argue, kept and published as "Dear Friends of the Gibson Reserve: recalling troubled times in Oka 113 years ago" in the *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 July 1990 [p. A15].

attended a public school at Gravenhurst, Ontario. Prior to working for the department of Indian Affairs, Cooke was employed by the Methodist Missionary Society as a teacher on the Gibson Reserve, and worked for the Georgian Bay Lumber Company as a clerk. Upon his graduation from high school, Cooke intended to study medicine at McGill University, but was instead persuaded to take a position with the department by the federal Member of Parliament for his district, Colonel O'Brien, a friend of his father.

Cooke's true lineage, however, was mixed Ojibwa and Iroquois, as his grandfather, Showandai, was a member of the Dokis Band in the Nipissing-French River area of Ontario. Nonetheless, Cooke was raised Mohawk, and although he was never recognised under the Indian Act as a member of any Band he remained true to the Iroquois side of his lineage. Between 1911 and 1926, Cooke tried hard to make a case for recognition under the Indian Act as a member of the Dokis First Nation. Although he submitted sufficient evidence to prove that his grandfather, Showandai, was a recognised member of the Dokis community, Cooke's application was nevertheless turned down, likely due to the financial burden it would have required of the Department of Indian Affairs. The Dokis Band also refused his claim, fearful of losing much needed Federal funding. Cooke demonstrated through affidavits and official documents that Showandai left Nipissing on the solicitation of a Sulpician Order missionary to join with other Indians from across Canada at the Oka Mission in Quebec. At Oka he met and married a widow, Marie Skonwaieren, Cooke's grandmother, and fathered a child (Ignace Kaniotakwen, Cooke's father). However, Showandai left Oka in 1847, abandoning his wife and child, and returned to Dokis, where he reportedly passed away. Marie Skonwaieren remarried a third time to an Iroquois with the surname, Cooke. Charles' father was raised by this man and took the name Angus Cooke. Angus Cooke was never admitted into the Oka Band or the Gibson Band as

required by the provisions of the Indian Act, therefore Charles was also never a recognised member of either Band. Experiencing financial difficulties and the illness and eventual death of his first wife in the decade following 1911, Charles Cooke felt compelled to apply for official membership to the Dokis Band as the only remaining descendant of Showandai. This lack of Band status meant that Charles Cooke, and his descendants, were never recognised as having Indian Status under the Indian Act.⁴

During his tenure as an employee of the Department of Indian Affairs, Cooke was a key figure in the establishment of the Department's library, compiling a "Comparative and Synoptical Indian Dictionary," publishing a newspaper in the Mohawk language, and in recruiting First Peoples from reserves throughout Ontario and Quebec to enlist for service in the First World War. Following his retirement from the civil service, Cooke was a popular lecturer and recitalist from 1926 to 1934, touring eastern Canada and the United States, reciting Iroquoian and Huron lore, songs and dances. When he was in his eighties, Cooke joined the National Museum of Canada, working with Marcel Rioux and Marius Barbeau in 1949 and 1951 in surveying and completing a grammatical study of Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, and Tuscarora. And in 1950, Cooke assisted the film director Allan Wargon in making and acting in a film representation of the life and religious activities of the Iroquois Six Nations in Ontario,

⁴ Details of Cooke's efforts to be recognised as a member of the Dokis Band are found in papers held in the Cooke Family Papers (currently in the care of Graham Cooke, Charles' grandson, in Edmonton). A perplexing discrepancy presents itself, however, when we read a brief family history Charles wrote, circa 1958. In that history, on which the contemporary Cooke family has based their family tree, there is no mention of Showandai, with Charles' grandfather reportedly being Jhi se re gen. Further complicating this story is the admission that Jhi se re gen was born on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. Jhi se re gen (or Charles Bearfoot, later Cooke) raised Charles' father, Angus, and perhaps due to the fact that Charles' application to be recognised as a member of the Dokis First Nation was turned down, he felt there was little reason to mention his biological grandfather in this short family history. Raised as an Iroquois, Charles' father, Angus, probably had little or no notion of his Ojibway heritage. Charles' grandmother (Angus' mother), Marie Skonwaieren, was reportedly of French birth, but was legally adopted (with her sister) by an Iroquois family at Oka, by whom she was raised. Charles Cooke's Iroquois/Mohawk ancestry, therefore, comes only through his Mother, Thiweza (of the Bear Clan), whom Angus married and fathered seven children.

which resulted in *La Grande Maison*, or the *Longhouse people*, released by the National Film Board of Canada in 1951.⁵

As an employee of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1893 to 1926, Cooke's career coincided with that of Duncan Campbell Scott.⁶ Now notoriously associated with his administration of Indian Affairs, Scott was during his lifetime (1862-1947) widely celebrated as one of Canada's Confederation Poets. Although Scott felt he was critically neglected as a poet, his literary reputation has been solid since at least 1900, with his work appearing in virtually all major anthologies of Canadian poetry.⁷ In 1921-22 Scott served as President of the Royal Society of Canada and in 1922 was awarded the very first honorary D. Litt. by the University of Toronto.⁸ Scott's day job, as a leading administrator and architect of policy at Indian Affairs, however, has perhaps come to define the man more than his poetry. His tenure as Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs was a turbulent one, characterised by a paternal and narrow approach to administering affairs relating to Aboriginal health, education, and welfare. Rather

⁵ For additional biographical details, see: Barbeau 424-426; Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, *Paper Talk: a history of libraries, print culture, and Aboriginal peoples in Canada before 1960* (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005) 89-101. Included in the Cooke family papers, held by Cooke's grandson, Graham, in Edmonton, is a brief family history written by Charles Cooke which explains, among other things, how the family came to have the English name "Cooke."

⁶ For more on Duncan Campbell Scott as an administrator of Indian Affairs, see E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1986).

⁷ For more on Scott's literary achievement, see: Stan Dragland, ed., *Duncan Campbell Scott: a book of criticism* (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1974); Dragland, *Floating Voice: Duncan Campbell Scott and the literature of Treaty 9* (Concord ON: Anansi, 1994); Gordon Johnston, *Duncan Campbell Scott and his works* (Downsview ON: ECW Press, 1983); R.L. McDougall, "Scott, Duncan Campbell" *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1999) 2121.

⁸ For more on Scott's literary career in relation to his activities as a senior member of the Department of Indian Affairs, see, for example: D.M.R. Bentley, "Shadows in the Soul: racial haunting in the poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott" *University of Toronto Quarterly* 75.2 (2006) 752-770; Dragland, *Floating Voice*; Gerald Lynch, "An Endless Flow: D.C. Scott's Indian poems" *Studies in Canadian Literature* 7.1 (1982) 27-54; Lisa Salem-Wiseman, "'Verily, the white man's ways were the best': Duncan Campbell Scott, Native culture and assimilation" *Studies in Canadian Literature* 21.2 (1996) 120-142; E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986) 23-36; and L.P. Weis, "D.C. Scott's View of History and the Indians" *Canadian Literature* 111 (1986) 27-40.

ironically, much of his poetry was related to “Indians.” Drawing on his experience as an Indian administrator in the field, Scott expressed sensibilities as a poet saddened by the perceived waning of ancient Aboriginal culture (i.e. the “vanishing Indian”). Yet in his administrative work, Scott actively sought to assimilate Indians into the Canadian mainstream, effectively quickening the pace of the demise he felt was so imminent. Perhaps this was a strategy on Scott’s part. If he could render the idea of Indians firmly to the past through his work as an administrator in Indian Affairs, then perhaps his Indian poetry would be taken more seriously. In all likelihood, however, Scott truly believed that the only “authentic” Indian was a pre-contact Indian. In other words, Scott perceived the Indian of the past as a “noble savage,” and the Indian of the present as merely in the way of progress.

Scott’s behaviour as a popular and critically acclaimed poet, who was at the same time an important administrator in Indian Affairs, is often puzzling. Reconciling Scott’s Indian poetry, where Aboriginal people are portrayed as “attractive and apparently humane,”⁹ with the dreadful and sorry legacy of his administration of Indian Affairs is challenging. The primary appeal of Scott’s poetry was his portrayal of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples, and as Stan Dragland has noted, “the very authenticity that makes those poems and stories so appealing was bought at the expense of Native people themselves.”¹⁰ Scott was not writing his Indian poetry from a position of removal, “he saw with his own eyes what they looked like, where and how they lived..., and this experience removed a veil of illusion that debilitated virtually all white writing about Canadian Natives up until Scott’s time, and much of it after.”¹¹ The Indians of Scott’s poetry are neither noble nor savage, but are rather the “physical and emotional casualties of European

⁹ Dragland 5.

¹⁰ Dragland 6.

¹¹ Dragland 6.

contact.”¹² But while his poetry may have shown some sympathy towards the plight of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples, in the everyday practice of his duties as a leading administrator of Indian Affairs, Scott showed little compassion or sympathy towards the people he considered to be mere wards of the state. Scott was a tireless administrator, determined to achieve his Department’s goal of ultimate assimilation of all Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Lisa Salem-Wiseman asserts that Scott’s poetry reflected his belief that Aboriginal cultures were obsolete, something of the past, and that the only way Indians could hope to survive was to relinquish their cultural beliefs and practices in favour of adopting the ideologies and practices of Euro-Canada.¹³ One of Scott’s biographers, E. Brian Titley, quotes the administrator-author as referring to Indians as a “weird and waning race.”¹⁴ As Deputy-Superintendent of Indian Affairs (the title by which the permanent head or chief civil servant of the department was known between 1862 and 1936), Scott considered himself responsible for pushing Aboriginal peoples toward “civilisation”; meanwhile, his poetry and writing revealed sympathy and compassion toward the passing of the Indian.

Salem-Wiseman encourages contemporary readers of Scott’s poetry and writing to avoid dismissing his work and judging the poet as a hypocritical racist, and instead asks the modern reader to “understand more fully his attitude toward the Native people who figured so prominently in both his ‘outer’ life at the Department of Indian Affairs and his more private ‘inner’ life as expressed in his poetry and short fiction.” After all, she says, it was a common belief among Euro-Canadians of the early twentieth century that “in order for Native people to

¹² Dragland 6.

¹³ Salem-Wiseman 120.

¹⁴ Titley 31. See also: Keiichi Hirano, “The Aborigine in Canadian Literature,” *Canadian Literature* 14 (1962) 43-52.

survive as individuals, all things that made their culture unique and distinct from other Canadians had to be destroyed.”¹⁵

But inherently, Scott also had a very personal and perhaps selfish reason to dispose of the Indian of old. His status and success as a poet and writer was directly reliant on the success of his policies as an Indian administrator. If the “Indian problem” could be solved, by assimilating all Indians into contemporary Euro-Canadian culture, then the romantic, sympathetic sentiments Scott expressed in his poetry would become more valid and thus hold a wider historical and popular appeal. In this way, Scott’s double life as a poet and government administrator was intimately linked. It is perhaps ultimately due to the failure of Scott’s administrative efforts (i.e. Aboriginal people still exist and exert their cultural and linguistic differences) that explains why Scott is all but unknown as a poet and writer today. Although he was widely known and respected as a literary figure in his lifetime, students of Canadian literature in the early twenty-first century have scarcely heard of Scott the writer, never mind actually read or critiqued his work. Like his ideas with regards to Indian policy, Scott’s literary output is now considered antiquated. Despite Scott’s heavy hand, Cooke managed to make some impact as an Aboriginal person working from the inside. Cooke family memory positions Charles as “barely tolerant” of Duncan Campbell Scott.¹⁶

In the same year as his hiring, Scott, who was then the Chief Accountant at Indian Affairs, announced the commencement of “the organisation of a library in connection with [the] Dept.”¹⁷ Cooke would have no small involvement with matters relating to the departmental

¹⁵ Salem-Wiseman 120-142.

¹⁶ Nona Argue (Granddaughter of Charles A. Cooke). Personal Correspondence. 19 November, 2002.

¹⁷ RG 10, Volume 2740, File 145131, Reel C-11273, Extract from Dept. letter of Dec. 26th 1893 to W. J. McGee, Esq., Ethnologist in charge, Bureau of Ethnology, Washington.

library throughout his career. Cooke's involvement with the Department included efforts to better organise the library, manage its records, and effectively collect works relating to First Peoples in Canada (and their languages) for the research uses of departmental employees and Aboriginal peoples alike. While the Department in general was around this time recognising the benefits of effectively collecting and organising its records,¹⁸ Cooke's efforts stand out as an attempt to bring the knowledge and ideas of Aboriginal people into the educational and political realm of Indian Affairs and illustrate an instance of Aboriginal articulation and integration of the Western form of information and knowledge preservation and literacy. Cooke was certainly not unique in the fact that he was an Aboriginal person working for the Federal Department of Indian Affairs. The *Sudbury Journal* reported in May, 1901, that "two other Mohawk Indians, Miss Maracle and Joseph Delisle" were employed in the same room as Cooke.¹⁹ Historian Douglas Leighton has noted that the Department of Indian Affairs recruited a number of Aboriginal employees in the nineteenth century, mainly as interpreters, clerks, and timber rangers. But while many were hired by the Department, few were in any position to influence the formulation of policy.²⁰ Cooke's significance lies in the fact that although he was largely unsuccessful, he attempted to influence policy decisions at Indian Affairs through his library, newspaper, and dictionary projects, as well as through his role as a military recruitment officer during the First World War.

¹⁸ G. M. Matheson, the Registrar for Indian Affairs and Head Clerk, Records Branch between 1888 and 1936, and other departmental personnel, were for instance during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, working towards creating a series of subject indexes to provide subject access to records relating to Indian Affairs (both those in the department custody and elsewhere). It does not appear, however, that Matheson had anything to do with the establishment and organizing of the Indian Affairs departmental library.

¹⁹ "A Paper for the Mohawks: the new weekly will be printed in their own tongue." *Sudbury Journal* (30 May, 1901) 1.

²⁰ Douglas Leighton, "The Compact Tory as Bureaucrat: Samuel Peters Jarvis and the Indian Department, 1837-1845." *Ontario History* LXXIII.1 (1981) 40-53. See also: Leighton, *The Development of Federal Indian Policy in Canada, 1840-1890*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 1975, 66-67.

In large part due to his Aboriginal status, Cooke was regularly approached by Indians seeking his assistance and influence in their dealings with the department. One notable example lies in the efforts of Thomas Laforce, who in 1925 actively sought enfranchisement. Laforce wrote to Cooke, “Now Charlie, you know me pretty well. I am always amongst the white-people and making an honest living and I have good reputation among the white-people. And tell the Department that I fought for my country for freedom. And now all I am asking the Department is to grant me our enfranchisement. I need the money and I would like to have as soon as possible. I am ambitious and I believe in an education and a future.”²¹ Seeking to be granted the Band monies entitled to him in a lump sum upon enfranchising, Laforce explained to Cooke that he endeavoured to use the money to pay the costs of tuition, as he was enrolled to study as an electrician. Laforce’s efforts in seeking enfranchisement were not entirely uncommon. Although only a very small minority of Aboriginal peoples actively and willingly sought to be enfranchised under section 122A of the 1918 Indian Act, Laforce’s reasoning, that he wished to use the monies available to him for education, was common. Enfranchisement effectively removed the Indian status of an Aboriginal person under the Indian Act, and gave them the full rights of Canadian citizenship. Laforce, formerly of the Gibson reserve, was at the time of his application, living in Waterford, Ontario, and he sought to study in Chicago, Illinois. Thus removed from his home community, Laforce likely saw the benefits of enfranchisement (at least financially) as outweighing the benefits of retaining his Indian status and Band membership. For Indians like Laforce, enfranchisement was not a cultural choice, but an economic one.²² Cooke’s

²¹ RG 10, Volume 7230, File 8022-9, T. Laforce to Cooke, 16 November 1925.

²² See: Robin Jarvis Brownlie, “‘A Better Citizen than lots of White Men’: First Nations enfranchisement—an Ontario case study, 1918-1940” *Canadian Historical Review* 87.1 (March 2006) 29-52. Thomas Laforce later applied to have his status reinstated, giving many of the same reasons he had expressed in arguing to be enfranchised in the first place (financial). See: RG 10, Volume 7230, File 8022-9, Parry Sound Agency—Enfranchisement, Laforce T.

efforts in helping Laforce seek enfranchisement were neither supportive nor discouraging, but decidedly non-committal. It appears as though Cooke was merely helping out a fellow Indian. At the heart of Laforce's desire to be enfranchised was a motivation to gain an education and better himself. As a successful Indian without status himself, one can hardly blame Cooke for offering some kind of assistance in this matter. The fact that he did so, without any apparent judgement, speaks to the level of professionalism with which he approached his job.

At the House of Commons Special Committee hearings to consider Bill 14 (in relation to involuntary enfranchisement) in 1920, both Charles Cooke and Andrew Paull were present and submitted evidence. It is clear from the transcripts of these hearings that Paull and Cooke had previously never met each other, and their views are in conflict. Cooke insisted that he was "giving evidence as a private Indian," and that his "connection with ... [the Department of Indian Affairs had] nothing to do with" his opinions, yet he stated that he had "no objection" to the idea of enfranchisement, and even endorsed it as a potential tool of "progress."²³ Andrew Paull confronted Cooke on his seeming minority Indian point-of-view, wondering aloud if Cooke's opinion could have been influenced by his employment at Indian Affairs, and stating "I do not think you have met the Indians of British Columbia," noting their apparent disapproval of involuntary enfranchisement.

Although Cooke's apparent support of the idea of enfranchisement is upon first reading highly confusing, it is significant to note that when questioned about why he had not become enfranchised himself, Cooke responded, "I have never thought of taking out enfranchisement, and another reason why I have not is because I enjoy the full privileges as a Canadian citizen by

²³ Library and Archives Canada. RG 14 D-1, Volume 666, Appendix No. 3 (pt. 2), Reel T-14571. Proceedings, House of Commons Special Committee to Consider Bill 14 to Amend the Indian Act (April, 1920).

reason of the fact that I own property outside of the Indian Reserve, and therefore I have the same privileges as any other national who comes into this country,” continuing, “and I have voted in every election, federal and otherwise in Ottawa.”²⁴ Further, in relation to his own status, Cooke said “I belong to the Gibson band,” and later, “I certainly have interests in the Gibson reserve.” In reality, however, Cooke did not have status as an Indian. Although he considered himself an Indian “in every sense of the word,” he in fact had no status to lose, and therefore could not be enfranchised. Furthermore, he did not envision enfranchisement as in any way endangering Indian identity, suggesting that enfranchised Indians could stay on-reserve and take “an active and respected part in the tribal affairs of that reserve.” Cooke cites examples of Indians, whom he claimed were enfranchised, and had found such positive situations on their reserves, including one George Thompson of the Sucker Creek Reserve on Manitoulin Island and Alexander Aikins (whose Reserve community is not mentioned). As Cooke states, “These are cases where enfranchisement has taken place, and the Indian has taken his stand, and demonstrated to the world what he can do if he is put upon his own reserve and given an opportunity to show his ability as a citizen of this country.”

From this reader’s point-of-view, Cooke viewed enfranchisement as potentially positive because he felt it could provide a means whereby the lives and social status of Indians could be improved. By improving themselves, he in turn hoped that non-Aboriginal Canadians would show all Indians greater respect (he cited an instance from his own experience where despite his status as a government employee, he was denied a room at a hotel in Penetanguishene, Ontario on the grounds that he was an Indian). In addition to this hope, we must remember that Cooke’s boss, Duncan Campbell Scott, was sitting right next to him during the course of these hearings.

²⁴ LAC. RG 14 D-1, Volume 666, Appendix No. 3 (pt. 2), Reel T-14571. Proceedings, House of Commons Special Committee to Consider Bill 14 to Amend the Indian Act (April, 1920).

How much these hearings provide evidence of Cooke's own thoughts is therefore difficult to judge. Even his voluntary participation in these hearings is not certain, for it is well known that Duncan Campbell Scott wielded considerable power and influence within the Department. Cooke may have been expressing such opinions in concern for his job.

Although his literary output was moderate, his efforts and ideas are nonetheless significant.²⁵ Like Johnson, who was a turn-of-the-century Mohawk contemporary, Cooke was to a lesser extent an Aboriginal artist and writer who sought to participate in the post-Confederation process of writing, constructing, and imagining twentieth-century Canada. From a postcolonial standpoint, as a civil servant and aspiring writer Cooke was self-consciously working to reclaim the cultural and social territory subordinated and occupied by Canadians of European descent. Cooke's audience was simultaneously Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian. Like Johnson's, his was a nationalist identity that sought to denounce oppression and incorporate the histories and knowledge of First Peoples into the larger Canadian social and cultural fabric.²⁶

In January, 1904, Cooke wrote to Clifford Sifton, Canadian Minister of the Interior and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, suggesting that the Indian Affairs department should properly organise its collection of books, accept contributions from Aboriginal people, and provide free and open circulation of its materials to members of the Department and status Indians. In addition to his duties as a records clerk, Cooke was compiling a history of Aboriginal

²⁵ Cooke's writing which resulted in publication, or which was intended for publication, include (in his lifetime): *A-de-rih-wa-nie-ton on-kwe-on-we ne-ha: a message to the Iroquois Indians*. Trans. by Charles A. Cooke (n.p.: The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Canada, n.d.); Iroquois Personal Names. Unpublished manuscript and recordings. Ed. by Marius Barbeau (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1950); "Iroquois Personal Names" *New Frontiers* 2.2 (Fall, 1953) 29-31; "Iroquois Personal Names—their classification" *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 96.4 (1952) 427-438; and *Onkweonwe* [magazine/newspaper] (1900-?). Ed. by Charles A. Cooke (Ottawa: F.X. Lemieux). Posthumously, Cooke's niece, Nona Argue, published one of his letters as: "Dear Friends of the Gibson Reserve: recalling troubled times in Oka 113 years ago" *Ottawa Citizen* (26 July 1990) A15.

²⁶ See: Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson, *Paddling her own canoe: the times and texts of E. Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

cultures and languages, and he thought Indian Affairs ought to be collecting literature and building archives relating to and originating from Aboriginal peoples. Cooke's rather progressive suggestions included: that an Indian National Library of Literature be established; that such a library be established and maintained under the control of the Department of Indian Affairs at Ottawa; that a fund of five hundred dollars be established out of which the books and other library materials could be purchased; and that a portion of this library circulate, so that books could reach accredited Indians through the Indian Agents.²⁷ Accompanying his request, Cooke submitted letters of support from Band members, missionaries, Indian Agents, book dealers, and other interested parties, including a Naturalist at the Geological Survey of Canada, who observed: "It has always been a great matter of surprise to me that no safe repository for the preservation of our native Indian records should exist in Canada, and the only point in your circular which I do not entirely agree with is the use of the word 'might' in the several clauses."²⁸ Josiah Hill, writing from the Ohsweken Council House of the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario, noted: "I have consulted two or three Chiefs upon the subject ... and they all seem to think that it would be a benefit to the Indians if such establishment could be carried out conveniently, and I quite agree with them."²⁹ Also from Six Nations, Chief J.W.M. Elliott added, "I have spoken to some of our most intelligent and influential Chiefs about the project of starting an Indian Library in connection with the Department of Indian Affairs and like my self they are

²⁷ RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-2 pt. 2A, Letter to the Hon. Clifford Sifton, from Charles A. Cooke, January 1904.

²⁸ RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-2 pt. 2A, Letter to Charles A. Cooke, from John Mawson, Naturalist, Geological Survey of Canada, 21st March 1904.

²⁹ RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-2 pt. 2A, Letter to Charles A. Cooke, from Josiah Hill, Ohsweken Council House, 22nd February 1904.

in favour of it.”³⁰

Cooke’s initiative in gathering support for the cause of his Indian National Library was impressive. Recognising that a great deal of knowledge and records were “in the possession of bands scattered throughout the Dominion, and others ... published in book form, issued in small editions, and having a limited circulation, and so are gradually lost to succeeding generations,” Cooke went to great effort to write to rare book dealers, missionaries and members of Indian Band Councils across the country, asking for their suggestions and support for the Indian National Library project. And as the range of support indicated, Cooke’s vision was clearly understood to be of significant value by parties outside the Department of Indian Affairs.³¹ However, Sifton transferred responsibility of the matter to Duncan Campbell Scott, who quickly and effectively dismissed the most progressive of Cooke’s suggestions. Scott responded with favourable comments relating to Cooke, describing him as “an intelligent young Mohawk,” but unfavourably dismissed Cooke’s ideas regarding his vision of an Indian National Library: “There is certainly an idea at the bottom of this scheme of his which is worth considering, but ... it has no great practical utility in its present form. There are two features which should not be adopted as part of an official scheme; I do not think the Indians ought to contribute, and I do not think the library should be circulating.”³²

As was the case with an overwhelming number of crucially important decisions made by

³⁰ RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-2 pt. 2A, Letter to Charles A. Cooke, from Chief J. W. M. Elliott, Six Nations Reserve, 29 February 1904.

³¹ In the correspondence included in RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-2 pt. 2A, there are at least fifteen letters in glowing support of Cooke’s idea to establish an Indian National Library. A number of the letters are in very poor condition, and are thus unreadable. All those included, however, appear to express positive support. Cooke himself quotes from twelve of these in a letter to Frank Pedley, Deputy Superintendent General.

³² RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-1, Reel C-11321, Letter to the Hon. Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, from Duncan Campbell Scott, Ottawa, 29th January 1904.

Scott during his tenure at Indian Affairs, the matter was refused on the grounds of its potential cost.³³ And given what we know of Scott's narrow and paternal vision with regards to administering Indian affairs, the matter was likely seen as frivolous and unnecessary in relation to the Department's ultimate goal of assimilating Aboriginal peoples and eliminating the "Indian problem." Nonetheless, that Scott, the literary man, Poet of Confederation, turned down an idea so closely related to a literary endeavour, seems puzzling, revealing him to be a strict administrator and bookkeeper. Cooke's Indian National Library may have made a significant contribution towards fostering relations between the department and Aboriginal peoples, and provided a priceless contribution to future researchers and scholars, had it not been shrugged off at such an early date.³⁴

If Scott ignored the heart of Cooke's suggestions, at least the proposal led to the formation of a workable departmental library. From the time that the Department's collection of books and journals was first envisioned in 1893, until 1904, the library stood as a small collection of ethnographic reports, and similar publications, collected mostly by Scott and later, Frank Pedley, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs (1902-1913), for the use of select Department employees. The collection was not organised in any useful way, nor was there a librarian or other individual charged with its care and maintenance.³⁵ When Cooke presented his ideas in relation to improving the library in 1904, Scott quickly dismissed any suggestion of

³³ See: E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1986) passim.

³⁴ It is important to note that the Federal government's 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, recommended that a "National Aboriginal Documentation Centre" be established to "research, collect, preserve and disseminate information related to residential schools, relocations and other aspects of Aboriginal historical experience." Cooke's proposed Indian National Library was therefore more than ninety years ahead of its time. See recommendation 3.5.36, *Gathering strength: volume 3 of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 1996) 538-539.

³⁵ RG 10, Volume 2740, File 145131, Reel C-11273, Ottawa, Ontario – Correspondence regarding the establishment of a library in the Department of Indian Affairs (orders, accounts, clippings), 1893-1904.

Aboriginal contribution to the collection, referring to the existing records of Indian tribes as “meagre and not of much importance,” and similarly ignored the idea that Aboriginal peoples make any use of the library.

He was, however, prompted by Cooke’s proposal to turn what had amounted to an unorganised collection of books and journals into an organised library. Scott ordered that a departmental library should be established containing books “dealing with the early history of the country in which the Indians played such an important part; works of value relating to ethnology, folk-lore, dictionaries, vocabularies, and books in native languages, etc,” noting that the Parliamentary Library, which at the time served the purposes of a national library in Canada, was ill equipped in books of this nature. Scott asked that all books in the department be collected and kept together in the new library, “under the custody of some competent person...under lock and key and...subject to ordinary library regulations.” Scott himself was responsible for supervising all library purchases, unfortunately, and Mr. Stewart, the department’s Assistant Secretary, was, in addition to his regular duties, selected to act as the librarian. This was a position that Cooke himself was certainly qualified to undertake, but he was nevertheless passed over in favour of Stewart, perhaps for reasons of seniority.³⁶

Recognising there was merit in Cooke’s suggestions relating to collecting and organising works of historical value, to his credit, Scott ordered that all Department records scheduled for transfer to the Dominion Archives should be copied and kept for future reference within the Department: “These should be copied from time to time...bound and indexed so that in a short time...we could have a complete basis for a history of the Indians of North America under British Rule....I think if we give careful attention to a library of Indian literature and a repository for

³⁶ RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-1, Reel C-11321, Letter to the Hon. Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, from Duncan Campbell Scott, Ottawa, 29th January 1904.

copies of all Indian archives, we shall be doing a useful and necessary work.”³⁷ Scott insisted, however, that the records and reflections of Aboriginal people themselves were not valuable or worthy of considering or including in the collection. This attitude is consistent with Scott’s behaviour as an administrator of Indian Affairs, who only sought to eliminate the “Indian problem” through assimilation, and minimising First Nations’ voices and traditional contributions. Scott’s notion of history, as it related to the First Peoples of Canada, effectively excluded Aboriginal people themselves from constructing and telling their own stories and experiences. Scott understood Indian history to exist only within the realms of what was written by members of the Indian Affairs department, government, and other Euro-Canadians, and therefore he effectively killed Cooke’s suggestion that First Peoples’ own understandings of their histories and visions of the future be included in the Department’s library.

Although his ideas were not considered to be of great vision or value in the eyes of Scott and the decision makers at Indian Affairs at the time, Cooke continued to work subtly, gathering materials for the library, and he attempted to make progress in the interests of First Peoples as an Indian employee working within the department. In August 1904, Cooke suggested that all photographs taken for inclusion in the Department’s annual reports be included and catalogued in the library, noting that “A collection of this kind would, in years to come, prove very interesting and useful.”³⁸ When nothing was done in response to his initiatives (the collection remained uncatalogued and largely inaccessible) Cooke issued a memorandum, commenting that although a number of books had been collected for the library, Department personnel desiring to use the collection were still waiting to do so because the collection was difficult to access and

³⁷ Letter to Hon. Clifford Sifton, from Duncan Campbell Scott, 29th January 1904.

³⁸ RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-1 pt. 1, Reel 11321, Letter to The Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, from Charles A. Cooke, 29th August 1904.

remained scattered throughout the Department: “I beg leave to suggest that some one be now designated ... as Librarian. The books should be catalogued, and those which are now in the Secretary’s Rooms should be placed with those recently acquired.”³⁹ Access issues for Department employees were clearly frustrating. Not only was Scott’s vision of a library one of a collection “kept under lock and key,” but materials were apparently dispersed throughout the Department and only available to select officials. Cooke’s interests in building a workable and accessible departmental library appeared to be rooted in a desire to provide the tools for all Department employees to access information and make educated decisions. Further, his ideas were meant to encourage consultation and an exchange of ideas between the Department and Aboriginal peoples, whose knowledges could provide unique insight and vision to departmental activities.

Without outside Aboriginal involvement, the library developed as one might expect over the next twenty-five years. The vast majority of all publications ordered for the collection were chosen by Duncan Campbell Scott, and the library contained little or no literature written from an Aboriginal point of view.⁴⁰ Titles ordered following 1904 were, not surprisingly, representative of Euro-Canadian or American interpretations of Aboriginal histories, cultures and languages, and a seemingly disproportionate number of titles had little or nothing at all to do specifically with First Peoples. The library remained quite small throughout Scott’s tenure, and operated on the slimmest of budgets. B. Parker is given as the librarian in 1924, with a collection size of just over 1,000 non-circulating items – all for reference purposes. Parker reportedly received no salary as librarian, and was thus charged with the care of the library in

³⁹ RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-1 pt. 1, Reel C-11321, Memorandum to the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, from Charles A. Cooke, 10th November 1904.

⁴⁰ See those records contained within: RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-1 pt. 1, Reel-C-11321.

addition to other, seemingly more important duties.⁴¹ Clearly Cooke's grand vision of an Indian National Library failed to develop during his time of employment with the Department. Instead, a rather small collection emerged that was only available to employees of the Department headquarters in Ottawa. Budgetary concerns dominated any selection of materials that did take place (rather than actual need, or any desire to offer much in terms of intellectual stimulation), and the collection was under the guardianship of only a part-time and unpaid librarian at best. In 1938, twelve years following the retirement of Cooke, and his efforts in lobbying on behalf of the departmental library, the collection was considered to be of even less value, much as it had existed before 1904, reported as a disorganized "private collection of books for the use of the [Indian Affairs] Branch," with no librarian in charge.⁴²

Although his proposed Indian National Library never emerged, Cooke's efforts as an employee of Indian Affairs were characterised by consistent lobbying in the interests of First Peoples, and an apparent expectation and hope that the relationship between Indian Affairs and Aboriginal people could be one rooted in cooperation, equality, and fair consultation. Cooke's ideas in establishing an Indian National Library through the Department of Indian Affairs were a natural continuation of his earlier initiatives within the Department in compiling a "Comparative and Synoptical Indian Dictionary," and in his efforts to compile, edit, and publish a newspaper in the Mohawk language. Each of these efforts was Cooke's own, which he presented to officials within the Department and gathered support. In May of 1899, Cooke solicited the department

⁴¹ RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-1 pt. 1, Reel C-11321, Report filed for the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Library Statistics, 1923.

⁴² RG 10, Volume 3081, File 270000-1 pt. 1, Reel C-11321, T.R.L. MacInnes, Secretary of Indian Affairs, to R.R. Coates, Dominion Statistician, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, April 4, 1938. Institutional memory at Indian Affairs, by the way, is apparently rather short. When the author spoke to the research librarians at the departmental library a few years ago they were only aware of the library's existence since 1966 [Pierre Beaudreau, Research Librarian, Departmental Library, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Personal Correspondence, 13 November 2001].

for funding in researching and compiling a comparative dictionary of Aboriginal languages, which he naively described as “embracing as many as possible of all the spoken Indian languages of today throughout Canada & U. S., and will be particularly invaluable with interests of philology & ethnology.”⁴³ This massive undertaking was one that Cooke continued to work on throughout his career and well into his retirement, culminating in 1950 in an extensive manuscript on Iroquois personal names. This manuscript, sponsored in part by the National Museum of Canada and the American Philosophical Society, contained more than 6,000 names taken down in missionary spelling, with phonetic renderings and tape recordings made by Cooke.⁴⁴

In 1900, Cooke took the initiative to compile and edit a newspaper in the Mohawk language, which he entitled, *Onkweonwe*, Mohawk for “Aboriginal people.” The department appears to have had no involvement in the project except to have possibly provided a publisher, but Cooke took advantage of his position within Indian Affairs to correspond widely with Mohawk Chiefs throughout Ontario, Quebec, and the United States, asking for support, to encourage subscribers, and to elicit Aboriginal involvement and contribution to the paper. *Onkweonwe*, according to an article published in the *Sudbury Journal* in relation to the paper, began “some time ago...[as] a semi-monthly magazine.” So successful was the endeavour, Cooke “decided to turn it into a newspaper, the first of its kind in Canada and the second in

⁴³ RG 10, Volume 2974, File 209860, St-François Agency – Correspondence regarding the *Comparative Indian Vocabulary*, Charles A. Cooke (List of words frequently used by Indians).

⁴⁴ For more information on Cooke’s work in compiling the vocabulary, see: Barbeau 424-425; and Cooke, “Iroquois personal names,” *Proceedings* 427-438. Cooke sold one copy of the compilation to the American Philosophical Society in 1951, for a reported fee of \$600. In today’s dollars, that would be something in the neighbourhood of \$4,750. This price is reported in: Canadian Museum of Civilization. Library, Archives and Documentation, Marius Barbeau Collection (Huron-Wyandot Files), Charles A. Cooke, Mohawk Scholar, File B-G-162, Marius Barbeau to Dr. F.J. Alcock, 19 February, 1952. The manuscript and tape recordings are today held in the American Philosophical Society Library’s American Indian Manuscripts collection, in Philadelphia, PA, and in the Library and Archives of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, QC.

America.”⁴⁵ Cooke originally envisioned that the publication would be issued every two weeks, and contain general news items, Indian news, and information helpful to Indians in agriculture, trading, hunting, and education.⁴⁶ The subscription price was set at twenty-five cents a year for “Indians who are able to pay, and free to the unable” and fifty cents a year for “white subscribers.” The first issue of *Onkweonwe* was published on 25 October, 1900, in magazine format but according to his correspondence, soon afterwards Cooke encountered some difficulty in publishing additional issues. Only five days following the publication of the first issue, Cooke appeared frustrated in his efforts to gather sufficient Aboriginal contribution.⁴⁷

Failing to gather enough interest and contributions to publish again within two weeks, Cooke on the 29th of November, in a letter asking for financial donations, described the publication as fortnightly, and although he then claimed to have “400 subscribers...throughout Canada and Ontario and in the state of New York,”⁴⁸ further efforts in publishing additional issues were complicated, and it is uncertain how many issues of *Onkweonwe* were eventually published. The only known surviving copy of *Onkweonwe* is volume 1, number 1, housed in the National Library of Canada. However, the *Sudbury Journal* republished at least two stories from the newspaper format of *Onkweonwe* in May, 1901, so we know that further issues were indeed published, although their extent is not known. Although short-lived, the paper was the first Aboriginal language newspaper written, compiled, and published solely by an Aboriginal person

⁴⁵ “A Paper for the Mohawks: the new weekly will be printed in their own tongue” *Sudbury Journal* (30 May, 1901) 1.

⁴⁶ RG 10, Volume 1307, Reel C-13907, Records concerning an Indian newspaper edited by Charles Cook.

⁴⁷ RG 10, Volume 1307, Reel C-13907, Letter from Charles Cooke dated 30th October 1900.

⁴⁸ RG 10, Volume 1307, Reel C-13907, Letter from Charles Cooke dated 29th November 1900.

in Canada.⁴⁹ All previous publications in Aboriginal languages were written and published by European or Canadian missionaries.

One of the reprinted stories in the *Sudbury Journal*, translated into English, was about “Indian John, a celebrated Mohawk guide,” who reportedly lived at the time near Eganville, Ontario, and was eighty years old.⁵⁰ This story gives us some sense of the nature of the writing in the newspaper version of *Onkweonwe*. In the only existing copy (in the magazine format), *Onkweonwe* features mainly contemporary reports and stories from Iroquois communities in Quebec, Ontario, and New York State, including the Six Nations reserve near Brantford, Oneida reserve near London, the Mohawk reserves of Tyendinaga, Kahnawake, Kanehsatake, and Watha, as well as Huron Lorette (today known as Wendake). Other topics discussed include foreign affairs, national affairs, economy, and sports. With regards to national affairs, Cooke provided the names of candidates running in the federal elections of November, 1900, with particular reference to those candidates running in the ridings in Ontario and Quebec where the Iroquois (and Huron) reserves were located. Additionally, Cooke provides the dates of hunting seasons for deer, moose, elk, beaver, otter, muskrat, and rabbit in Quebec, and lists the current prices of potatoes, onions, apples, sugar, butter, eggs, chicken, duck, beef, hogs, and lamb. And, of course, he did not neglect to mention the current lacrosse standings.⁵¹ So, while our existing copy of *Onkweonwe* is only four pages long, it is packed with information useful and relevant to

⁴⁹ The first Aboriginal language newspaper in North America, published by an Aboriginal person, was the *Cherokee Advocate*. *Onkweonwe* was indeed the first of its kind in Canada. To get a sense of the range of serial publications in Aboriginal languages in Canada and the United States, see: James P. Danky, ed. *Native American periodicals and newspapers 1828-1982: bibliography, publishing record, and holdings*, compiled by Maureen E. Hady (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1984).

⁵⁰ See “A Paper for the Mohawks” *Sudbury Journal*, 1.

⁵¹ Thank you to Gunther Michelson for his translation of *Onkweonwe*. Gunther Michelson. Personal Correspondence. 7 November, 2002.

the Aboriginal communities of Ontario and Quebec.

During the First World War, Cooke's status as an Aboriginal person working within the Department was convenient for the sake of recruitment. Cooke "did his part" for the war effort in travelling extensively to Indian communities throughout Ontario and Quebec, encouraging the young men to enlist. From the moment the first call went out to Canadians to fight, Aboriginal peoples (along with other significant minority groups like Blacks and Asians), lined up to enlist. But Aboriginal people were initially discouraged and outrightly turned down from enlisting in the war effort in large part due to the "nature of Canadian race sentiment" in the early part of the twentieth century. In other words, there was a general sense of white superiority, and the idea that certain peoples (visible minorities, mainly) were "militarily incompetent."⁵² Never mind that Aboriginal and Black communities in Canada had proud records of military service prior to Confederation – the stereotypes of incompetence and undesirability held towards visible minorities by Euro-Canadians were powerful. By the spring of 1916, however, with the intensity of the war increasing, Indians, along with other visible minorities, began to be accepted as recruits. Charles Cooke was seconded by the Department of Indian Affairs to work as a recruiter for the 114th battalion, which was supposed to be an all-Indian regiment. Given the honorary rank of lieutenant, Cooke travelled Ontario and Quebec, often with an Indian commissioned officer, "stressing the pride and the opportunity derived from serving in an identifiably Indian unit."⁵³ Thanks in part to Cooke's work, more than 3,500 Aboriginal people participated in the war effort, and uncountable others volunteered, but were rejected.

Aboriginal persistence in volunteering for the war effort reveals that they "had not been

⁵² James W. St.G. Walker, "Race and Recruitment in the World War I: enlistment of visible minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," *Canadian Historical Review* 70.1 (1989) 1-26.

⁵³ Walker 13.

defeated by the racism of white society, had not accepted its rationalizations, and were not prepared quietly to accept inferior status.” Further, Aboriginal involvement in the First World War, spurred in part by Cooke, demonstrated that they had not lost faith in Canada and Canadian justice, and that they were confident in their equality to Euro-Canadians, and still loyal to Canada and the empire.⁵⁴ Aboriginal people volunteered, and were actively encouraged to volunteer by their communities (and through the efforts of Charles Cooke), because they sought to gain group recognition and to further the rights of their people. When Prime Minister Borden introduced conscription in 1917, Aboriginal people protested loudly, refusing to report on the grounds that as wards of the state – legal minors and treated as children – with no vote and no voice in the conduct of the war, it was unfair to expect them to participate in the war. As one Ontario Indian declaration proclaimed, “we cannot say that we are fighting for our liberty, freedom and other privileges dear to all nations, for we have none.”⁵⁵

Frustrated with how they were first refused as volunteers, and then later hounded by recruiters, members of the Six Nations, who had at first offered their assistance as allies in 1914, began to oppose recruiters in 1916, stating that they were an independent people and would only enlist upon the personal appeal of the governor general and recognition of their special status.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Aboriginal contributions to the war effort, in Ontario at least, encouraged and moulded in no small part by Charles Cooke, were carried out in hopes that the Euro-Canadian perception of Indians would improve. Aboriginal people sought to fight side-by-side their Euro-Canadian countrymen in a symbolic effort to entrench ideas of equality and positive perception

⁵⁴ Walker 26.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Walker 18.

⁵⁶ See: Walker, 16; RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-7, Charles Cooke to Duncan Campbell Scott, 12 February and 4 March, 1916; and “Indians” *Ontario and the First World War, 1914-1918: a collection of documents*. Barbara M. Wilson, ed. (Toronto: Champlain Society and University of Toronto Press, 1977) cv-cxiv, 169-175.

in the minds of non-Aboriginals and government. As in Cooke's other efforts, his war service was carried out in an effort to give Indians a stronger voice and to rectify the overtly negative images many Euro-Canadians felt towards Aboriginal peoples.

Cooke had a relatively long career in the Department of Indian Affairs, working into his late fifties (he retired from the public service in 1926). But his retirement was equally long and productive. In retirement, Cooke continued an active schedule devoted to the betterment of Aboriginal peoples through research, publishing, and performance. His rough diary entries, in 1944, reveal a man who was a voracious reader and a regular writer, often remaining "in all day & at night, reading & writing etc.," or visiting the Parliamentary Reading Room and Library, or the Museum Library, for new books, and conducting research at the Archives.⁵⁷ Amongst his papers held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, is a neatly kept pocket book listing, alphabetically, titles of books relating to Indians. Correspondence between Marius Barbeau and the National Museum, following Cooke's death in 1959, indicates that Cooke indeed owned a small library, but in all likelihood he kept this inventory of books on hand for his numerous trips to libraries and archives.⁵⁸ Cooke was a scholar indeed.

A staunch Methodist, Cooke attended church services regularly and was very active as a member of the Ottawa-based, Stewarton United Church choir. His father, Angus Cooke, had regularly preached on the Gibson reserve in the absence of the local missionary, and was integral

⁵⁷ See Cooke's rough and undated diary and journal writing in the Cooke Family Papers (held by grandson, Graham Cooke, in Edmonton). Composed on his old letterhead (designed in the 1910s), Cooke's entries are detailed accounts of his daily doings, the weather, costs, and thoughts. A brief snapshot of his life between October and December, entries around the Christmas season reveal the year (1944), and a man who often reflected on the past, including the November anniversary of his second marriage, and the sorrow he felt over the death of his first wife (Cooke's first wife, Edith, died in 1915 at the age of 47. He remarried in November, 1919, to his first wife's younger sister, Minnie). As he explains in the entry of December 24th, he often found himself "wandering in the cul de sac of spiritual life."

⁵⁸ Marius Barbeau Collection (Huron-Wyandot Files), Books re: Indians.

in building the Methodist church at Gibson. For his efforts, Angus was considered “Chief,” and his strong sense of faith and community activism was clearly a great influence on Charles. In relation to his church membership, Charles was also an integral member of the noted Hiawatha Quartet, “whose appearances in this area [Ottawa] guaranteed sell-out crowds,” and a life member of the Prince of Wales Lodge A.F. and A.M. (the Fraternal Order of Free and Accepted Masons), and the Canadian Order of Foresters.⁵⁹ Cooke’s Methodist devotion undoubtedly influenced his print and literary efforts. Education and literacy was a key element in Methodist thought and in disseminating its broader social message geared towards shaping the spiritual and moral characteristics of national life. The Methodist philosophy (which also influenced nineteenth-century Aboriginal writers like Peter Jones) recognised that knowledge could be used for good or evil, depending on how it was learned and utilised. Thus the goal of education from a Methodist perspective was to stimulate knowledge that could help to reveal God’s purpose and work.⁶⁰

Prior to, and following his retirement from the Department of Indian Affairs in 1926, Cooke worked hard in raising the public profile of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, in part by touring all over Canada and the United States, speaking and performing at churches and community halls, but also through his close association with the anthropologist Marius Barbeau. His efforts included at least one known publication, a pamphlet which he translated into Mohawk, and published with the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is of Canada.⁶¹ This

⁵⁹ “Charles A. Cooke: internationally famed Indian scholar dies, 88” *Ottawa Citizen* (14 April, 1958) 1149.

⁶⁰ For more on the Methodist philosophy with regards to literacy and education, see: Neil Semple, *The Lord’s Dominion: the history of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996); and Edwards, *Paper Talk*, 45-54.

⁶¹ *A-de-rih-wa-nie-ton On-kwe-on-we Neh-ha: a message to the Iroquois Indians*. Trans. by Charles A. Cooke (n.p.: The National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is of Canada, n.d.). *The Baha’i News* mentioned the publication of this pamphlet in its April, 1956 [no. 75] issue [p. 4].

pamphlet, entitled “A Message to the Iroquois Indians,” was published as a missionary aid for Baha’i propagators near Caughnawaga. In addition to translating the document, Cooke is said to have acted as an intermediary on behalf of the Baha’is. In a letter he sent to their Quebec Regional Teaching Committee, Cooke says, “Since writing last I had the privilege of visiting the Mohawks at Oka, and sowed the seeds for the propagation of the work of the Baha’is...”⁶² *The Baha’i News* reported that his assistance was “particularly interesting as Mr. Cooke...has for years been well and favourably known by the church groups in Eastern Ontario and Quebec for his work in bringing the problems of the Indian to the attention of the public as a church member.”⁶³ Cooke’s interest and apparent attraction to the Baha’i faith likely came from a shared desire to see Aboriginal peoples and Canadians of other ethnic backgrounds treated fairly and equally. The Baha’i faith was founded on the principle of the spiritual unity of all peoples – a philosophy certainly in line with Cooke’s interests.

As a singer, Cooke was known throughout Canada and the U.S. (particularly in Ontario and Quebec) where he toured between 1926 and 1934. In his own words, “after retirement in 1926 [I] devoted attention to lecturing and concerts-recitals, from Sidney [sic], N.S. across to Victoria.”⁶⁴ Blessed with a rich bass voice, Cooke performed regularly and extensively. In addition to his activities in the Stewarton United Church and the Hiawatha Quartet, he was also a celebrated member of the Torrey-Alexander Choir of Ottawa as organiser and leader. In a certificate of appreciation presented to Cooke by this choir in December, 1906, Mrs. W.M. Joelyn expressed on the choir’s behalf that his leadership was effective in “drawing us more

⁶² Quoted in *The Baha’i News* 75 (April, 1956) 4.

⁶³ *The Baha’i News* 75 (April, 1956) 4.

⁶⁴ Marius Barbeau Collection (Huron-Wyandot Files), Iroquois Names Recorded by Charles Cooke, B-G-164, Autobiographical notes.

closely together, both socially and spiritually.”⁶⁵ Cooke even designed his own letterhead, advertising himself as available for concerts, recitals, lectures, and socials as “Canada’s Indian Basso and Reader.” Similarly, a promotional pamphlet advertised Cooke as sporting an “Extensive Repertoire of Choicest Sacred, Patriotic, National Humorous Songs and Readings.” Testimonials from audiences and news reports as far away as New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island praised his “fine clear bass voice,” maintaining a “perfect richness and the perfection of his enunciation adds to the pleasure of his auditors.”⁶⁶ As part of his popular performances, Cooke dressed in Indian costume, as something of the male counterpart to E. Pauline Johnson, who was similarly active around the same time.

Although he was not as famous, Cooke’s performances as a singer are reminiscent of Oskenton (1886-1955), “the singer from Muskoka,” who was similarly performing around the same time. Although Oskenton was internationally acclaimed during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, very little has been mentioned of him in academic scholarship. Reportedly a member of the Bear Clan of the Mohawk at Kahnawake, he was “Orphaned at an early age,” and “spent his formative years living with relatives and in missionary schools, with intervals of residing in nearby forests.”⁶⁷ Overheard singing by a group of Euro-American campers in 1915, he was invited to perform at the Christmas tree lighting in Madison Square Garden that December, and so began his illustrious singing career. In 1918 he appeared in a Jerome Kern musical, produced by Henry W. Savage, on Broadway, called “Toot-Toot.” Touring throughout the English-speaking world, Oskenton studied the musical traditions of other North American Aboriginal people, and

⁶⁵ A copy of this certificate is included in the Cooke family papers held by Graham Cooke in Edmonton.

⁶⁶ From Cooke’s promotional pamphlet, held in the Cooke family papers in Edmonton.

⁶⁷ “Biographical Note,” Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, MSS 294, Chief Oskenton Collection, Mashantucket, Connecticut.

performed these along with those of the Mohawk.⁶⁸ Grey Owl's biographer, Professor Donald Smith, reveals that Oskenonton was also known as Louis Deer, and with an English friend, Ted Blackmore, he constructed the Plains Indian headdress that Grey Owl bought in London in 1936.⁶⁹ Oskenonton's popularity was such that Cooke would have undoubtedly been aware of his performances, and it is possible that he even modelled himself in a similar fashion.

By chance, archival records relating to Cooke's linguistic work with Marius Barbeau at the Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, also reveal something of his lecturing and performances in the mid-1920s. Recorded on index cards, interspersed amongst the materials donated to the museum by his widow, Minnie Cooke, is a revealing record of Charles' performances between October 1923 and July 1924. Although likely incomplete, these notes reveal the places in which he performed, the precise songs and lore he recited, and the fee he was paid. Earning on average between \$10 and \$15 (the equivalent of approximately \$125 to \$185 in 2008 prices), Cooke sang and recited a mix of material, including an ode to famed Ottawa-area politician, Alonzo Wright (the "King of the Gatineau")⁷⁰, Pauline Johnson's famous poem, "The Cattle Thief," an address on "Indian Courtship," the British lyric, "Old Mother Hubbard," and songs such as "Friend O' Mine," "The Skipper," "My Land," and "The Floral Dance," among others.⁷¹ These records

⁶⁸ These scarce biographical details on Oskenonton have been obtained primarily through the following: "Biographical Note," Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, MSS 294, Chief Oskenonton Collection, Mashantucket, Connecticut; and "'War Song' by Chief Oskenonton." August, 2007. Robert's Old Shmaltz Archives. 15 March, 2008 <<http://www.raeproductions.com/music/war.html>>. Additional tidbits can be found on the website of the University of New Mexico's Digital Collections <<http://econtent.unm.edu/index.php>> ; Bishop Bryant, "Canada's Blackest Blot!," *Toronto Star Weekly* (28 May, 1938); and Bessie Hilton, "The Visit of Chief Os-Ke-Non-Ton," *Lumen* (Easter Term, 1938). Reprinted on the website of the Farnworth Grammar School, near Manchester, England, 4 July, 2003 <http://www.fgs.utvinternet.com/38_Lumen_2.html>.

⁶⁹ Donald B. Smith, *From the Land of the Shadows: the making of Grey Owl* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1990) 129.

⁷⁰ For more on Alonzo Wright, see: Pierre-Louis Lapointe, "Wright, Alonzo." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*. 2000. 21 January, 2008, <<http://www.biographi.ca>>.

⁷¹ Canadian Museum of Civilization. Library, Archives and Documentation (Ethnological Records), Charles A.

reveal that Cooke was invited, and well-received in mainly small, rural communities, such as Tamworth, Cherry Valley, Haliburton, Dundela, Hawthorn, Ivanhoe, Opinicon Lake, and Millbrook, Ontario, as well as communities like St. Andrews East and Dalhousie Mills in Quebec. Most of these communities are in the Ottawa-Peterborough-Kingston-Cornwall vicinity, well within a day's commute of his home in Ottawa (Cooke, in 1924, was still employed by the Department of Indian Affairs, thus any touring he undertook had to be local).⁷² A notice in the Napanee *Beaver*, in relation to his performance in Newburgh on 6 October, 1923, describes Cooke's performance as "a treat" that should not be missed.⁷³

Cooke worked extensively with the famed Canadian anthropologist, Marius Barbeau. As early as 1913, Barbeau says that Cooke had worked with him on the Huron-Wyandot field notes, and in the early 1950s he was Barbeau's interpreter and go-between at the Six Nations reserve. Barbeau thought of Cooke as "a competent and industrious native scholar," and considered his Mohawk vocabulary work as "most valuable...by far the best – if not the only – lexicon of Mohawk in existence."⁷⁴ In other letters, Barbeau referred to Cooke as "a most industrious and far-seeing Mohawk scholar" who produced "monumental work."⁷⁵ Barbeau obviously thought very highly of Cooke, and was particularly excited by the extensive manuscript and recordings he produced on Iroquois names. From correspondence between Barbeau and Dr. William

Cooke Collection (III-I-150M), Mohawk Dictionary, File B424 f. 1.

⁷² Library, Archives and Documentation (Ethnological Records), Charles A. Cooke Collection (III-I-150M), Mohawk Dictionary, File B424 f. 1.

⁷³ Napanee *Beaver* (28 September, 1923) 5.

⁷⁴ Marius Barbeau Collection (Huron-Wyandot Files), Charles A. Cooke, Mohawk Scholar, File B-G-162, Marius Barbeau to Dr. L.S. Russell [Acting Director, National Museum, Ottawa], 16 April, 1959. See also: Marius Barbeau Collection (Huron-Wyandot Files), Charles A. Cooke, Mohawk Scholar, File B-G-162, Barbeau to Dr. William E. Lingelbach [Librarian, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia], 7 February, 1952.

⁷⁵ Marius Barbeau Collection (Huron-Wyandot Files), Dr. Lingelbach Recording Cooke's Iroquois Names, B-G-165, Barbeau to Dr. William Lingelbach, 7 May, 1951.

Lingelbach, Librarian at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, it is clear that Cooke undertook this work with hopes of publication. As Barbeau reports to Lingelbach during the summer of 1952, “he [Cooke] was telling me that his friends among the Iroquois are inquiring as to whether his large list of names will be published and when. They would be willing to subscribe to the cost of its publication.”⁷⁶ But as the manuscript was immensely large, and “bulky” in Barbeau’s words, it never found a publisher and has thus remained difficult to consult, particularly for interested Iroquois, as the only copies available are the archival originals.

Barbeau was instrumental in helping Cooke publish articles in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, and recommended him to Margaret Fairley, editor of the Toronto-based, socially progressive magazine, *New Frontiers*.⁷⁷ *New Frontiers*, published by the Labour-Progressive Party of Canada, between the winter of 1952 and the summer of 1956, was a decidedly leftist (i.e. Communist) magazine that celebrated Canadian arts and literature. Outspokenly opposed to the idea of “Canadian culture” celebrated and criticised by the Massey Commission (which the magazine characterised as demonstrating a “contempt for content,” failing to address the “widespread disgust at the degrading U.S. culture welcomed by Canadian business interests,” and tying cultural life to military defence by proposing the Council for the Arts, Letters and Social Sciences work hand-in-hand with the Department of External Affairs), *New Frontiers* sought to celebrate the art of the “working people” in such a way as to “contribute to the cause of world peace, and to Canadian progressive culture” (i.e. editorial staff identified

⁷⁶ Marius Barbeau Collection (Huron-Wyandot Files), Dr. Lingelbach Recording Cooke’s Iroquois Names, B-G-165, Barbeau to Dr. William Lingelbach, 4 July, 1952.

⁷⁷ Marius Barbeau Collection (Huron-Wyandot Files), Charles A. Cooke, Mohawk Scholar, File B-G-162, William E. Lingelbach [Librarian, American Philosophical Society] to Barbeau, 5 January and 6 February, 1952; Marius Barbeau Collection (Huron-Wyandot Files), Charles A. Cooke, Mohawk Scholar, File B-G-162, Margaret Fairley [Editor, *New Frontiers*] to Barbeau, 27 February, 1953.

themselves as subscribing to a Communist philosophy). Editor Margaret Fairley, was in addition to her editing duties, a well-known writer, educator, and political activist, and she was married to the equally well-known and respected educator and writer, Barker Fairley, who is perhaps most famous as co-founder of *Canadian Forum* and as a friend and promoter of the Group of Seven.⁷⁸

In the opening essay of the first volume of *New Frontiers*, Fairley outlined the magazine's philosophy with regards to Aboriginal peoples:

When the fight for the rights of the Indian people is won, and we welcome them into full citizenship, they will bring with them their tradition of art as part of daily life.... In terms of modern life the tradition of Indian culture can only mean this: the effort to make the whole of life beautiful, and the expression through our culture of the most advanced knowledge and the most energetic creative work; not moccasins and knitted sweaters as the [Massey Commission] *Report* suggests.... Their decorative designs and their symbolic carvings, because they are rooted in their day by day struggle with nature, will enter into the tradition of all Canadians and will play a significant part in bringing art and life close together.⁷⁹

In publishing his work with *New Frontiers*, Cooke was sharing the page with notable Canadian leftist writers such as Dorothy Livesay, Milton Acorn, and George Ryga, among others.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ For more on Margaret and Barker Fairley, see: James Doyle, *Progressive Heritage: the evolution of a politically radical literary tradition in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002); David Frank, "The Progressive Tradition in Canadian Literature" *Labour/Le Travail* 52 (2003) 245-251; "David Kimmel, "The People vs. Margaret and Barker Fairley," *The Bulletin* [University of Toronto] (23 March, 1998); Kimmel, "The Spirit of Canadian Democracy: Margaret Fairley and the Communist Cultural Worker's Responsibility to the People" *Left History* 1.1 (1993) 34-55; Kimmel and Gregory S. Kealey, "With Our Own Hands: Margaret Fairley and the 'Real Makers' of Canada" *Labour/Le Travail* 31 (1993) 253-285; Rodney Symington, "Fairley, Barker" *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Year 2000 Edition (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999) 812; Unsigned, Avrom Yanovsky, and Margaret Fairley, "Margaret Fairley: a remembrance: the Cultural Worker's Responsibility to the People" *Horizons: the Marxist Quarterly* 25 (1968) 1-6. The City of Toronto named a park after Margaret Fairley in the 1970s, located at the corner of Brunswick Avenue and Ulster Street.

⁷⁹ Margaret Fairley, "Our Cultural Heritage" *New Frontiers* 1.1 (Winter, 1955) 2.

⁸⁰ George Ryga (1932-1987) would later write and publish, *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* in 1967. Now considered by some critics and students of theatre as the most important English-language play by a Canadian playwright, it is the story of a young Aboriginal woman arriving in the city, only to find she has no place with either her own people or the non-Aboriginal population. *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* was first staged at the Vancouver Playhouse, and later at the official opening of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, and in Washington, D.C., featuring Chief Dan George as Rita's father. See: James Hoffman, *The Ecstasy of Resistance: a biography of George Ryga* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1995); and Dianne Meili, "Chief Dan George: popular actor and chief accomplished much before his death." *Windspeaker* 26.3 (June, 2008) 26.

Cooke's article in *New Frontiers*, "Iroquois Personal Names," is an abbreviated version of the more in-depth and linguistically focussed paper, "Iroquois Personal Names – their classification," which he published a year earlier in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*.

In the very same issue of *New Frontiers* in which Cooke's piece was featured, was an article by Eloise Street, editor of *Indian Time*, a quarterly magazine published at the time in Vancouver. Street's offering to *New Frontiers*, "Tzinquaw," was a review essay on the Aboriginal opera of the same name, which was touring the west coast at the time. Performed by the Cowichan Indian Players, and directed by Frank Morrison, *Tzinquaw* played to packed houses in New Westminster, BC, and was according to Street, "pioneering a new kind of Indian art" with the aim of helping to fund an Indian art centre. Street's magazine, *Indian Time*, began publication in 1950 (it ceased publication in 1959), and in her own words, "one thing we are doing is to give space to Indian writers and we are getting increasing recognition of our objectives."⁸¹ Among the Aboriginal authors who were published in the magazine were Edward Williams (Mi'kmaq) and K'HHalserten Sepass. Williams published a serialised novel in *Indian Time*, entitled "Council in the Sky," beginning in the spring of 1954.⁸²

In his efforts to establish an Indian National Library, in *Onkweonwe*, and in his life-long efforts to compile a comparative vocabulary of the Iroquoian languages, Cooke was trying to balance his position within the Department of Indian Affairs as a "civilised Indian," with his

⁸¹ Queen's University Archives, Lorne and Edith Pierce Collection, Box 23, File 13, Item 14-16, Eloise Street [Editor, *Indian Time*] to Lorne Pierce, 27 May, 1954.

⁸² John Napier-Hemy, "Student Seeks to Promote Education of B.C. Indians" *The Ubyyssey* XXXIII.27 (November 24, 1950) 2; Petrone, *Native Literature in Canada*, 24-25; and Petrone, *First People, First Voices*, 143-146. See also: Queen's University Archives, Lorne and Edith Pierce Collection, Box 80, File 9, The songs of Y-ail-mihth: poem; and Khalserten Sepass, *Sepass Poems: the songs of Y-ail mihth*. Recorded by Eloise Street (New York: Vantage Press, 1963).

Mohawk identity. Cooke's proposed Indian National Library, the short-lived newspaper/magazine, *Onkweonwe*, and his "Comparative and Synoptical Indian Dictionary," demonstrated an articulation, integration, and effort to employ Western modes of information and communication, and a high degree of literacy in relation to the printed word. Each of Cooke's initiatives, whether successful or not, was an attempt at redefining the largely Western technology of the printed word for the social, cultural, and political benefit of Aboriginal peoples, without compromising Aboriginal cultural interests and beliefs. In his library, newspaper, and dictionary projects, Cooke demonstrated a sincere interest in protecting, strengthening, and promoting Aboriginal languages, histories, and cultural practices, and his efforts were motivated by a desire to create an environment where Aboriginal people could make meaningful contributions to the affairs of the Department.

At the same time, Cooke framed these efforts within a context that the colonial Indian Affairs department could understand and justify as potentially worthy projects. The establishment of school libraries and teaching Aboriginal children to read and write alphabetic texts were projects that the Department later adopted as part of their policy to assimilate and civilise Aboriginal peoples. In each proposal, Cooke attempted to sell his ideas on the basis that they were designed to "help and enlighten Indians" in colonial and assimilative interests, but each was also articulated in a way so as to help maintain the languages, histories, and practices of the First Peoples. The mandate of *Onkweonwe*, for example, was to provide insight into "agriculture, trading, hunting, household, education" and other information—a clear mix of Indian Affairs' colonial interests, and the interests of First Peoples themselves. Often frustrated by the lack of interest and initiative demonstrated by members of the Department, Cooke was similarly frustrated by a lack of Aboriginal interest in his proposals. The ultimate failure of *Onkweonwe*

provides an obvious example, as do the observations of his colleague, the distinguished ethnographer and anthropologist Marius Barbeau,⁸³ who noted in 1951, “to [Cooke’s] regret he found out that the Indians themselves, instead of being interested in their own language and names, would give him scant encouragement. Suspicious, they did not respond whole-heartedly to his questions.”⁸⁴

Cooke acted as one of Barbeau’s informants between 1911 and 1914 in the noted anthropologist’s study of the Huron-Wyandot in Ontario, Quebec, and Oklahoma. Cooke later worked with Barbeau in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s in Barbeau’s assessment of Iroquoian languages. Barbeau’s biographer, Laurence Nowry, describes Cooke as “an indispensable go-between who skilfully wended a path through Six Nations politics and sensitivities...” whose perspective and scholarly work “was unique and probably indispensable for [the] successful completion of Barbeau’s Iroquois work.”⁸⁵ Cooke’s relationship with Barbeau was complicated by the fact that the anthropologist concluded that the Huron had been assimilated into white society, and that the Huron nation effectively no longer existed. The Indian Affairs department and the Canadian state readily agreed with these conclusions, citing Barbeau’s research in disestablishing a Huron reserve and forcibly enfranchising its population, thereby abolishing their Indian status.⁸⁶

Marius Barbeau compared Cooke to contemporary U.S. Indian scholars like Arthur C.

⁸³ Marius Barbeau (1883-1969) is perhaps the most prominent anthropologist in Canadian history. A member of the Anthropological Division of the Geological Survey of Canada between 1911 and 1948, his anthropological, folklorist, and ethnomusicological work was tremendously influential at both academic and political levels.

⁸⁴ Barbeau 424.

⁸⁵ Laurence Nowry, *Marius Barbeau, Man of Mana: a biography* (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1995) 350-351.

⁸⁶ See: Andrew Nurse, “‘But Now Things Have Changed’: Marius Barbeau and the politics of Amerindian identity” *Ethnohistory* 48.3 (2001) 433-472.

Parker and J.N.B. Hewitt.⁸⁷ Parker was an active member of the Society of American Indians in the United States, and like Cooke he was a public speaker and writer. In one of his published articles in the *Southern Workman*, Parker addressed the topic of Indian citizenship, arguing for a moderate middle position where Indians should adopt a philosophy of “adjustment to modern conditions,” allowing them to remain Indian, with pride, while adapting for their own well-being:

Today, in the age of rapid development, when developed man has extended his power over the earth, gradually encroaching upon native races, those native races can only survive as they respond to the conditions and requirements that the advanced culture thrusts upon them.... Must not the Indian by force of circumstances turn to new things, accept new things, use new things, and employ the same methods of procuring these new things as are employed by the race that produced them and caused the change of conditions?

Between the conservationist and the extreme progressionist [sic] there should be a sane middle ground on which the best elements of both may be found.⁸⁸

Cooke and his Aboriginal Canadian counterparts were, as Lucy Maddox argues in relation to American Indian intellectuals, “attempting to create a public, political space for themselves.” In doing so, they “deliberately adopted, manipulated, and transformed the means already available to them for addressing white audiences,” particularly writing, publishing, and performance.⁸⁹ Although he never articulated it so clearly, like Parker, Cooke appears to have taken a moderate middle position with regards to the place and role of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian society.

Cooke lived and worked between two cultures – on the one hand he complied with the stated colonial Canadian agenda, as a “civilised” Indian. On the other hand, his efforts to protect

⁸⁷ Barbeau 424-426. John Napoleon Brinton Hewitt (1859-1937), Tuscarora, was a linguist and ethnographer for the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. He contributed to the *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, and was characterised by a boundless need for research. At the time of his death, a 12,000 page manuscript was uncovered. The majority of his work was published posthumously. See: Blair A. Rudes and Dorothy Crouse, *The Tuscarora legend of J.N.B. Hewitt: materials for the study of the Tuscarora language and culture* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1987).

⁸⁸ Arthur C. Parker, “Progress for the Indian,” *Southern Workman* 41.11 (November, 1912) 630.

⁸⁹ Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American intellectuals, race, and reform* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) 16.

and strengthen Iroquoian languages and promote Aboriginal involvement in the larger Canadian society on equal terms positioned Cooke as an intermediary, committed to two cultures, negotiating between clashing world views and multiple ideologies. In his efforts to enlist Aboriginal people for service in the First World War, he made the following observation regarding his status as an Aboriginal person working for the federal Department of Indian Affairs:

I wish to add that the reception given me on the different Reserves, all due no doubt to my nationality, and connections with the Department, have been most cordial, and that my visits have done much to reconvince the Indians that our Government is willing to recognise its wards by honouring them in having one in its service.⁹⁰

While he was often frustrated by both the Indian Affairs department and by Aboriginal people, Cooke's insightful efforts were important in that they provided some semblance of Aboriginal agency at work within the Department, in an attempt to employ Western ideas of literacy and print culture in ways meant to benefit and further the political, social, and historical interests of First Peoples in Canada.

⁹⁰ RG 10, Volume 6765, File 452-7, War 1914 - 1918 – Recruitment by Charles A. Cooke among the Indians of St. Regis, Caughnawaga and Oka, 1916 - 1917.

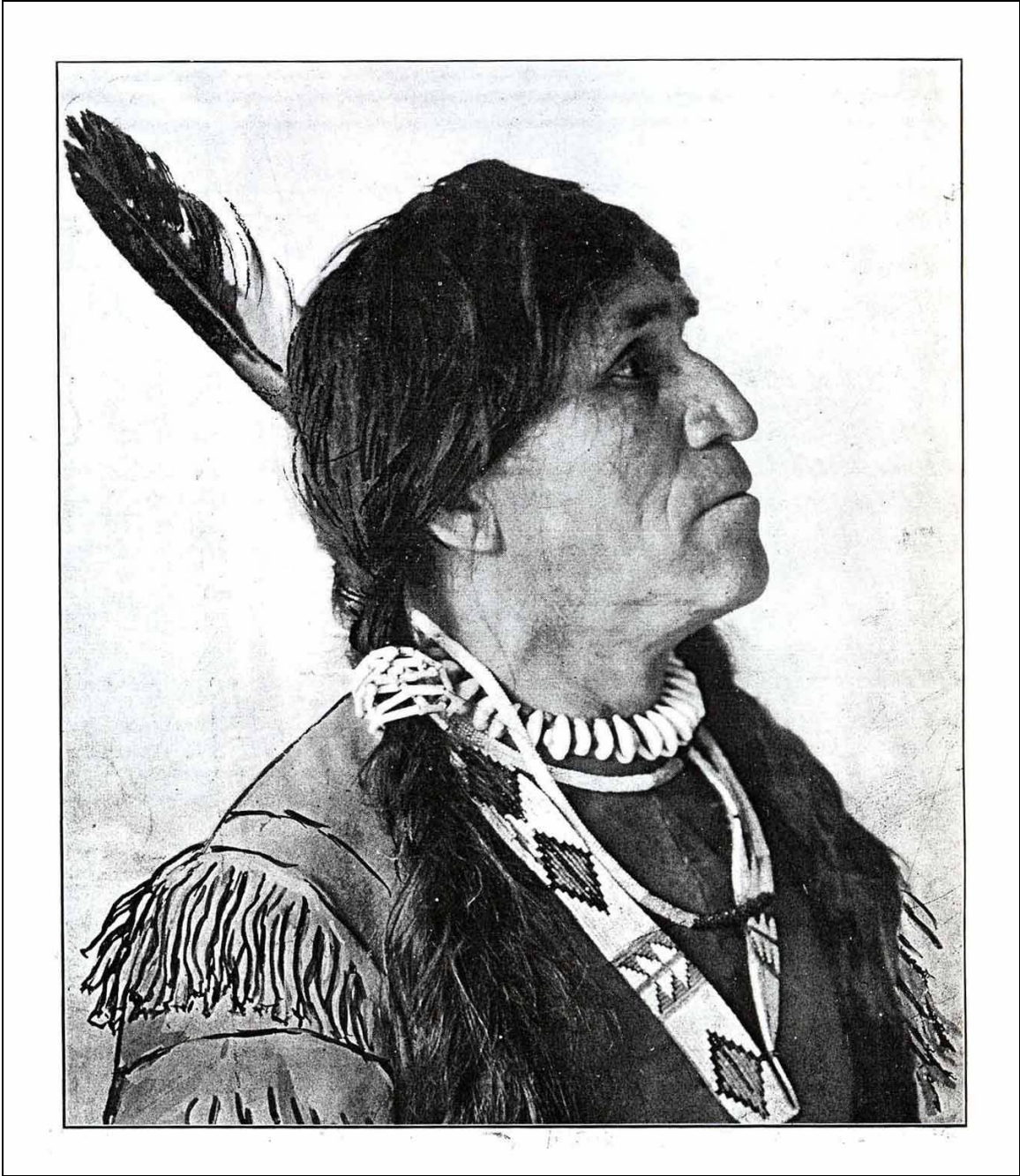


Figure 4-1. Charles A. Cooke in his Indian costume, which he wore as a recitalist and entertainer between 1924 and 1932 (Cooke Family Papers, Edmonton).



CHAS. A. COOKE

**CANADA'S INDIAN CONCERT BASSO
AND ENTERTAINER**

Extensive Repertoire of Choicest Sacred,
Patriotic, National Humorous Songs and
Readings

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412 Sunnyside Ave., Ottawa, Ont.
Phone Carling 4156w.

Figure 4-2. Promotional flyer advertising Charles A. Cooke as a recitalist and entertainer (Cooke Family Papers, Edmonton).

ONKWEONWE

Aterientarajera naah ne Kasatstensera.

VOL. I.

OTTAWA, CANADA, OCTOBER 25, 1900.

NO. 1

F. X. LEMMEX, Communes, Ottawa, Ont



Tioriwa jionskaneks Nonkweonwe nakaienate ne Tekonrenies ne jiniiewennoten, neken kaiatonsera nen tontasawen watewateristora-rake nok oni ienakontakiwe jinaeh enienonewe-eseke Nonkweonwe. Tekeni ne sewennita tenkaiakenseke tiotkononi oriwasesji enkarakeh ne akwa ne Onkweonwe akoriwasonah eso jienkarake. Onaiawen nakwekon aiek-weni aienion neken Tekonrenies, (50 cents) wisk-orkniwasen kwenis nikanoron ne josera nions jienietakwaseke.

Keniken kaiatonsera neakwa enwaskehna naiaikoienawase Nonkweonwejiok-nitiotieraton jiaikonnette. Tanon oni aiakoisten nakoterientarajera jinenka nonwenjakeka oriwasonah.

Ehkati niio jikarhare okkentiienkaawe Nonkweonwe teniesiene naosatstensera neken Kaiatonsera jienienion. Jikati nijon nensewiana neken tiotieraton Kaiatonsera, iejirorianion ne tewanonsanenekenaton tanon ne sewatenrohsonah, iejijonkaron oni naatini-nion.

Entkowanahsere neken Kaiatonsera jiken-watawite ne tenwatkaneren ne iaonwe ne tiataieiakserake jiaikaikenseke. Kenniiosen-noten jionwe entiontennite nowista :

THE ONKWEONWE,
15 Florence st.,
Ottawa,
Canada.



Kanawake,

Akwa eso jinaawen nonkwanatakon, keniken Nonkweonwe—kariton, *Jonn B. Daillibout* (Taitokone), saatenienten naoiena *Joseph Cross-the-river* tioriwa jirononwaratonon. Taatatenhe ne Joseph, ekati takaniiontakwe waiaierio, nok oni neronwanateroron raotino-ronkwajera ne waonion ne ronwaienasere, iakaewe kati waonwienawase naonsaania-kenne, etone ne kariton, raonia waioiente ne Sose, Soji kati iosatste jiwatokwate niwaa jikararajeraientakwe Naonsaatkwatoko ne Sose. Iokontatie ne Kariton waonwaiaton-seron, waonwaiena, waikensrakwen jionkwe waatenienten naokarewate. Etokati Tiotiake niaonwaiatenawe, eto oni tetonwatliatoret, nok arekoki tielitotoknon toniio jienkari-wenne.

Ehso iakon iakorare naonwe ne Onkweonwe-neah Tekonrenies, Aseken enieriw-

Jinatentionin Twakenni.

Onen ne *Laurier*-rao-korasera iakorori ne *Canada* ienakere jinkaawi tenionnitiokwakenni, 7 senskarake November onwa-kanen-nakene.

Ehniio jiwene akwaien jitenatinotet, tejaron sateiosatste jironatateriwanirati jienont-kweni. Akwasasaka noweron jiniia-tewatoken naniotiwakennion toonte niio jiaten-watkaratho. Teotitiokwake jitenonitiokwakenni nene Onekwentara (*Liberals*) Tanon Naroniah (*Conservatives*); eto sane iokonoron rotiketota ne iakaneka tetotiriwarekwen akwa ok tiataewennio.

Onen oknaah toah akwekon ronwatiataraki wen jion-nikanakeraserakeron nekati jiniati nen-karakwen ne jionwe niienakerenion Nonkweonwe kenatissenaronnion.

Kanawake (*aka*)—J. A. C. Ethier, Nonekwentara nok, J. Girouard, Noronia; ne 1896 sioserate sationnitiokwakenni, Ethier 17 nikasennake nitotkwenion.

Kanawake—J. P. Brown, nonekwentara, nok arko noroniah ne 1896 sationnitiokwakenni Brown 700 nitotkwenion.

Akwiasne (*St. Regis*)—J. S. McLaren, nonekwentara, nok R. N. Walsh, noroniah, ne 1896 sationnitiokwakenni *Ju'ius Scriver* nonekwentara, 719 nontakweni ne *R. White* oroniah teonantitokwakennine. Waatorishen onen ne *Scriver* takarioni jioji onen teoten-ronne, nensewai eso-jirokstenah. Isinin ne 30-uisenake Rajenaies.

Kanienke—J. M. Hurley, nonekwentara, nok W. B. Northrup, noroniah. *Hurley*, 323 nitotkwenion ne 1896 sationnitiokwakenni.

Oshweken—C. B. Heyd, nonekwentara, nok R. Henry, noroniah 381 nitotkwenion ne *Heyd* nonaken sationnitiokwakenni.

Watha Reserve (Muskoka)—George McCormick, noroniah, nok R. J. Watson, nonekwentara. *McCormick*, 258 nitotkwenion ne 1896 sationnitiokwakenni.

Onenitotkake — Areko nenneeh onka teonwatiatarakwen. *Casey* ronniats onekwentara, neeh raonawen kena Rajenaies. 726 nitotkwenion ne 1896 sationnitiokwakenni.

Kawenokowanenne (*Cornwall Island*) *Ji-Ontario* nenka rotiiatontieton tkakonte kioninnee rotien ne kanon iataontkaneren ne raonawen Rajenaies: R. A. Pringle, noronia, nok nonekwentara areko nenneeh teonwaiatarakwen. *Snetsinger*, onekwentara, nonaken iaonnion Rajenaieskwe, sationnitiokwakenni ne 1896, 592 nitotkwenion.

Jionowa niskaianerenseroten ne Teionnitiokwakennies, iah teiakote sennaian nonkweonwe Keserve-ienakere naontajennaren, neok ne Ronkweonwe Tiorensakake ienakere netens ne tioiana ne *Indian Act* jiro-tiatontakwen nonkononwene roien naatajennaren ne jitenionni tiokwakenni.

Jinikaianerenseroten keniken ne Ronkwe, Rajanerenseroni, ratonsere; akwa ok jikakorakwa nenorioten enotoetston oni ne 21-tenaoseriiaakon; a kwaokoni isi nikon *thousand* jisatekena jiroientak jironnekwen tanon ne raotentajera. Nonen enonwasennionte 7-nonta oenton ne jinatentanitiokwakenni etone oni enaionte tekeni-tewenniawe nikawistake, toka enatkweni ensaiana nok toka

tane ne teoniotarhon, enotonse kine raowis-ta.

Toterienton Sakoteriwanotani.

Josera jinae Sitoh-jenrion ne *Columbus* nenonon—nikawenote, niro nakwa totierenten sakorionnienni Nonkweonwe ne oriwatokenti kariwioiston, *Boyle* ronwaiats, Teiasontha Rajienstaji, toka niati ratikwekonatiene ne ratijienstaji-okon.

Keniken ne *Columbus* sahrawe ne kenonkwa 12 - Siskare *October*, 1492 sioseton ne jioserate, wasako iatajeni onkwe ienakere, akwa ioserareston rotiiatateronni tanon ronajelaron : iah onaoten teonajeroni. Iakawe nen-iaonaterakewe najerionsera oni ne kate-ronsera, onenki waontenienten taatitahren : jikati naatikweniah watontarionian, oktatonteweiariktanion tnon watont - konsaieronniontan. Esa kinaah kateronsera taonatiatanti ne Rononkweonwe takaientakwe jiwaka oia niati-atoten ne waonwennonwenjorene. Waonnenre ojatokon taatitentakwe soji ratiraken, aseken-ioweren iaken jionen ajakta nontaatiationtie : neki jiwasirotion ne kaonweiakowa karaken niio testittieren ne jiojotare, tanon jioonrakere ne kaonre-kowa, ronnerre ki-ne Rononkweonwe iowerenken.

Nekati nonen sonsaatkarateni ne *Columbus* onwenjakaienne siionsare, tohka nisti ne Onkweonwe ionsasakoiatenawe, jionon niota-tanarakwa ne Ronontio, *Ferdinand* ne *Spain* aonakerasera, eto isakoteron, eoni nontewatasawe nakwatitierenton ronwatirionnie nni ronatekoserhon jinenka noriwarokentike. Nekati nonen saaronke Nariiwawakonkowa neken jinaawen, waatonnaen, waaratste jiiensakotenniete ne Ratijienstaji jion tatinakere ne Rononkweonwe, naonwatri. honnien ne Oriwatokenti. Ete Kati naawen, jiniwakennes ne 1493 ne Rajienstaji *Boyle* nitowatennieton, tontanetakwe ne *Columbus* nok *San Salvador* jikawenote enon naah tioentoh ronatenatoni, eh oni nonwe tioentoh jiwaatasawc ronwanateriwanotani Nonkweonwe naontienawaste ne Kari-nioston.

Teontsjikwaeks

Toka senonwa iah teiowiatoken onkaok ionskaneks aiakotokense oni iah-teiakotier-entare, tonlio jionteweiennentane ne kwaan-ken kania-Teontsjikwaeks nonwa-wakennate-kwe,

Iaiah niotitiokwake rotiiataraskenen ne okonhonkwa: oieri skatshon niatontsjikwaeks ne jiniwakennes. Kanajo-ronon (*Capitals*) nonwa ioserate waontkweni; ensaok waon-tonset.

Kenkati ratissenaronnion, watrori jinikon Skatshon waontkweni okoni jinikon waon-tonset.

Naon kweni; waonatonse

Kanajo-ronon (<i>Capitals</i>)	9	"	1	"
Toronto-ronon	5	"	5	"
<i>Shamrocks</i>	5	"	5	"
Ronseronni (<i>Nationals</i>)	4	"	6	"

Figure 4-3. Front page of *Onkweonwe*, volume 1, number 1, compiled, edited, and distributed by Charles A. Cooke, circa 1900 (Library and Archives Canada, AMICUS No. 8518427).

CHAPTER FIVE

Edward Ahenakew:
aspiring Plains Cree novelist and writer, respected clergyman, and amateur anthropologist

I am writing these as things appear to the Indian himself, in Saskatchewan more particularly but I am sure to other provinces in the West at least.¹

Reverend Canon Edward Ahenakew, D.D. (1885-1961) was not a well-known writer in his lifetime, but his literary accomplishments and aspirations are significant. Born into a Christian Cree family at the Sandy Lake reserve in Saskatchewan, Ahenakew was schooled on the reserve at the Atahkakohp Day School and later Emmanuel College Boarding School in Prince Albert, Wycliffe College in Toronto, and the Anglican Theological School at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon before his ordination as an Anglican priest in 1912. The Emmanuel College Boarding School was established in the early 1880s by the Bishop of Saskatchewan, John McLean, on behalf of the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England to train Cree, Blackfoot, and Ojibwe as teachers and missionaries to work among their own people.² Reverend Ahenakew later attended medical school at the University of Alberta where he was a member of the University of Alberta Literary Club. While at the University of Alberta, Ahenakew met Paul Wallace, who in the years to come would be an important influence and inspiration for his writing.³

¹ American Philosophical Society, Paul A. W. Wallace Papers, B W15p, Box 1, Edward Ahenakew to Paul Wallace, 5 September, 1923.

² See: Frank A. Peake, "Church Missionary Society: policy and personnel in Rupertsland," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 30.2 (1988): 70.

³ Stan Cuthand, "Introduction to the 1995 edition," *Voices of the Plains Cree*, by Edward Ahenakew, edited by Ruth M. Buck (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995), x-xi, xiii.

Ahenakew became well-known as a writer after his death in 1961 when Ruth Buck⁴ edited his handwritten manuscripts of Cree stories and published a collection of these as *Voices of the Plains Cree* with McClelland and Stewart in 1973. One half of the collection are stories which Ahenakew recorded on paper after interviewing Chief Thunderchild, and the second half is a fictional story called “Old Keyam” written by Ahenakew himself. These stories are now considered historical documents and capture something of the Cree ethos and way of thinking, according to Cree scholar Stan Cuthand, but were never published or widely shared during Ahenakew’s lifetime.⁵

Reverend Ahenakew’s literary aspirations began as early as 1903, when at the age of eighteen he began producing a handwritten newsletter in Cree syllabics while teaching at the John Smith’s Day School. The original run of the newsletter was short-lived, however, as Ahenakew only taught at the school for one year before continuing his own studies in Toronto. Twenty years later, while recuperating on Thunderchild’s reserve from a severe illness brought on by the stresses of medical school, Ahenakew began recording in writing the oral stories of Chief Thunderchild, and wrote “Old Keyam.” While at medical school in Edmonton a few years earlier, Ahenakew befriended Paul Wallace through their mutual interests in the University of Alberta Literary Club.⁶ Wallace went on to become a professor of English, and during Ahenakew’s convalescence on Thunderchild’s reserve the two corresponded extensively about Ahenakew’s aspirations to publish “Old Keyam” and to write “as things appear to the Indian

⁴ For more on Ruth Buck, see: Ruth Buck Matheson, “The Matheson’s of Saskatchewan Diocese,” *Saskatchewan History* 13.2 (1960): 41-62.

⁵ Cuthand, xii.

⁶ Professor Wallace’s papers and correspondence are today housed in the manuscript collection of the American Philosophical Society Library in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as well as at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff, Alberta, and at the United Church Archives in Toronto.

himself, in Saskatchewan more particularly but I am sure to other provinces in the West at least.”⁷ Ahenakew even hoped that his stories, if published, might provide him with a small income through royalties. The majority of his writing was based on the old stories told to him by Chief Thunderchild, and Ahenakew was successful in publishing twenty-six of these as “Cree Trickster tales” in 1929 in the *Journal of American Folklore*.⁸ The remainder of the stories, including “Old Keyam,” would remain unpublished until after his death.⁹ But Ahenakew’s personal papers, only some of which have been preserved at the Saskatchewan Archives Board in Regina, demonstrate that Ahenakew, for at least a part of his life, imagined himself as a writer. Among his papers in Regina are notebooks filled with poetry and a very clear attempt at a full-length novel. One story, entitled “Black Hawk,” by Ahenakew is more than 120 handwritten pages long, filling five scribblers. Organised in clear chapters, “Black Hawk” is without a doubt Ahenakew’s attempt at writing a novel. Written between 1912 and 1916, “Black Hawk” is a romantic story, as are many of his poems from this period, in a style that suggests Ahenakew aspired to write in the spirit of E. Pauline Johnson.¹⁰ The full extent of Ahenakew’s writing cannot be fully known, as the papers which today exist at the Saskatchewan Archives Board were only saved several years after Ahenakew’s death and there are clearly gaps and large

⁷ Wallace Papers, B W15p, Box 1, Ahenakew to Paul A. W. Wallace, 5 September, 1923.

⁸ Edward Ahenakew, “Cree Trickster tales,” *Journal of American Folklore* 42 (1929). Three of these stories were later reprinted in: Carlyle King, ed., *Saskatchewan harvest: a golden jubilee selection of song and story* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1955).

⁹ During his lifetime Ahenakew was successful in updating the Cree-English part of *A Dictionary of the Cree Language* with Archdeacon R. Faries (Toronto: General Synod of the Church of England in Canada, 1938). He also translated some works into Cree syllabics for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, including: A. Leigh, *Cree New Testament stories*, translated by Edward Ahenakew (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1936); and Caroline M. Duncan Jones, *Everybody’s prayer*, translated by Edward Ahenakew (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1933?).

¹⁰ Saskatchewan Archives Board (Regina), Edward Ahenakew Papers, R-1, Folder 7, Part 2, Romance. “Black Hawk” by Edward Ahenakew. Other stories and poetry are included in the following folders, all included in: Ahenakew Papers, Folder 6 (Manuscripts, circa 1923 to 1960), Folder 9 (Poems, circa 1914 to 1954), and Folder 13 (Unidentified Miscellaneous Pages).

portions missing. What is clear, however, is that writing, both professionally in his role as a Minister and creatively, was a regular pastime for Ahenakew.

But Ahenakew was, in some ways, a reluctant writer. While he certainly showed an interest in writing and literature on his own, it was his relationship with Paul Wallace that appears to have inspired a significant amount of his literary contribution. Like Ahenakew, Wallace left the University of Alberta before completing his studies, returning to his native Toronto and eventually obtaining his doctorate at the University of Toronto and relocating to Annville, Pennsylvania to head the English Department at Lebanon Valley College. Although he was labelled an English Professor, Wallace's academic background was equally rooted in History and folklore, and most of his publications were of a historical nature.¹¹ David Miller, Indigenous Studies Professor at First Nations University in Regina, who has been working on Ahenakew as a writer for some time now, points out that "Ahenakew's career and disposition as a writer cannot be thoroughly assessed without giving attention to the instrumental friendship and periodic working relationship" he had with Wallace.¹² Both Ahenakew and Wallace showed a sincere interest in expanding the horizons and limits of Canadian literature, as is evidenced in

¹¹ Paul A. W. Wallace's published works include, but are not limited to: *Baptiste Larocque: legends of French Canada* (Toronto: Musson Book Co., 1923); *Selections from Sam Slick*. Ed. by Paul A.W. Wallace (Toronto: Ryerson, 1923); *The Twist and Other Stories* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1923); *Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760: friend of colonist and Mohawk* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945); *The White Roots of Peace* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946); *The Muhlenbergs of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950); *Historic Indian Paths of Pennsylvania* ([Harrisburg]: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1952); *Thirty Thousand Miles with John Heckewelder*. Ed. by Paul A.W. Wallace (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1958); *Pennsylvania: seed of a nation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); *Indians in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1964); *Lebanon Valley College: a centennial history* (Annville: Lebanon Valley College, 1966); and *Daniel Boone in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1967). For more on Wallace, see: Donald Smith, "Biographical Sketch of Paul A. W. Wallace and how *The White Roots of Peace* came to be written," *The White Roots of Peace*. Iroquois Reprints (Ohsweken, Ontario: Irocrafts, 1997) 6-23.

¹² David R. Miller, "Edward Ahenakew's Tutelege by Paul Wallace: reluctant scholarship, inadvertent preservation." In *Gathering Places: essays on Aboriginal histories*. Ed. Laura Peers and Carolyn Podruchny (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, in press). Sincere thanks to Professor Miller for generously sharing his work and insight on Edward Ahenakew.

their early friendship and involvement with the University of Alberta Literary Club. In November, 1921, Wallace published an opinion piece in the *Edmonton Journal*, sharing his views on Canadian literature. In this article, Wallace condemns the lack of a national literature that existed in Canada in the early twentieth century, noting that talented writers “should be retained here to help build up the national spirit which is uniting all too slowly our widely scattered population.” He perceives a lack of Canadian literature as due not to a lack of talent or subject matter, but to a lack of readers. He urges Canadian critics to “interpret the writer to the public, who will insist that writers respect their own calling, and who will help writers to maintain a standard and keep their direction in a movement to interpret the life of Canada to the world.” Further, he urges, “It is for the critic to look for those writers, and to encourage them by showing that there is a discriminating public in Canada that enjoys good work, respects good work, and is not surprised to see it being produced in our own country.” With these opinions in mind, it is safe to characterise Wallace’s relationship with Ahenakew as taking on a critic-like role, encouraging the writer in Ahenakew to break out and find his audience.¹³

A short time after leaving Edmonton, Ahenakew wrote to Wallace asking for his advice and assistance in putting together his manuscript of “Old Keyam” and the stories related to him by Chief Thunderbird. By December, 1922, Ahenakew was in communication with Lorne Pierce (1890-1961), editor at Ryerson Press in Toronto, who had asked him to submit his manuscript. Unfortunately for Ahenakew, the only copy of his manuscript was in the hands of a colleague (identified as Mr. Button) who was taking his time reviewing the manuscript. Ahenakew urged Wallace to give Mr. Button a push since he had reportedly had the manuscript in his possession for “almost a year.” Ahenakew rightly considered Button’s slow response as “very much

¹³ See also: Wallace, “Canada’s Literature: Canadian Authors Need Canadian Critics” *Edmonton Journal* (November 21, 1921) 4.

unbusinesslike [sic],” as he was feeling rather anxious with regards to keeping his word with Ryerson Press: “I am very anxious that Mr. Button should submit the Mss. to the Ryerson Press as I have given them my word and I hate to break my word or it appear [sic] lacking in promptness to business men who prize such qualities....As soon as I am able to do so, in fact as soon as I know the probable fate of my ms. now in Mr. Button’s hands, I shall begin to put into shape the sequel which is partly written now.”¹⁴ Button eventually passed Ahenakew’s manuscript on to Ryerson Press, directly into the hands of Lorne Pierce. Pierce, who was a noted cultural nationalist, was a very important figure in the Canadian publishing world, so it is rather significant that Ahenakew’s manuscript was under consideration by Pierce directly.¹⁵

Correspondence between Pierce and Ahenakew indicates that, for a time at least, Ryerson Press thought that the Reverend’s work was worthy of publication; Pierce is mentioned in one of Ahenakew’s letters to Wallace as stating that he was “very much interested in me and my work.” Ahenakew quotes Pierce in this same letter as saying “I sincerely hope we may be able to find some way of publishing your ms. with the corrections you suggest.”¹⁶ Unfortunately for Ahenakew, and other Aboriginal authors of the day, Ryerson Press was in financial difficulties in the early 1920s. Pierce’s biographer, Professor Sandra Campbell, notes that by 1923 Pierce was in a cash squeeze, more than usual, because of the considerable costs of the Makers of Canadian Literature Series. Pierce was reportedly under pressure from his superior at

¹⁴ Wallace Papers, B W15p, Box 1. Ahenakew to Paul A. W. Wallace, 22 December, 1922.

¹⁵ Dr. Sandra Campbell, at Carleton University, is in the midst of writing a biography of Dr. Lorne Pierce. See also: Clarence Heber Dickinson, *Lorne Pierce: a profile* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1965); Campbell, “From Romantic history to communications theory: Lorne Pierce as publisher of C.W. Jeffreys and Harold Innis” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 30.3 (1995) 91-116; and Campbell, “‘The Foundling has come a long way’: Lorne Pierce, Canadiana collecting, and the founding of the Bibliographical Society of Canada” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 43.2 (2005) 67-78.

¹⁶ Wallace Papers, B W15p, Box 1. Ahenakew to Wallace, 2 February 1923.

Ryerson Press, Book Steward Samuel Fallis.¹⁷

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Pierce sought financial subvention to publish Ahenakew's work. Not surprisingly, Pierce approached the Department of Indian Affairs for financial assistance. Heading the Department at that time was none other than Duncan Campbell Scott. Given his literary credentials, one might assume Scott would have been encouraged by the efforts of a fellow writer to be published by a respectable publisher like Ryerson Press. And given his role in the Department of Indian Affairs, which sought to educate and "civilise" Canada's Aboriginal population, a writing Indian might also have been of interest to Scott. But this was not the case. As Scott had done some years earlier in discouraging and quashing the publishing and literary aspirations of his own employee, Charles A. Cooke, Scott essentially quashed the publishing hopes of Ahenakew. In his response to Pierce's request for financial assistance, Scott wrote, "I regret very much that we would have no funds to meet your suggestion with reference to Mr. Ahenakew's manuscript, much as I would like to assist."¹⁸

Scott's friend and contemporary, the professor and critic, E.K. Brown, wrote of Scott that he believed in the government's goal of assimilation of the Indian, and he believed that "by education and encouragement the Indians were to cease being interesting exotic relics."¹⁹ Scott was certain that there was no place for the Indian in modern and progressive twentieth-century Canada. Therefore it was necessary that Aboriginal people must collectively abandon their

¹⁷ For detail on the professional relationship between Pierce and Fallis, see: Janet B. Friskney, "The Years Before Union: Samuel Fallis, Lorne Pierce, and the Ryerson Press, 1919-1926" *Épilogue: Canadian Bulletin for the History of Books, Libraries, and Archives* 13 (1998-2003) 69-96. Imbued with nationalist sentiment, together Pierce and Fallis ambitiously set out to make the Ryerson Press a "Canadian cultural mecca."

¹⁸ Queen's University Archives, Lorne and Edith Pierce Collection, Box 1, File 11, Item 14. Duncan Campbell Scott to Lorne Pierce, 16 October, 1924. Thank you to Professor Sandra Campbell for alerting the author to this reference regarding Ahenakew in the Pierce Papers.

¹⁹ E.K. Brown, "Memoir," *Selected Poems of Duncan Campbell Scott* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1951) xxvi.

cultural traditions and accept the customs, religion, and values of Euro-Canadian society in order to survive. The writings and literary efforts of Indians like Ahenakew and Cooke, who sought to preserve and maintain the traditions of their peoples through literacy, were thus unacceptable within the realm of Scott's Indian Affairs ideology. Yet despite Scott's lack of support, if not active opposition to the writing endeavours of Ahenakew and Cooke, he did assist Amelia McLean Paget in her publication of *The People of the Plains* in 1909. Although she did not closely identify with this element of her identity, McLean Paget was of Aboriginal ancestry. *The People of the Plains* was based on her observations and interviews with the Cree, Assiniboine, and Saulteaux.²⁰ Married to Frederick Paget, a Department of Indian Affairs bureaucrat,²¹ this work was commissioned by the Department and was edited and presented to a publisher by Scott. Despite Scott's editing, *The People of the Plains* is a sympathetic appreciation of Aboriginal plains culture, challenging conventional views. Researching and writing at a time when the *Indian Act* banned such activities as the sun dance, when the mothering and housekeeping skills of Indian women were heavily criticized in government publications as a means of justifying the residential school system, and when traditional chiefs were being overthrown by government policy because of their beliefs and practices, Paget "threatened

²⁰ For more on Amelia McLean Paget, see: Amelia M. Paget, *The People of the Plains* (1909; Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center and the University of Regina, 2004); Sarah A. Carter, "The 'Cordial Advocate': Amelia McLean Paget and *The People of the Plains*" In *With Good Intentions: Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal relations in colonial Canada*. Ed. by Celia Haig-Brown and David A. Nock (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006) 199-228; and Carter, *Capturing women: the manipulation of cultural imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).

²¹ Frederick Paget was employed by the Department of Indian Affairs in Regina as assistant to Indian commissioners Hayter Reed and Amedee Forget from 1882-1899. In 1899, the same year he married Amelia McLeod, he was appointed chief accountant of the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. Sarah Carter reports that although he was an accountant, he was valued for his advice on western Indians, in part due to his wife's background. He was also the author of a 1908 report on residential schools in the west which was highly critical. See: Carter, "The 'Cordial Advocate'" 212-213. For discussion of Frederick Paget's 1908 report, see: John S. Milloy, "*A National Crime*": *the Canadian government and the residential school system, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999) 82-83.

powerful conventions and proposed a radical departure from prevailing wisdom.”²²

The Ahenakew manuscript that was under consideration by Ryerson Press was the collection of “Old Keyam” stories. Keyam was a fictional character created by Ahenakew that, as Miller notes, was both “pained and angry” and “humorous and satirical.”²³ It is clear that the character of Keyam is partly autobiographical, and this persona acted as a literary device for Ahenakew to express comment on a range of topics, including the Euro-Canadian insensitivity towards Indians, the lethargy of Aboriginal peoples to their own fates, and political satire.

In 1922, Ahenakew began self-publishing the *Cree Monthly Bulletin*, a newsletter which he used to promote Christianity among the Cree. The newsletter was printed in set type in Cree syllabics, and was issued from the St. Barnabas Indian School at Onion Lake, Saskatchewan. The *Cree Monthly Bulletin* at some point became the *Cree Monthly Guide*, which was also issued in syllabics, featuring editorials and articles on spiritual matters, and lessons in catechism. Fortunately several issues of the *Cree Monthly Guide* have been preserved in the papers of Robert Archibald Logan at the Saskatchewan Archives Board in Regina. Ahenakew and Logan corresponded on occasion between 1942 and 1954. Logan was immensely interested in learning the Cree language, and he wrote to Ahenakew in reference to subscribing to the *Cree Monthly Guide*, and to ask questions and advice of Ahenakew regarding various translations, dialects, and pronunciations. Ahenakew went as far as providing Logan with two Cree correspondents, who could not speak or write English, so Logan could practice his written Cree. Logan, who was convinced of the superiority of the Cree language to English, considered it a far more intelligent language in design, and much older. Logan was injured in the war and had a lot of free time at

²² Carter, “Introduction to the 2004 Edition: The ‘Cordial Advocate’: Amelia McLean Paget and *The People of the Plains*” In Amelia M. Paget, *The People of the Plains* (1909; Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center and the University of Regina, 2004) xxvi.

²³ Miller, “Edward Ahenakew’s Tutelege by Paul Wallace.”

his disposal, he was a self-confessed lover of languages and was mainly interested in Cree because he believed that some of his Gaelic ancestors may have been in contact with, and possibly spoken, the language.²⁴ Logan's relationship with Ahenakew was important to his research and writing on issues relating to the Cree language.

From the cache of *Cree Monthly Guide* issues held in Logan's papers, we can get some sense of the nature of Ahenakew's efforts in self-publishing. Amongst these issues, ranging from 1941 to 1954, we can see evidence of the wide range of topics that the monthly guide featured. Mainly published in Cree syllabic, articles included relevant and contemporary discussion about religion and religious news and reflection, Aboriginal news from around Canada (for example, in regards to other Aboriginal publications, such as the *Native Voice* in British Columbia, the rise in the Indian population, changes in the Indian Act, etc.) political and election discussion, news from pupils and ex-pupils, community reports, and stories about individuals, including Henry Budd (c1812-1875) (celebrated as the first Aboriginal person ordained by the Anglican Church in North America),²⁵ Pat Burns (1856-1937) (a self-made millionaire, Burns was a rancher, meat packer, and senator, remembered primarily as one of the founders of the Calgary Stampede),²⁶

²⁴ See: Saskatchewan Archives Board (Regina), Robert Archibald Logan Papers, R-214.1, File 4 (Correspondence with Edward Ahenakew, 1942-1959) and File 14 (Newsletter. Cree Monthly Guide, 1941-1954). Logan published some material on the Cree language as well, including: Robert A. Logan, *The Books of Kapuwamit* (New York: Vantage Press, 1968); Logan, *Cree-English dictionary and remarks on the Cree language*. 2 vols. (Duluth: R. A. Logan, 1964); Logan, *Cree language notes* (Lake Charlotte, NS: Loganda, 1958); Logan, *The Cree language as it appears to me* (Lake Charlotte, NS: Loganda, 1958). He also wrote a foreword to volume six of Reider T. Sherwin's, *The Viking and the Red Man: the Old Norse origin of the Algonquin language* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1940-1957); and an article in *Beaver* magazine on the Cree language: Logan, "The Precise Speakers," *The Beaver* 31.1 (June 1951) 40-43. Additional biographical information on Logan is provided by the Dalhousie University Archives on their website: <<http://www.library.dal.ca/archives/MS2/MS-2-580.htm#a0>>. See also: Robert A. Logan Fonds, MS-2-580, Dalhousie University Archives and Special Collections, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

²⁵ For more on Henry Budd, see for example: Rev. T.C.B. Boon, "Henry Budd: the first Native Indian ordained in the Anglican Church on the North American continent" *Manitoba Pageant* 3.1 (1957); Henry Budd, *The Diary of the Reverend Henry Budd*. Ed. by Katherine Pettipas (Winnipeg: Hignell, 1974); Katherine Pettipas, "'The Praying Chief': Reverend Henry Budd" *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 33.1 (1991) 41-50.

²⁶ See: David H. Breen, "Burns, Patrick" *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Year 2000 Edition (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1999) 329.

Queen Victoria, Queen Elizabeth II, and others. The vast majority of the content and commentary originated from Ahenakew's pen, and reflected his views and opinions. But Ahenakew did not work alone on the *Cree Monthly Guide*. Mimeographing, for example, was taken care of by someone else – presumably also Cree, as Ahenakew states in a letter to Logan, “The Christmas number of the Cree Guide will be a little late this time as the man who mimeographs for me has been out trapping & hunting and will, I hope be back tonight & will be able to do the work next week.”²⁷

The *Cree Monthly Guide* was also occasionally published in English. Ahenakew explained in the September, 1926 edition that his reasons for issuing an English edition were twofold: because he wished to reach “the many ex-pupils of our Schools who cannot read the Syllabic but who are able to read English. These are not always in a position to secure English papers for themselves and are therefore out of touch with events and influences which would be for their welfare.”²⁸ Ahenakew's second purpose was to induce “white people...to subscribe and by this means an intelligent interest would be aroused in them in things that pertain to the Church's work among the natives of this land.”²⁹ Some of the paper's editorial comments are quite humorous. For example, Ahenakew states “No effort is made to arrange the subject matter, nor is the material contained in this issu [sic] for the idea of an English Edition was born in the mind of a Missionary only a few minutes ago.”³⁰ Which missionary (other than Ahenakew himself) suggested the idea of an English language edition of the *Cree Monthly Guide* is not

²⁷ Robert Archibald Logan Papers, R-214.1, File 4. Ahenakew to Logan, 19 December 1953.

²⁸ Special Collections Department, University of Saskatchewan Library, Morton Manuscripts Collection, MSS C550/1/31.3. *The Cree Monthly Guide* 11.9 (September 1926) 1.

²⁹ *Cree Monthly Guide* 1.

³⁰ *Cree Monthly Guide* 1.

known. But if the idea was born of someone other than Ahenakew, we can safely assume it was one of his Euro-Canadian superiors who would have been reluctant to encourage literacy in any language other than English or French. It appears as though Ahenakew's humour was decidedly tongue-in-cheek, particularly with reference to the idea of producing two editions of the periodical, "To print the Cree Monthly in two languages, would of course mean doubling the work of the Editor [Ahenakew], but if the project has the sanction of God, a way will be opened whereby the work can be managed."³¹ A lack of time and insufficient funding would plague Ahenakew's literary work throughout his life.

In addition to Ahenakew's editorial comments, the English supplement also included articles on the "Death of Chief Cutknife," "Chief Sweet Grass," "Death of Kamiyustotin..Chief Starblanket," "Work, Work, Work," and "Loyalty....Loyalty," all authored by Ahenakew himself. These last two articles are perhaps the most interesting because they feature Ahenakew offering criticism of the Indian schooling system and the double standard often held against Aboriginal peoples by Euro-Canadians. In "Work, Work, Work," Ahenakew addresses the inability of some Indians to find gainful employment, noting that the boarding school experience was structured in such a way where "we were told to do things [sic] we did not have to do much planning of nor did we have to make ourselves work, that was done for us." Ahenakew urges his Indian readers to "not be easy and indulgent with yourselves. Make yourselves work and keep at it," noting that this is the only path to success and self-respect. Furthermore, he reminds his readers that "they [sic] whiteman respects work and if they see you at work all the time they cannot help respecting you. Take an interest, a deep, [sic] one, in your affairs, kee [sic] going and keep your word when given."³²

³¹ *Cree Monthly Guide 1.*

³² *Cree Monthly Guide 9.*

In “Loyalty....Loyalty,” Ahenakew comments on the double standard that Euro-Canadians held towards Indians. In relating the story of an ex-pupil who visits a theatre, Ahenakew is at once able to point a finger at the hypocrisy of Euro-Canadians and remind everyone that Indians fought alongside other Canadians in the First World War, and note “we were loyal to the Empire indeed.” The protagonist of this short tale stands at full attention as the national anthem is played following a performance at a theatre, but he notices that only one other person in the whole building, a veteran, is doing the same—the others began “filing out at the close of the programme.” The Indian ex-pupil is described as feeling “surprise” and a “sense of loss,” at the behaviour of his countrymen. Ahenakew, in a not so subtle manner, reminds readers that Indians were taught to stand up straight and remain at full attention when they hear the National Anthem; meanwhile other Canadians apparently pay little heed. Rather than complain about the practice, however, Ahenakew criticises those who do not take the time to stand erect at such a time, advising his readers, “whatever a crowd may do, stand at attention when the National Anthem is played or sung.”³³

Although Stan Cuthand points out that there were no Cree stories included in the newsletter, and that there was little, if any, evidence of a Cree perspective in the writing, there is clearly a kind of pan-Indian perspective given.³⁴ Ahenakew could not be too critical, of course, due to his high position within the Anglican Church. To be too critical of the Indian education system, government, or Canadians in general, would probably have cost Ahenakew his job. The Missionary Society, after all, was sponsoring the paper and providing some funds for its publication, and it appeared that Ahenakew did not wish to test the limits of the Church’s

³³ *Cree Monthly Guide* 9.

³⁴ Cuthand, xvii.

generosity.

Ahenakew's writings in the *Cree Monthly Guide* stand in contrast to the stories that he recorded from Chief Thunderchild. In life he vigorously promoted the Anglican faith, but in death Ahenakew was largely remembered and praised for his Cree story, "Old Keyam," and for his record of Cree cultural beliefs. Ahenakew, like other Aboriginal peoples who chose writing and publishing as a method of sharing their message to a wider Canadian audience, understood that in order to be heard and taken seriously it was necessary to adopt or conform to the "civilised" standard. Peter Jones and George Copway each understood this necessity, and chose the Methodist church as a vehicle to communicate with non-Aboriginal audiences in the nineteenth century. Similarly, Charles Cooke, Andrew Paull, and Dr. Oronhyatekha (a well-known Mohawk physician and Forester) sought bureaucratic and professional status to make their marks.³⁵

Ahenakew's own introduction in the *Voices of the Plains Cree* offers some insight: "The time has come in the life of my race when that which has been like a sealed book to the masses of our Canadian compatriots... should be known.... We have our own view of the life that has been imposed upon us, and these pages are written that others may glimpse what we feel and experience."³⁶ In an article Ahenakew wrote in the early 1950s about the Little Pine Day School, he expressed his optimism about the role and necessity of education for the First Peoples of Saskatchewan.³⁷ An initial reading suggests that Ahenakew was merely toeing the line of his

³⁵ For biographical details relating to Oronhyatekha, see: Gayle M. Comeau-Vasilopoulos, "Oronhyatekha" In *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*. <http://www.biographi.ca>.

³⁶ Edward Ahenakew, *Voices of the Plains Cree*, edited by Ruth M. Buck (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995), 9.

³⁷ Edward Ahenakew, "Little Pine: an Indian day school," edited by Ruth Matheson Buck, *Saskatchewan History* XVIII.2 (1965): 55-62.

non-Aboriginal Church of England superiors, citing the need to “civilize” the Indians, but Ahenakew’s active involvement in organizations like the League of Indians (an early Aboriginal organisation devoted to forming an Indian presence and voice on a national scale) suggests his motives were deeper. In his introduction to “Old Keyam,” Ahenakew encourages his Aboriginal readers, and points out to non-Aboriginal readers that as contemporary First Peoples, “we must face the challenge of our day, not as white men, but as good Indians.”³⁸ Ahenakew’s published articles in organs such as the *Canadian Churchman* and the *Western Producer Magazine* suggest that at least part of his motivation in writing was to educate a non-Aboriginal audience about the traditions, beliefs, and current plight of his people.³⁹ His unpublished stories, poetry, and novel, however romantic in their presentation, also sought to remind Euro-Canadians, and perhaps his own people, of a glorious Aboriginal past, but they also portray a conflicted author, one who struggled to find a balance between his modern and contemporary role as an Anglican minister, while still acknowledging and staying true to his Cree heritage.

In the 1995 introduction to *Voices of the Plains Cree*, Stan Cuthand, Cree elder and a family friend of Ahenakew’s, notes that few of the Reverend’s friends or family were aware of his Cree stories until after his death. Cuthand relates a story where his father asked Ahenakew why he did not publish Cree stories in the *Cree Monthly Guide*. In response, Cuthand says Ahenakew expressed a fear of upsetting the Anglican Church Missionary Society, which was funding the publication of the newsletter. As Cuthand explains, “He didn’t want to rock the boat

³⁸ Edward Ahenakew, “Introduction to Old Keyam,” *Voices of the Plains Cree*, edited by Ruth M. Buck (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995), 51.

³⁹ See: Canon Edward Ahenakew, “Sixty-Five Years Ago,” *Western Producer Magazine* (January 11, 1951) [about the North-West Rebellion of 1885]; Ahenakew, “Island Lake Indian Mission,” *Canadian Churchman* (n.d.) [copy held at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina]; Ahenakew, “Geographical Conditions as they affect the Indian Character,” *Canadian Churchman* (? , 1919) [copy held at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina]; Ahenakew, “Indian Superstitions,” *Canadian Churchman*, (August 14, 1919) [copy held at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina].

of the church.”⁴⁰ Ahenakew’s Cree writing remained largely unpublished in his lifetime, while his work relating to the Church was rather well known. But the “Old Keyam” stories, “Black Hawk,” and other stories from a Plains Cree perspective demonstrate that Ahenakew held an equal respect for his Plains Cree heritage and the adopted Christian philosophy in which he was raised and formally educated. “Black Hawk” is perhaps the clearest indication of the two worlds in which Ahenakew lived and worked. The protagonists in that story are a Christian Plains Cree family, who constantly struggle against discrimination from their Euro-Canadian neighbours, the confining policies of the Indian Act, and uneducated and inattentive Indian Agents. Other stories, like “Loyalty....Loyalty” (in the *Cree Monthly Guide*) subtly hint at the hypocrisy of Church-run school teachings in comparison to the reality demonstrated by Euro-Canadian members of the Church. But the Anglican Church was Ahenakew’s only source of income, and in his heart he believed in the Christian philosophy. To openly criticize or question his employer and spiritual superiors meant he would be quite literally cutting himself off at the knees, a risk he was apparently unprepared to take.

Ahenakew, we must not forget, was schooled at Anglican missionary-run schools at Sandy Lake and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Obviously a strong believer in the faith, Ahenakew also had the Anglican Church to thank for his high degree of education and professional opportunities as a respected member of the Church. To explicitly bite the hand that feeds, so to speak, would not have been clever strategy on Ahenakew’s part. Constantly facing financial shortages, he simply could not afford to either. Furthermore, all indications suggest Ahenakew’s residential schooling experience was a positive one. Any attempts the Reverend made at changing the system from within were subtle and polite.

⁴⁰ Cuthand xvii.

It is tempting to compare Ahenakew's writing to that of Charles Pratt (Askenootow) (1818-1888). Both men were closely involved with the Church of England, and both men appear to have chosen their words carefully in their Church-related writings. In Winona Stevenson's reading, Pratt's journal writing toed the usual missionary line, "rife with racism, notions of cultural superiority, and zealous evangelicalism," because he was writing for an exclusive audience – that being his Euro-Canadian Church superiors.⁴¹ But there are distinct differences between Ahenakew's and Pratt's writing. The bulk of Pratt's writing, which Stevenson bases her analysis on, is journal writing. Ahenakew, on the other hand, was writing publicly through the *Cree Monthly Guide* and other publications. Although Stevenson asserts that Pratt was writing what his Church superiors wanted to hear – thus explaining the discrepancies and contradictions between family lore relating to Pratt, and the man revealed through his writing – her argument is not entirely solid. Pratt's journal writing may or may not have been meant for an audience beyond the writer himself.

Although missionaries were expected to keep weekly journals, and such writings are now prevalent in archives throughout North America, the extent to which such documents were ever read (or meant to be read) by Church superiors is uncertain. The act of journaling is not generally associated with public readership, but instead for the benefit (be that for purposes of memory or otherwise) of the writer – letter writing and written or published reports were the preferred method of communicating publicly. Ahenakew's writing, on the other hand, is not in journal form, but rather in the form of journalism, short stories, poetry, and a novel – all modes of writing generally associated with a broad readership. In Ahenakew's published writing we see a careful choice of words, with criticisms of the Church and government masked in subtlety; in the

⁴¹ Winona Stevenson, "The Journals and voices of a Church of England Native catechist: Askenootow (Charles Pratt), 1851-1884," *Reading Beyond Words: contexts for Native history*, edited by Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1996), 304-329.

cache of unpublished writing by Ahenakew, however, his criticisms flow freely, suggesting that he (or someone else) closely edited his material before publication. In this way Ahenakew's approach to writing differs significantly from that of Pratt because we cannot be certain that Pratt was writing for anyone other than himself.⁴²

Draped in a degree of humour, Ahenakew's writing in the *Cree Monthly Guide* was clearly not exclusively positive. And in front of a Joint Parliamentary Committee in 1947, Ahenakew testified that students from the Catholic schools in his diocese were better dressed than those who attended the Anglican run schools. As J.R. Miller notes, "Clothing was one of the most effective means, apparently, by which denominations could compete for adherents among groups of poor Indian people."⁴³ In other words, fancier clothing would attract more potential students, as the parents were sure to be positively influenced by the outward appearance of existing students. At that same Parliamentary hearing, Ahenakew indicated that the Catholic schools appeared to have an advantage over the Anglicans when it came to school meals as well, "Their children tell of eating good meals at their school while ours often speak otherwise." Similarly, he felt that the Catholic schools did a better job of accommodating visiting parents; "The Indians going to see their children at the Roman Catholic schools generally have a building in which they can stop overnight or longer."⁴⁴ Thus, Ahenakew did not remain entirely silent with regards to areas where he felt the schools in his diocese could be improved. But his

⁴² It was not uncommon for Aboriginal converts and missionaries to engage in journal writing as a means of reflecting upon Christianity and faith. A great example is in the journal writing of Arthur Wellington Clah, discussed at length by Susan Neylan. Clah's writings were clearly not meant for a public audience, yet his output is plentiful and full of insight. See: Susan Neylan, "'Eating the Angels' Food': Arthur Wellington Clah – an Aboriginal perspective on being Christian, 1857-1909," In *Canadian Missionaries, Indigenous Peoples: representing religion at home and abroad*. Alwyn Austin and James S. Scott, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) 88-108; and Neylan, *'The Heavens are Changing': nineteenth-century Protestant missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003) 161-174.

⁴³ Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision* 298.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision* 501 n. 49.

criticism was noticeably guarded.

At once both his largest asset, and perhaps the biggest detriment to Ahenakew's writing, was Paul Wallace. Wallace's encouragement was certainly an important element to Ahenakew's writing. Although he wrote the "Old Keyam" stories, early poetry, stories, and "Black Hawk" manuscript on his own, and the stories he recorded from Chief Thunderchild were largely at his own initiative (with Wallace's advice), as was the *Cree Monthly Guide*, later writing by Ahenakew, which is now in the collections of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, was undertaken with Wallace in mind. Wallace was an instrumental editor and critic of Ahenakew's writing as early as the summer of 1923. A constant theme of their correspondence was Ahenakew's desire that Wallace do whatever he could to improve his stories, their presentation, and in finding a publisher. In just one of numerous such examples, Ahenakew urged Wallace to consider himself "perfectly free to make any arrangements with any printing firm with reference to magazine publication with just the one condition that I be given chance to go through any of the chapters that may be accepted before publication, with the purpose of bringing it up to date and eliminating anything that may not be wise."⁴⁵ Similarly, Ahenakew often pleaded with Wallace to "tell me just what I should do as soon as you are able," or "I shall try to do as you advise," allowing Wallace to "please use the greatest freedom in arranging the book and I shall be pleased to abide by what you advise."⁴⁶

But although Wallace certainly gave Ahenakew advice with regards to content and theme, it appears as though both men's expectations fell short. With the eventual failure of Wallace or Ahenakew to find a publisher for the Old Keyam stories, Ahenakew's expanding

⁴⁵ Wallace Papers, B W15p, Box 1. Ahenakew to Wallace, 16 May 1924.

⁴⁶ Wallace Papers, B W15p, Box 1. Ahenakew to Wallace, 11 August 1923.

duties with the Saskatchewan diocese of the Anglican Church (serving a district on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River, from Battleford to Frog Lake, a distance of more than 300 kilometres, travelled every four weeks), and writing and printing the *Cree Monthly Guide* in syllabics, the cleric's writing suffered and the friendship and professional relationship between the two men began to fade (despite efforts by Wallace to maintain contact with Ahenakew). Although their correspondence was fraught with apparent misunderstanding with regards to what each expected from the other, Wallace viewed Ahenakew as a person with authentic knowledge and the writing skills to facilitate the preservation of information that might otherwise disappear.⁴⁷

After an apparent silence of more than ten years, during which time Ahenakew focussed solely on his missionary work, Wallace picked up his pen and wrote to Ahenakew again in the summer of 1947. Wallace clearly indicated in this correspondence that he viewed Ahenakew as in a position to preserve "what is beautiful in some cultures that are in danger of passing away." Furthermore, he likened Ahenakew to the Romantic English poet, William Wordsworth: "I always refer to you, when I read Wordsworth's poem, 'The World Is Too Much With Us,' and what you said about the value of the Thunderbird legend in bringing nature alive for us today."⁴⁸ Wallace's motivation in writing Ahenakew after their long silence, was to invite him to begin writing again, to submit his observations to the collections of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia; "I have recently had a good deal of contact with the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. They are very much interested in what I have told them about your work among the Crees, and in your collection of Wesakaychak legends....They, too,

⁴⁷ Miller, "Edward Ahenakew's Tutelege by Paul Wallace"

⁴⁸ Wallace Papers, B W15p, Box 1. Wallace to Ahenakew, 5 July 1947.

are interested in gathering records of the folklore and institutions of your people.”⁴⁹

Wallace’s main contact at the American Philosophical Society was Dr. William E. Lingelbach, the Society’s Librarian. Lingelbach, a fellow Canadian, as the APS Librarian, was active in acquiring, among other interests, American Indian collections. Lingelbach (1871-1962), was born at Shakespeare, Ontario, and was educated at the University of Toronto. He later migrated to Germany, receiving graduate training in modern European history at the University of Leipzig in 1895-96, eventually continuing his graduate study at the University of Chicago, and after accepting a position as an instructor at the University of Pennsylvania, he received his doctorate at that university in 1901. Lingelbach taught history at the University of Pennsylvania, eventually becoming Dean of the College (Arts) at Pennsylvania, until his retirement at the age of 70 in 1941. It was after his retirement as a professor that Lingelbach was appointed the Librarian of the American Philosophical Society, a post that he was active in until he resigned in 1958. But at the urging of the APS, Lingelbach retained an office at the Society and continued as a member of the Committee on the Library, a position he maintained until his death in November, 1962.⁵⁰

Wallace certainly recognised the existing writer in Ahenakew, of this there is no doubt. Wallace was not Ahenakew’s inspiration or motivator, but rather, a supporter. Ahenakew clearly felt that with Wallace’s help, he could find publishers for his work. But Wallace’s motivations were rather different, apparently seeking only to have Ahenakew write stories so they might be collected (rather than published, necessarily) by the American Philosophical Society. The apparent disconnect between each man’s motives, probably led to their eventual falling-out.

⁴⁹ Wallace Papers, B W15p, Box 1. Wallace to Ahenakew, 5 July, 1947.

⁵⁰ For more on Lingelbach, see: Richard H. Shryock, “William Ezra Lingelbach (1871-1962)” *Year book: American Philosophical Society* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1963) 173-179.

Events in Ahenakew's life point to a desire and demonstrate the difficulty of balancing the cultures. Ahenakew served for a brief period as the vice-president of the League of Indians for western Canada, the first national Aboriginal organization which lobbied the federal government to allow Indians to vote without losing their status and to allow them greater control over band properties and funds.⁵¹ The Department of Indian Affairs and Bishop Walter Burd forced Ahenakew to discontinue his work with the League, however, insisting that a churchman should not meddle in the affairs of the state. Ahenakew's resignation from the League troubled his conscience greatly.⁵²

His publication of the *Cree Monthly Guide* was certainly an accomplishment that Ahenakew was proud of. When the Saskatchewan government approached him in the mid-1950s about potentially naming a lake in the northern part of the province after him, Ahenakew included reference to his writing and publishing of the *Cree Monthly Guide* in a brief biographical sketch which he submitted to the Minister of Natural Resources: "For over 30 years I have edited a small paper in syllabic characters and this is sent to all reserves where there are Crees. It is specially [sic] welcome to Northern Indians." Additionally, he also considered his work, with Archdeacon R. Faries (1870-1964) (Born at Rupert's House, Faries was taught by Bishop John Horden, founder of the Moose Mission Press. Faries went on to be an Anglican missionary at York Factory amongst the Swampy Cree for more than forty years),⁵³ on a Cree-

⁵¹ For more on the League of Indians, see: Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: a history of founding peoples from earliest times* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1994), 328; Peter Kulchyski, "A Considerable unrest: F.O. Loft and the League of Indians," *Native Studies Review* 4.1-2 (1988): 95-113.

⁵² Cuthand xviii.

⁵³ For more on Horden, see: Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, *Paper Talk: a history of libraries, print culture, and Aboriginal peoples in Canada before 1960* (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005) 53-57. For more on Faries, see: Richard Faries, "Autobiography of Archdeacon Richard Faries" (Documents of the Canadian Church – 5) *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 15.1 (1973) 14-23.

English dictionary, to be of note, proudly mentioning that “It has now been printed for many years and is of great value to missionaries and traders.”⁵⁴ Ahenakew might also have mentioned his work as a translator, occasional newspaper and magazine contributor, amateur anthropologist and historian, and creative writer, but neglected to do so. Nonetheless, the Saskatchewan government deemed him worthy and accomplished enough to name a small lake in northern Saskatchewan in his honour, “Ahenakew Lake.”⁵⁵

Much of Ahenakew’s unpublished writing consists of poetry, short stories, and a full-length novel, untitled but dubbed “Black Hawk.” This work is particularly significant when considered in conjunction with comments by Aboriginal literary scholars like Thomas King, who says “as yet, we have not discovered any novels, collections of short stories, volumes of poetry, and the rest. It could be that there is little to find....” King qualifies these comments in noting that most Aboriginal writing during the early twentieth century, after E. Pauline’s Johnson’s death, was published in periodicals, newspapers, and local journals.⁵⁶ Ahenakew, who has been acknowledged as making speeches and writing articles during this period, has to date not been given the attention he deserves as a creative writer. The bulk of his creative writing and poetry remains unstudied and unprocessed amongst his papers in archives. Stories like, “An Indian Courtship” and “The Winning of the Fawn,” along with the full-length novel attempt in “Black Hawk,” are all written in a romantic vein. Each story involves the courtship of a young Indian couple, and/or a tale of unrequited love, but these stories also involve a degree of political commentary. “Black Hawk,” for instance, involves a narrative outlining the frustrations faced by

⁵⁴ Saskatchewan Archives Board (Regina). Ahenakew, Edward. Priest. (1885-1961), R-E 1928, File 1. Ahenakew to The Hon. J. H. Brockelbank, Minister of Natural Resources, December 30, 1955.

⁵⁵ Ahenakew Lake, in northern Saskatchewan, is west of Wollaston Lake, at 58°02’ latitude, 103°55’ longitude.

⁵⁶ Thomas King, “Native Literature in Canada” In *Dictionary of Native American Literature*. Ed. by Andrew Wiget (New York: Garland, 1994) 357.

Indian farmers on the Sandy Lake Reserve. In telling of these frustrations, Ahenakew also points to the absurdity of government Indian policy in relation to farming practices, and the mismanagement of inept and inappropriate Indian Agents. Sitting largely unnoticed in an archive for the last forty years, Ahenakew's creative writing paints a picture very similar to the historical reality of Indian farmers since set out by historians like Sarah Carter.⁵⁷

Set both contemporarily and in a mythic past, Ahenakew may have been writing these stories for his own amusement. A life-long bachelor, he may also have been writing from experience, if not imagined experience. Certainly the narrative of "Black Hawk" is rooted in the real-life experiences and observations Ahenakew made as both a Cree living on Reserve, and an esteemed member of the community. Ahenakew likely never tried to publish "Black Hawk," as his criticisms of Indian policy and inept government management are clear, and such commentary would not have sat well in the eyes of the Anglican Church who were not in the business of criticising the government of the day. The Anglican Church, and other denominations, were effectively in business with the Canadian government in relation to Indian schooling. The Canadian government provided funds for the churches to organise and administer the education of Indian students, thus any criticism of the government would likely have led to the removal of much needed funding. The literary value of these stories remains untested, but the main significance of their existence is the proof they offer of Ahenakew's double-life as an aspiring author. Although it was his historical and anthropological work that saw publication in his lifetime, and made him famous in death, Ahenakew was also an aspiring fiction writer.

At least one of these stories, "An Indian Courtship," includes a kind of moral-religious

⁵⁷ See: Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian reserve farmers and government policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); and Sarah Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow: 'Peasant' farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-1897" In *Sweet Promises: a reader on Indian-White relations in Canada*. Ed. by J.R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 353-377.

tale. Described as the story of “an old school friend on the Reserve on which I was a counsellor,” it chronicles the journey of Patch to win the love of Susan Jane, who is from a different community, several days’ journey away, and the narrator’s (perhaps Ahenakew himself) role in ultimately helping his young friend to woo Susan Jane. The story is a clever and rather humorous mixture of moral tale, adventure, and romance, with a clear intertwining of traditional Cree religious beliefs and contemporary Christianity.⁵⁸ Patch and Susan Jane, of course, end up a married couple in the end, but not before some clever trickery on the part of the narrator to give the “superstitious” (i.e. traditionally minded) Susan Jane a little incentive. Patch’s marriage proposal is initially turned down by Susan Jane, and the disappointed Patch is ready to go home. The narrator, however, has a last ditch idea to convince Susan Jane to change her mind. Recognising that she is traditionally minded in terms of spiritual beliefs, the narrator cleverly uses the cover of night, a rabbit hole, and an altered voice to make Susan Jane believe that she has been spoken to by her spirit guide. The message, of course, is that she should marry Patch. At once humorous and deceitful, “An Indian Courtship” speaks to the difficulties and misunderstandings that early twentieth-century Christian missionary work amongst traditional Cree communities encountered and created. The story also speaks to the turmoil and two-mindedness that Ahenakew faced as a Cree man working in the name of the Church of England, perhaps even revealing something of his methods in obtaining converts.

If Ahenakew’s methods in reality were anything like the approach demonstrated by the religious counsellor in “An Indian Courtship,” then the Reverend took effort to draw connections between traditional Plains Cree beliefs and the teachings and philosophies of the Anglican Church. This humorous story also reveals a certain suspicion, if not disbelief, in the traditional

⁵⁸ Edward Ahenakew Papers, R-1, Folder 7, Part 1. “An Indian Courtship.”

spiritual beliefs of the Cree, which Ahenakew does not hesitate to label “superstition.” If we consider that “An Indian Courtship” belongs to the Ahenakew body of writing that was never intended for the eyes of his religious superiors, then the notion that he was merely toeing the line of the Church is not sufficient. Ahenakew was a proud Anglican, thus his views on traditional Plains Cree religious beliefs would have included a fair degree of suspicion and disbelief. But if his personal beliefs differed from those of his people, this did not lead to any disrespect or arrogance on Ahenakew’s behalf. Calling traditional Cree beliefs “superstition” is as hurtful as he gets. Ahenakew firmly believed that he was doing a service to his people in teaching them the ways and philosophies of the Church of England. “An Indian Courtship” reveals something of the masterful way in which Ahenakew maintained a sense of respect and balance between Cree belief and his own Anglican faith.

The narrative of “Black Hawk” also offers unique insight into Ahenakew’s mind with regards to his views on print culture and the place of literacy in Aboriginal life. A mythic like character, introduced early in the “Black Hawk” manuscript, for example, is described glowingly as a man honoured by his people and loved by the Hudson’s Bay men: “He had in his pocket a long piece of paper on which were inscribed words which were big with meaning. No man had ever been so treated before. Into any Hudson Bay Fort he could go in and presenting the paper was allowed to take what he needed for his own use anything the great company had.”⁵⁹ And later in the story, the elder of two Cree brothers is described as a lover of books. His younger brother, who aspires to a life of farming, makes fun of the elder’s fascination with books and writing. In response, the older boy contends: “I wouldn’t be a farmer for anything...I don’t like the smell of manure and I don’t like to see cows chewing and, Ugh! It makes me sick. I like

⁵⁹ Edward Ahenakew Papers, R-1, Folder 7, Part 2. “Romance. Black Hawk by Edward Ahenakew.”

books. I want to be a great man.”⁶⁰ Thus, based on the views expressed in his writing at least, Ahenakew appears to associate books and literacy with greatness. Perhaps more importantly, books and literacy are the basis of respect within the community and abroad.

In Ahenakew’s writing, print culture provides a source of status, so to speak, a ticket to what lies beyond the confines of the Reserve, bringing the Indian up to par with his or her Euro-Canadian neighbour. Yet in his own experience, Ahenakew was confined in his role as a cleric and aspiring writer. His involvement with the Church of England as an important and respected figure (for both Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian members of the Church) brought him considerable status and respect, but at the same time set up considerable obstacles to exploiting his creativity as a writer in pursuit of Aboriginal causes. Nonetheless, through guarded humour in his public writing, and rather vividly in his private writing, Ahenakew managed to subtly criticise the educational and assimilative philosophies and techniques of his fellow clergymen.

⁶⁰ Edward Ahenakew Papers, R-1, Folder 7, Part 2. “Romance. Black Hawk by Edward Ahenakew.”



Figure 5-1. Reverend Edward Ahenakew as a young man (Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B11359).

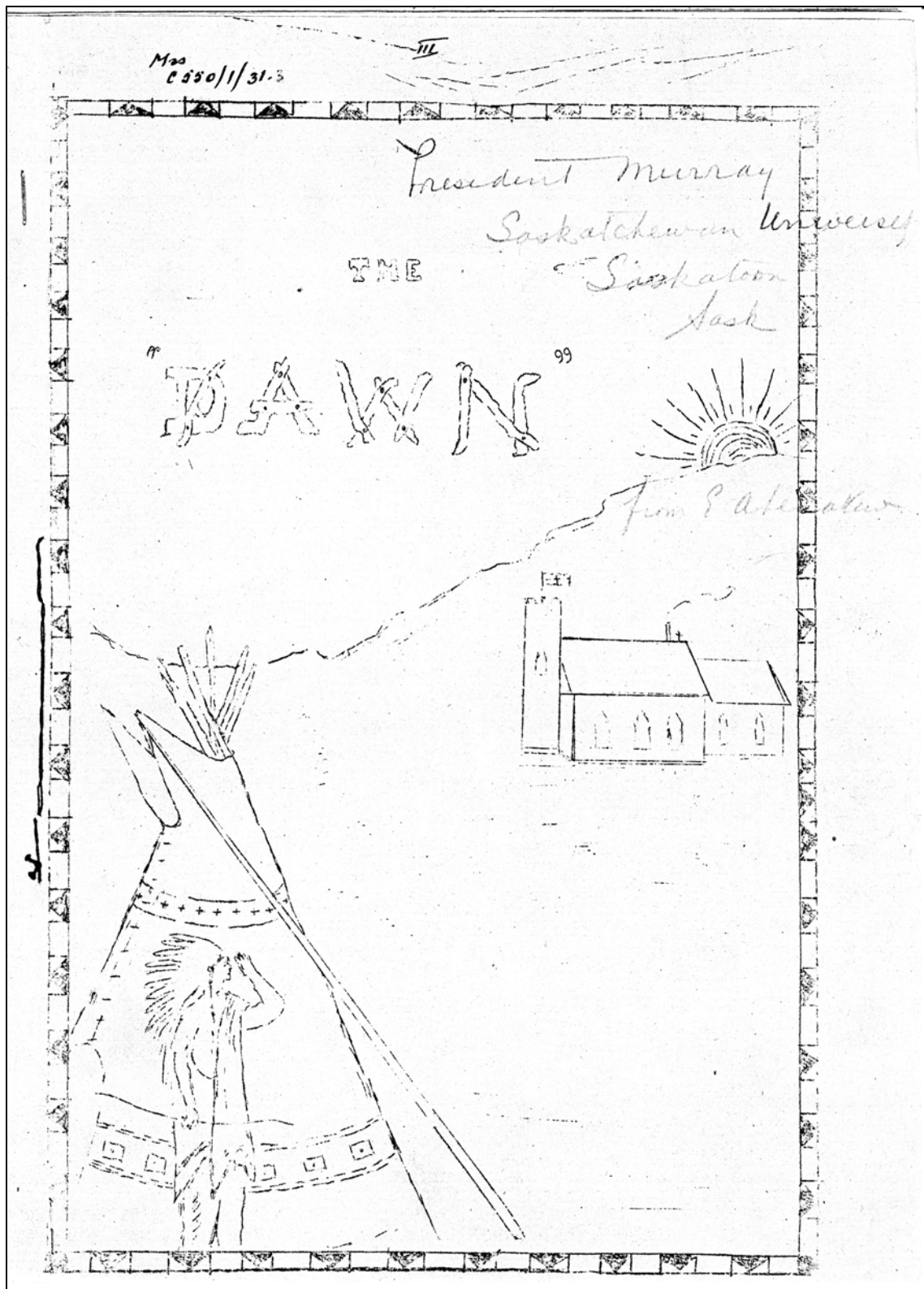


Figure 5-2. Cover image from the *Cree Monthly Guide* (September, 1926), compiled, printed, and distributed by Edward Ahenakew (University of Saskatchewan Library, Special Collections, MSS C550/1/31.3).

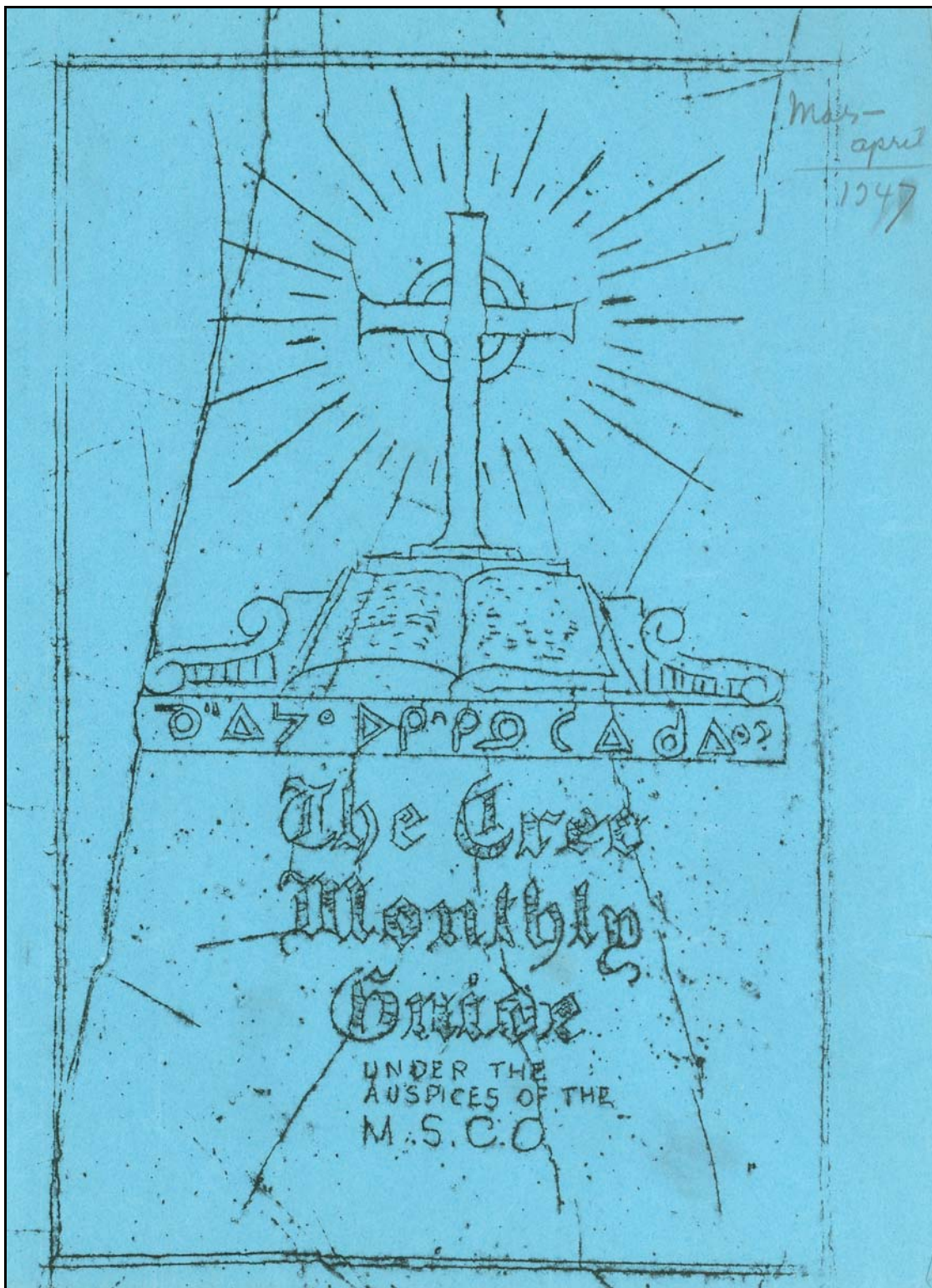


Figure 5-3. A later cover of the *Cree Monthly Guide* (March-April, 1947). Note the use of both English and Cree syllabic (SAB (Regina), Robert A. Logan Papers, R.214.1).

CHAPTER SIX

Andrew Paull:

Squamish political leader, respected sportsman, newspaper columnist, and editor/publisher

The Thunderbird will lay aside the tomahawk, and use the white men's pen fearlessly in the interest of the North American Indians.¹

Andrew Paull, or Chief Andy Paull, as the Vancouver newspapers usually referred to him, was a colourful and popular figure in both Aboriginal circles and the mainstream press from the late 1920s until his death in 1959. A relentless political force in his own right, Paull was known as "Canada's Indian conscience," publicly fighting for improvements in the status of Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia, Canada, and the United States. His chief concerns were equal opportunity of employment and education, legal recognition of Indian rights, and more efficient and effective measures to ameliorate Aboriginal living conditions. His main vehicle for expressing these concerns was his long-time presidency of the North American Indian Brotherhood, which he founded in 1944. As the *Vancouver Province* noted in 1956, "his approach combines the eloquence of the zealot, the dialectic skill of the lawyer and the shrewdness of the politician."² Widely respected as an authority on the law as applied to Aboriginal peoples, Paull spoke on behalf of BC's and Canada's Aboriginal peoples in provincial and federal courts and before commissions several times. Although he was not formally educated as a lawyer, Paull considered himself as "a lawyer without a ticket." At the age of only fifteen, he was placed by his people with a city law firm, where he worked for four years, learning general legal procedures and gaining a special knowledge of the law as it applied

¹ Andy Paull, "Editorial" *The Thunderbird* (June 1, 1949) 1.

² James Roe, "Canada's Indian conscience" *Vancouver Province* (December 27, 1956) 7.

to Aboriginal peoples. At the time of his death, Paull's friend and colleague, Maisie Hurley, told the media that "he could not become a lawyer without renouncing his aboriginal rights.... But he had a marvellous mind. He could recite cases chapter and verse. He was considered the greatest authority on this continent on Indian aspects of the law. He would have been one of the country's most brilliant criminal lawyers if he'd had a degree. He had dignity, drama. He was superb."³ His first appearance before a government commission was at the young age of only 21, in 1926, arguing the case for more realistic Indian legislation before a joint Senate-Commons committee.

Paull's career of advocacy, however, began when he was merely a child, in 1899, when he was chosen by his people, the Squamish, to be "the one to learn the ways of the white man and speak for the Indian." At this young age he made a solemn oath "to be the eyes, ears and spokesman for the Indians and to serve them faithfully."⁴ It is significant to note that at age seven, when Paull entered school, he did not speak one word of English. He learned English from French-speaking nuns at St. Paul's Residential School in North Vancouver. Paull's residential school experience was overwhelmingly positive, and for the rest of his life he made a point of crediting the nuns and teachers at St. Paul's with providing him with the tools he needed to be a successful writer, speaker, and political organiser. He spent seven years at St. Paul's, from 1899 to 1906.

Chosen by his community to attend the school in North Vancouver, which at the time was brand new, Paull's "purpose in going was not to learn how to become a white man. He went there to learn how to use the tools of the white man, and with these tools to speak for and fight

³ Mac Reynolds, "None to Take His Place: Death of Courtly Andy Paull Stills Indians' Voice Forever" *Vancouver Sun* (July 29, 1959) 12. Hurley's assertion that Paull would have had to have given up his Indian status to become a lawyer was misguided. Paull could have become a lawyer without renouncing his status. See also: Herbert Francis Dunlop, O.M.I., *Andy Paull: as I knew him and understood his times* (Vancouver: The Order of the O.M.I. of St. Paul's Province, 1989) 33, 39-40.

⁴ Roe, "Canada's Indian conscience" *Vancouver Province* (December 27, 1956) 7; See also: Dunlop, 21-24.

for the rights of his people.”⁵ Rather than give up his identity as an Indian, or assimilate to Euro-Canadian society, Paull’s time at St. Paul’s Residential School provided him with the tools to effectively communicate with and stand up to the Canadian and British Columbia governments in relation to the rights of Aboriginal peoples. One of Paull’s early biographers, Oblate Priest Father Herbert Dunlop, who was certainly not unaware of the many faults and misguided efforts of the residential schooling system in general, says of Paull’s experience: “Andy would know the good and the bad of residential school life. It is significant that he would fight hard to prevent the closing of the one he went to. It is significant that he would respect the people who taught him throughout his life.”⁶ Paull was life-long friends with two of the Sisters who had taught him at St. Paul’s, and he remained a strong believer in the Roman Catholic faith throughout his life. By all accounts, St. Paul’s Residential School and his ties to the Catholic Church were important formative influences. While he never hesitated to criticise government and Department of Indian Affairs administrators for their roles in failing to live up to treaty promises, including the provision of proper and adequate schooling for Aboriginal peoples, he rarely, if ever, spoke negatively about the work of missionaries.

As a result of his special training in the history, culture, and traditions of his people, Paull was widely respected as an expert on Indian lore, and he commanded attention every time he spoke. George Manuel, Paull’s successor as President of the North American Indian Brotherhood, considered Paull a kind of guru, and credited him with being “the spark and catalyst” of the contemporary First Nations political movement.⁷ As the *Vancouver Sun* noted at

⁵ Dunlop 24.

⁶ Dunlop 30.

⁷ See: Peter McFarlane, *Brotherhood to Nationhood: George Manuel and the making of the modern Indian movement* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1993) 50; and George Manuel and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: an Indian reality* (Don Mills: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974).

the time of his death, “Tall, built like a prizefighter, endowed with a magnificent courtroom manner, Andy Paull dedicated his life to improving the conditions of his people.”⁸

As the President of the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB), Andrew Paull stood before the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons appointed to examine and consider the Indian Act on the 27 June, 1946 (he literally stood, ignoring an invitation by the Committee Chairman asking if he would “rather sit down”).⁹ The evidence that Paull gave to the Committee is compelling reading, portraying a well-spoken and highly prepared orator, despite his own self-deprecating, or perhaps even sarcastic remarks to “disregard my inability to speak and my lack of command of the English language.”¹⁰ In his plea for greater Indian involvement in Indian Affairs, and for the Government of Canada to recognise that it was in abrogation of the treaties, Paull used the literature of the treaties and subsequent legal studies to make his points, illustrating and effectively reminding the Committee that the Indians who signed the treaties with the British Crown and Canadian government were acting as sovereign powers and were recognised as such by the Euro-Canadians involved:

I have read in the evidence of Mr. T.R.L. MacInnes (Secretary, Indian Affairs Branch) that the Indian had nothing to give when he signed the treaty because he had not colonized the country. Now, we can give you plenty of decisions to contradict that argument, but we know that you are men of learning and I do not think it will be necessary to do that. That is why I did not bring the books here; but we can give you decisions to contradict the statements made by Mr. MacInnes.¹¹

⁸ Reynolds, “None to Take His Place” *Vancouver Sun* (July 29, 1959) 12.

⁹ Canada. Parliament. Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons Appointed to Examine and Consider the Indian Act. *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, No. 9 (June 27, 1946) 420.

¹⁰ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1946). *Minutes*. No. 9. 422.

¹¹ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1946). *Minutes*. No. 9. 422.

Continuing, in reference to Treaty No. 1, Paull stated, “We see a treaty between two nations with sovereign powers. Perhaps you will disagree with me. Perhaps you will say I do not know what I am talking about, but I have lots of help behind me, lots of books, to convince you.”¹²

Paull presented himself as a highly literate and educated Indian with a specific intention – to demonstrate that the people he represented as President of the NAIB were a capable and thoughtful people, fully able of handling their own political, social, and economic affairs. Paull pushed this point forward because the popular conception of the Indian at the time was far less flattering, too often portraying Canada’s Aboriginal peoples as incapable and unwilling to adapt or effectively take care of themselves. Paull argued that if there was even a small ounce of truth in this conception, it was because the *Indian Act* served to lower the morale of Aboriginal peoples, because it took away any democratic power of Indians to administer their own affairs.

An inherent part of Paull’s message was the notion that Euro-Canadians had relied and benefited from a situation where Indians had remained illiterate and incapable – the generally deplorable state of the government- and church-administered Indian education system supported this claim, encouraging and allowing Aboriginal peoples to remain downtrodden. Meanwhile, in reference to what Paull called “unwritten treaties” and other forms of Euro-Canadian encroachment on Aboriginal rights and powers, he continued to drive home the colonising role and influence of Western literacy:

Queen Victoria sent the Marquis of Lorne to Chief Spintlum with a flag and a bible and a sword...to ratify this early treaty....Now, the other kind of treaty – and it is not a treaty – is peaceful encroachment. Your ancestors came here and you penetrated into the country, and you sent as your ambassadors people with the bible, with the Book. Now, I am a Christian man and I have no kick against any religion, but that is the way you got in. We can show you court decisions to show you that in the peaceful encroachment you sent as your ambassadors the missionaries I am not going any further in that regard; we can leave it at that. I

¹² Canada. Parliament. SJC (1946). *Minutes*. No. 9. 422.

am merely touching on the different ways in which you people came here.¹³

Paull was demonstrating that although the Indians of the past may not have had the skills to fully decipher Western literacy, they entered the treaty agreements in good faith and assumed the same of their Euro-Canadian counterparts. Through the passing years, as Aboriginal peoples struggled in the government- and church-run Indian schools which offered little in terms of literacy education, subsequent Canadian governments wilfully broke the treaty promises. In part the treaties were abrogated because the Federal government and popular Euro-Canadian conception was that Indians would be effectively assimilated. Thus the treaties would no longer be necessary. But treaty promises were broken on paper, through legislation and inter-governmental policy changes, with no consultation or immediate awareness of Aboriginal peoples themselves. The Aboriginal peoples involved usually only learned of the broken promises well after the fact, when Euro-Canadians began encroaching further onto their lands. Paull used the example of the Federal government transferring the authority of natural resources to the Province of Ontario, allowing a situation where tourists began accessing lands that the treaties set aside as Aboriginal lands for hunting and fishing.¹⁴

But Paull informed the Special Joint Committee members that his people would no longer stand for such encroachments and wilful violations, that the Euro-Canadian governments could no longer count on Indian ignorance of the written treaties: “Perhaps I should bring you one of these treaties. Perhaps my words will not convince you. Here is one of these documents with you [sic] representatives of former years, signed on parchment, signed at command of the government, and it is a treaty you broke, and I charge you with having broken these treaties –

¹³ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1946). *Minutes*. No. 9. 423.

¹⁴ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1946). *Minutes*. No. 9. 425-426.

you and all the members of your committee....”¹⁵ After reading the text of the treaty, Paull continued,

Now that is what the treaty says. That is an original copy. That is what it says. And now, you, the government, has abrogated the terms of that treaty without giving the Indians notice that you were going to abrogate the terms of that treaty. Now that goes beyond the category of common decency. Look at your international law and see what it says about that. I do not need to tell you about that because you are learned in the law.¹⁶

In further illustrating his point, that Euro-Canadians had wilfully taken advantage of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, Paull showed that he was well-versed in literature. Quoting a small piece of poetry, prominently featured in Lord Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s historical novel, *The Last of the Barons*, Paull pointed to the brutality and hypocrisy of Euro-Canadian treatment of Aboriginal peoples in the face of Indian generosity: “When the white man was hungry, the Indian brought him food; he brought over deer, he brought over fish, he brought over moose – we have a bit of poetry here: ‘Death to the dove is the eagle’s love and Sharp is the kiss of the falcon’s beak.’ That is what happened, that is why we are here now.”¹⁷ In fact, the transcription of this poem is slightly incorrect. The poem in its entirety reads, “The cushat would mate / Above her state, / And she flutters her wings round the falcon’s beak; / But death to the dove / Is the falcon’s love— / Oh, sharp is the kiss of the falcon’s beak!”¹⁸ In the context of Lytton’s novel, this poem, or verse, is quoted at least three times. In the first two instances, the verse is sung by a troop of “timbrel girls,” or “tymbesteres,” as a metaphorical warning, illustrating the

¹⁵ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1946). *Minutes*. No. 9. 424.

¹⁶ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1946). *Minutes*. No. 9. 425.

¹⁷ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1946). *Minutes*. No. 9. 426.

¹⁸ See: Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Bart., *The Last of the Barons*. Everyman’s Library (1843; London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1913) 78.

imbalanced relationship between Sibyll, a poor alchemist's daughter, and William de Hastings, a nobleman and royal chamberlain to Edward IV. Paull's apparent fascination with this verse is even more intriguing when we consider that the timbrel girls, or minstrels, the characters that provide us with these lines, are in all likelihood, English Gypsies.

In quoting from Bulwer-Lytton, Paull was demonstrating that he was a well-read and educated man, countering the familiar image of the Indian as incapable or uninterested in literature. It is not certain if Paull intended for members of the Committee to recognise this excerpt of poetry, or if he intended to pass it off as his own. *The Last of the Barons* was Bulwer-Lytton's most critically acclaimed book, although not his most popular. Bulwer-Lytton also had a direct connection to the colony of British Columbia. As Secretary of State for the Colonies in Lord Derby's government, Bulwer-Lytton reacted to the crisis posed by the discovery of gold on the Pacific coast in 1856 by creating the colony of British Columbia, with a London-appointed governor to act as an umpire among the competing interests of the Indians, prospectors, and the Hudson's Bay Company.

Bulwer-Lytton was an unusual Secretary of State, demonstrating as much moral purpose as he did economic interest; he wrote regularly to the Royal Engineers of British Columbia and showed a great interest in the development of the colony, referring to his Engineers as "Pioneers of Civilisation."¹⁹ Furthermore, because Lord Lytton was "unusually sensitive to the claims of indigenous peoples,"²⁰ his political writing and speeches as a cabinet minister and politician were crucial in the political lobbying and protest headed by Paull and the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia. The Hudson's Bay Company's short-lived Fort Dallas at Camchin (or

¹⁹ Leslie Mitchell, *Bulwer Lytton: the rise and fall of a Victorian Man of Letters* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003) 214-215.

²⁰ Mitchell, 214.

Kumsheen) (at the confluence of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, in the territory of the Nlaka'pamux people) was renamed Lytton in the noble's honour in 1858. Thus, it is not surprising that Paull would take some interest in Bulwer-Lytton's work as an author.

As a historical novelist, Bulwer-Lytton sought to teach history that he felt ought to be better known. *The Last of the Barons*, from which Paull quoted, relates to the War of the Roses period in British history and reveals a lot about nineteenth-century British attitudes towards it, speaking to the nature of political leadership, nationalism, and ambition.²¹ Bulwer-Lytton was, in his lifetime and until the early twentieth century, one of England's most popular writers.²² He was undoubtedly one of the Victorian era's principal spokesmen. Bulwer-Lytton's novels and poetry were extremely popular in his time (1803-1873), outselling such authors as Charles Dickens. Although little-known or rarely read since 1918, when his popularity inexplicably declined, he is credited with coining such popular phrases as, "pursuit of the almighty dollar," "the pen is mightier than the sword," and the now infamous incipit, "It was a dark and stormy night."

Andrew Brown, Academic Director of Cambridge University Press, says of Bulwer-Lytton's popularity, "It seems clear that for a large number of his readers (of whichever gender) Bulwer's great attraction was his interweaving of romantic idealism and (at least what passed for) deep philosophical thought with the more conventional features of the popular thriller, thereby elevating novel-reading to a more respectable status."²³ As a writer, he was certainly the most

²¹ See, Andrew Brown, "Bulwer's Reputation" In *The Subverting Vision of Bulwer-Lytton: bicentenary reflections*. Ed. by Allan Conrad Christensen (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004). See also: Mitchell, *Bulwer Lytton: the rise and fall of a Victorian Man of Letters* passim.

²² Bulwer-Lytton's collected works are held in the Chief Factor's room at Fort Carlton Provincial Park in Saskatchewan – a testament to his widespread popularity in the late nineteenth century.

²³ Brown, "Bulwer's Reputation" 32.

famous name of his day. During a career spanning five decades he published two dozen best-selling novels, including *The Last Days of Pompeii*, one of the most famous titles in all of nineteenth-century fiction; nine plays, two of which (*Money* and *The Lady of Lyons*) proved among the most resilient of the Victorian era; fifteen volumes of poetry, including an epic in twelve books (*King Arthur*) and translations of Horace and Schiller; a history of Athens, a pioneering sociological survey of the English national character (*England and the English*); four volumes of essays and enough uncollected prose to fill a dozen more volumes.²⁴

Not merely a popular writer, Bulwer-Lytton led a multi-faceted life: he was a politician, novelist, essayist, poet, commentator on European affairs, and a spiritualist. What he wrote and said never failed to capture the attention and imagination of the Victorian-era English public. As an author, he was also the source of considerable controversy because he often wrote from the perspective of criminals, the underclass, or less desirable characters of Victorian England. Because he was also a popular politician and Cabinet Minister, Bulwer-Lytton was “one of the few literary men who had the opportunity of putting his ideas into practice.”²⁵ Whatever Paull’s intention in quoting from Bulwer-Lytton, these few sentences clearly illustrate that Paull was well read, with a distinctive taste in literature. Paull’s motivation may have been related to Lytton’s reputation as a politician who sympathised and attempted to understand the conditions and opinions of classes and peoples other than his own: an example that Paull probably hoped his contemporary Euro-Canadian political counterparts would find inspiring.

Paull made significant and effective use of written documents in his oral performance and sworn testimony to demonstrate that the Aboriginal peoples of the late 1940s could no longer be

²⁴ Brown, “Bulwer’s Reputation” 34.

²⁵ Mitchell, xix.

dismissed, nor could the government assume they would soon be assimilated. He used the example of his own literacy and education in treaty literature to demonstrate that it could also no longer be taken for granted that the Indians of Canada would sit idly by while the government neglected the treaty promises. Furthermore, Paull was seeking to inform members of this Committee that an increasing number of Aboriginal peoples in Canada were obtaining good educations, and rather than assimilating to Euro-Canadian values, they were using that education to work for Indian concerns. Thus, Paull and members of his delegation at the Committee hearings were seeking greater involvement by Indians in Indian affairs, particularly with regards to managing the reserves and education. With reference to the many Indians who fought alongside other Canadians in the World Wars, and the ill-treatment they were subjected to following their return to Canada, Paull asserted, "I submit that you can trust an Indian to be an agent, a superintendent or something like that. I say to you...that we have Indians qualified to do some of the government work that you men are doing.... We have Indians throughout Canada who have a greater degree of learning than the illiterate Indian agent who supervises and administers your laws over those Indians."²⁶

E. Palmer Patterson II, who has done extensive biographical work on Paull, has indicated that Andrew Paull first came to broad provincial and national attention during the hearings of the 1927 Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons appointed to inquire into the claims of the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia.²⁷ While Paull was certainly active in the politics and protest of Indian affairs prior to 1927, it was his appearance before this Special

²⁶ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1946). *Minutes*. No. 9. 427.

²⁷ E. Palmer Patterson II, *Andrew Paull and Canadian Indian Resurgence* (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1963); Patterson II, "Andrew Paull (1892-1959): Finding a voice for the 'New Indian'" *The Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* VI.2 (1976) 63-82; Patterson II, "Andrew Paull and the Early History of British Columbia Indian Organizations" In *One Century Later: Western Canadian reserve Indians since Treaty 7*, Ed. by Ian A.L. Getty and Donald B. Smith (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1977) 43-54.

Joint Committee that garnered him positive feedback in British Columbia and nationally. Although much of what the Allied Indian Tribes of BC asked for during the Committee hearings was ignored, Paull, along with Rev. P.R. Kelly (described by historian Anthony Hall as “a Haida aristocrat and Methodist missionary”),²⁸ was openly praised in the Committee’s *Report*: “The evidence of Messrs. Kelly and Paull was given in idiomatic English, clearly and forcibly expressed, and both the matter of their evidence and the manner of presentation were highly acceptable to your Committee. Due praise should be accorded them, and the Indian members of their organization can be assured of the competent and thorough fashion in which they dealt with the case.”²⁹ In other words, Committee members considered Paull and Kelly to be a credit to their race.

Although Andrew Paull and Peter Kelly appeared together several times, speaking on behalf of British Columbia’s Indians, fighting political battles, they did not see eye-to-eye with regards to how each saw the future of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Kelly, a devout Methodist, envisioned a future where “Indians must be prepared to be assimilated into the white community, eventually disappearing as a separate race.”³⁰ As Alan Morley says in his biography of Kelly, “Andy Paull was a type of Indian contrasting sharply with Peter Kelly, but they worked together well for years, until Paull broke with Kelly in 1947 over fundamental views of the Indians’ future role in white civilization.”³¹ Their ability to work together as long as they did appears to

²⁸ Anthony J. Hall, *The American Empire and the Fourth World* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003) 250. For more on Peter Kelly, see: Alan Morley, *Roar of the Breakers: a biography of Peter Kelly* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967).

²⁹ Canada. Parliament. Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons Appointed to Inquire into the Claims of the Allied Indian Tribes of British Columbia, as set forth in their Petition to Parliament in June 1926, *Report and Evidence* (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1927) v.

³⁰ Morley 102-103.

³¹ Morley 107.

have been rooted partly in each man's strong communication skills. Through their mutual and individual oral performances and written works, Paull and Kelly were effective, if not unlikely, partners. Alone, each was a powerful voice, but working together they were virtually impossible to ignore. Although they were unsuccessful in the 1927 inquiry, that "defeat," as Morley points out, "opened official doors to them that had always been closed before and provided a means of access for the Indians to those who controlled political power in the national Parliament."³²

Paull's very first request as a witness in the 1927 inquiry was to ask that "all the proceedings before this Committee be reported in book form, and that the Indians be supplied with that record."³³ Although he later stated that in British Columbia "at least 90 per cent of the Indians...cannot read nor write,"³⁴ Paull clearly wanted to ensure that all the evidence and issues discussed during the inquiry were available for public consultation by Aboriginal peoples in the future. Furthermore, Paull's request was certainly motivated by a desire to hold the Committee members accountable for their words, that any promises made or broken could be clearly supported on paper. Being well-versed in the literature and politics of Indian affairs in British Columbia, with a request for written proof, Paull was thinking ahead. Further, he knew that many "promises" had been broken, forgotten, or denied by governments of the past when their contents were not clearly written down. And despite his claim that most Aboriginal peoples in BC could not read or write at the time, his request for a book form of the proceedings demonstrated an optimism that this state of illiteracy would be remedied in the years to come. In writing to the Chiefs and members of the Interior Tribes of BC in June, 1947, Paull actively encouraged their participation in the Indian Act process through the printed testimony of his

³² Morley 117.

³³ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1926-27). *Report and Evidence*. 2.

³⁴ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1926-27). *Report and Evidence*. 129.

appearance before the Joint Committee: “I suggest that you send for the printed record of the addresses made by myself and my colleague Mr. Norman Saylor, who is an Iroquois Indian, and a lawyer, before the Indian Act Committee.... Send for these by air mail to, Edmund Cloutier, Kings Printer Ottawa, Ont. They cost five cents each, so that you will see how I spoke on behalf of the Indians of the Interior of British Columbia.”³⁵

And Paull had every reason to believe the education of his people would improve. The improvement of education was one of the single most important issues he stood up for throughout his years of political discussion and protest. Speaking in 1947 at the Special Joint Committee hearings on the Indian Act, Paull talked explicitly about the need to improve Indian education: “The Hon. Mr. Crerar in a conference I had with him asked me if I had any solution to settle these Indian problems and I told him that I had. I said, ‘Hon. Mr. Crerar, I can give you the answer in one word: education.’ Because if the Indian is educated he can fight himself out of his difficulties. He will not feel an inferiority complex. If he has education he would feel that he was equal to anybody. That was the answer I gave to Hon. Mr. Crerar.”³⁶

Because the provision of education was one of the areas where the Federal government was supposed to take responsibility as part of its obligation to Aboriginal peoples, Paull and his contemporaries took great issue with the failure of Indian education. At a June, 1943 meeting of the Society for the Futherance of Indian Arts and Crafts, where Paull was the guest speaker, he

³⁵ Library and Archives Canada, Paull Fonds, MG30 C226, Letter from Paull to the Chiefs and Members of the Interior Tribes of B.C., June 18, 1947. It is unclear if Paull is referring in fact to Norman Lickers, rather than Norman Saylor. Lickers (1913-1987), was an Iroquois from Six Nations, called to the bar in 1938, and is credited as Canada’s first Indian lawyer. Lickers acted as independent counsel at the 1947 hearings on the *Indian Act*. For more on Lickers, see: Constance Backhouse, “Gender and Race in the Construction of ‘Legal Professionalism’: historical perspectives.” Address at a Colloquia organised by the Chief Justice of Ontario’s Advisory Committee on Professionalism, 20 October, 2003 (This paper is published online on the website of the Law Society of Upper Canada. See <http://www.lsuc.on.ca/media/constance_backhouse_gender_and_race.pdf> 2-12).

³⁶ Canada. Parliament. Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons Appointed to Continue and Complete the Examination and Consideration of the Indian Act, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*. No. 18 (Ottawa: Edmund Cloutier, Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1947) 887.

spoke out with regards to Indian education: “Indians of B.C. are seeking the fullest education for their children, but that promise made by the Government of Canada has not been carried out.... At present only 100 of the 4000 Indian pupils of the province are in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. The Indians of B.C. would like to see their children attend technical and normal schools as well as the University of B.C.”³⁷ A year later, at the annual convention of the North American Indian Brotherhood, Paull made headlines when he accused the Federal government of repeatedly breaking promises it had made to the Indians. One of the main promises broken, said Paull, was with regards to education: “In 1927, after years of agitation, the government had agreed to make provisions for higher education for Indian students who showed promise.... The Indians considered this a great achievement and visualized the day when there would be Indian technicians, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and among the women, trained nurses.” Paull continued in noting that since that time Indian interest in education had in fact decreased. The blame, he said, lay in part with the Department of Indian Affairs, which had taken away incentive for Aboriginal parents to send their children to school: “The way it is now, what is the use? My son goes to school and ends up the same as I, as a fisherman, longshoreman, or logger.” Paull strongly asserted that the government, in fact, did not want Aboriginal peoples to become educated.³⁸ Ten years later, upon the announcement by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration of a \$300,000 boost to support higher education for Aboriginal peoples, Paull noted that “We are gradually breaking down racial prejudice against the Indians. Education is one of the important steps in this process.... But there are scores of Canadian Indians who have had to go to the United States to practise as doctors, lawyers, judges and professors because of racial

³⁷ “Future of Race: Indians seek school rights,” *Vancouver Province* (June 12, 1943) 7.

³⁸ Ray Gardner, “‘Beware White Man’ says Indian Orator: ‘Broken promises’ strew record on army service, taxes and education” *Vancouver Sun* (November 16, 1944) 13.

prejudice in Canada.”³⁹

That Indian education in the first half of the twentieth century was, for the most part, a disastrous failure, has been well documented. Not only were few Aboriginal peoples properly educated, many were rarely, if ever, exposed to books in French or English that might have inspired literacy in those languages. At the same time, Aboriginal children were punished for speaking or communicating in their mother tongue, so it was no great exaggeration for Paull to claim that most of the Indians of BC were illiterate in 1927. In many, many instances Aboriginal communities lobbied the Department of Indian Affairs for increased literacy education and libraries, but until well into the 1950s they were largely stonewalled.⁴⁰ Evidence suggests that the Department of Indian Affairs may have feared the consequences of Aboriginal peoples becoming fully literate in the languages of Euro-Canadians. The primary intention of the Indian schools, funded and administered by the Federal government and missionaries, was to produce productive, assimilated Aboriginal workers to support the Canadian economy, not young Aboriginal intellectuals to challenge the dominant Euro-Canadian society. Thus, little thought, effort, or funding was put into literacy programmes or school or public libraries in Aboriginal communities.⁴¹ Even worse, literacy education and access to books were often willingly withheld by school and government officials.

Paull and his Aboriginal counterparts encountered a situation similar to this during the 1927 Special Joint Committee hearings. In the midst of Arthur O’Meara’s testimony before the Committee, the Honourable H.H. Stevens (a prominent federal politician) was particularly

³⁹ Stanley Burke, “Andy Paull Lauds Indian Education” *Vancouver Sun* (October 28, 1953) 14.

⁴⁰ See: Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, *Paper Talk: a history of libraries, print culture and Aboriginal peoples in Canada before 1960* (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005) passim.

⁴¹ Edwards, *Paper Talk*, passim.

vehement, if not outwardly hostile, towards the points and evidence given. O'Meara was a lawyer and clergyman prominent in BC Indian activism at the time. He co-founded the Conference of Friends of the Indians of British Columbia in 1910, and eventually acted as legal counsel for the Allied Tribes of BC.⁴² While government officials and the legal community generally treated O'Meara as an irksome troublemaker throughout the proceedings, the behaviour of H.H. Stevens was particularly disgusting.⁴³ E. Brian Titley says with regards to H.H. Stevens, a Conservative M.P. from Vancouver, that,

his treatment of the representatives of the Allied Tribes throughout the hearings virtually amounted to harassment. British by birth and an ardent Methodist, prohibitionist, imperialist, and member of the Orange Order, he shared all the proverbial prejudices associated with such a background. In his determination to keep his province British, he was an unrelenting foe of oriental immigration and native rights. As the self-proclaimed expert on British Columbia, he tended to dominate the proceedings with his hostile cross-examination of the Indians and their lawyers and with his frequent outbursts of indignation. He was an unfortunate choice for the committee, and his presence banished any semblance of objectivity that the inquiry might otherwise have displayed.⁴⁴

O'Meara, as counsel for the Allied Tribes, was treated with remarkable discourtesy. While attempting to present a historical argument for Aboriginal title and citing legal precedents, he was continually interrupted. "Piffle," "rubbish," "rot," "nonsense," and other equally rude

⁴² For more on O'Meara's influence and role in BC Indian activism of the day, see: Robert Exell, "History of Indian Land Claims in BC" *The Advocate* 48.6 (1990) 866-880; Hamar Foster, "We Are Not O'Meara's Children: law, lawyers, and the first campaign for Aboriginal title in British Columbia, 1908-28" In *Let Right Be Done: Aboriginal title, the Calder case, and the future of Indigenous rights*. Ed. by Hamar Foster, Heather Raven, and Jeremy Webber (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007) 61-84; Mary Haig-Brown, "Arthur Eugene O'Meara: servant, advocate, seeker of justice," In *With Good Intentions: Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal relations in colonial Canada*. Ed. by Celia Haig-Brown and David A. Nock (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006) 258-296; and E. Palmer Patterson II, "Arthur E. O'Meara, Friend of the Indians" *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 58.3 (1967) 90-99.

⁴³ See: Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: the Indian land question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990) 87-88.

⁴⁴ E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986) 155.

remarks punctuated his presentation.⁴⁵

The behaviour of H.H. Stevens bordered on contempt when O'Meara raised the issue of a particular book. In attempting to make a point about the relevance of section 109 of the British North America Act in the Indians' claim, O'Meara was badgered by Stevens with regards to the accuracy of the quoted statements presented.⁴⁶ When asked to give the name of the volume and page where one particular statement was taken from, O'Meara replied, "My quotation has been taken from the actual historical record that is in the Parliamentary library."⁴⁷ Stevens, for the umpteenth time cried foul, "No. I cannot help but object, Mr. O'Meara, for what is a common practice of yours of taking a simple sentence and erecting upon it a claim for your clients, a claim which is so serious that it will affect every particle of land in British Columbia if your claim is sustained, and which is not sustained by the very document from which you presume to quote."⁴⁸ Stevens, for one, was clearly under the impression that the whole idea of the claim was O'Meara's in the first place (and not the Indians'), and that enfranchisement was the only appropriate path for Aboriginal peoples. Flustered by Stevens' attacks, O'Meara could not at that very moment produce the precise text from which he was quoting. Having previously made mention of the book's presence in the Parliamentary library, O'Meara was ordered to run off and retrieve it to support his claims.

In the meantime, Andrew Paull interjected:

⁴⁵ Titley 155.

⁴⁶ The quotations under question are, in fact, statements made by Lord Lytton, when he was the British Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1858. Paull was apparently well aware of Lytton's body of writing (his non-fiction and fiction), as he later quoted him during the Special Joint Committee hearings on the Indian Act in 1946. See: Canada. Parliament. SJC (1926-27). *Report and Evidence*. 219-231; Canada. Parliament. SJC (1946). *Minutes*. No. 9. 426.

⁴⁷ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1926-27). *Report and Evidence*. 222.

⁴⁸ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1926-27). *Report and Evidence*. 223.

May I be allowed to interrupt for a moment? There is a book that has been published many years ago, which contains all the dispatches in colonial days with the Imperial Government. All those dispatches are contained in that book and we have been trying all the time since I have been associated with this matter to get a copy of it. I have been to the Department, and Dr. Scott could not let me have it. I have been to the Library, and they have not got it there. I know that Commissioner Ditchburn has that book; and I would ask to have access to it.⁴⁹

After continued discussion about how Mr. O'Meara had gained access to the book in the first place, Mr. Murphy, another member of the Committee, asked if a copy of the book was in the room, at which point Duncan Campbell Scott was obliged to answer, "I have no copy of this book, but this one for myself. I have no objection to allowing them to look at this book. I thought Mr. O'Meara was referring to something original from the Imperial Government."

In the meantime, O'Meara had returned from his jaunt to the Parliamentary library without success, because as mentioned by Paull, the library's copy was in the hands of Mr. Ditchburn, who had been sitting quietly in the room throughout all of this discussion. Ditchburn then interjected, "I do not want that book to be put in and impounded. It is my personal copy and I do not know where to get another copy of it."⁵⁰ Stevens, aware that the outright contempt of the Committee was about to be exposed, then jumped in, asking Ditchburn to do what he had previously prevented O'Meara from doing, "Read the section into the record, then you will have it." The Committee Chairman, who could have had either Ditchburn or Scott's copy of the book put into evidence, instead ordered O'Meara to read the relevant section, "We want you to read what you are referring to now, Mr. O'Meara, into the record, because the book from which you are taking it belongs to the Indian Department, and they have only one copy of it, and they

⁴⁹ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1926-27). *Report and Evidence*. 225-226.

⁵⁰ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1926-27). *Report and Evidence*. 226.

cannot let it go.” O’Meara then read the passage in question, which was of course exactly as he had read from his notes only moments before.⁵¹ Thus, O’Meara, Paull, and representatives of the Allied Tribes were once again denied access to the documents that were important to their case. As Paul Tennant points out in his description of the book ordeal, “White politicians and officials, in contrast, including Stevens, Scott, and Ditchburn, could routinely possess copies [of the book in question] and found it useful to carry with them for ready research.”⁵²

The book in question, which Paull and representatives of the Allied Indian Tribes were denied access to, was, *Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question*, published by the Province of British Columbia in 1875. This volume is a compilation of documents providing an authoritative record of early Indian land claims in BC. Tennant notes that *Papers* was, in fact, not published on the initiative of the BC government, but compiled by members of the opposition as part of a committee to examine all papers relating to the Indian land question in BC.⁵³ The volume, however, did not have a wide distribution and was not readily available to the public until 1987, when it was reprinted by the Provincial Archives.⁵⁴

This instance of willingly withholding information from members of the Allied Tribes was, sadly, not an isolated one. Internal government documents relating to Indian land claims in British Columbia, during Paull’s years of activity, often spoke of the benefits of withholding information from the Indians.⁵⁵ The thought of allowing well-educated, well-spoken, and highly

⁵¹ Canada. Parliament. SJC (1926-27). *Report and Evidence*. 226.

⁵² Tennant, 108.

⁵³ Tennant, 47-49.

⁵⁴ British Columbia, *Papers Connected with the Indian Land Question, 1850-1875* (1875; Victoria: Queen's Printer 1987).

⁵⁵ See: Edwin May, *The Nishga Land Claim, 1873-1973* (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University 1979), 110.

literate – thus dangerous – Indians like Andrew Paull access to documents like *Papers*, must have legitimately frightened government officials like Duncan Campbell Scott. After all, Euro-Canadian government legislators (Scott especially) saw it as their duty to “civilise” and assimilate the Indians so that the Department of Indian Affairs would one day cease to exist (because Indians would cease to exist), and allowing Aboriginal peoples access to treaty literature and documents relating to early governmental relationships with Indians would act in direct opposition to these plans.

Paull complained of a similar situation of intentionally withheld information in 1943. In writing the band representative from Shuswap in relation to lands affected by the Douglas Treaties (1850-1854) (undertaken by James Douglas, chief factor of Fort Victoria and governor of the colony, on behalf of the Hudson’s Bay Company), Paull observed “we cannot get the James Douglas survey that you wanted years ago. Lots of other Indians wanted it, but it seems the government was so ashamed, that they destroyed all the James Dougla [sic] survey maps, and in every case where an Indian had it, his house burnt, in the days gone by, so now we cannot find any record of it.”⁵⁶ The intentional censorship and withholding of information from Aboriginal peoples like Paull by Federal government representatives was an act of desperation on behalf of these representatives, an act meant to maintain and protect the position of control in the government-Indian relationship.

One of Paull’s biographers, E. Palmer Patterson II, notes that in addition to his work as a political protester and Indian activist, Paull was also heavily involved with organising sporting activities for young Aboriginal people in British Columbia. His interest in sport continued throughout his life and, as Patterson notes, it also “contributed to his public image and his

⁵⁶ Paull Fonds, Letter from Paull to Mr. Ben Alexander, March 11, 1943.

relations with the news media.”⁵⁷ Paull received as much attention, if not more, for his sporting interests and organising, as he did for his role as a statesman. He was a household sporting name in 1930s Vancouver. Hardly a week would go by throughout the lacrosse seasons in the 1930s that Paull was not quoted or mentioned in the Sport pages of the *Vancouver Province*. The Squamish Braves were a popular and often winning team in the mid-1930s, and Andy Paull, sometimes coined “Chief Many-Words” or “Chiefie,” was a darling of the Vancouver sport writers, portrayed as wily, unpredictable, tricky, and always entertaining:

So Chief Many-Words, who was gifted with more than ordinary Indian education, who serves as an interpreter of justice for his fellow men, a sort of intermediary between red and white; organized his humbled braves into teams and sent them against the very race which had bound them with shackles of civilized stuffiness. Not with animosity, not with hostility did he send his brothers but more as a link of friendship and an attempt to prove the capable being of his men.⁵⁸

Paull’s sporting and public image was further enhanced by his writing of a column in the sport pages of the *Vancouver Province* entitled “Andy Paull in Boxla,” or “Boxla Banter by Andy Paull” in the early 1940s (“boxla” is short for “box lacrosse”).

Another of Paull’s biographers, Herbert Francis Dunlop, an Oblate priest, characterised this period of Paull’s life (during the 1930s when he was mainly involved in sporting activities) as “no place for a man of his talents.”⁵⁹ But on the contrary, while Paull may not have been directly politically active during the 1930’s, focussing the bulk of his energies on coaching and managing, lacrosse, baseball, music, and sports writing, he was nonetheless performing a necessary and important service for the Squamish. Paull’s coaching efforts were well-known by

⁵⁷ Patterson II, “Andrew Paull” *WCJA* VI.2 (1976) 70.

⁵⁸ Hal Straight, “Wherein We Discuss History of Paull: which makes his oust from lacrosse seem unfair,” *Vancouver Province* (February 10, 1937) ? [Clipping supplied by the Sun-Province Infoline].

⁵⁹ Dunlop, 205.

Vancouver sports writers and his activities were widely reported in the papers. Paull's success as a sporting coach and manager was also evidence of his great command and ability to effectively organise. His teams' successes did a great service to the Squamish and B.C.'s Aboriginal people in general because they inspired positive images of Indians in the eyes of the public at large. His working association with the *Province* in particular, also meant that he was a regular source of news in the future, something he might not otherwise have achieved. And as his one-time journalist colleague, Bill Dunford, often remarked in his "Talk of the Town" columns throughout the 1950s, Paull was affectionately, if not somewhat sarcastically, known as "Chiefie" during his days as a fellow writer in the *Province's* Sport Department.⁶⁰

As a player, manager, and promoter of baseball, lacrosse, boxing, and canoe-racing, Paull was warmly portrayed by B.C. and national media as a colourful and likeable character, who was always joking or playing a prank. In December, 1945, the *Vancouver News-Herald* described him as a man no less storied than Tecumseh: "The Indian about whom the most fabulous tales are told among the redskin bands of Canada today is not Tecumseh, or even Pontiac. He is the wise-cracking, politically canny, Squamish tribesman named Andy Paull."⁶¹ Paull even made the papers in eastern Canada when he visited Toronto or Ottawa, and not merely for political reasons. In the *Globe and Mail* sportswriter Jim Coleman's column, he was often cited. For example, in October 1943, Coleman said of Paull:

Toronto's most distinguished sporting visitor of the week was Chief Andrew X. Paull, business agent for the Squamish tribe of Indians on the Pacific Coast, who paused here briefly Wednesday night on his way to Ottawa where he plans to burn down the Federal Parliament Buildings. By now, Chief Paull and 100 other Indian braves, fully equipped with feathered headdresses and war paint, are encamped in the national capital. They are ki-yi-ing that Canada's Indians

⁶⁰ See, for example: Bill Dunford, "Talk of the Town" *Vancouver Province* (January 22, 1954) 5.

⁶¹ "People Tell Me," *Vancouver News-Herald* (December 31, 1945) 4.

are conscripted arbitrarily for military service, despite the fact the Indians aren't permitted to vote. Chief Paull says that unless the Federal Government makes some compromise, the Indians will have no alternative but to raze the capital and scalp all Cabinet Ministers and Senators under the age of 87.

The Chief is noted chiefly in the sporting world for his intimate connection with lacrosse. For many years he was manager of the Squamish Indian Lacrosse Club in Vancouver.⁶²

Certainly not the kind of description one might expect to read in the sport pages of today's newspapers, Coleman's colourful description of Paull's non-sports related activities nevertheless serve to highlight the broad appeal of the statesman/sportsman. Coleman's short piece also highlights the humour that was one of Paull's trademarks. As Patterson notes, "Paull's own sense of humour and enjoyment of sports, and his contacts with the newspapers produced a generally happy relationship. He was sensitive to social conventions touching upon Indian-white relations and sometimes used humour as a way of commenting on the Indian condition in Canada."⁶³ Dunlop notes that Paull was "loved" by the feature writers in the big Vancouver dailies: "When things were dull on the sports horizon Andy often furnished good copy for a grateful scribe. Nearly every writer on the Sun or Province sooner or later took a bearing on Andy's past...and offered it as fare for his reading public."⁶⁴

And Paull's sporting activities were not without controversy and a tinge of politics. Due much to Paull's popularity and influence with Indians nation-wide, he regularly recruited Aboriginal players from the lacrosse-rich and talented territory of Six Nations in Ontario to play for the Squamish Braves. Due no doubt to the success of the Squamish Braves, other BC lacrosse teams protested Paull's out-of-province recruiting to the Intercity Lacrosse Commission

⁶² "By Jim Coleman," *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto] (October 22, 1943) 16. The middle initial, "X." mentioned here in relation to Paull, presumably stood for Xavier, a Jesuit-inspired name.

⁶³ Patterson II, "Andrew Paull" *WCJA* VI.2 (1976) 70.

⁶⁴ Dunlop, 189. See also: Dunlop, 191, 205.

in 1937. The eligibility of two of Paull's recruits, "Beef" Smith and John Squires, both from Six Nations, was disputed because the two men were reported to have migrated back to Brantford during the course of the season. Despite protest, Paull continued to play Smith and Squires in a losing attempt to get into the 1937 playoffs.⁶⁵ And at the opening of the 1938 season, Paull's Braves sported no fewer than ten players from the east, drawing further protest and criticism (including unrest from within the ranks of the team itself). Sporting politics aside, Paull regularly combined trips east with his (often winning) lacrosse team to visit Ottawa on political business. As Paull's own notes indicate in early 1933, "I was in Ottawa, last October, I went with our lacrosse team as manager, they returned from Winnipeg but I and another Squamish man Gus Band kept on going to Ottawa, so I am still in the fight...."⁶⁶

Paull used the written word as a venue for promoting his political causes and to reach out to the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities of British Columbia. In addition to his writing in the sport pages of the *Vancouver Province*, through which he was read by a largely Euro-Canadian audience, Paull was also the editor and publisher of two Aboriginal periodicals in British Columbia, the *Thunderbird* and the *Totem Speaks*. The *Thunderbird* ran from June 1949, to approximately 1955, while the *Totem Speaks* began in July 1953 and continued until 1957, when Paull suffered a heart attack.⁶⁷ Following the cessation of the *Totem Speaks*, Paull continued until his death to write for other papers and maintained his position at the *Vancouver*

⁶⁵ See: "'Beef' on Boxla Carpet Tonight," *Vancouver Province* (August 16, 1937) 8; Don Tyerman, "Burrards Protest Indians' Victory: Squires and 'Beef' under fire again," *Vancouver Province* (August 18, 1937) 19; Tyerman, "Commission Likely to Step in as Redskin 'War' Continues," *Vancouver Province* (May 5, 1938) 26; Tyerman, "All Ten Easterners Set to Perform With Paull," *Vancouver Province* (May 6, 1938) 16.

⁶⁶ Paull Fonds, Letter from Paull to Mr. Ben Alexander, February 1, 1933.

⁶⁷ Surviving copies of *The Thunderbird* can be found in the Rare Books and Special Collections division of the University of British Columbia Library, the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, and the Department of Indian Affairs Library. Copies of the *Totem Speaks* are held at the Library and Archives Canada, and the Glenbow Museum. See: James P. Danky, ed., *Native American Periodicals and Newspapers 1828-1982: bibliography, publishing record, and holdings*. Compiled by Maureen E. Hady (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984) 414.

Province as an occasional columnist.

In the first issue of the *Thunderbird*, Paull explicitly stated his goals in providing “A compilation of news and commentary of special interest to North American Indians and their many friends”:

The *Thunderbird* makes its bow today as a result of persistent requests by native Indians throughout Canada, that I publish a paper that would print news of interest regarding the many activities in the diversified lives of the Indians, and which would also publish legislation by the federal and provincial governments and the new policies formulated by the law makers. I had repeatedly refused former offers to use my name on such a newspaper, unless I was in control of the editorial department [sic] and formulate the policies to be pursued. These important contingencies are now an actuality and *The Thunderbird* will lay aside the tomahawk, and use the white men’s pen fearlessly in the interest of the North American Indians.⁶⁸

The *Thunderbird* was well written, including articles of national and international interest to Aboriginal peoples, just as Paull promised. It also included a broad range of advertising sponsorship, a crucial financial resource that predecessors to the *Thunderbird* were never able to adequately tap. Articles from the *Thunderbird* were regularly reprinted in the large Vancouver dailies, further proof of Paull’s wide-ranging influence and media connections. Before his death in 1959, Paull was given the distinction of honorary membership in the Newspaper Writers’ Old Timer’s Club.⁶⁹

In July, 1953, when the first issues of the *Totem Speaks* rolled off the presses, Paull was once again in the big Vancouver newspapers. The *Vancouver Sun* and *Vancouver Province* ran stories on Paull’s new venture as managing editor, describing the *Totem Speaks* as fulfilling Paull’s “lifelong ambition to run his own publication about Indian affairs.” The *Sun* article continued, noting that 3,000 copies of the first issue were printed and were “on their way to

⁶⁸ Andy Paull, “Editorial” *The Thunderbird* (June 1, 1949) 1.

⁶⁹ Dunlop 179.

contacts throughout Canada and the U.S.” Paull is described glowingly as “the only full-blooded Canadian Indian editing a publication in the interests of the native Indians.”⁷⁰ The *Totem Speaks* was a monthly publication, containing “news, items and commentaries of interest to North American Indians and their friends.”⁷¹ Remarkably, Paull appears to have made the *Totem Speaks* available to readers free of charge; “I take pride in what I have so far been able to accomplish with the help and financial assistance of many public-spirited Canadians.”⁷² Paull’s interest in founding the *Totem Speaks* was motivated mainly by his desire to be Managing Editor of his own publication. With the *Totem Speaks* he had total editorial control, where with *The Thunderbird* he was merely an editor who seemingly had to reach compromises with other editors and financiers of the publication; “For many years it has been my ambition to be the Managing Editor of my own publication. I was formerly the editor of THE THUNDERBIRD, and as such was the only full blooded Canadian Indian editing a publication in the interests of the native Indians. Now, due to the help of influential friends, I am the Managing Editor of THE TOTEM SPEAKS....”⁷³

Less than two months after the first issue hit the streets, both the *Sun* and *Province* again ran stories about Paull’s *Totem Speaks*, noting that a small controversy had arisen as a result of an article Paull wrote and published in the first issue. In the July 1953 issue, Paull wrote an article claiming that Chief Capilano (Ki-ap-a-la-no) led forty war canoes out to meet Captain

⁷⁰ “Indian Chief Deep in Printers’ Ink” *Vancouver Sun* (July 30, 1953) 21.

⁷¹ “Chief Takes Over as Boss: Andy helps the Totem Speak,” *Vancouver Province* (July 30, 1953) 13.

⁷² “Chief Takes Over as Boss,” *Vancouver Province* (July 30, 1953) 13.

⁷³ Andy Paull, “An Announcement,” *The Totem Speaks* (July, 1953) 1.

Vancouver in Burrard Inlet in June 1792. But Vancouver City Archivist, Maj. J.S. Matthews,⁷⁴ took issue with Paull's version of history, claiming instead that it was impossible that Capilano met Vancouver in 1792 because Capilano "wasn't born until about eight years after Vancouver sailed in to the harbour." Matthews, in a letter to the *Totem Speaks*, called Paull's story "tommyrot," and said that "there is not a word of truth in it." Paull responded in the next issue of the *Totem Speaks*, claiming that he stood by his story because "he knows the facts because he was among a chosen few selected to learn local Indian history for the purpose of handing it down to the next generation as his forefathers did before him."⁷⁵ As the *Province* outlined in more sarcastic detail,

Andy, a descendant of a Squamish chief..., chosen as a child by the leaders to be trained and educated for such a job, has spent a lifetime fighting white lawyers, lacrosse commissioners and baseball umpires.... He goes on to tell how he was trained to be the recipient of tribal history, and how, the way he heard it, Chief Capilano saw the white men sailing into the harbour, called his warriors together and said: "You know this is the seventh generation and during every seventh generation something very good or very bad always happens. We must treat these new arrivals with kindness so that they may not bring us evil."⁷⁶

Matthews claimed to have written evidence from two of Capilano's grandchildren to the contrary, but even the *Province* noted that, as Paull had pointed out, "the remains of Chief Capilano and his daughter...are marked by a monument that says, in part...'Chief George Capilano who met Captain Cook in A.D. 1782 and was the first to meet, welcome and escort

⁷⁴ Matthews was an author concerned with Aboriginal issues in his own right. See: J.S. Matthews, *Conversations with Khahtsahlano 1932-1954: conversations with August Jack Khahtsahlano, born at Snauq, False Creek Indian Reserve, circa 1877, son of Khaytulk and grandson of Chief Khahtsahlanogh* (Vancouver: Vancouver City Archives, 1955).

⁷⁵ "Archivist, Indian Split: 2 Historians paddle their own can-who's" *Vancouver Sun* (September 26, 1953) 5.

⁷⁶ Bill Dunford, "Talk of the Town" *Vancouver Province* (September 25, 1953) 5.

Captain Vancouver into Burrard Inlet on the 14th of June A.D. 1792.”⁷⁷ And Paull, as the managing editor of the *Totem Speaks*, would have the last word, of course, a pleasure he undoubtedly often sought in his political activities: “With all due deference to Major Matthews, for who [sic] I have the greatest respect, I must unequivocally contradict him and state my article is historically correct.”⁷⁸

Two years later, in 1955, following the completion of an artificial body of water in the Capilano River Canyon, Paull wrote to the *Province* arguing that this new water body should be named in honour of Chief George Capilano, “who met and escorted Captain George Vancouver into Burrard Inlet..., because of his actions and his leadership made a great contribution, not only to Vancouver but to the British Commonwealth.” Paull went on to note that it was Chief Capilano who gave Stanley Park to the British, and it was his leadership which led to peace between the warring coastal tribes. Further, “Chief Capilano did all this and much more for the British without payment for his work.... The above was told to the writer by the chief’s daughter...and many of the Indians now gone to their eternal rest, who knew the history of the Indians better than your Cheechako historians.”⁷⁹ (Note: “Cheechako” is Chinook Jargon, meaning “a newcomer or tenderfoot,” or alternatively, “acts like a white guy.”)

Paull saw it as his duty to educate Euro-Canadians about the historical and contemporary reality of British Columbia’s and Canada’s Aboriginal peoples. Through political performance, letter writing, and writing and editing his own newspapers, Paull had some success in reaching the masses. He was something of a celebrity in Vancouver, his image and words commonly in

⁷⁷ Dunford, “Talk of the Town” *Vancouver Province* (September 25, 1953) 5.

⁷⁸ Andy Paull, “Vancouver City Archivist Errs!” *The Totem Speaks* (September, 1953) 1.

⁷⁹ “Lake Memorial for Noted Chief?” [Letter to the Editor, signed by Andy Paull] *Vancouver Province* (February 21, 1955) 7.

the pages of the major daily newspapers – so much so that some people worried he was giving the impression that the Squamish were understood as the only “Indians of B.C.” A letter to the editor in the *Province* in 1955 reflects this concern: “Sir: Without any desire to disparage Chief Andy Paull...it should be said that his tribe (the Salish) is only one of many tribes in B.C.... It is a pity that the people of B.C. should get the idea that Andy’s tribe in southern B.C. constitutes generically ‘the Indians of B.C.’”⁸⁰ Perhaps more a complaint against the big Vancouver dailies, for not giving more attention to other Aboriginal spokespersons and groups in B.C., more than an outburst against Paull directly, this letter writer also paid Paull a great compliment, noting “Andy is right about the Cheechako historians who know nothing of the Indians of B.C.” This was a clear reference to Paull’s many battles, politically and in the papers, to have Aboriginal history, ideas, and rights recognised. Furthermore, this response is a clear indication of Paull’s successes as a spokesman. He was rarely ignored and never failed to capture the attentions of his desired audience.⁸¹

Andrew Paull was known amongst his people as “The Quoitchequoi,” or snake-slayer, a name he was given as a young boy by the chiefs of his community. But as Herbert Francis Dunlop, Paull’s friend and biographer, observes, Paull’s weapon was not the arrows of the legendary figure whose name he bore. His weapon of choice was the written word:

Andy’s weapon was the battered old typewriter. He hunched over it like a dracula [sic], especially in later years when his eye-sight was failing him. He hunched over it like a dracula [sic] and attacked it with two fingers. He hammered out the letters of the alphabet like a stream of machine gun bullets. He pounded his protests onto each page and weighted them down with ponderous verbiage. And when he had finished he would rip the page out of the typewriter as though he were actually tearing the perfidious heart from the

⁸⁰ “B.C.’s Indians” [Letter to the Editor, signed ‘Old Timer’] *Vancouver Province* (March 2, 1955) 6.

⁸¹ “B.C.’s Indians” *Vancouver Province* (March 2, 1955) 6.

bosom of some mischievous official hiding behind the barriers of red tape.⁸²

Both the *Thunderbird* and the *Totem Speaks* were venues for Andrew Paull to flail at the government, discuss court cases, and inform the Aboriginal population of new developments in Indian policy. Indeed, the *Totem* did speak through Paull's journalistic efforts, but as Dunlop notes, "He spelled out his bitterness in...'*The Totem Speaks*.' Mostly the totem spoke acidly. Mostly it was a paper of recrimination and complaint."⁸³

Meanwhile, Paull's regular appearances in the sport pages of the Vancouver dailies during the 1930s, and his own sport writing, served to highlight his abilities in appealing to the everyday person who was not necessarily concerned with Indian land claims or treaty rights. Paull's sporting activities served to showcase him as a man of action and passion, regardless of the cause he was fighting for – and much of his protest was expressed through writing and publishing. If not in book form, Paull was a prolific writer of letters, pamphlets, and newspaper columns, through which he (often successfully) sought to reach out to the Euro-Canadian governments and public at large and to influence positive change on behalf of the Squamish people and First Nations throughout Canada. And Paull did this without financial compensation for his writing, as was consistently highlighted in his regular pleas for financial support. As Paull wrote to Ben Alexander, band leader of the Nesconlith Reserve, Shuswap, B.C, in October, 1946, "I have so much writing to do, and some travelling, and I would really appreciate financial assistance at this time from my friends in your district."⁸⁴ A talented and charismatic individual, a lesser person might have used these skills to attain personal wealth, but Paull worked tirelessly and often pennilessly to serve his people his entire life.

⁸² Dunlop 174.

⁸³ Dunlop 239.

⁸⁴ Paull Fonds, Letter from Paull to Mr. Ben Alexander, October 3, 1946.

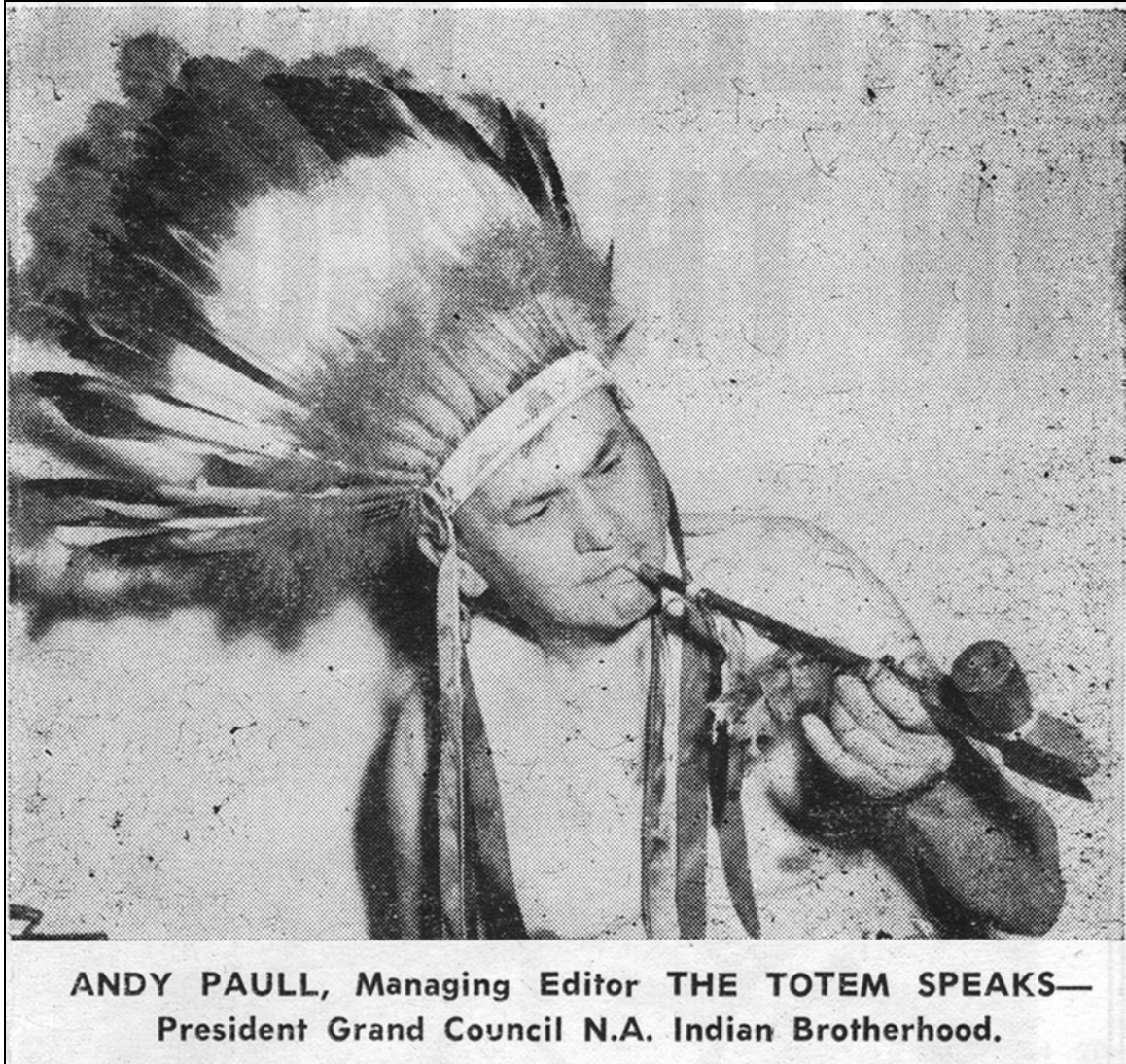


Figure 6-1. Andrew Paull in Indian costume, featured in the July, 1953 edition of *The Totem Speaks* (Library and Archives Canada, AMICUS No. 19939898).

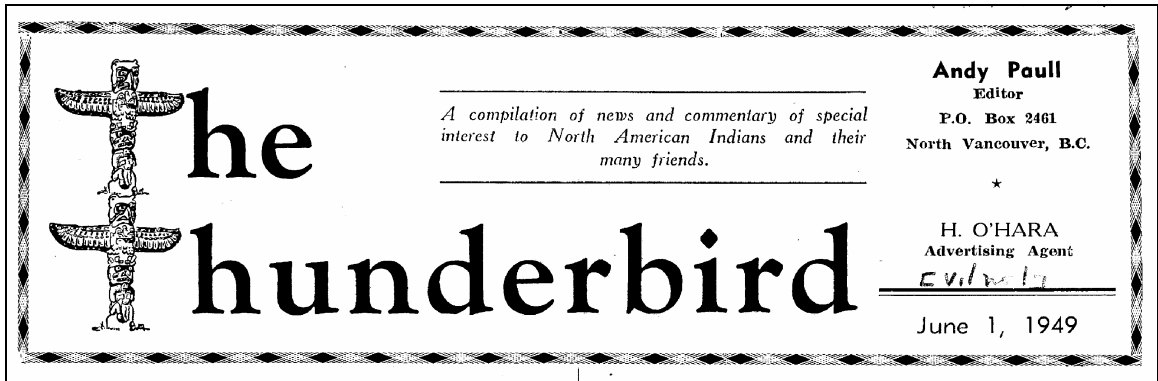


Figure 6-2. Masthead of *The Thunderbird*, compiled and edited by Andrew Paull (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Library, Periodicals).

CHAPTER SEVEN

“Not the Only Pebble on the Beach”: Bernice Winslow Loft (Dawendine) vs. Ethel Brant Monture

Most of the literature of America is a saga of the so-called bravery of the Europeans in subduing the savages...who fought bitterly only to hold their homes for their families, and to save the land of their forefathers for a heritage for their children’s children. To this day this is a barrier to greater understanding.¹

Growing up on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario as a young girl, Bernice Loft (Dawendine), believed it was more important to listen than it was to write.² Born to a Cayuga mother, De-yohnt-ji-jo-kwa-tah, and a Mohawk father, William De-wau-se-ra-keh Loft in 1902, Dawendine was taught by her school teacher mother to read and write in English before she started school at the Mohawk Institute, near Brantford. And from her parents she also learned the dialects of the original Iroquois League of Five Nations – the Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, and Mohawk. Through her parents and grandparents, Dawendine had a living link to a celebrated past, and each provided a role model and precedent for her later career as an orator and writer. On the occasion of William Loft’s eightieth birthday in 1938, the *Niagara Falls Evening News* reported that “Chief Loft and his daughter...are widely in demand as Indian historians, narrators of quaint lore, translators and craftsmen. Chief Loft...has passed both his artistry and historical knowledge to his daughter, Mrs. Winslow, who has long been his right hand and helper.”³

¹ Ethel Brant Monture, “The Indian Canadian and His Future,” Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Talks and Public Affairs. Script held as part of: Woodland Cultural Centre Library, Ethel Brant Monture Materials, File 55, no date.

² Bernice Loft Winslow, interviewed by Donald B. Smith, 9 January 1993, Whitman, Massachusetts. Special thanks to Professor Smith for providing me with a video tape of this interview.

³ “Eighty Years or More: Chief Sah-re-ho-wah-ne” *The Niagara Falls Evening News*. 2 April 1938. See also: Robert Stacey, et. al. “Introduction.” *Iroquois Fires: the Six Nations lyrics and lore of Dawendine (Bernice Loft Winslow)* (Ottawa: Penumbra Press, 1995).

Preceding her as an author and orator, was her celebrated uncle, Frederick O. Loft (1861-1934), founder of the League of Indians, Canada's first pan-Indian organization, founded in 1918. Frederick Loft was a newspaper writer and an authority on the history and traditions of the Six Nations, as well as a political campaigner.⁴ His influence, along with the success and popularity of Pauline Johnson, certainly influenced and encouraged Dawendine in her writing and oratory performance. Her early poetry reflects the style and subject matter of Johnson, and as a fitting gesture towards the power of literacy and print with regards to Iroquois youth, Loft Winslow donated one-half of her 1938 speaking honorarium to the Pauline Johnson Memorial Library Fund to establish a library on the Six Nations Reserve. When the Six Nations Public Library finally opened in June 1969, Loft Winslow cut the ceremonial ribbon. She saw her role as a writer and performer as a necessary one in an effort to educate not only non-Aboriginal Canadians about Iroquois ways, but also her own people, particularly the young. Performing and speaking regularly as a young woman, reciting her own poetry, as well as that of Johnson, Dawendine stopped making public performances after the birth of her daughter in October, 1938. Often dressing in "Indian costume," in a similar fashion as Pauline Johnson and her contemporary Charles Cooke, much of Dawendine's encouragement as a writer of original poems and stories came from Paul Wallace – the same man who had offered considerable encouragement to Edward Ahenakew. As part of his professional association with the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, the Canadian-born Wallace actively sought written texts from Aboriginal writers, who he believed could offer authentic first-hand accounts of traditional Aboriginal life and beliefs. Loft Winslow's active correspondence with Wallace offers insight

⁴ Stacey et. al. 15-16. See also: Peter Kulchyski, "A Considerable Unrest: F.O. Loft and the League of Indians" *Native Studies Review* 4.1-2 (1988) 95-113; and E. Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986) 102-109.

into her aspiring career as a writer.

Throughout the 1930s Dawendine was extremely busy as a public speaker and recitalist throughout Ontario, Quebec and New York State, speaking to children, women's groups, university audiences, and professional organizations, such as teachers. Much of the time she dressed up in "Indian" costume, mimicking the performances of Pauline Johnson. Although such activity and dress brought her considerable awareness and a steady stream of bookings, Loft was not always comfortable with how she was presented and viewed. In her extensive correspondence with life-long friend, Celia B. File, Loft hints at her occasional displeasure: "I'm to appear in Indian dress + speak for fifteen minutes. I'm the monkey. I'm so lazy – and feel rebellious – as my dignity is awe-inspiring..."⁵ Here Loft's words echo the feelings of Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) one hundred years earlier. On his third tour of Britain in 1845, Jones grew weary of begging for monies in his efforts to fundraise for Indian schools in Canada. At one point, in a letter to his wife, Jones referred to his "odious Indian costume,"⁶ mirroring his feelings that the British were only interested in him as an exotic curiosity, and not as the civilised Christian Indian he had become.

Worse, Dawendine felt that her performances sometimes drew criticism from her own people, leaving her feeling ostracised and alienated. Such criticisms left her hurt and frustrated with her own people. With her strong upbringing in the languages and history of the Iroquois, being criticised and alienated for her efforts to educate newcomer populations in Canada, as well as many of her own people, sometimes left Dawendine clearly bitter. Nonetheless, the positive reassurance she received from some of her audience members and friends, like Celia File, kept

⁵ Lennox and Addington Museum and Archives, Celia B. File Papers, Box 5, File 28. Bernice Loft to Celia B. File, 23 January 1936.

⁶ Quoted in Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: the Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) 204.

her motivated:

Do not think...that I am altogether unhappy. I still believe in some Indians, and many *still* need my help. Sometimes it is really a nuisance.... Perhaps I believed too blindly, and needed to know where true friends were. And perhaps the malicious comment of one woman hurt “that I was selling my race.... The only thing helped was the saying of some of my people, to keep on. That those people some day would find out how erroneous they were. And letters have arrived even this week from various places I’d spoken, always saying that all their life they’d remember the picture I’d given them of the Indian.... It is a curious world.... Because first and fore most when I go to speak – my Indian blood stands out and is proclaimed. I am then of necessity a little bit aloof from your people [non-Aboriginal Canadians]. Now it is almost the same with my people. Something told me that when I first started out.... I have accepted that now I’ll wear the rue – with a difference. The last write-up sent me from St. Catharines spoke of me as “the lovely cultured, soft-voiced Indian girl” – I’ll try to keep that, to merit that. Surely even that is something for our race, something accomplished.⁷

A sense of loneliness, and standing apart, often characterised Loft’s feelings with regards to her active touring and speaking schedule. Her bitterness towards her audiences, whom she sometimes labelled as “dumb” or simply too easy to please, extended also to some of her competitors, so-to-speak.

Ethel Brant Monture, who toured and spoke publicly at the same time as Loft, and who was also a writer, on at least one occasion shared a stage with Dawendine. While Monture did not usually dress up as an “Indian” in her public performances, she always emphasised her familial descent from Joseph Brant. Her credentials as an expert on Iroquois history were always rooted in her genealogical descent and at her public performances she was billed as a Brant descendant.⁸ In June, 1937, both Loft and Monture spoke to the Junior Institute Convention at

⁷ Celia B. File Papers, Box 5, File 28. Loft to File, 21 February 1937.

⁸ Ethel Brant Monture’s (1892-1977) published work includes: *Canadian Portraits: Brant, Crowfoot, Oronhyatekha: Famous Indians* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1960) [Republished under variant titles]; “College for Indian Youth” *Maclean’s* (15 April 1940); and *Indian Hall of Fame*. Illustrated by Irva Coucill (Brantford: Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre, 1967). Excerpts of her work also appeared in *I Am An Indian*. Ed. by Kent Gooderham (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1969). And with Harvey Chalmers: *Joseph Brant: Mohawk* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1955); and *West to the Setting Sun* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1943).

the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph.

One might expect that Loft and Monture would support one another, not merely as complementary entertainers, but also as Iroquois women with a mutual interest in the history and lore of her people, not to mention their shared desire to educate Canadians about the achievements and continuing existence of Aboriginal peoples. But in Loft's correspondence with Celia File, it is apparent that Dawendine, at least, did not have much love for Monture, and saw her as a potential threat and competitor:

I got there shortly before and shared a dressing room with Mrs Monture. She amused me by immediately beginning a recital of all Indian successes – to tell me I was not the only pebble on the beach. Miss McDermant asked us finally to sit with her on the platform but Mrs Monture immediately refused for us. I knew it was because my Indian outfit looked so much nicer than hers. I amiably prompted her. She was on first, and she told Miss MC she would recite “Canadian Born” because of Coronation week “The Cattle Thief” and one of Wilson McDonald’s for an encore.... I was nervous intensely so because of several things. Frankly speaking, I thought Mrs Monture would be wonderfully improved and I should be nowhere. But her first two verses filled me with a great amusement; she was so colourless. They were the dumbest audience too. I had to go right after Mrs Monture who got no encore, neither of us did. I didn’t expect any, as I talked...told a legend, and ended with a song, after speaking a bit in Indian. But immediately after Prof Buchanan’s wife sought me out and I am to go to the Canadian Club at Guelph in October, so I won. I feel myself to be a flat failure, for I couldn’t strike fire anywhere, really, to be honest.... I saw Mrs Monture’s ineffectual and rather immature attempts to join in. They were all too scared of one another to be real.⁹

On the other hand, Loft consistently encountered financial difficulties throughout her time as a touring lecturer.¹⁰ If Monture was travelling the same circuit, thus cutting into Dawendine’s

⁹ Celia B. File Papers, Box 5, File 28. Loft to File, 14 June 1937.

¹⁰ See discussion in: Cecilia Morgan, “Private Lives and Public Performances: Aboriginal women in a settler society, Ontario, Canada, 1920s-1960s” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 4.3 (2003); and Morgan, “Performing for ‘Imperial Eyes’: Bernice Loft and Ethel Brant Monture, Ontario, 1930s-60s” in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and settler women in Canada’s colonial past*. Ed. by Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005) 67-89.

potential profits, then Loft's bitterness towards her contemporary may be understood. Loft had a great confidence in her own knowledge, if not always in her ability to present it. But clearly she did not agree with the political strategies of Monture, and felt that her own education and background left her better suited to speak for her people. Monture, in Loft's view, rested too much on her genealogical relation to Joseph Brant, and made too many compromises in addressing her non-Aboriginal audiences.

Often taking a great interest in the reaction of her audiences, and drawing strength from positive reviews, Loft took pride in her ability to be frank and forthright in her approach and criticisms of Euro-Canadian treatment of Aboriginal peoples. As she explained to File, "I had a letter from an Indian girl on our Reserve afterward (Hazel Miller) thanking me and encouraging my work.... She said it must have taken courage to speak to Brantford people as I did – I had a chip on my shoulder anyway and I knew Moses and Mrs Monture always just pat, pat, pat. Do you know I honestly believe they admired me more for being frank."¹¹

But the public performances of Loft, and other Aboriginal people, like Cooke and Monture, while rooted in a desire to educate Euro-Canadians about the historical and contemporary achievements of Aboriginal peoples, could be misinterpreted and thus dangerous. Dressing up as an "Indian" allowed audiences to interpret such performances as reinforcing widely held romantic stereotypes about the "vanishing Indian." Loft's observations regarding her audience's reactions suggest that she was acutely aware of this danger, yet her self-representation as an "Indian Princess" continued beyond her public performances. Perhaps envisioning a time when she could market herself to an even broader audience, selling souvenirs and mementos of her performances, Loft designed a line of stationary and greeting cards which

¹¹ Celia B. File Papers, Box 5, File 28. Loft to File, 4 February 1938.

she labelled “Princess Dawendine.” However, her financial constraints meant that this project never got beyond the planning stages. As she reported to File, the copyright and trademark fees would set her back as much as \$100 – a fee she did not readily possess or have access to.¹² Nonetheless, examples of her artistic conception still exist. Subtle in presentation, they are handsome and simply designed, far less flashy and romantic than late twentieth-century “Indian” souvenirs. Presenting herself as an “Indian Princess,” however dangerous and open to misinterpretation, was nonetheless a necessity for the likes of Dawendine. If she was to be seen and heard at all, with any hope of making a lasting impact, Loft was forced to adopt an “Indian” persona. In other words, she had to play up to the expectations of her Euro-Canadian audiences.

Without her costume, in the era in which she was performing, Loft would have been viewed as overtly political, as an example of the positive and effective measures of assimilation policies. This was the criticism and reality that Ethel Brant Monture faced, for example. She rarely dressed as an “Indian,” preferring instead smart and stylish two-piece suits. In the reviews of Monture’s talks, and in Loft’s criticisms of her, her apparent dwelling on the past achievements of Indians was often overshadowed by her own appearance and physical presentation. While Monture may have made concessions, so as to not offend her audiences (in Loft’s view, at least), Dawendine prided herself on speaking frankly and directly. But the reviews of Dawendine’s performances do not reflect her directness. Instead, they speak of a “lovely cultured” and “soft-voiced” Indian girl. Monture, on the other hand, who rarely dressed “Indian,” is remembered as a blunt and straightforward defender of Aboriginal achievement. Loft’s self-presentation is therefore contradictory: on one hand, dressing as an “Indian Princess” assured her a wide and receptive audience, who would walk away at the end of the night with

¹² Celia B. File Papers, Box 5, File 28. Loft to File, 4 February 1938.

something to talk about. On the other hand, such costumes may have distracted her audiences from listening to her actual message. Nonetheless, dressing in “Indian” costume was an act of “reverse appropriation of the stereotype,” a means of playing the “trickster.”¹³ In the end, the varying efforts of Monture and Loft both met modest success, even if they did not have a close professional or personal relationship.

Monture’s tendency to avoid performing Indian-ness was exemplified in her comments to the Centennial Commission, leading up to Expo ’67, where she expressed great frustration over the fact that Euro-Canadians had generally failed to understand the complexities of Aboriginal cultures and histories. In part, she blamed such misunderstanding and ambivalence on the common representation of Aboriginal people as little more than “a romantic hangover” of the past:

Through the years we have been surveyed by an endless parade of observers. We have been simpered over as the ‘dear dead race’ by sentimentalists who see us as a romantic hangover. Or again we break out from the printed page as wooden cigar adornments, seldom as human beings intent on holding to a country and an identity. The writer, always of another race, uses the yardstick of his own values and understanding.¹⁴

In their discussion of Aboriginal involvement in the planning of the Indian Pavilion at Expo ’67, historians Myra Rutherdale and Jim Miller say that “In Monture’s view, constructions of First Nations by outsiders too often suggested a static and passive image which did little to create understanding between Natives and Newcomers.”¹⁵ In other words, staging Indian-ness, or sentimentalizing Indians, did little to reveal the real efforts of Aboriginal peoples to find equality

¹³ Ruth Phillips, “Performing in the Native Woman: primitivism and mimicry in early twentieth-century visual culture” in *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: policing the boundaries of modernity*. Ed. by Lynda Jessup (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) 26-49.

¹⁴ Quoted in Myra Rutherdale and Jim Miller, “‘It’s Our Country’: First Nations’ participation in the Indian Pavilion at Expo 67” *Online Journal of the CHA* 2006 17.2 (2006) 151.

¹⁵ Rutherdale and Miller 151.

within Canada. However, in many cases, such as Dawendine and Charles Cooke, for example, Aboriginal peoples were directly involved in the representation and presentation of performing Indian-ness, complicating the meaning and implications of such sentimental activity.¹⁶

Non-Aboriginal peoples expected Indians to appear in full Indian costume, otherwise they were considered inauthentic or too “civilized.” But on the other hand, Aboriginal peoples risked being too “Indian.” As Paige Raibmon explains in her discussion of Aboriginal performances at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893, “This sort of double jeopardy, faced by Aboriginal peoples across the continent, resulted from non-Aboriginal society’s success at casting all discussions about Aboriginal peoples along the parallel dichotomies of traditional versus modern, and authentic versus inauthentic.”¹⁷ Little had changed in the half-century since the Chicago World’s Fair. Aboriginal peoples like Dawendine and Monture still struggled with such dichotomies, a kind of civilized/savage paradox. On one hand, non-Aboriginals disapproved of so-called “savage” Indians in their midst, while on the other hand they made them a central character in museums, exhibitions, fairs, television programmes, films, and literature.¹⁸

American historian, Philip Deloria, speaks to this same issue with regards to the creation of a so-called “American” identity: “Savage Indians served Americans as oppositional figures against whom one might imagine a civilized national Self. Coded as freedom, however, wild Indianness proved equally attractive, setting up a ‘have-the-cake-and-eat-it-too’ dialectic of simultaneous

¹⁶ Several recent studies have tackled this topic, including: Cecilia Morgan, “‘A Wigwam to Westminster’: performing Mohawk identity in Imperial Britain, 1890s-1900s” *Gender and History* 25.2 (2003) 319-341; Ian Radforth, *Royal Spectacle: the 1860 visit of the Prince of Wales to Canada and the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Paige Raibmon, “Theatres of Contact: the Kwakwaka’wakw meet colonialism in British Columbia and at the Chicago World’s Fair” *Canadian Historical Review* 81.2 (2000) 157-190; and Joan Sangster, “*The Beaver* as Ideology: constructing images of Inuit and Native life in post World War II Canada” *Anthropologica* 49.2 (2007) 191-209.

¹⁷ Raibmon 161.

¹⁸ See: Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Great Disappointment: honeymooning and tourism at Niagara Falls* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1999) 60.

desire and repulsion.”¹⁹ Such ambiguity with regards to Aboriginal peoples certainly existed (and arguably remains today) not only in the minds of non-Aboriginal North Americans, but in the preconceptions and notions of non-Aboriginal observers worldwide. Aboriginal people, like Dawendine and Charles Cooke, participated in such Indian play, so to speak, as a means of “insinuating their way into Euro-American [and -Canadian] discourse,”²⁰ attempting to direct the image of the Indian in useful directions. This was not, however, the approach taken by Monture, who saw such performance as counter-productive.

The individual writing of both Monture and Loft reflected the physical appearance that each constructed for their public audiences. Monture’s writing was rather straightforward and historical, speaking directly to the historical achievements and modern possibilities of Aboriginal peoples. Her calls for improved Indian education were direct, and reached rather large audiences (through *Maclean’s* magazine, for example). A great extent of Monture’s creative writing was with her collaborator, Harvey Chalmers – a historical novel about Iroquois life in the era of Joseph Brant (Thayendanega) entitled, *West to the Setting Sun* (1943). Judging by the style and form of Monture’s other writing, the creative element in *West to the Setting Sun* appears to be overwhelmingly that of Chalmers. Monture’s contribution to this novel was in providing historical details that Chalmers would otherwise have been hard-pressed to uncover. As Chalmers acknowledges in the novel, “entire credit for the Indian viewpoint, reaction and philosophy in this book is due to Ethel Brant.... Thanks to her manipulation the writer was privileged to meet Indians on a common footing and to see with their eyes and hear through their ears.” To his credit, Chalmers acknowledges that before meeting Monture, his ideas about Indians were “the antithesis of reality...as sadistic, vindictive, treacherous people with a racial

¹⁹ Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 3.

²⁰ Deloria 8.

obsession for murder and torture.”²¹ In private correspondence, Chalmers was more candid. For example, on the inside of a copy of *The Last Stand of the Nez Perce* presented to Monture, Chalmers wrote, “To Lovely Yonodes, with gratitude for teaching me the truth about Indians.”²²

Monture’s main contribution to the novel, therefore, was as a guide in providing Chalmers with the historical detail to present the Iroquois as human beings, as generous, good-tempered, and skilled in social relationships. Where a lot of previous fiction, written exclusively by non-Aboriginal authors, had worked to solidify the misconception of the “noble savage,” Chalmers’ novel is unique for its time in presenting Aboriginal peoples in a light much closer to reality; a contribution wholly credited to Monture. Nonetheless, reviews of *West to the Setting Sun* were not entirely positive. Although described as “vivid and exciting,” Chalmers’ attempt at presenting the Indian as authentic were not successful in the eyes of at least one critic, who observed,

the picture of Iroquois culture is very one-sided and places extreme emphasis on Iroquois warfare. Had Mr. Chalmers spent more time with Joseph Brant’s own people...his characters would neither talk or act after the fashion they do. Neither would his book contain so many erroneous characterizations and interpretations.... It is a case of the book being written without sufficient attention to the living people who should serve as models and interpreters. The people of the book are still storybook Indians.²³

This criticism indirectly is a criticism of Monture as well, who according to Chalmers, at least, considered the novel to be “truly Indian.”²⁴ Nonetheless, Chalmers and Monture could take some pride in the fact that at least one reviewer considered it a book worthy of teaching in

²¹ Harvey Chalmers, *West to the Setting Sun* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1943) vi.

²² Monture’s personal copy, today housed in Special Collections, Woodland Cultural Centre Library, Brantford, Ontario.

²³ John Whitthoft, Review of *West to the Setting Sun*, by Harvey Chalmers. *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 70.1 (January 1946) 134-135.

²⁴ Chalmers, vi.

public schools. The *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* recommended *West to the Setting Sun* to teachers, calling it “a competent narrative... [offering] an entertaining introduction to an exciting episode in colonial history...[which] should be of interest to students.”²⁵ And the famous and highly respected American Seneca writer, historian, and anthropologist, Arthur C. Parker, considered *West to the Setting Sun* to be a positive example of fiction following in the literary tradition of James Fenimore Cooper. As Parker noted in a paper delivered at a 1951 conference to reappraise the work of James Fenimore Cooper,

Cooper, of course, was not a historian, though much of that which he wrote has been taken literally as scarcely modified fact. He was a weaver of tales, and his first care was the story itself. The background was secondary.... That he might have done better with his ethnology and history is certain had he personally gathered his material at source.... What plots and personalities Cooper might have found within a day's stage journey of Cooperstown. Witness what has been written since his days, yes, in the last quarter century, by those who found only the crumbs of the still warm loaf that he might have devoured between 1820 and 1850. Note the facts and plots employed by Robert Chambers in his *Little Red Foot* and in his *Hidden Children*. The romance of Joseph Brant and his sister Molly might have been unearthed and employed as Harvey Chalmers did in his *West to the Setting Sun*....²⁶

Working with Chalmers a decade later, Monture provided similar insight and contribution to his biography of Brant, *Joseph Brant: Mohawk* (1955). Reviews, however, of this work were not entirely positive either, noting particularly Chalmers' lack of academic rigour in failing to provide proper footnoting and sources for the information he presented. As one reviewer noted, “it is difficult to judge the author's research or the dependability of his numerous quotations, for he provides no documentation, no bibliography, no index.”²⁷ Criticized for not only its lack of

²⁵ “Book Notes” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 31.1 (1944) 105.

²⁶ Arthur C. Parker, “Sources and Range of Cooper's Indian Lore” *James Fenimore Cooper: A Re-Appraisal* (Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1954) 85-6.

²⁷ Milton W. Hamilton, Review of *Joseph Brant: Mohawk*, by Harvey Chalmers, in collaboration with Ethel Brant Monture. *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 80.2 (April 1956) 253.

documentation, “unpardonable” errors were also exposed, leaving reviewers to criticise the work for its heavy use of “fiction and conjecture,” thus deeming the book “of limited value to scholars.”²⁸ Much of this criticism no doubt relates to the information and research provided to Chalmers by Monture, who drew heavily on oral history in telling her side of the Joseph Brant story. But Chalmers’ book omits acknowledging even Monture’s oral sources, thus leaving the book open to much criticism. This lack of documentation is not surprising perhaps, given the nature of Chalmers’ writing, which was mainly directed at a popular, non-academic audience. But it is surprising given that *Joseph Brant* was published (and seemingly edited) by a scholarly press (Michigan State University Press), and was apparently directed at an academic readership.

Reviews also criticised the book for being less a biography of Brant, than a general history of the Mohawk during his lifetime: “In spite of its length, this is not a biography of the great Mohawk, but a rather detailed recital of the troubles of the Indians in the years following the Revolution....the role of Brant is often lost sight of in preoccupation with the words and actions of many other persons.”²⁹ Once again, this probably had a lot to do with Monture’s interests, mainly rooted in educating the non-Aboriginal public in the U.S. and Canada about the achievements and historical and contemporary importance of Aboriginal peoples, particularly the Iroquois. But in 1955, such a history would have been a hard sell, likely explaining the decision by Chalmers and Monture to market the work as a biography. The slightly awkward title, *Joseph Brant: Mohawk*, probably reflects the authors’ attempts in presenting a biography of an individual which also spoke to the role and achievements of his people in general. Reviewers apparently did not pick up on this technique.

²⁸ Dwight L. Smith, Review of *Joseph Brant: Mohawk*, by Harvey Chalmers, in collaboration with Ethel Brant Monture. *William and Mary Quarterly* 13.4 (October 1956) 588.

²⁹ Hamilton, 253.

Harvey Chalmers' preoccupation with Aboriginal peoples who crossed the Canada-U.S. border continued with the 1962 publication of *The Last Stand of the Nez Perce*. Monture's presence as an informant and co-writer is not acknowledged in this text, but the spirit of Chalmers' writing and apparent purpose are much the same as in *Joseph Brant* and *West to the Setting Sun*. Chalmers' narrative in *The Last Stand* was based on the accounts of Yellow Wolf, a nephew of Chief Joseph, which were told to L.V. McWhorter through an interpreter³⁰

Dawendine's body of writing, however, in comparison to Monture's, is of remarkably different character, reflecting her more refined, if not gentle, public persona. While both women drew heavily on the poetic work of E. Pauline Johnson, Monture's writing shows no trace of Johnson's literary grace. Loft's writing, on the other hand, is riddled with comparisons and not-so-subtle tributes to the popular poet. Dawendine did not always write. As a young woman, touring as a popular orator, writing was not one of her preoccupations. But as she became more familiar with the material she was presenting, and some of the interpretive literature related to it, Loft began to find something of her own voice in telling her people's stories. Much of what she related to her audiences had been handed down to her by her grandparents, parents, and their friends. Following the birth of her daughter, in 1938, Dawendine gave up public speaking, and in 1943, following the death of her father, she moved permanently with her American-born husband and family to Whitman, Massachusetts. It was only at this point that Dawendine began to put a pen to paper, writing her "word pictures" and poems about the Six Nations. Her long-time correspondent, the academic Paul Wallace, was one of her most ardent supporters and her writing may have been supported by the positive feedback she received as a public speaker. As one fan and supporter wrote in 1936, "You have a fine chance to do much for your race. I liked

³⁰ See: Harvey Chalmers II, *The Last Stand of the Nez Perce: destruction of a people* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1962).

the little story you told. These are fine both for telling and writing.”³¹ In a 1967 interview, Dawendine admitted that much of her writing emerged from “nostalgia or loneliness for those whom I had left and had known for so long. I was trying to describe them because it was one way of bring [sic] back certain things.”³² But despite the best efforts of Loft and the assistance of her fans and influential friends, like Wallace, her writing was not published until the 1990s.

Before she ceased speaking publicly in 1938, Dawendine used her small celebrity to establish a memorial fund in honour of E. Pauline Johnson. The memorial fund was to be used to establish a library, in Johnson’s name, at Ohsweken, the administrative centre of Six Nations. Although the library itself did not open until June, 1969, it was Dawendine’s initiative that got the ball rolling. However, as she confessed to File, Loft’s motives in establishing a memorial fund for Johnson were not entirely rooted in full appreciation of the famous poetess: “I want to try and raise some sort of Memorial to Pauline Johnson – get my wedge in before others do. I believe this goal would be the one thing needed now to build me up and to make my work pay in some measure. I would announce that above expenses I would donate half of each fee at each engagement to this fund with suitable Trustees – I’d place it in a Brantford bank but make myself the head one. I think I would get a lot more engagements this way.”³³

With the help of Major E.P. Randle, local Indian Affairs Superintendent, and Judge A.D. Hardy of the Brant County Historical Society, the fund was started in February, 1937 and a province-wide campaign was launched to solicit funds. The Johnson Memorial Library was envisioned on a grand scale: “it is proposed that the upper floor of the building be used

³¹ Celia B. File Papers. Box 5, File 31 [Bernice Loft Testimonials]. Walter Wellarve [Grimsby, ON] to Loft, 29/1936.

³² Quoted in Stacey et. al., 20.

³³ Celia B. File Papers. Box 5, File 28. Loft to File, 4 February 1938.

exclusively for a library and the lower floor as an Indian museum. The two-story structure contemplated will be in the heart of the reserve's activity and the 3,000 Indians, Mohawks, Oneidas, Tuscaroras, Onondagas, Cayugas and Senecas, will have easy access." Ontario's Lieutenant-Governor, Albert Matthews was asked to be a patron of the campaign.³⁴ But by the end of August, that same year, Dawendine had ceased speaking publicly (and would not resume until after her husband's death in 1962).

The abrupt change of plans came about due to Loft's difficult pregnancy with her first child, and the strict orders of her doctor: "I've been speaking occasionally but Aug 26th was my last appearance – the Doctor said it would be better not to go any more, though he let me before that."³⁵ In an interview with the *Globe and Mail* that same month, Loft commented that the library fund "is growing very slowly, but the fact it is growing is some encouragement." She also expressed her hope that the fund could act in "providing an avenue of further education on the reservations in this Province, where educational facilities are at present very limited...."³⁶ The cessation of Loft's speaking duties no doubt contributed to the stalled efforts of the E. Pauline Johnson Memorial Library fund. As Loft had expressed clearly to File, her motivation in establishing the memorial fund was to boost her credibility and popularity as a public speaker. With the motivation of its founder no longer acting as a guiding presence, the library and education fund simply sat in a state of limbo for several years.

Monture, on the other hand, appears to have been a woman who got things done in a much quicker, if not more successful fashion. This was due perhaps to her wide circle of

³⁴ "Indian Poetess to be Honored: Campaign to Erect Library in Memory of Pauline Johnson Launched: Trust Fund is Set Up" *Globe and Mail* [Toronto], 23 February 1938, 4.

³⁵ Celia B. File Papers. Box 5, File 29. Loft to File, 1 September 1938.

³⁶ "Education Fund Growing Slowly: Pauline Johnson Library Project to Aid Ontario's Indian Youth." *Globe and Mail* [Toronto] 8 August 1938, 10.

influential friends and contacts, and to the fact that Monture began her writing and speaking career after raising a family (and leaving her husband), where Loft was busy before and during her busy years as a wife and mother. Like Loft, she too was considered an authority on the history and culture of the Six Nations, but Monture's impact appears to have had a wider reach. Her impact and influence were such that publications were dedicated in her honour (*The Seven Dancers*, by Aren Akweks, for example),³⁷ and large U.S. publishers considered her opinion of such value that they regularly sent her books for review (Vantage and University of Oklahoma Press, for example),³⁸ and she was one of the founders of the Indian Hall of Fame in 1967 (of which she later became a member, in 1973). She was further recognised for her achievement and influence with the Centennial Medal in 1967, given to "outstanding" Canadian citizens, and was named posthumously to the Agricultural Hall of Fame for her work in founding and presiding over the women's division of the Ontario Agricultural Societies (1937-1939) and her role as a leader in Women's Institute activities.³⁹ Throughout the 1950s, Monture acted as an informal sounding board and advisor to Angus McGill Mowat, Inspector of Public Libraries for the Province of Ontario, who was in those years focussed on establishing and improving provincial library services to Aboriginal peoples in the province. His efforts resulted in the expansion of travelling library services to Aboriginal communities throughout the province, and the first

³⁷ "We, the Akwesasne Mohawk Counselor Organization, dedicate this pamphlet...to our Mohawk Sister, Ethel Brant Montour [sic]." See: Aren Akweks, *The Seven Dancers*. Iroquois Life History Series (Hogansburg NY: Akwesasne Counselor Organization, St. Regis Mohawk Reservation, n.d.).

³⁸ Books sent to Monture, which were clearly review copies, are included in what remains of her personal library, today housed at the Woodland Cultural Centre Library in Brantford, Ontario. Books sent as review copies include: Muriel H. Wright, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1951); Katherine C. Turner, *Red Men Calling on the Great White Father* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1951); *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's account of the seven rites of the Oglala Sioux*. Recorded and Edited by Joseph Epes Brown (University of Oklahoma Press, 1953); Ruth Murray Underhill, *Red Man's America: a history of Indians in the United States* (University of Chicago Press, 1953); George A. Trotter, *From Feather Blanket and Tepee: the Indians fight for equality* (Vantage Press, 1955); and Hilda Faunce Wetherill, *Navajo Indian Poems* (Vantage Press, 1952).

³⁹ "Ethel Brant Monture named to Agricultural Hall of Fame" *Brantford Expositor*. 23 January, 1984. 11.

recognised public library in an Aboriginal community in Canada, at Moose Factory, Ontario in 1958.⁴⁰

Rather significantly, Monture was one of only a few Aboriginal people to participate in the University of Toronto-Yale University conference on “The North American Indian Today” in September, 1939. Although Monture did not give a paper at the University of Toronto-Yale University Seminar, she was present at the conference and was selected as a member of two committees which were formed as a result of the event: the Continuing Committee on Indian Affairs, formed as a group to promote the continuing exchange and evaluation of information on Indian Affairs, and to organise future conferences; and the Committee to Consider Founding a Canadian Lay Association on Indian Affairs.⁴¹ Following this historic conference, Indian members of the delegation broke away from the main group of Euro-Canadian and American scholars, government officials, and missionaries, and met separately to pass their own resolutions. Monture was a part of this rather dramatic and significant Indian defection (she was one of twelve Aboriginal delegates, only two of which were women) which claimed that they did not need government officials, missionaries, academics, or other non-Aboriginal sympathizers to speak for them. On an international scale, Aboriginal people declared “We hereby go on record as hoping that the need for an All Indian Conference on Indian Affairs will be felt by the Indian tribes, the delegates to such a conference be limited to bona fide Indian leaders actually living

⁴⁰ For more on Angus McGill Mowat, see: Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, *Paper Talk: a history of libraries, print culture, and Aboriginal peoples in Canada before 1960* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 149-153. Correspondence between Ethel Brant Monture and Mowat can be found in the Angus McGill Mowat Collection, J.J. Talman Regional Collection, D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.

⁴¹ See: University of Toronto-Yale University Seminar-Conference, *The North American Indian Today: University of Toronto-Yale University Seminar-Conference, Toronto, September 4-16, 1939*. C.T. Loram and T.F. McIlwraith, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1943). See also: R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, and Donald B. Smith, *Destinies: Canadian history since Confederation*. Third Edition (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1996) 376-377; and Donald B. Smith, "Now We Talk – You Listen," *Rotunda: the magazine of the Royal Ontario Museum* 23.2 (1990) 48-52.

among the Indian people of the reservations and reserves...that such a conference remain free of political, anthropological, missionary, administrative, or other domination.”⁴² In other words, the Aboriginal delegates were saying that they did not need intermediaries; they could speak for themselves.

Unfortunately the Canadian public at large generally did not hear this strong, independent Indian voice, of which Monture was a part. The press had paid little attention to the Yale-Toronto meetings because, as historian Donald B. Smith reports, Germany had invaded Poland three days before the meetings began, and two days later Britain declared war on Germany. Midway through the conference Canada declared war on Germany, and the day after the meetings were completed the Soviet Union invaded Poland. As Smith rightly notes, “The general public and press were too preoccupied to hear about the poor health conditions, unemployment, and the residential school system experienced by Indians.”⁴³ But the Second World War, in the long run, helped the non-Aboriginal Canadian public to hear the collective voice of Aboriginal peoples. The strong contribution of Indians to the war effort (as well as in the First World War), and the injustice Aboriginal veterans faced upon returning, prompted non-Aboriginal Canadians to begin seeing the wider injustices that Aboriginal peoples had been plagued by for generations.⁴⁴

But if Monture’s circle of influence was wide, her beginnings were notably unremarkable. The fifth of nine children to Robert and Lydia Brant, who lived on the New Credit Reserve (known today as the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, located close to Six Nations Reserve, near Hagersville, Ontario), Ethel was a great-great grandchild of Joseph

⁴² Quoted in Francis et. al. 376.

⁴³ Smith, “Now We Talk” 52.

⁴⁴ See, for example: R. Scott Sheffield, *The Red Man’s on the Warpath: the image of the “Indian” and the Second World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

Brant, through his third wife Catherine Croghan. Described as “interested intensely in books” at a young age, her biographers claim she “could read and peel potatoes at the same time.”⁴⁵ Encouraged by her father to continue reading, Monture is said to have acquired “the basis” of her knowledge in Iroquois and Aboriginal history and culture while attending elementary school on the Reserve. Although she attended high school in nearby Hagersville, she did not obtain her diploma or attend university. After marrying and raising two children, Monture began writing and lecturing in her late thirties. Driven by a “desire to see a history of the Indian people that had been written by an Indian person,” she undertook research into the life of her great-great grandfather, Joseph Brant.⁴⁶ This work led to her collaboration with Harvey Chalmers on *West to the Setting Sun* (1943) and *Joseph Brant: Mohawk* (1955), and her own work, *Famous Indians* (1960). Monture lectured at clubs, schools, and universities across Canada and the north-eastern United States, her main goal being to enlighten her audiences (overwhelmingly non-Aboriginal) about the contributions made by First Peoples to the development of Western civilization. And although she never graduated from high school, from time to time she taught home economics and history on reserves in Ontario.

At the time of Monture’s induction into the Indian Hall of Fame, it is said that she wrote her own biography for the official archives. Conceived in 1967 by the Indian-Eskimo Association (this organisation changed its name to the Canadian Association in Support of Native Peoples in 1972 under the leadership of Thomas H.B. Symons, with a mandate of promoting wider awareness and understanding among non-Aboriginal Canadians and Aboriginal peoples, and aiming to assist Aboriginal peoples in developing programs to meet this

⁴⁵ Cathy Porter and Daniel Moses, *Ethel Brant Monture* (Brantford: Woodland Indian Cultural Education Centre, 1978) 1.

⁴⁶ Porter and Moses, 1.

objective)⁴⁷ with help from Monture herself (and others), the Indian Hall of Fame is housed at the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario and is devoted to celebrating the lives of Aboriginal peoples who have contributed to the advancement of Aboriginal society in Canada. Describing herself as “one of the great living authorities on Indian Culture and History,” and as “an author of several books,” Monture may have let her immense self-confidence get in the way of authentic description.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, her portrayal has stuck. Although she may not have been the only living expert on Aboriginal culture and history in her lifetime, she certainly was knowledgeable and passionate. And although she only wrote one book herself, and assisted in the publication of two others, her constant speech-writing and lecturing probably could have filled the pages of several volumes. At the peak of her lecturing career, Monture gave ninety-four lectures in three months for the Canadian Club.⁴⁹ Her passion and energy were unquestionably large, and if her lecture notes and papers survived today, no doubt she could be the author of additional books. At the time Monture wrote her own biography for the Indian Hall of Fame, she likely anticipated that she would compile her research and publish further titles. But unfortunately ill health prevented her from doing so. In 1973, she suffered a stroke. And although she was reportedly working on another book project at the time, an autobiographical narrative about her childhood, her health never fully recovered, and the project was never completed.⁵⁰

In writing her own biography, Monture well understood the power of print. For more

⁴⁷ See: Anthony J. Hall, *The American Empire and the Fourth World* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003) 265-266.

⁴⁸ See: “Ethel Brant Monture: Lecturer, Author, Expert on Indian Culture.” In *Significant Lives: Profiles of Brant County Women* (Brantford: University Women’s Club, 1997) 101-103.

⁴⁹ *Significant Lives*, 102.

⁵⁰ Porter and Moses, 2-3.

than thirty years her biography has been included in the promotional literature of the Indian Hall of Fame, thus perpetuating the identity that Monture herself created. And it was through publication and speaking, combined, that Monture sought to promote better relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Equally important, she sought to develop leadership within Aboriginal communities and to dispel the persistent negative stereotypes about Indians by the non-Aboriginal majority. In her own words, she was a “one-woman crusade to reverse over four centuries of propaganda.”⁵¹ It was her wish that the contributions of Aboriginal people be known to all Canadians and that school textbooks be revised to eliminate bias and falsehood, to reflect historical reality in relation to First Nations.

Like Loft, Monture had an immense interest and sense of respect for E. Pauline Johnson. Included amongst her small collection of books and clippings at the Woodland Cultural Centre Library in Brantford, is a bulk of material relating to Johnson (mainly short newspaper and magazine articles – only some of which Monture authored). At her speaking engagements, Johnson was often a topic of interest. In Monture’s promotional material, she was said to be available to speak on the following subjects: “Indians in the Twentieth Century, Joseph Brant: His People, Indians in Literature, and Indian Art and Poetry.”⁵² That both women tried to ride the crest of Johnson’s lingering popularity amongst non-Aboriginal Canadians is clear. Monture and Loft modelled themselves after Johnson, and both frequently recited her poetry at their public speaking engagements. However, using Pauline Johnson as a model and selling point was also dangerous, particularly for each woman’s reputation on-reserve and within the Aboriginal community.

⁵¹ Quoted in *Significant Lives*, 103.

⁵² See: Woodland Cultural Centre Library, Special Collections. Ethel Brant Monture, Promotional flyer.

To this day there is a kind of animosity towards E. Pauline Johnson amongst some members of the Six Nations, who consider her to be from “the other side of the river.” The Six Nations of Grand River Reserve is located southeast of the city of Brantford, Ontario. The city and the reserve are separated by the Grand River, but Johnson’s family home (Chiefswood, a mansion built by her father, George Johnson), the Mohawk Chapel (the oldest Protestant church in Ontario), and what was once the Mohawk Institute (a residential school), are located on the Brantford side of the river. Although this land is technically a part of the Six Nations Reserve, its proximity to Brantford means it is sometimes viewed with trepidation and suspicion by some members of the reserve community. Johnson’s habit of playing the civilised white woman one moment, and the next an “Indian Princess” for her public audiences (and in her writing) did not sit well with some Aboriginal people. Johnson’s early writing, in particular, usually took the stance of a civilised white woman, using possessive pronominal adjectives to distinguish between “them” (i.e. Indian) and “our” (i.e. Euro-Canadian). On other occasions, Johnson argued on behalf of the Iroquois, but declined to identify explicitly with them.⁵³ Despite Johnson’s now secure and celebrated place in the Canadian literary canon, her reputation amongst First Nations has never been so clear cut.

Loft experienced the dangers in modelling herself after Johnson to a greater extent than did Monture. Dawendine’s efforts in establishing the Pauline Johnson Memorial Library at Ohsweken, for example, were hindered to some extent by the fact that Johnson’s name was attached to the project. Original support for the Johnson Memorial Library notably came from Brantford, rather than the Reserve. And when the library finally opened some thirty years after Loft’s original efforts, it did not bear the name of Pauline Johnson. Nonetheless, for the non-

⁵³ See: Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson, *Paddling Her Own Canoe: the times and texts of E. Pauline Johnson, Tekahiwake* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 157-159.

Aboriginal public to take notice of Indian writers and performers – particularly female – Johnson’s persona and celebrity were unavoidable. Johnson’s behaviour and approach may not have been perfect in the eyes of Aboriginal peoples, but her influence and memory amongst most Euro-Canadians of the first half of the twentieth century was large and overwhelmingly positive. For both Monture and Loft, Johnson was an example or model to whom they could look for inspiration. Monture and Loft both envisioned a time when Aboriginal peoples in Canada would be treated with respect. Because Johnson’s memory, at least, was treated with apparent respect by an apparent majority of the Canadian public, her stance as a role model was natural, if not inevitable.

Special Collections-Monture, Ethel Brant



By VARDEN

Ethel Brant Monture

*the great-great granddaughter of Joseph Brant,
one of the great chieftains of the SIX NATIONS.*

Figure 7-1. Promotional brochure advertising Ethel Brant Monture as a public speaker and recitalist (Woodland Cultural Centre Library, Special Collections).



Figure 7-2. Bernice Loft Winslow in her Indian costume, which she wore as a recitalist and entertainer (*Iroquois Fires*, Penumbra Press, 1995).

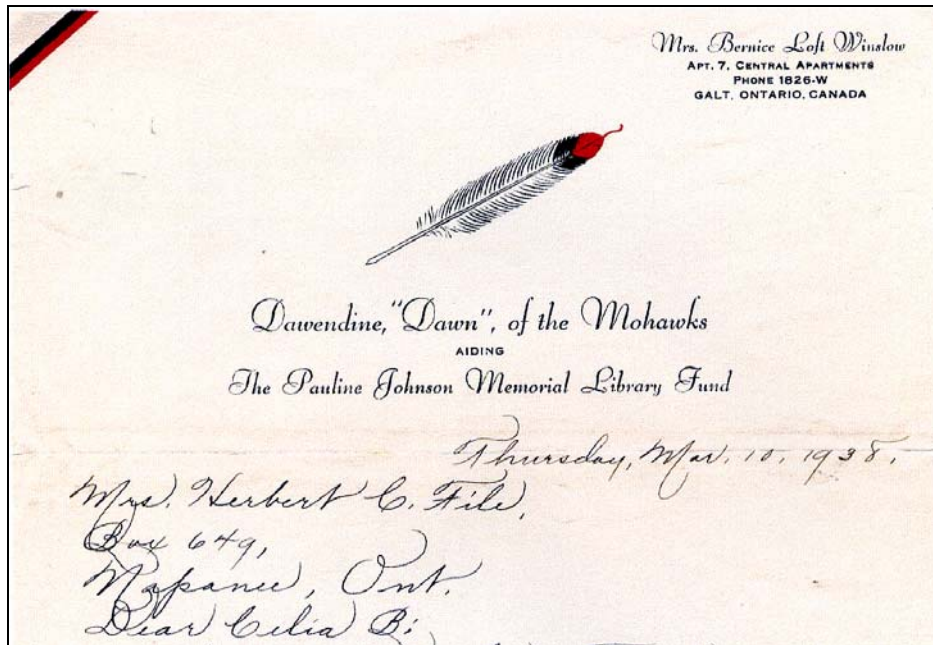


Figure 7-3. Letterhead designed by Bernice Loft Winslow, 1930s. (Lennox and Addington County Museum and Archives, Celia B. File Papers, Loft Correspondence).

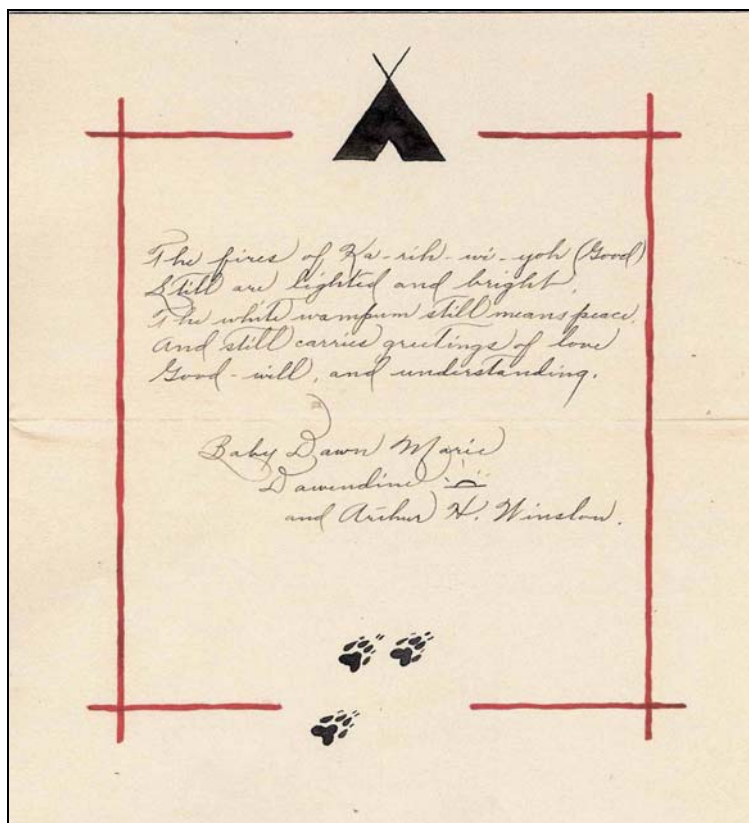


Figure 7-4. Greeting card designed by Bernice Loft Winslow, 1930s (Lennox and Addington County Museum and Archives, Celia B. File Papers, Loft Correspondence).

CONCLUSION

How have you paid us for our game? How paid us for our land? / By a *book*, to save our souls from the sins *you* brought in your other hand.¹

Aboriginal writing in Canada has often been categorized in terms of binary opposition: oral versus written. However, as Blanca Schorcht has pointed out, “the idea that First Peoples remain immersed in orality, while mainstream Canadian culture is almost exclusively print-based, perpetuates out-dated stereotypes,” overlooking the fact that Aboriginal groups have been translating foreign texts into their own languages since the early eighteenth century at least. Furthermore, regarding orality as a binary opposite to literacy, “implies that translation between the two is impossible, and repeats essentialized ideas of correlating language with identity.”²

As Jacques Derrida has argued, binary oppositions are culturally and historically defined. The assumed opposition between oral and literate, within a Western framework, places literacy in the more powerful position, assuming that to be literate is a sign of civilised, advanced human behaviour, while a person who communicates and disseminates information through only oral means is less advanced, uncivilised. According to Derrida, Western thought has consistently presented writing as a dangerous and derivative form of language, seemingly because of its permanency. Speech, or orality, has on the other hand been presented as the natural means of presenting language. Writing, then, has been paired with civilised behaviour, while speech has been aligned with humans in a natural, pure state. Derrida deconstructs this binary opposition,

¹ Emily Pauline Johnson, “The Cattle Thief” in *E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahinwake)*. Ed. by Gerson and Strong-Boag, 99.

² Blanca Schorcht, “Intersections between Native oral traditions and print culture” *History of the Book in Canada*. Volume 3: 1918-1980, Carole Gerson and Jacque Michon, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 33. See also: Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, *Paper Talk: a history of libraries, print culture, and Aboriginal peoples in Canada before 1960* (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005) 1-17.

arguing instead that all presentations of language (oral and written) are forms of writing, of creating and disseminating meaning. Orality and literacy, therefore, are not binary opposites, but one and the same. Both act as a means of presenting language, disseminating information, and understanding the world around us.³ The privileging of either writing or speech as a central form of communication, therefore marginalising and inherently devaluing the other, is done for political reasons, providing the culture that abides by the privileged/central means of communication with power over the marginalised other. As alphabetic writing has always been associated from a Western perspective with civilised people, oral cultures have automatically been considered as barbaric or savage, as marginal and peripheral. Understanding the oral and the written as a dichotomy is false and misleading because no culture communicates or survives on written language alone. It is crucial to remember that every culture is to one degree or another, an oral culture.⁴

Prior to the period when E. Pauline Johnson was writing, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Aboriginal literary activity in Canada was characterised primarily by religious translations and dictionaries (written and translated by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, with the intent of educating, “civilising,” or assimilating Indians) and texts emerging from the practice of salvage anthropology (again, written by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, guided by the principle that Indians were a vanishing race). Johnson’s era of writing introduced an Aboriginal literature that was unique, drawing on both European literary traditions

³ See, for example: Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Derrida, *Paper Machine*. Translated by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); and Derrida, *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

⁴ Nancy Shoemaker says that the dichotomy between orality and literacy was cultivated equally by Indians and Europeans – each worked to create the notion that writing and speaking were the core differences between them, and that Europeans were better at writing and Indians were better at speaking. See: Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: becoming red and white in eighteenth-century North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 61-81.

and Aboriginal oral traditions. Some sixty years later, beginning in the 1960s, contemporary Aboriginal literatures began to “decolonize both the English language and its genres of literary expression, while transforming them into uniquely Aboriginal representations.”⁵ But in the fifty or sixty years after E. Pauline Johnson’s death and the emergence of a contemporary Aboriginal literature, Aboriginal peoples in Canada relied mainly on newspapers and magazines for literary and political discussion and as a vehicle for communicating between communities. Individual Indian schools and missionaries took some initiative in publishing their own reading materials, for example, such as *Spiritual Light*, edited by Reverend F. G. Stevens at the Norway House Mission in Manitoba, from 1932 to 1946.⁶ *Spiritual Light* was published entirely in Cree syllabic, and in addition to religious content included translated stories by popular standard authors such as Charles Dickens, poetry, and articles with reference to Aboriginal health.

However, in this period a uniquely Aboriginal journalism also took root. In December, 1946, the *Native Voice* was founded by the Native Indian Brotherhood of British Columbia. The *Native Voice* established a nationwide movement of periodical publication by Aboriginal peoples and organizations, which coincided with a growing political expression and a desire for Indian control of Indian affairs.⁷ The efforts of Cooke, Ahenakew, and Paull all demonstrate this trend in Aboriginal periodical publication in the period after Johnson’s literary career. However, where Johnson and her predecessors were usually writing with a Euro-Canadian audience in mind, Aboriginal writers after Johnson began writing with two clear audiences in mind: first their own people, and secondly, non-Aboriginal Canadians and supporters who could sympathise with and assist Aboriginal populations in their quest for proper recognition, justice, and basic

⁵ Schorcht 30.

⁶ United Church of Canada. Board of Home Missions. *Spiritual Light*, 1932-1946.

⁷ Edwards 140-142.

human rights. Writing, literacy, and publication became something of a call to arms for Aboriginal peoples in the first half of the twentieth century.

Jace Weaver, Professor of American Studies at Yale University, describes contemporary Aboriginal writing as reflecting and shaping contemporary Aboriginal identity and community, assuming an important role in pulling the people together (many of whom are separated from their traditional lands, communities, and practices), and providing a vehicle for activism.⁸ While their efforts may not have been as widely successful, the writers and performers examined in the preceding discussion demonstrated similar qualities and motivations in their work in the early twentieth century. If these authors did not explicitly reflect community, they certainly were active in trying to promote the Aboriginal community in Canada, and their work promoted activism in this era of emerging pan-Indian national political movements.

All of the writers discussed in this work – Cooke, Ahenakew, Paull, Loft Winslow, and Monture – employed writing and publishing, often combined with public performance, as a means of drawing their own people together and to broadcast their message to a wider Canadian public. Their efforts demonstrate that the period roughly between 1910 and 1960 was not the “barren period” that scholars like Penny Petrone, Thomas King, Armand Garnet Ruffo, and Cecelia Morgan have described. If this era was lacking in literary output by Aboriginal peoples – compared to other periods – it was not without the sincere efforts of these individuals. Their relative failures in garnering publishers, or attracting wide readerships, have perhaps more to do with the political and social environment of the time in Canada, than with their ability (or inability) to write material of value. Charles Cooke struggled within the confines of the Department of Indian Affairs, under the ironic eye of literary man Duncan Campbell Scott, yet

⁸ See: Jace Weaver, *That the People Might Live: Native American literatures and Native American community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) passim.

he still managed to publish his own newspaper, compile a landmark work on the Iroquois language, and helped to build a library of literature relating to Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Through his newspaper and anthropological work with Marius Barbeau, Cooke reached out to Aboriginal peoples, giving them a voice, while at the same time announcing their continued existence to the rest of Canada. As a writer and clerk within Indian Affairs, he did his best to listen to the concerns of his people, and gave them a voice as much as he could.

Similarly, Andrew Paull did much to articulate the concerns of Indians nationally, but particularly in British Columbia. As a writer, publisher, and public figure on both the political and cultural fronts, Paull was not easily ignored. His efforts did much to spark the modern-day national pan-Indian political movements that have done much to raise public awareness about Aboriginal issues. Reverend Edward Ahenakew, meanwhile, laboured on his writing in a much less public way, afraid of the implications it might have had for his role as a respected member of the Anglican Church. Nonetheless, he wrote, producing both non-fiction and fiction, including the “lost Indian novel” of early twentieth-century Canada. Contemporary Cree filmmaker and journalist, Doug Cuthand, calls Ahenakew “our Martin Luther King,” pointing out that this unsung Cree hero was the first in a series of political and spiritual leaders who worked within the church to assist their people on a provincial and national scale.⁹

As Aboriginal women, Bernice Loft Winslow and Ethel Brant Monture faced perhaps even greater challenges to have their voices heard. Yet, through persistence and performance, they left their marks on the stages and pages of Canadian audiences and libraries. Monture and Loft were, however, unique amongst this group of writers. Their lecturing and writing efforts were at points in their lives their only means of income. The male writers in this group all had day jobs, so to speak, where Loft and Monture made a living from their lecturing and writing

⁹ Doug Cuthand, *Askiwina: a Cree world* (Regina: Coteau Books, 2007) 22.

activities. In Loft's case, her writing was never profitable, but as her correspondence reveals, she hoped that it one day would be. Family responsibilities, of course, altered her plans. Loft and Monture also differed somewhat in their uses of literacy in that they both came from prominent and well-known Aboriginal families. Their respective pedigrees meant that public and media attention was already directed somewhat their way. By the nature of their famous ancestors, Loft and Monture could more easily attract a receptive audience, at least initially, and in part this is why they were able to make a living from their efforts.

Much of the writing of these aforementioned individuals was non-fiction (with Loft's poetry and Ahenakew's novel, short stories, and poetry being notable exceptions). For the most part, their writing was marked by the distinctive features of journalism, autobiography, anthropology, history, and activism. English Literature Professor and historian of Indian non-fiction Robert Warrior characterises the Aboriginal tradition of non-fiction writing as "the oldest and most robust type of modern writing that Native people in North America have produced," having brought us pleas on behalf of Aboriginal peoples, accounts of crucial periods in history, profiles of important individuals, and examinations of mistreatment and dysfunction within the Aboriginal world.¹⁰ Rather than merely demonstrating evidence of Aboriginal assimilation of western literacy and book culture, such writing followed what Warrior has termed, an "intellectual trade route."¹¹ These Aboriginal writers articulated and adopted Western forms to suit their own purposes of communication, knowledge transfer, and community, and brought new information and knowledge to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audiences alike using the same tools that had so often been used against them. Although the medium of their message was

¹⁰ Robert Warrior, *The People and the Word: reading Native nonfiction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) xx.

¹¹ Warrior 181-187.

rooted in Western traditions of literacy, the messages they sought to transmit were not messages of defeat. Rather, by articulating and adopting western literary forms, the Aboriginal writers discussed here were attempting to strengthen the resolve of their people, to solidify and buttress their efforts in maintaining their identities as Indians. None of these writers appears to have suffered from any form of “cognitive assimilation,” which Marie Battiste highlights as one of the dangers of literacy when it is “forced” upon people of differing cultures.¹² Ahenakew, Cooke, Loft Winslow, Monture, and Paull each used literacy as a means of strengthening and asserting their identities as Aboriginal people, as a means of supporting the cultures of their people.

Thus it follows that the work of these Aboriginal writers demonstrated a concerted effort to create an intellectual space for Indians in early twentieth-century Canada. The work of McMaster University English Literature professor Daniel Coleman has shown that not only do people write books, but that books have a role in writing people. In other words, the literary project in Canada leading up to the early twentieth century had been dominated by a “romantic-nationalist idea that equated each nation with a single culture.”¹³ That single culture was portrayed as white and predominantly British, conflating whiteness with civility. The literary work of early Canadian writers supported such ideas, thereby naturalizing whiteness as the norm for English-Canadian identity. Early Canadian fiction, poetry, drama, journalism, and political writing all served to strengthen this so-called norm, in the process squeezing out all cultural voices that were not white and English-speaking.

Coleman outlines the literary work that served to establish such ideas of normalcy in Canada. Through the regularly repeated literary personifications of the Canadian nation as a

¹² Marie Battiste, “Micmac literacy and cognitive assimilation,” *Indian Education in Canada, volume 1: the legacy*, Eds. Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert and Don McCaskill (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1986) 23-44.

¹³ Daniel Coleman, *White Civility: the literary project of English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006) 4.

Loyalist brother, an enterprising Scottish orphan, muscular Christian, or maturing colonial son, a norm was established identifying English Canada as distinctly British and white.¹⁴ In turn, the writing of English Canadians established for the country a “fictive ethnicity,” whereby Aboriginal people, for one, were decidedly pushed to the margins, characterised as existing firmly in the past (or prehistory, suggesting relative unimportance) and denied any existence in the present or future of the country. Where Aboriginal people did make an appearance in the present, they were depicted as delayed in the race of civilizations, as standing in the way or on the margins of Euro-Canadian (white, British) settlement and progress. The future of Aboriginal peoples, as depicted by mainstream Canadian writing, was of course much darker – they ceased to exist at all. Aboriginal writing in the early twentieth century, as much as it could, attempted to discredit such assumptions, to modify and correct Canada’s fictive ethnicity.

Threaded throughout the work of these Aboriginal writers, were the positive reinforcement and encouragement of interested and progressive Euro-Canadians. Despite the iron fist of Duncan Campbell Scott in Indian Affairs, who did his best to silence both Cooke and Ahenakew, these men found support through other channels – Ahenakew through Paul Wallace and William Lingelbach, in particular – Canadian scholars abroad who indirectly touched Cooke as well. Cooke benefited largely through the influence and support of Marius Barbeau, who had a professional relationship with both Wallace and Lingelbach. Ethel Brant Monture and Bernice Loft Winslow similarly found solace and support in Paul Wallace, as well as women like Celia File. The support that non-Aboriginals, like Wallace, Lingelbach, Barbeau, and File offered, was rarely financial, but perhaps more importantly it came in the form of intellectual curiosity, stimulation, and a desire to create an intellectual space where the voices of Aboriginal people could be heard. But the work that each writer produced was theirs alone. For example, where

¹⁴ See Coleman 5-7.

Paul Wallace was certainly a motivator for Edward Ahenakew, the cache of Ahenakew's fiction and poetry proves that the Reverend was writing more for himself than he was for Wallace, or for the small writer's fees that the American Philosophical Society (through Wallace) could provide. Each of these five writers provides us with examples of early twentieth century Aboriginal writing that is largely unfiltered, without significant interference from Euro-Canadians who acted as editors. In the case of Ahenakew and Cooke in particular, we have their handwritten manuscripts as evidence of each man's authentic voice.

But the question remains: why could none of these writers and performers capitalise on the recent fame of E. Pauline Johnson? The story told here reveals that they did capitalise on her fame. That they have not been remembered and celebrated in the same light as Johnson speaks to the fact that non-Aboriginal Canadians were largely uninterested in the work and voices of Aboriginal peoples during the first half of the twentieth century, and in the flurry of Aboriginal literary activity and "cultural renaissance" of the post-1960 era, the efforts of Cooke, Ahenakew, Paull, Loft, and Monture have been unfortunately forgotten and overlooked. Johnson's literary output and familial background was also richer, without a doubt, and her dual image as Victorian lady and Indian Princess was fresh in her time. Furthermore, Johnson's popularity appears to have benefited from a kind of transitory nostalgia after Indians in Canada ceased to be a major political force. Loft, Monture, and Cooke each tried to capture and capitalise on something of Johnson's legacy, with some success. But we must also remember that Johnson's legacy as an innovative and important literary figure and performer was not solidly in place in the years and decades following her death.

In her lifetime, Johnson was well-loved and widely respected. But for nearly fifty years following her death – the same period in which the writers discussed in this work were active –

Johnson's reputation was very nearly forgotten. As Margaret Fairley wrote in 1954, "There is a sharp contrast between the reputation of Pauline Johnson in her lifetime and her reputation now. Two or three of her poems are known through anthologies.... The prose works are hardly known at all.... Yet in her lifetime her work was loved by audiences of people of all classes right across Canada, and won high praise from the leading critics of the time."¹⁵ Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson note that in Johnson's lifetime, she was most often referred to as a "poetess," but in the decades following her death, she was usually devalued as a "princess," playing to popular stereotypes. Much of the blame for this, according to Gerson and Strong-Boag, lies in the hands of the literary Indian-impostors, Grey Owl and Buffalo Child Long Lance,¹⁶ who had built up considerable reputations in print, were adored by Euro-Canadian audiences, only to be later exposed as frauds: "The stories of these two phoney Indians, both of whom had been remarkably successful in deceiving audiences eager for 'safe' representatives of oppressed peoples, did little to create confidence in the authenticity of Native authors and performers."¹⁷ Within such an environment, Euro-Canadian readers and critics devalued Johnson's literary reputation, weary that she too might have been some kind of an impostor.

Cooke, Loft, Paull, Ahenakew, and Monture thus suffered from this same modernist devaluation. In the fifty years following Johnson's death, in which these Aboriginal writers were active, Euro-Canadian audiences were either distracted by the convenient romance and fulfilled

¹⁵ Margaret Fairley, "Pauline Johnson" *New Frontiers* 3.2 (Summer, 1954) 43.

¹⁶ The fascinating story of "Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance" (supposedly a full-blooded Blackfoot chief) who was in reality Sylvester Long, the son of mixed-blood parents born into slavery in the American south, is told by Donald Smith in, *Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance: the glorious impostor* (Red Deer, Alberta: Red Deer Press, 1999). Long Lance/Sylvester used print and publishing as one means of inventing himself as an Indian. In addition to his biography – *Long Lance* (New York: Cosmopolitan, 1928) – Long Lance/Sylvester was active as a journalist with the Calgary *Herald* and was often published in other periodicals, such as *Maclean's*.

¹⁷ Strong-Boag and Gerson, 125.

stereotypical imagery of Grey Owl and Long Lance, or they were disgusted with having been deceived by these same fake-Indians. The environment for Aboriginal writing and performance was therefore largely hostile towards authentic Indians, who ironically did not fit perceived notions of “Indianness,” thus explaining their essential erasure from the Canadian literary memory.

The literary efforts of Aboriginal peoples have always suffered too from the non-Aboriginal notion that literacy is something which has largely eluded Aboriginal populations, in part due to indifference, and in part due to perceived historical realities. Aboriginal peoples have long been classified by missionaries, government, and non-Aboriginal media as belonging strictly to oral cultures, where history, lore, and law were passed on through generations by oral storytelling only. While this is not completely untrue, it is misleading. Orality, in the view of most Westerners, at least, has been paired as the polar opposite of literacy. In other words, oral cultures were non-literate cultures, assuming that because the main mode of disseminating information and knowledge was through oral means, that the cultures had no notion or understanding of writing or reading. But the opposite certainly is not true of so-called literate cultures, where oral transmission of knowledge is part of the cultural means of communication. And what are we to make of the existence of hieroglyphics, wampum, and winter counts in cultures that have been labelled simply as “oral”? Each of these traditional forms of so-called “art” was in fact a method of communication. Although they did not resemble alphabetic scripts, each was written and meant to be read. Some, such as wampum and winter counts, were meant to act as visual aids to oral stories, while others, like hieroglyphics were potentially stand-alone methods of communication.

Where hieroglyphic and syllabic forms of writing existed prior to European influence, for

example amongst the Mi'kmaq of Atlantic Canada or the Northern Cree, Euro-Canadian missionaries of varying denominations adopted such writing to further their religious conversion goals. Nineteenth century Methodist missionary James Evans invented (or possibly adapted) syllabics for the Cree at Norway House, translating the Bible into the script. Evans' efforts constituted the first instances of book printing in western Canada. The mid-eighteenth-century efforts of Roman Catholic missionary Pierre Maillard amongst the Mi'kmaq similarly included the adoption of an existing Aboriginal script to further his religious cause. Maillard's motivation in using hieroglyphics in communicating with his Mi'kmaq congregation was in part fuelled by his fear that the Mi'kmaq would learn to read and write alphabetic script, thus undermining his authority. His assertion, "if they could make use of our alphabet ... they would not hesitate strongly to persuade themselves that they knew much more than those who are intended to instruct them," recognized that Aboriginal peoples would embrace and use European languages and the printed word for their own purposes.

While the Roman Catholic approach to literacy education historically generally limited Aboriginal access to the Bible and the printed word by attempting to maintain strict control over the content and nature of such literature, Protestant denominations, particularly Methodists, demonstrated a great faith in the power of education and an emphasis on reading the Bible.¹⁸ In this light, Aboriginal converts to Methodism, such as Reverend Peter Jones and George Copway, made use of the English language and alphabetic literacy to draw non-Aboriginal attention towards the grievances of their people (and were encouraged to do so by Euro-Canadian Methodist leaders such as Egerton Ryerson). Other Protestant denominations, namely Anglicans, also made wide use of the printed word in their attempts to convert Aboriginal peoples. Their influence, for instance, among coastal Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia played a key role

¹⁸ See: Edwards (2005).

in the eventual establishment of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia and its widely distributed publication, *The Native Voice*.

Pauline Johnson was the first Aboriginal person to employ alphabetic literacy in a decidedly non-religious form. Cooke, Paull, Ahenakew, Loft, and Monture, provide us with examples of Aboriginal people who followed in her footsteps, to varying degrees of success and exposure, through to the mid-twentieth century. The early part of the era in which they were writing has been characterized as a time when non-Aboriginal Canadians were perhaps at their most ignorant of Aboriginal issues. By the time their efforts ceased, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, general public awareness of the mistreatment and social ills that faced Indians in Canada was once again on the rise. While the efforts of these writers should by no means be attributed wholly with the renewal of public interest in the social welfare of Indians, their presence throughout the first half of the twentieth century, on the page and on the stage, demonstrated that Aboriginal peoples were by no means inactive from a literary and socio-political point of view.

The era in which they were performing and writing was also one characterized by misconceptions of Aboriginal peoples that were generally seen as social truths. The impact of generations of popular and widely read non-Aboriginal writing about Indians, casting Aboriginal peoples as either noble savages, a vanishing race, or savage menaces, had become viewed as not mere fiction, but a historical and contemporary truth. In part, this is how dress-up Indian impostors like Grey Owl and Buffalo Long Lance (and Karl May) built their careers of deception. They built on existing stereotypes and embodied the romantic image of Indians that had been buttressed in part by Euro-Canadian literary fiction. Pauline Johnson, unfortunately, was swept into the romantic conception of a savage Indian princess who has partially a civilized Victorian lady. But the efforts of Ahenakew, Paull, Cooke, Monture, and Loft stood apart from

such romantic and misleading notions about Indians. Although Cooke and Loft certainly performed Indian-ness, regularly dressing in Indian garb to fulfill the preconceptions of the non-Aboriginal public, their messages were not stereotypical. None of the writers discussed in these pages supported the idea of a vanishing race, but rather used their literary and performing skills to draw attention to contemporary Indian issues. And for perhaps the first time in Canadian history, their writings were addressed equally to Euro-Canadian audiences and Aboriginal peoples. Although not explicit in their motivations, each was using the printed word as a means of demonstrating that Aboriginal peoples were here, and their numbers were growing, and each was calling upon their people to fight back against misleading and damaging stereotypes.

All of the writers discussed in this work employed some kind of public performance as a part of their art and message. Charles A. Cooke and Bernice Loft Winslow performed publicly in much the same way as E. Pauline Johnson, dressing up in “Indian” costumes, and performing poetry, songs, and lore to mainly Euro-Canadian audiences. Andrew Paull was publicly active as a key political figure and member of the North American Indian Brotherhood, and additionally he was nationally recognised as one of Canada’s leading coaches of lacrosse. Edward Ahenakew was heavily involved with the Anglican Church in Saskatchewan. That these writers were also performers and public speakers should perhaps be no surprise. Scholars of Aboriginal literature have noted before the relationship between performance and writing, especially in the careers of contemporary Aboriginal writers.¹⁹ Kimberly Blaeser has noted, for example, that

¹⁹ See, for example: Kimberly M. Blaeser, “Writing voices speaking: Native authors and an oral aesthetic,” *Talking on the page: editing Aboriginal oral texts*. Ed. by Laura J. Murray and Keren Rice (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) 53-68; J. Edward Chamberlin, “Doing things with words: putting performance on the page,” *Talking on the page*. 69-90; Julie Cruikshank, “The Social life of texts: editing on the page and in performance,” *Talking on the page*. 98-119; Norman K. Denzin, *Performance ethnography: critical pedagogy and the politics of culture* (London: Sage, 2003); Alexia Maria Kosmider, *Tricky tribal discourse: the poetry, short stories, and Fus Fixico letters of Creek writer Alex Posey* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1998); Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American intellectuals, race, and reform* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Simon Ortiz, ed., *Earth power coming: short fiction in Native American literature* (Tsaile: Navajo Community College Press, 1983); Jarold

“contemporary Native authors work to translate not only language, but form, culture, and perspective. And within their written words, many attempt to continue the life of the oral reality.”²⁰ Writer and activist, Simon Ortiz, noted in the early 1980s that Aboriginal writers often embody “supra-literary intentions,” a continuation of the communal function or orality in written stories. In his words, the goal of contemporary Aboriginal writers is to “make sure that the voice keeps singing forth so that the earth power will not cease, and that the people remain fully aware of their social, economic, political, cultural, and spiritual responsibilities to all things.”²¹

Performance is not merely to entertain, but as Norman K. Denzin explains, “it must be political, moving people to action, reflection, or both”; and in drawing links between performance and writing, he notes, “writing creates the worlds we inhabit.”²² And writing, of course, is really an alternative form of performance. Authors write with an audience in mind, just as performers and actors perform with an audience in mind. Reading a performance, therefore, requires a literate audience: in both instances of performance, on the page and on the stage, the audience or reader must embody a kind of literacy to fully understand the message. To read text, obviously one must be literate in a traditional reading and writing sense, but to fully understand a live or oral performance, a kind of literacy is also required. Oral or stage performance is a kind of communication, “a way of speaking, the essence of which resides in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communication skill, highlighting the

Ramsey, *Reading the fire: the traditional Indian literatures of America*. Revised and expanded (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999).

²⁰ Blaeser 53.

²¹ Ortiz (1983) vii-viii.

²² Denzin xi, xii.

way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential context.”²³ Performance must be contextualized: “it involves an active process of negotiation in which participants reflexively examine the discourse as it is emerging.”²⁴ Active listening is an essential part of oral storytelling and performance. More than merely speech, it involves utterance, hearing, listening, and delighting. Simon Ortiz elaborates, “a story is not only told but it is also listened to; it becomes whole in its expression and perception.”²⁵ The audience, therefore, should be active participants who must do more than merely listen to the sounds and words, but should try to perceive context, meaning, and purpose.²⁶

Aboriginal performance has often been characterised as a form of resistance to colonialism,²⁷ particularly because it expresses and embodies moral ties to community and through performance, indigenous worldviews and political viewpoints are legitimated. Denzin says that “meaning and resistance are embodied in the act of performance itself,” the act itself is political, where the soul of the culture resides.²⁸ In her work on Maori of New Zealand, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, characterises contemporary Indigenous performance as embodying four moral elements: (1) decolonisation, reclaiming Indigenous cultural practices and articulating these at social, political, and spiritual levels; (2) healing, physically, psychologically, and spiritually; (3) transformation, focussing on changes that result at the psychological, spiritual, social, and

²³ Richard Bauman, *Story, performance, and event* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 3.

²⁴ Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs, “Poetics and performance as critical perspectives on language and social life,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990) [59-88] 69.

²⁵ Ortiz, “Always the stories: a brief history and thoughts on my writing.” *Coyote was here: essays on contemporary Native American literary and political mobilization*. Ed. by Bo Scholer (Aarhus: University of Aarhus, 1984) 57.

²⁶ Ortiz, *Song, poetry, and language: expression and perception* (Tsaile: Navajo Community College Press, 1977) 9; Blaeser 55.

²⁷ See, for example: Denzin (2003); Maddox (2005); and Strong-Boag and Gerson, *Paddling her own canoe*.

²⁸ Denzin 245-246.

political, economic, and collective levels; and (4) mobilisation, at local, regional, national, and global levels. Each process is interdependent, and addresses cultural survival and collective self-determination.²⁹ In the performances of Cooke, Loft, Monture, Paull, and Ahenakew, we can observe many of these elements. In every instance, each worked to decolonise the negative aspects of Western culture, and to empower their communities against the negative and incorrect stereotypes of “Indians” held by Euro-Canadians. And although none was as widely read or published as the likes of E. Pauline Johnson, or American Indians like Luther Standing Bear, Charles Eastman, Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, or Arthur C. Parker, their modest collection of writing was offered as a corrective to the existing histories and stories published and disseminated by Euro-Canadians.³⁰ Each, in his or her own way, offered an Aboriginal point of view on Indian affairs which many Euro-Canadians were either ignorant of, or worse, wished to obliterate.

Charles A. Cooke was for the Canadian anthropologist, Marius Barbeau, what Charles Cultee had been for Franz Boas: not only a linguistic informant, but a gifted and enthusiastic recitalist, literary scholar, and an artist in his own right.³¹ Cooke was at once a civil servant and employee of the Department of Indian Affairs, an informant to anthropologists like Marius Barbeau, a scholar in his own right (compiling a newspaper and dictionaries in the Mohawk language), and an Indian performer. As a scholar, informant, and civil servant, he wore a suit and tie, appearing very formal and “civilised,” but as an Indian performer, he presented himself in Indian costume, including even a headdress. He embodied at once a remnant of a “vanishing

²⁹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing methodologies: research and Indigenous peoples* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999).

³⁰ For more on Standing Bear, Eastman, Bonnin, and Parker, see: Maddox (2005).

³¹ See: Ramsey xix-xx

race,” and a trainee in Euro-Canada’s benevolent project of “uplift and civilization.” The contrast of these representations seems to be intentional, perhaps because, as Lucy Maddox argues, Euro-North Americans were “ill equipped to recognize Indianness as anything but a performative role.”³² In other words, Cooke recognised that in order to be seen and heard by a Euro-Canadian audience, he had to play up to their expectations. Cooke performed as a “noble savage” because this was one of only two conceptions of the Indian that most Euro-Canadians could understand.³³ But in dressing-up to meet such expectations, Indian performers like Cooke were embodying “roles that before had been largely discursively constructed.” In reclaiming these images as their own, Indian performers were attempting to alter these constructions.³⁴

While certainly problematic, if not confusing, from a contemporary standpoint, the employment of Indian costuming and public performance in the first part of the twentieth century by Cooke, Loft, Monture, and others was a means of protecting a personal and public sense of identity. By dressing up and meeting the visual expectations and stereotypes of non-Aboriginal audiences, yet at the same time presenting themselves as well-spoken intellectuals, Aboriginal writers/performers were sending the clear message that citizenship and assimilation did not go hand in hand. As Maddox explains in the context of American Indian performers of the same period, “it was entirely possible, from their perspective, to demonstrate one’s ‘civilization’ and one’s Indianness in a single performance.”³⁵

³² Maddox 4.

³³ Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) took a similar approach in his role as a Indian preacher. See: Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers*.

³⁴ Maddox 4. For more, see also: Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); and Robert Allen Warrior, *Tribal secrets: recovering American Indian intellectual traditions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

³⁵ Maddox 129.

The efforts and literary output of Cooke, Paull, Ahenakew, Loft, and Monture demonstrate that the early twentieth century was not devoid of Aboriginal literary contribution or interest. Euro-Canadian audiences may not have been as responsive as they had been in years previous and in the decades following, but there was nonetheless a continuum of Aboriginal writing. Efforts are currently under way to publish Edward Ahenakew's fiction and poetry, and such a collection will constitute the "lost Indian novel" of the first quarter of the twentieth century.³⁶ The writing of Cooke, Ahenakew, Monture, Paull, and Loft was unique in the sense that it addressed both Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal audiences – a literary characteristic that was later followed by Aboriginal writers in the 1960s onward. The writers discussed in these pages, therefore, were precursors to the Aboriginal renaissance of the 1960s and 1970s. An awareness of their efforts thus helps us to understand the perceived flurry of activity that would happen later. Writing back to the negative stereotypes of Indians perpetuated by European and Euro-Canadian writers, while at the same time rallying First Nations people to action through writing and performance, Ahenakew, Cooke, Paull, Monture, and Loft, each in their own small way helped to foster an environment that would spawn the Aboriginal leadership of the decades that followed.

³⁶ The author is currently compiling and editing Ahenakew's fiction and poetic works with Saskatchewan writer (and Ahenakew's grand-niece), Heather Hodgson. An editor at the University of Toronto Press has expressed interest in the publication of such a volume, which we hope will make a significant contribution to the history of Aboriginal writing in Canada.

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