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Waging War on Education: American Indian Versions

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Education's Histories

methodological grist for the
history of education

Notes

¹ Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

Waging War on Education: American Indian Versions

Donald Warren

Sometime between 1703 and 1712, four Mohawk chiefs came to London under the aegis of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Lawrence Cremin mentioned this astonishing cultural encounter as an aside in a dismal assessment of the Society's missionary ventures among the colonies' Native peoples.¹ The Mohawk leaders were not the first Indians to cross the Atlantic for English destinations, and they would not be the last. Still, such voyages were unusual, and a delegation of Native dignitaries to foreign shores even rarer. One wonders what the chiefs thought of their experience and how the English hosts responded to them. The moment teems with educative potential begging for conjecture and analysis. For the Mohawks, the journey alone back and forth across an unknown ocean must have amazed. The English too entered unfamiliar territory, their guests' physical bearing, regalia, language, mores, and spirituality. Did they see savages, royalty, or traces of both? Cremin did not pursue such matters probably because documentary sources were not available. Notice, however, on other topics he willingly and insightfully guessed. Apparently unheeded, the Mohawk meeting slipped from Euroamerican memory, and it failed to capture Cremin's speculative interest. Segments of it may yet be recoverable within Mohawk and Iroquois oral traditions, the kinds of sources he cited in general references to American Indian histories.

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This photo symbolizes the past and present. The photo on the left was taken by Edward Curtis in 1908. The photo on the right, taken 100 years later in 2009, demonstrates the long standing educational and spiritual tradition of the Arikara and that there are those who have not forgotten our teachings. Photograph and caption by KuuNUx TeeRIit Kroupa. Personal collection.

What piqued Cremin's curiosity instead was why colonial missions among Indians tended to fail. With regard to the Iroquois, one of his sources, a missionary Mohawk elders declined to encourage, offered answers: 1) mistreatment of Indians by land speculators, 2) disreputable behavior by white military personnel, and 3) misrepresentation of English motives by Dutch merchants seeking advantages in their trade with the Iroquois. Cremin added an implication. The missionary "could scarcely carry on his work in the face of this larger and more powerful education."² Discordant education or discordant pedagogies thus surfaced as an interpretative theme in his three-volume history *American Education*.³

Summarizing colonial experience, Cremin posted a binary framework for analyzing Indian and European cultural conflicts, "the more powerful education of tribal folkways on the one hand and white exploitation on the other."⁴ A fair fight, he observed, did not ensue. Rather, "the vast majority of the Indians were formed by tribal values for a way of life that was at best marginal to the social mainstream, and at worst crumbling."⁵ Cremin found education within the dynamics of Natives' cultural formation and judged it deficient. By the time of the American Revolution, it was losing a battle against dominant myriad forces of Eurocentric teaching and learning. This essay explores methodological effects of what can be classified in Cremin's terms as a war waged on education. Looking backward from what would become the United States' future, he did not ask whose social mainstream qualified as normative during the colonial period, apparently assuming the answer was known. Battle after battle, it would seem, Indians eventually lost the war on their cultures. The perspective deletes an entire topic from the interests of education historians, namely the educative processes and institutions active among Indigenous Americans pre- and postcontact with white intrusions. Specifically, the paper develops a preliminary investigation on roles played by historians of education in continuing historiographical failures.

Other Conceptual Foundations

American Indian scholars and specialists think education historians need sharp eyes and ears ready to hear.⁶ The suggestion may seem odd. It is meant collegially to aid detection of often muted and submerged noises of cultures in motion, the essential task of historians interested in education. The advice has far-reaching applications. Unready, education historians can miss, for example, David Van Reybrouck, *Congo*, Amanda Vaill, *Hotel Florida*, and Theodore Rosengarten, *All God's Dangers* as deeply nuanced reconstructions of education in process.⁷ Van Reybrouck configures the long, turbulent histories of the Congolese from pre- to post-colonial eras,

² Ibid., 349.

³ Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783*; Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982); Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

⁴ Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783*, 350.

⁵ Ibid., 354.

⁶ Vine Deloria, Jr., *We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf* (New York: Macmillan, 1970); Vine Deloria, Jr. and Daniel R. Wildcat, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2001); Raymond J. DeMallie, "These Have No Ears: Narrative and the Ethnohistorical Method," *Ethnohistory* 40, no. 4 (1993): 515-38; Donald L. Fixico, *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World: American Indian Studies and Traditional Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2003); K. Tsianina Lomawaima, "Tribal Sovereigns: Reframing Research in American Indian Education," *Harvard Educational Review* 70, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 1-23; Devon A. Mihesuah, "Introduction: Native Student, Faculty, and Staff Experiences in the Ivory Tower," *The American Indian Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2003): 46-49.

⁷ David Van Reybrouck, *Congo: The Epic History of a People* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014); Amanda Vaill, *Hotel Florida: Truth, Love, and Death in the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014); Theodore Rosengarten, *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974).

determined to find Indigenous perspectives on lessons wrought from European and U.S. imperialism. Vaill uses a much frequented Madrid hotel to filter interactions comprising the Spanish Civil War, asking variations on a single question: What did participants learn from the conflict? In contrast, focused on one man, a black Alabama sharecropper who labored across the twentieth century, Rosengarten produces a study of cultures fixed, fluid, and ironically integrated. In one critic's view, *All God's Dangers* is the book that "best explains the [U.S.] South."⁸ It won a National Book Award in 1974 and then vanished from scholarly and popular discussion, including the education canon, where it never found a home in the first place. Education historians might also overlook Thomas Piketty's magisterial *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, which, like Daniel T. Rodgers' *Age of Fracture*, scans the history of economics for clues to the ways and means of the education of the public.⁹ Similarly, Werner Sollors, *The Temptation of Despair* looks for the public emerging in Germany after World War II.¹⁰ Here despair becomes an educational option in the same way that inequality functions as an educating institution in Piketty's analysis and social fragmentation surfaces as a vehicle of pervasive teaching and learning in Rodgers' work. Save for Rosengarten and Rodgers, none of these authors pays much attention to schools or other intentionally pedagogical institutions; all treat education as the fraught process of cultural formation.

They have methodological similarities as well. The authors merge research designs of various disciplines and rely on extensive sources ranging across archaeological digs, commercial motion pictures, correspondence, documentary films, fiction, government records, news reports, oral history, photojournalism, and statistics. They neither disparage precolonial times as prehistory nor otherwise elevate Western European culture as the pre-eminent arbiter of ideas, values, explanations, and meanings. They consider oral traditions and storytelling historically reliable. There is no presumed progressive arc driving the inquiries, thus explicitly denying time fantasized ameliorative powers. Things do not necessarily get better. Not all wounds heal, and those that do may leave barely visible scars. Decisions, like other actions, have consequences the authors intend to find. They choose words carefully, demonstrating the importance of history writing. Prose becomes the third front of their history projects, the others being method and topic. Although intimately joined, like a string ensemble, each plays different and varying roles. By these means, but unintentionally, the authors push education history onto less trafficked landscapes. Their work implies the field is again due for revision, the research agenda needing new formats and sensibilities, as Native scholars have advised.

This essay proposes an expedition into sources, published ones primarily, synthesizing works not usually linked to education history. It moves from a definition of historiography as not only literature review but more basically as critique of research methods, or to borrow from William Fenton, "the critical and constructive

⁸ Dwight Garner, "Lost in Literary History: A Tale of Courage in the South," *The New York Times*, April 19, 2014, sec. C, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/19/books/all-gods-dangers-a-forgotten-autobiography.html>.

⁹ Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Werner Sollors, *The Temptation of Despair: Tales of the 1940s* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014).

¹¹ William N. Fenton, *American Indian and White Relations to 1830: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 19.

¹² See Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

¹³ Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), 14.

¹⁴ Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Wonderful World of Ellwood Patterson Cubberley: An Essay on the Historiography of American Education* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965); Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783*; Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876*, 1982; Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980*, 1988.

process by which history is written.”¹¹ The essay is interested both in historians’ findings and how they reach findings. It does not seek balance between poles of a continuum, trying rather to understand how fulcrums shift in particular projects and whether they should shift. In general the essay raises a debatable proposition: Education history’s intrinsic and most inviting contributions begin as research methods. Hypothetically, any topic can be approached, and reach important destinations, if the approach itself is driven by accumulating evidence of when, where, and by what means individuals and groups have learned, for good or ill. Absent any presumed definition of education, history of education projects as procedurals take the form of biography, cross-generational probes of intersections among human behaviors, intentional or not, and their contexts, both of which—the people and their settings—require identities and investigations. The essay offers America Indian histories as analytical levers. Collectively, they provide prismatic case studies of what happens methodologically when education historians attempt to cleanse their methods of ethnocentrism and similar predispositions. Such efforts inevitably fail, given durable habits of mind, but the research process itself benefits. It can bloom profusely. In short, education history is required to meet a basic standard: It must be educative along the path toward discovery of a particular relevant topic. Topics in Native education histories are deemed end products rather than places from which to begin. The essay’s concluding observations can apply to Indigenous histories of other nations but that probability is only hinted, not pursued systematically.¹²

From several angles, the following pages explore Bernard Bailyn’s problematic definition of education, but do so by casting Native Americans’ perspectives on conceptual issues. He presented his now famous paper on the history of U.S. education in October 1959 as part of a conference series hosted by the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Virginia. Both welcomed and decried as moving beyond the confines of formal pedagogy, Bailyn defined education “as the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations.” The broad construction, he argued, enabled historians to see “great variations” as “schools and universities fade in significance next to other social agencies,” to see “education in its elaborate, intricate involvements with the rest of society,” and “its shifting functions, meanings, and purposes.”¹³ At the time, responses tended to be contentiously bipolar. Many celebrated an open, more empirically grounded, version of education history liberated from unquestioning advocacy of schools, colleges, and other formal institutions. Critics feared a threatened retreat from recurring battles to defend publicly financed and controlled common schooling and warned Bailyn’s hypothesis could not produce written histories distinguishable from general history. The history of education would disappear as a specialized field of inquiry. Almost at once, Lawrence Cremin set to work to prove them wrong, subsequently devising more detailed, if malleable, definitions of education to inform a comprehensive survey.¹⁴ The debate continued, eventually less heatedly. Other

revisionist trends ensued, but in the twenty-first century self-identified historians of education routinely work from Bailyn's assumptions and definitions and Cremin's examples. Nevertheless, they seem to have returned to a schooling focus, as documented in the pages of the *History of Education Quarterly*, *American Educational History Journal*, and the printed conference programs of the History of Education Society, Organization of Educational Historians, and Southern History of Education Society, all U.S. associations.¹⁵ Work emanating from other countries may limn a more intricate contemporary portrait.

Cremin refined and augmented Bailyn's critique of education history but left it basically unchallenged. Furthermore, Sol Cohen observes in detail, Cremin's three-volume masterwork *American Education* merely proved Bailyn's critics right. A coherent, fulsome survey of U.S. education broadly defined could not be reduced to a written version without crimping intellectual consistency or invoking pre-emptive benchmarks to obtain manageable samples of teaching and learning.¹⁶ One could argue Bailyn and Cremin tried hard to soothe disconcerting variability and controversy. They tended to leave funding as an indicator of education's priority status unexamined. Both tethered their critiques and reconstructions to the coalescing U.S. achievement of pedagogical institutional forms before the Revolutionary War. Afterwards, well into the twentieth century in Cremin's work, Americans progressed to an admittedly diverse array of ensconced educational variations. According to Bailyn, their most notable alteration of antecedent European influences was to shift education to a social intention. Growing from their wilderness experience as colonists on the Atlantic coast, they concluded that institutionalized teaching and learning were necessary accompaniments of urgently needed social cohesion. They survived and eventually flourished not as individuals and families alone but as a union. Intentional schooling brought efficient fuel and cultural glue to the enterprise, and the march toward a new nation commenced. Granted, the trek had ups and downs, although they were correctable within a generally sure-footed directive.

Early on, Richard Storr had warned of the chilling effects of "teleology in reverse," reconstructing education's past through the rose-tinted glasses of reigning knowledge claims.¹⁷ He worried about educative phenomena that would be missed along the way toward documenting the pre-established definitions and remained deeply skeptical of methodological effects issuing from over-weighted intentionality. Room should be left for serendipitous, accidental, and experiential learning. With tacit reference to Bailyn and Cremin's definitional approach, Storr thought the field's problem was not lack of breadth. Rather, they bequeathed an inadequate, even crippling, research design. Knowing education's appearance in advance, they could confidently locate it in trolling the past. The methodological misstep entered at the onset of research and tainted the findings that followed. Education historians have tended to ignore Storr's advice as several critics have observed.¹⁸

¹⁵ Milton Gaither, *American Educational History Revisited: A Critique of Progress* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2003); Milton Gaither, "The History of North American Education, 15,000 BCE to 1491," *History of Education Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (August 1, 2014): 323–48.

¹⁶ Sol Cohen, *Challenging Orthodoxies* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

¹⁷ Richard J. Storr, "The Role of Education in American History: A Memorandum for the Committee Advising the Fund for the Advancement of Education in Regard to the Subject," *Harvard Educational Review* 46, no. 3 (August 1976): 334; Richard Storr, "The Education of History: Some Impressions," *Harvard Educational Review* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1961): 124-135.

¹⁸ Yesenia Lucia Cervera, "Negotiating the History of Education: How the Histories of Indigenous Education Expand the Field," *History of Education Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (August 1, 2014): 362–83; Joshua B. Garrison, "Ontogeny Recapitulates Savagery: The Evolution of G. Stanley Hall's Adolescent," Dissertation (Bloomington, IN, 2006); Glenn P. Lauzon, *Civic Learning through Agricultural Improvement: Bringing "The Loom and the Anvil into Proximity with the Plow"* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2011); Adrea Lawrence, *Lessons from an Indian Day School: Negotiating Colonization in Northern New Mexico, 1902-1907* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011).



Arikara Lodge completed in 2009 in White Shield, ND. Photograph by KuuNUx TeeRIt Kroupa. Personal collection.

Historians who underestimate Bailyn and Cremin as scholars are bound to find themselves embarrassed later. They are celebrated exemplars of a cultural perspective that lifts teaching and learning, variously discerned, onto history's center stage. Yet, if education is understood in their terms as the process by which people struggle to survive, grow, and form society, their critique of education history fails at other methodological points as well. The conceptual errors blur distinctions between their work and that of Ellwood P. Cubberley, a personalized target of their analyses and an easy mark for later criticism given his overt biases against women, immigrants, people of color, and farmers.¹⁹ Other important problems surface. No competent historian treats the past as “the present writ small,” but depicting the past as distinctly different from the present, a foreign territory, merely restates a Western European abstraction of time as linear and progressive.²⁰ British novelist Julian Barnes helps readers perceive the more twisted chronologies charting the lives of real people, where past and present mingle and memory functions as more of a solvent than a fixative unless regularly exercised. In lived chronologies people forget and alter past events; time and memory neither recur purely nor cohere upwardly. They emerge as tools for organizing personal and communal experiences, constructed realities that come and go in relation to equally mobile signposts and other triggers. Euroamerican historians have battled over these complexities for centuries. If only intuitively, they have grasped revision as the lifeblood of their discipline. They write and rewrite and perform their detective work tentatively, acknowledging that sooner or later colleagues may offer different interpretations. Finally, although the Bailyn-Cremin criticism of education history as celebratory and evangelical sounds wise and empirically attractive, it crumbles upon inspection. If education is a cultural asset, arguably the necessary one, as they propose, finding evidence of its traces occasions historians' warm welcome, or should, if they intend to understand how societies form and fade. Education portends the depth and breadth of experiments in cultural change and continuity, including those telling failed ones, inevitably discovered interactively after the fact. This is the closely woven filter Indigenous Americans tend to employ in retelling their oral traditions.

To capture the diverse, typically subterranean, phenomena of cultural formation, education historians need a different conceptual net than the one Bailyn and Cremin posited. It may be broader, although it does not have to be, as Rosengarten shows, but it must be finely meshed. In *The Barbarous Years*, his latest addition to the multivolume study of *The Peopling of British North America*, Bailyn reveals his famous aphorism as finite and skewed. Education remains the process of cultural development across generations, but his model culture is Western European, thus soured by colonial and mercantilist preferences against other, apparently lower order, cultures.²¹ Does education perform its magic in all cultures? Are some more educative than others? Bailyn leaves us in a conceptual cul-de-sac.

¹⁹ Ellwood P. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of the American Educational History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919); Ellwood P. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History*, Rev. and enl. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934).

²⁰ Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society; Needs and Opportunities for Study*, 9.

²¹ Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Knopf, 1986); Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675* (New York: Knopf, 2012).

²² William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, Revised (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003); Andrés Reséndez, *A Land So Strange: The Epic Journey of Cabeza de Vaca* (New York: Basic Books, 2007); Jonathan D. Steigman, *La Florida Del Inca and the Struggle for Social Equality in Colonial Spanish America* (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2005); John Willinsky, *Learning to Divide the World: Education at Empire's End* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

²³ Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

²⁴ Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003); Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 2008); Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008); Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South, From Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003); Steven Hahn, *Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Edward P. Jones, *The Known World* (New York: Amistad, HarperCollins Publishers, 2003); Louis Menand, *Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

²⁵ W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1963); W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: The Modern Library, 1903).

To back out of it, consider a different working hypothesis: The most pervasive, embedded, and effective agent of education in the U.S. during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was slavery. As an institution, it taught Americans how to see and measure their world and their own worth. It functioned as the lodestar of their moral compass, slanted public and scholarly rhetoric, and molded, unremarkably, the conceptual foundations of literacy, religion and theology, commerce, science, technological advance, and art. It was literally, although not ideally, the American common school. It received direct and indirect public subsidies and political ratification. Slavery's educative force encompassed the nation, shaping discourse, policy, territorial, state, and federal constitutions and laws, and accepted common sense. Popular views on women, American Indians, and immigrants, particularly Irish Catholics, Eastern and Southern Europeans, Asians of all nationalities, and Spanish and Portuguese speakers, hardened accordingly. Some of these consigned strangers predated the arrival of other Western Europeans, and thus are incorrectly classified as immigrants, except from the perspectives of Native Americans.²² Slavery's hegemony did not end with the Emancipation Proclamation or two years later at the Appomattox Courthouse but persisted legally, by common practice and consent, and insidiously, as Douglas A. Blackmon documents in *Slavery by Another Name*.²³ Recent research on the history of slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, both anticipates and reinforces Blackmon's penetrating study.²⁴ These new contributions frame afresh questions of where and how Americans learned, proposing slavery as their principal educative institution perhaps beyond the nineteenth century, as W.E.B. DuBois concluded long ago and Blackmon confirms.²⁵ Drawing from methodological and conceptual innovations, the queries propose a truism: Historiographical findings in education depend on scholars' abilities to reconceive the search for relevant phenomena. None of this fertile new work has been produced by professed education historians.

If, as in the example of slavery, research methods are key and fundamental in the history of education, a question rises in importance and urgency: How do education historians proceed? An answer can be found in recent histories of American Indian tribes and nations and reconsiderations of older—often much older—contributions. Like all intellectual domains, stretching from pure science to popular culture, education history benefits from new and revised findings, but now it is especially clear that the investigations' necessary precondition and consort is another way of thinking. The times seem ripe for a thorough rebuke of our field via methodological initiatives. Piketty's critique of economics offers a model that is at once rigorously and systematically historical, empirical, literary, multidisciplinary, and educative. Not detailed here, the example could prove useful as education historians ponder escapes from delimiting approaches and assumptions.

At War with Education

Bailyn's series on *Peopling of British North America* tacitly invites education historians to join frankly animated conversations. The two books published so far can be read as a depiction of the fateful beginning in the seventeenth century when England declared war on the education encountered in its new world. This hypothesis forces a reconsideration of Bailyn's earlier pronouncements on the history of education in the United States. *Education in the Forming of American Society* was the third publication in the Needs and Opportunities for Study series. Each followed a similar organization, an interpretive essay supported by a bibliographical review. The second, and more relevant to this paper, was *American Indian and White Relations to 1830* by William N. Fenton, an anthropologist committed to the emerging field known then and still today as ethnohistory.²⁶ Tension within the amalgam persists, evident in the 1950s and 60 years later. It grows from disputed assumptions and methods favored respectively by historians and ethnologists, the latter drawing principally, at least originally, from anthropology. Now visible within the history discipline itself, the tension reinforces calls for a fresh critique of Bailyn's 1960 essay and literature survey and his subsequent investigations on *The Peopling of British North America*, specifically *The Barbarous Years*.²⁷ Note the practical goals of these conferences and publications: "The primary aim of the series is to serve the needs of graduate students and those directing their studies, and thereby to foster better research."²⁸ Unrecorded was a tacit purpose to send historical research in certain directions and not in others. The Bailyn volume stated the aim explicitly: to "provide a new and challenging perspective for the study of early American education, indeed for a reassessment of the history of education in the United States down to the present."²⁹ Was the aim then to cement history's substantive relevance to contemporary education policy or, separating methods from findings and thus committing simultaneously the sins of anachronism and contextual isolation, to enforce a particular way of doing history? Depending on the answers, Milton Gaither's critique of Bailyn and his admirers is overly gentle or his criticism of the institutional foci of current education historians is off the mark.³⁰ They are simply following in Bailyn's footsteps and, as it appears, in Cubberley's as well. Are there grounds for understanding the Bailyn hypothesis as proposing routine socialization cloaked in Euroamerican institutions, academic, if graceful, prose, and the history discipline's ethnocentric snobbery?

Taking cues from an ongoing project in the 1950s funded by the Ford Foundation, Bailyn aimed to decouple "the present interpretation of education in American history" from "its leading characteristic . . . its separateness as a branch of history, its detachment from the mainstream of historical research, writing, and

²⁶ Fenton, *American Indian and White Relations to 1830: Needs and Opportunities for Study*.

²⁷ Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America*; Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years*.

²⁸ Fenton, *American Indian and White Relations to 1830: Needs and Opportunities for Study*, ix.

²⁹ Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society; Needs and Opportunities for Study*, vi.

³⁰ Gaither, *American Educational History Revisited*.

³¹ Paul H. Buck et al., *The Role of Education in American History* (New York: Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1957).

³² Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society: Needs and Opportunities for Study*, 5.

³³ Fenton, *American Indian and White Relations to 1830: Needs and Opportunities for Study*.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, v.

teaching.”³¹ Education history was an embarrassment, “a distinct tributary,” its origins traceable to a marriage of convenience with professional teacher preparation at the turn of the twentieth century.³² (Similar complaints issued from psychology and sociology, both maturing disciplines during the same period.) Bailyn envisioned a change of venue where education historians would ply their trade within the canons, if not under the authority, of history departments. He reckoned free of the context of higher education’s protocols, values, and policies. The proposed marriage failed to be consummated, for reasons falling outside the scope of this paper. If a Bailyn revolution was in the making, its trajectory fell short. To align education history with university history departments assumes the latter know how to frame and pursue educational queries and are inclined to do so. Until recent decades, that has proved to be optimistic, and contrary to typical history department reward systems. Within a few decades, education history usually still could be found in professional academic units and retained its institutional focus. Looking back, we can detect a more basic problem with the key concept of culture. It forged the foundation of Bailyn’s thinking about change, continuity, and societal development, and that foundation was essentially Eurocentric, ill prepared to admit or sustain studies of different cultures. The problem becomes acute in investigations of American Indians before or independent of their Euroamerican contacts. If education is the means by which a culture transmits itself across time, we have to ask: Taking into account tribal and national distinctions, where and how do we find specific manifestations of American Indian education? If we label them “informal,” only to differentiate bureaucratized Euroamerican schooling, education historians risk devaluing their educative purposes and effects.³³ We could also subvert prospects for more culturally inclusive approaches in teacher preparation and education research generally. In the same vein, slave education, owner learning within the culture of bondage, multilateral exertions of agency development, and education as lived experience forging group identity and differentiated resilience, all intersect here as well. In the 1950s and moving toward century’s end, such calibrated phenomena were the foster children of U.S. historical and education research, typically unseen by many leading practitioners yet even then an obvious and rich trove of insights on interacting cultural strangers and the intersections’ national implications.

William Fenton presented his paper in February 1953 at the third Needs and Opportunities for Study conference. The series was meant “to encourage a broadening of historical studies into fields where relatively little original research has been carried on or where new approaches to old problems challenge investigators.”³⁴ Although Fenton’s paper was second in the published series, even so, four years passed before the book appeared. Other commitments consumed his time; nevertheless, his needs and opportunities for study project seems to have been troubled. Fenton declined to document his paper in formats familiar to historians, and his list of published and primary sources struck conference organizers as abbreviated. They invited other authorities to expand it.

Couched tactfully, the difficulties apparently surfaced at the start, with Fenton’s conference presentation itself. Read how he began:

It is in the spirit of Dekanisora, speaker of the Five [later Six] Nations, who called on Governor Spotswood here at Williamsburg [VA] supposedly before 1720, that I have come to your fire to polish the “Chain of Friendship” between the ethnologists and the historians.³⁵

³⁵ Ibid., 3.

He offered wampum (in the form of his paper) as the bond of friendship attesting words spoken, urged the audience “to wipe away tears for those who have gone the long trail since our last meeting,” to open their ears for better hearing, and “to clear your throats of any bitterness . . . between us that you may reply later with a clear mind.” Trained “conventionally” as an ethnologist, Fenton also recalled he had been initiated into adulthood by the “old men of the Six Nations.” He was no stranger to distrustful collaborations between anthropologists and historians, for years engaged with the preparation of historical ethnologists. He then admitted this opening was ritualistic “in the manner of the old Iroquois orators.”³⁶ Its format could be found in the records of numerous Indian negotiations with British and French representatives, who routinely reported feeling stymied by the delay in turning to the business at hand. The reactions mystify. Euroamericans of the day (and subsequently) typically began conferences with prayers and other invocations. Fearing his 1953 audience would be similarly restive and ethnocentric, Fenton aimed to underscore an elementary point. Given the topic, the history of Indian and white relations in what became the United States, both groups needed to be apprehended on their own terms, ideally with respect for cultural differences. (Presciently, the hardcover imprint of his book carried an image of a peace pipe.) The Iroquois, for example, always attended meetings that promised significant outcomes bearing wampum, a specifically crafted or selected gift representing the event.³⁷ They began with speeches honoring the dead and the continuing past, admonishing attendees, themselves included, to listen carefully to each other, and urging all to lay aside acrimony and bitterness. A multination confederation, not a tribe with a distinct language, uniform value system, and singular religious practices, the Iroquois governed themselves by consensus, their path to transcending diversity. Oratory was a necessary skill, and they were famous for it among colonists and Indians alike. It was the means by which they convinced others and themselves of productive actions and resolutions of internal and “foreign” conflict. Its centrality suggests a component of what Euroamericans still label curriculum. Oratory advanced cross-generational teaching and learning.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ DeMallie, ““These Have No Ears: Narrative and the Ethnohistorical Method””; Timothy J. Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Barbara Alice Mann, *Iroquoian Women: The Gantowisas* (New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2004); Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* (New York: Knopf, 2005).

Following the ritual opening and related history lessons, Fenton turned to the conference theme in an effort to complicate what he feared could become bland and boring issues. Historiographical barriers arose immediately in his presentation, notably with regard to Indian life before European contact. To reconstruct this past, he cautioned, historians required access to oral traditions, with more than mere nods to archaeology and anthropology's research tools and findings. Lacking them, uninitiated historians could not grasp generally or in detail the trajectories of cultural change and continuity Indians had instigated across millennia. Not all their societies had developed in similar ways and speeds; some had devolved or disappeared completely. Tribal differences remained, and all were in motion. They became farmers; others, abetted by horses and guns, ranged farther afield as hunters and gatherers.³⁸ Their spirit lives—their theologies, rituals, and cosmologies—shifted accordingly. Unless historians paid attention to the changes, they risked committing their guild's fundamental error, writing Indian histories without Indian sources. In assessing white and Native relations before 1830, historians needed to know Indians from Indian perspectives.

Fortunately, Fenton observed, historians could find dizzying arrays of relevant materials. Written in English, French, Spanish, or other European languages, they lay scattered across the country in massive and local collections and in European libraries, museums, and archives. Great numbers were warehoused as U.S. government documents, others held by state historical societies. Surviving captivity memoirs by whites, a popular genre of the colonial and early national periods, and even fiction proved informative if contextually triangulated to help frame research questions. With difficult labor, oral traditions could be accessed and situated. Fenton concluded with an agenda of needs and opportunities for study: 1) the supplanting of Indians in New England; 2) the role of the Six Nations in founding the Republic; 3) biographies of Native and white individuals and societies; and 4) as a beginning, the connections among leading actors in emergent narratives, each rooted within Indian and white frameworks: the missionary, ethnologist, educator, and patriot. It was a short list but also outlined a tangled web of complex, transdisciplinary work to be done.

The supporting bibliography, not written entirely or principally by Fenton, provided citation details. The section on "Missions and Education" exposed an originating problem. It posited a false assumption that should have troubled historians generally, namely that Euroamericans through evangelical projects brought education to Indians.³⁹ Here was a discordant note sounded in sharp contrast to Fenton's emphasis on Indians' long (and diverse) traditions of teaching and learning to guide cultural change and form their societies. The list and categories of sources revealed, for all who cared to see, that the Euroamerican concept of education was terrifyingly, maybe incurably, ignorant, that its true purpose was imperialistic, or both. Again, a path of study

³⁸ For later confirmations, see Colin G. Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008); Preston Holder, *The Hoe and the Horse on the Plains: A Study of Cultural Development Among North American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970); Roy Willard Meyer, *The Village Indians of the Upper Missouri: The Mandans, Hidatsas, and Arikaras* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977); Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³⁹ Fenton, *American Indian and White Relations to 1830: Needs and Opportunities for Study*, 109–113.

beckons.

Bailyn gave his paper on early American education six years after Fenton's presentation. It was published the following year with the intent of disturbing often-trod areas of study overgrown with "an excess of writing along certain lines and almost undue clarity of direction."⁴⁰ It identified Ellwood P. Cubberley as a major culprit in the commission of historiographical errors.⁴¹ The interpretive essay and bibliography qualified, in Milton Gaither's view, as a history of a history; in Bailyn's view, the latter was an inept history to boot.⁴² Gaither perceived a young man at work who favored subtle wit and irony. Imagine Bailyn having fun. But at stake was serious business, a reconceptualization of early American life dictated by an unimaginable future, not a familiar, well-rehearsed past. Due in part to inadequate attention to the colonial period, education historians had missed this context in which "learning—the purposeful acquisition not merely of technical skills but of new ways of thinking and behaving—was essential." On this point, Bailyn channeled Benjamin Franklin, pioneering exemplar of transformations in the inherited pattern of education among his Euroamerican contemporaries. Replacing stable cross-generational family status, the nature and persistence of servitude, and restricted opportunities for careers, "new devices for self-improvement and education" appeared.⁴³ Colonists relaxed and amended expected family traditions and social structures as they invented wilderness communities and struggled to survive in them. Sectarian religion provided mooring of sorts, a trusted anchor. For Bailyn, that explained why they launched missions to convert, educate, and otherwise civilize the "savages" who surrounded and outnumbered them. Social life in the colony required unity, and the Indians were definitely different and eventually hostile. The colonists' outreach exuded "bland piety" and "hypocrisy" but also "sincerity."⁴⁴ The effort failed miserably. "The English settlers, insensitive, inflexible, and righteous," despite their need to adapt to strange and unwelcoming lands, proved "atrocious anthropologists," habitual practitioners of feral ethnocentrism.

The implications become explicit in *The Barbarous Years* where Bailyn reconstructs seventeenth-century British encounters with Powhatans and other Algonquins without recourse to sources providing Indian perspectives on the invasions of their lands.⁴⁵ The historiographical error could have been avoided, given the accumulating new research on North American Indian peoples, much of it coming from Native scholars working in anthropology, archaeology, demography, ethnohistory, plant biology, and U.S. history. Merle Curti's social and intellectual history of human nature in Euroamerican thought also would have helped fashion more complex and dynamic depictions of Indigenous and white confrontations.⁴⁶ In *Education in the Forming of American Society*, however, Bailyn credited white newcomers with introducing "the problem of group relations in a society of divergent cultures," adding "a new dimension to the social role of education."⁴⁷ The "self-conscious, deliberate, aggressive

⁴⁰ Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society; Needs and Opportunities for Study*, 4.

⁴¹ Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States*, 1919; Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History*, 1934.

⁴² Gaither, *American Educational History Revisited*; See also Cohen, *Challenging Orthodoxies*.

⁴³ Gaither, *American Educational History Revisited*, 36.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁵ Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years*; See James Axtell, *The Rise and Fall of the Powhatan Empire: Indians in Seventeenth-Century Virginia* (Williamsburg, VA.: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1995); Fenton, *American Indian and White Relations to 1830: Needs and Opportunities for Study*; Paula Gunn Allen, *Pocahontas: Medicine Woman, Spy, Entrepreneur, Diplomat* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003).

⁴⁶ Merle E. Curti, *Human Nature in American Thought: A History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980).

⁴⁷ Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society; Needs and Opportunities for Study*, 38–39.

48 Ibid., 39.

49 Ibid., 41.

50 Ibid., 39.

use of education...spread throughout an increasingly heterogeneous society and came to be accepted as a normal form of educational effort.” It was to be enforced as ointment for the “unstable, highly mobile, and heterogeneous society” of colonial America.⁴⁸ Schooling became “an instrument of deliberate group action.” The “transformation of education, turning on the great axles of society—family, church, community, and the economy—had become clear before the end of the colonial period.”⁴⁹ Note the transformation grew from improvisation and generational breakdown. Experiments were underway. Unfortunately for Indians, the English missionary campaigns were both evangelical and more essentially propagandistic experiments of a different order.⁵⁰ Consider the contrasting anthropological and archaeological evidence of an inconvenient truth. The Powhatans, other Algonquians, and the Iroquois had long understood and practiced education as social intention, and now also facing grave uncertainty, they too tested new norms of educational effort. Bailyn does not recount their side of the story.

51 Ibid., 5.

52 Ibid., 66.

As promised, his essay delivered a hypothetical history, identifying myriad and fundamental needs and opportunities for study, but it slanted the perspective. Closely reasoned and documented, it nonetheless privileged a narrative that tilted the playing field on which envisioned investigations were to be conducted, admitting “it may well prove to be wrong or misleading.”⁵¹ In the essay on sources, Bailyn acknowledged the publication by “Fenton and others” but dwelt on the mission and education section of its bibliography, the details of which “need not be repeated here.”⁵² Arguably, he should have dug deeper, especially into Fenton’s layered conceptions of culture drawn from outside the history discipline at the time. In doing so, he would have found non-imperialistic examples of education as the process of cultural change and continuity, or at minimum framed rudimentary questions opening them to inquiry.

53 Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years*.

54 Fred Anderson, “America: ‘Into the Heart of Darkness,’” *New York Review of Books* LX, no. 6 (2013): 55–57.

55 Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America*.

56 Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years*.

Bailyn confirms the bias in *The Barbarous Years*, a work subtitled *The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675*.⁵³ Here emphasis falls on the process through which diplomatic and common courtesy extended by English and Algonquian tribes, specifically the Powhatan Confederacy, degenerated quickly into barbarity within both societies. Pointedly, he asks why the English became savages. One reviewer, a former Bailyn doctoral student at Harvard, judged the question faulty.⁵⁴ First, it had surfaced in Bailyn’s original plan for the multivolume series published before the study was far advanced.⁵⁵ Second, and perhaps for this reason, the sources cited almost three decades later tended not to take advantage of recent Native studies.⁵⁶ The comment warrants an underline.

⁵⁷ See, for example, David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997); Allen, *Pocahontas*; Axtell, *The Rise and Fall of the Powhatan Empire*; James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Calloway, *First Peoples*; Cervera, "Negotiating the History of Education"; Brenda J. Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of the Community* (New York: Viking, 2012); Deloria, Jr. and Wildcat, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*; Vine Deloria, Jr., *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2003); Fixico, *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World*; Donald A. Grinde, Jr. and Bruce E. Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy* (Los Angeles: American Indian Studies Center, UCLA, 1991); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Standing Bear Kroupa, "Through Arikara Eyes: History of Education as Spiritual Renewal and Cultural Evolution" (presented at the American Educational Research Association, Denver, CO, May 3, 2010); KuuNux TeeRit Kroupa, "Education as Arikara Spiritual Renewal and Cultural Evolution," *History of Education Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (August 1, 2014): 303-22; Lawrence, *Lessons from an Indian Day School: Negotiating Colonization in Northern New Mexico, 1902-1907*; Adrea Lawrence, "Epic Learning in an Indian Pueblo: A Framework for Studying Multigenerational Learning in the History of Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 54, no. 3 (August 1, 2014): 286-302; Lomawaima, "Tribal Sovereigns: Reframing Research in American Indian Education"; Mann, *Iroquoian Women*; Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*; Charles C. Mann, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created* (New York: Knopf, 2011); Jerald T. Milanich and Charles M. Hudson, *Hernando De Soto and the Indians of Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993); Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee*; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁵⁸ Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*; Mann, *1493*.

⁵⁹ Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years*, xiii.

American Indian histories have amassed exponentially over the past 30 years, with Native scholars contributing significantly to the enterprise.⁵⁷ Critical acclaim, sales, and prestigious awards have accompanied the new productivity. Charles Mann complains, somewhat unfairly, that Bailyn's premise commits the sins of anachronism and historicism, given the undeniable presence of Native inhabitants who met European invaders.⁵⁸ His general title, *The Peopling of British North America*, notwithstanding, Bailyn knows his study concerns "the repeopling" of North America's eastern seaboard.⁵⁹ He intends to construct narratives of the colonists, a heterogeneous mix of European ethnicities, not English alone, and of Indians ("The Americans"), but his interpretation and the sources supporting it suggest grounds for skepticism. His secondary materials in history and anthropology tend to be old and indiscreetly selective. Bailyn dispenses rather abruptly with contested findings, for example, estimates of Indigenous populations, a matter related to mortality rates traceable to imported European diseases, and he avoids searching critiques of European missionary impulses. He displays detailed attention to the life styles and values of specific tribes, relying heavily on testimony from outsiders, but does not acknowledge limitations of this historiographical approach. His attraction to the British story, despite recognition that the Spanish came earlier, hints of racial, ethnic, and linguistic predispositions. With lyrical sophistication, he portrays Indians as exotic and doomed, a commonplace but backward-reading depiction of Native peoples as perceived by white outsiders. It tacitly assumes the clearest understanding of Indians is as conquered peoples. There is irony here. Bailyn misses opportunities in his subsequent investigations to amend, update, and otherwise extend his hypothesized linkage of education and culture in *Education in the Forming of American Society*. The omission casts doubt on the earlier work as merely a learned restatement of the Cubberley thesis: Schooling in the United States developed amid serial battles and opponents as increasingly

⁶⁰ Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States*, 1919; Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History*, 1934.

⁶¹ Cremin, *The Wonderful World of Ellwood Patterson Cubberley*.

⁶² Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America*; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*; David Ewing Duncan, *Hernando De Soto: A Savage Quest in the Americas* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1995); Charles M. Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun: Hernando De Soto and the South's Ancient Chiefdoms* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997); Reséndez, *A Land So Strange*.

⁶³ A. J. Angulo, *Empire and Education: A History of Greed and Goodwill from the War of 1898 to the War on Terror* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Julian Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Cultures in the Philippines and Puerto Rico During U.S. Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Julian Go, *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Walter Nugent, *Habits of Empire: A History of American Expansionism* (New York: Vintage, 2009).

⁶⁴ K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty, *"To Remain an Indian": Lessons in Democracy From a Century of Native American Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006).

⁶⁵ Calloway, *First Peoples*; Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*; Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee*.

⁶⁶ Bernard Sheehan, *Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); David E. Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine: Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983)

⁶⁷ Lawrence, "Epic Learning in an Indian Pueblo."

embedded socialization.⁶⁰ Does Lawrence Cremin's take on historiographical sins of education history also warrant reassessments?⁶¹

Breaking Ideological Molds

On lands incorporated as the contiguous United States, contacts among Indian peoples, white invaders, and migrants from the south and the north occurred in tidal waves of settlers, missionaries, itinerant hunters, and military personnel across more than four centuries, some predating Columbus' voyages.⁶² Like that with Mexico, the long Canadian border remained relatively porous throughout, an openness compromised periodically by the Russian and U.S. acquisitions of Alaska and fluctuating policies of governments up and down the continent. Neither demarcation constrained travel by Indigenous Americans and never had. After the 1880s, U.S. expansion into Pacific and Caribbean islands changed the targets of empire building but not its rationale.⁶³ What had happened previously proved to be merely dress rehearsal of a Euroamerican script many years in the writing. Advantaged by new research, we can see now the U.S. newcomers and their governments were neither prepared for nor inclined to accept the cultural legitimacy of the peoples occupying lands they wanted. To safeguard the forced acquisitions, this essay hypothesizes as a way of reading the evidence, they declared war on education. Other interpretations of longer duration are available for consideration—conquest, genocide, effective, if partial, assimilation—but they leave much unexplained. Why did American Indians typically resist the strategies and tactics, favoring instead both/and choices among traditional and white cultures?⁶⁴ How have so many tribes and nations managed to survive against military, economic, and political forces and pandemic diseases? The second question implies they are winning the war. If so, how?

Answers to these three leading questions can be found in resilient Native cultures. Outsiders know more about them than previously, and evidence continues to accumulate. Newcomers to the U.S. during the post-Columbian era encountered culturally heterogeneous societies, some blended and formally allied, others distinctive, even warlike.⁶⁵ Their oral traditions and sources reconstructed by archaeologists and historical anthropologists tell us they practiced cross-generational education.⁶⁶ Adrea Lawrence perceptively names it "epic learning."⁶⁷ They adapted their cultures as disruptions occurred, thus reactivating practiced habits of change and continuity. Education enabled accumulations of cultural assets, what Jonathan Lear, in his study of the Crow Nation, labels



The inside of the Aikara Cultural Center in White Shield, ND. Photograph and caption by KuuNUx TeeRIt Kroupa. Personal collection.

⁶⁸ Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

⁶⁹ Holder, *The Hoe and the Horse on the Plains*; Kroupa, “Through Arikara Eyes: History of Education as Spiritual Renewal and Cultural Evolution”; Kroupa, “Education as Arikara Spiritual Renewal and Cultural Evolution”; Meyer, *The Village Indians of the Upper Missouri*.

⁷⁰ Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*.

⁷¹ Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee*.

⁷² Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*; Thomas W. Kavanaugh, *The Comanches: A History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press in cooperation with the American Indian Studies Research Institute, Indiana University Bloomington, 1996); Thomas W. Kavanaugh, *Comanche Ethnography: Field Notes of E. Adamson Hoebel, Waldo R. Wedel, Gustav G. Carlson, and Robert H. Lowie* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press in cooperation with the American Indian Studies Research Institute, Indiana University Bloomington, 2008); Philipp Meyer, *The Son* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013).

⁷³ See, for example, William Wilmon Newcomb, Jr., *The Indians of Texas from Prehistoric to Modern Times* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961).

⁷⁴ Deloria, Jr., *We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf*; Deloria, Jr., *God Is Red*; Kroupa, “Through Arikara Eyes: History of Education as Spiritual Renewal and Cultural Evolution”; Kroupa, “Education as Arikara Spiritual Renewal and Cultural Evolution”; Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*; David Delgado Shorter, *We Will Dance Our Truth: Yaqui History in Yoeme Performances* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).



“radical hope,” pervasive devastation notwithstanding.⁶⁸ Other examples abound. Agricultural pioneers, Arikara Indians adapted corn horticulture and related religious ceremonies on a pre-Columbian, millennium-long migration from south Texas to North Dakota. Along the way, they engineered corn for diverse soils and climates, introduced the crop to Plains tribes (before Euroamerican contact), and acquired a reputation as entrepreneurs by organizing gatherings of the nations to exchange hides, tools, crafts, dances, songs, and stories.⁶⁹ William Fenton’s high regard for the Iroquois was widely shared. Charles Mann judges the confederacy to have been North America’s most influential polity above the Rio Grande River at the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁷⁰ The Sioux had attained similar status in the upper Plains a century later.⁷¹ The Comanches operated primarily in the lower Plains, the Southwest, and northern Mexico during this period. Recent studies conclude they had become the mightiest empire on North American soil by the mid-eighteenth century, eclipsing the world’s super powers in cultural sway and military capacity.⁷² The list is only illustrative of the many ways American Indians displayed distinct cultural strengths as educational attainments.

Their histories can liberate education historians to think again about their field and to weigh expansions. For one, the studies multiply the available instances of cultural continuity and adaptation, and thus of education, that occurred throughout the American continents outside those permitted within Euroamerican frameworks. They serve to de-provincialize the detection of teaching and learning, releasing curiosity from cultural blinders. For another, they draw upon sources and methods that can inform research on other topics in education history and education research. Multidisciplinary and comparative approaches seem essential but cannot be taken at face value. Anthropology, for example, has its own history of bias and curtailed interests to contend with.⁷³ Buyers need to beware. Scholars in the social sciences and humanities have proved noticeably inept in posing and pursuing questions about teaching and learning phenomena. Their primary interests rest elsewhere, a preoccupation helping to explain why so many fail to acknowledge Native scientific achievements and other cultural assets.⁷⁴ In framing such queries, education historians contribute not only to their own specialization but also to the literatures of other disciplines. Language can help with the liberation. As repositories of unique metaphors, symbols, and modes of analysis, American Indian histories offer treasuries of diverse ways of thinking and writing about education’s past, including that long period of declared war.

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