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Mooney Award Committee Report

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The Southern Anthropological Society

Requests Nominations For

THE 2003 JAMES MOONEY AWARD

A juried prize to be awarded for the best book written on the South or Southerners from an anthropological perspective and published in the years 2001 and 2002.

The James Mooney Award: The purpose of the James Mooney Award is to recognize and thereby encourage distinguished anthropological scholarship on the South and Southerners. Presented annually, the award includes a \$500 cash prize and certificate of recognition to be presented to the winning author at an awards ceremony. In addition, an Honorable Mention Award includes a \$250 cash prize and certificate of recognition. The winning presses will also receive a certificate of recognition and will be granted free exhibit space at the Society's annual meeting and, for one year, free advertising space for the winning books in the *Southern Anthropologist*.

Eligibility Criteria: To be considered for the 2003 James Mooney Award, a book must have been published between the years of 2001 and 2002. The judges welcome works on the South or Southerners from any subfield of anthropology or from other disciplines so long as the primary perspective of the work is anthropological. Co-authored books may be nominated, but edited volumes may not. The nomination must clearly be for a single book, even if it builds on prior work by the author or others.

Nomination Procedures: Nominations for the 2003 James Mooney Award may be submitted by any individual, author, or press. The nomination should include a letter describing briefly the subject and significance of the work and giving the name, address, and telephone number of the author. The letter of nomination should be accompanied by at least one copy of the book and preferably by three copies, one for each member of the selection committee.

Nominations for the 2003 award must be received by July 15, 2003 and should be sent to the Chair of the Awards committee, from whom additional information can be obtained:

Dr. Daryl White; Department of Sociology & Anthropology
Spelman College; Campus Box 375
350 Spelman Lane, SW
Atlanta, GA 30314

Books will be judged by a committee of anthropologists from different subfields in the discipline. The winner will be announced in March of 2004.

Mooney Award Committee Report

The report of the Mooney Award Committee for 2002, By Hester Davis, Chair for 2002

The Mooney Award Committee (Daryl White, Carrie Douglas, and Hester Davis), received nine books from various presses for review. Three of these were ones which had been submitted for the award last year, but these were dutifully reviewed by this committee and again did not win. The Committee's decision was unanimous in choosing Dr. Samuel Cook's *Monacans and Miners: Native American and Coal Mining Communities in Appalachia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000) for the 2002 Mooney Award. Because Carrie was not able to review ALL the books, we agreed that this year there would be no "Honorable Mention" (created two or three years ago and carrying a \$250 award with no invitation to the meeting).

We had some good books this year and a good response from the presses. I think the Mooney Award is doing very well and I've seen presses noting the Award in their advertizements. I have always thought that the Mooney Award was one of the most important things that the SAS does. I hope that the Board will continue to try and find a way to increase the prize money to \$1000.

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(Comment from Daryl White)

The Mooney Award Committee considered over ten books this year and easily agreed that Samuel R. Cook's *Monacans and Miners* deserves this year's Mooney Award for its substantial contribution to the anthropological understanding of the U.S. South. *Monacans and Miners* admirably epitomizes many qualities of anthropological scholarship—qualities that allow anthropologists to contribute both to understanding contemporary conditions and to promoting positive social change. The book is comparative, conceptually focused, methodologically diverse, deeply sympathetic, and written very well indeed. As his subtitle, *Native American and Coal Mining Communities in Appalachia*, suggests, Cook performs a comparative analysis of two communities and a region: The Monacans of Amherst County, Virginia, who have survived centuries of economic exploitation and political subjugation; a coal community of Wyoming County, West Virginia, that has undergone dramatic population shifts resulting from the development of the coal industry; and Appalachia, a region characterized by high degrees of local impoverishment, absentee landownership, and remote control. The communities differ significantly, yet share important commonalities, and Cook explores these principally by using two related concepts—dependency theory and internal colonialism—to develop ten broad questions that guide the research. There is nothing heavy handed in the ways these analytical tools are used; he is not out to prove something, but to explore and understand political efficacy through a controlled comparison. In his introduction, Cook writes:

At the bottom line, this is a study of power relations. It is not merely an examination of material inequalities but of differential cultural configurations within a set space. It is also a study of how power relations can *change*, and how human agency at *all* levels of the power structure can alter the entire configuration. I represent the Monacans and the residents of Wyoming County only as a concerned—albeit well-informed—outsider, and not as a definitive authority. At the same time, I hope to open the canon to an understanding of two underrepresented communities consisting of people whose stories should be told. Their stories are in some ways remarkably similar and other ways profoundly different (2000:22, italics in original).

The stories are well researched and well told. The book is both historical and ethnographic, in equal proportion.

Cook employs a wide range of research methods: archives, quantitative measures, participant observation, in-depth interviews and oral histories. There is a welcome sense of collaboration. To empower the reader, he includes long passages in the words of his informants. And the interviews, by providing informants with the opportunity to reflect in a new way on their history, helped shape new understandings on both sides of the interview conversation. *Monacans and Miners* is well-suited for use in a wide range of undergraduate and graduate anthropology courses, including *Introduction to Anthropology* to other courses focused on region, development, identity, and change. Cook describes his analytical concepts, research questions, and methodological choices in language that is clear, concise, and interesting. For me, the simple dedication at the beginning of the book signals the depth of Cook's connection to the subject of his book: "For the mountains of the Virginias. The most forgiving landscape I know."



(Letter from Sam Cook to the SAS upon receipt of the Award)

First, let me express my deepest regrets for not being able to attend the SAS meetings to receive this award in person. I have heard so many good things about this organization from close colleagues, and I was looking forward to this event marking my possible transition into the fold. I was also looking forward to escaping one of the harshest winters in the recorded history of the New River Valley. Then again, I live for irony.

I am humbled, to say the least, to have been selected to receive this high honor. For me, it has a particular significance because I have always admired James Mooney. Not only did he pioneer anthropological work among Virginia Indians, he also produced the first comprehensive monograph on Siouan peoples of the East, which monograph remains a foundational ethnohistorical document for those of us who work with groups such as the Monacans, Catawbans, and Occaneechis. James Mooney, I believe, played a significant role in developing the MODERN profession of anthropology. Like all of his contemporaries in the Bureau of American Ethnology, he was versed in cultural evolutionary theory, Lewis Henry Morgan-style. However, once he actually entered the field and came to know the

people he worked with as HUMAN, the theoretical veneer became problematic, and Mooney realized how complex human groups truly are—too complex to be reduced to simple typologies.

Mooney, in fact, was a staunch advocate of the political rights of Virginia Indians at a time when even acknowledging that these groups were “Indian” was grounds for virtual banishment. He later distinguished himself, much to his disfavor, as an advocate for American Indian land rights and religious freedom, ultimately resulting in his banishment from Indian Country by federal authorities. In the long run, then, Mooney realized—at least to the same extent as Boas—that anthropologists had to move beyond the façade of scientism because the pursuits of our profession, by nature, carry certain ethical and moral mandates.

I would like to believe that my work is guided by the same ethical and moral principles. In no way can I liken myself to Mooney, but I can certainly exalt him as a model for ethical conduct in anthropological pursuits.

That being said, I am compelled to offer my humble thanks to many people, including my dissertation committee chair David E. Wilkins, who not only taught me the true meaning of critical thinking, but also introduced me to the Monacan community. I must also thank my other dissertation committee members, Nancy Parezo and Tom Holm, for imparting

a great deal of practical and professional wisdom in me. I am indebted to Gary Dunham, editor of the University of Nebraska Press, for his expressing such enthusiasm for my book project from the first moment that he looked at my prospectus. There are many people in the Monacan community who deserve special thanks, including George Whitewolf, Diane Johns-Shields, Karenne Wood, Phyllis Hicks, Lucian Branham, and Buddy Johns, among so many others. I also, need to express my deepest love and thanks to those in my West Virginia homeland who helped to facilitate my research, including Wanda Lester, Paige Cline, Sarge McGhee, Jack and Sarahh

Lou Frank, and Thurman and Josephine Lester. Finally, I must honor my late parents, Tom and Mary Cook, who would be proud beyond words on this occasion, even though it is but a pittance in remembering them.

Most of all, I cannot reiterate enough how thankful I am to the Southern Anthropological Society for selecting my book for this high honor. You not only honor me, but all of those in the Monacan community in Wyoming County, West Virginia, whose lives and experiences are at the heart of this book.

All My Best,
Sam Cook