

TOURISM, PLACE, & IDENTITY: ECONOMIC HISTORY AND POLITICAL
SOVEREIGNTY IN THE HO-CHUNK NATION

by

KENDALL MARIE TALLMADGE

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written by Kendall Marie Tallmadge
has been approved for the Department of Anthropology

(Jennifer Shannon)

(Kaifa Roland)

(Carole McGranahan)

Date _____

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Tallmadge, Kendall Marie (M.A., Anthropology)

Tourism, Place, & Identity: Economic History and Political Sovereignty in the Ho-Chunk Nation

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For over 150 years, the city of Wisconsin Dells played host to tourists from all over the American Midwest. In the late 1990s and early 2000s it officially became rebranded as the “Waterpark Capital of the World.” Before the indoor waterparks the tourism scene rested on the natural landscape, and with it, the Native American Ho-Chunk population and their displays of cultural performance. How has this influenced the Ho-Chunk Nation and Wisconsin Dells communities as they exist today? I argue that tourist spaces served as contact zones and Native gathering places that paved the way for future Ho-Chunk economic development and allowed for a shared history of interaction with non-Native locals. This had significant impacts on Ho-Chunk political sovereignty and the identity construction of non-Native local residents. This history is essential for understanding the current viewpoints of community members and the desire to bring back the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I grew up in the small tourist city of Wisconsin Dells, WI, a place that since the late 1990s has been branded as the “Waterpark Capital of the World.” Visitors to the area value fun and exciting new waterslides. However, local residents will tell a different story, one rooted in tourism of a different era. Prior to being known for its array of indoor waterparks, Wisconsin Dells (or “the Dells” for short) was known for its scenic natural beauty and its glimpse into a world from the past. Prior to the waterparks, there was the river, the landscape and the rock formations, and the local Native American tribe, the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago).¹

I never expected my research in anthropology to take me back to my own hometown and community. I grew up during the end of the cultural tourism era of Wisconsin Dells. My mother danced at one of the attractions, the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial, and my father was the emcee and general manager of the show in the early- to mid-1990s. I remember summers spent dancing as a child at the Ceremonial or following my dad in the evenings when he managed. The Ceremonial played a huge part of my life, even after its closure. I returned to the Dells every summer during my undergraduate years to work as a tour guide and pilot for Dells Boat Tours.² Stand Rock served as one of the main landing points on the two-hour tour, and as a guide I walked the trails at Stand Rock at least two to three times per day.

¹ The term Winnebago comes from the Mesquakie word for the Ho-Chunk and loosely translates to “people of the stinking or dirty water.” The name referred to the plants which lined the shores of Lake Winnebago. However, the name eventually came to take on a more derogatory meaning when it became translated to “stinky people” by early Europeans. The Wisconsin Ho-Chunk also shared this name until 1990 when the tribal government officially changed their name on record back to “Hochungra,” the name which the Ho-Chunk have always used for themselves.

² I attended Beloit College from 2005-2009. I worked as a tour guide for Dells Boat Tours during the summers of 2006-2008. My first summer season I worked on the Upper and Lower Dells tour boats. In subsequent seasons I worked only on the Upper Dells. I was promoted to pilot for the summers of 2009 and 2010.

My experiences growing up showed me a side of tourism that was different from what I read in academia. Cultural tourism as displays of performance was just another part of life as Ho-Chunk peoples. The idea was normalized and in some instances even advocated for. The Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial, the last of these attractions, officially closed in 1998.³ Since then talk and discussion of bringing it back has existed in varying degrees over the years.

The first moderately successful attempt occurred during the summers of 2011 and 2012 when the non-Native mayor of the city of Wisconsin Dells in partnership with Jean and Samantha Day (two local Ho-Chunk women), organized four performances of the Indian Ceremonial in one of the city parks. These shows drew a crowd consisting mainly of local non-Native and Native American residents of Wisconsin Dells showing their support for the continuation of such performances.

Native American and non-Native local residents, along with a handful of visitors, continue to bemoan the end of the cultural tourism era of Wisconsin Dells. The decline of cultural tourism coincides with increased commercialization and the rise of the waterpark industry. Today Wisconsin Dells is home to 20 indoor and outdoor waterparks and 10,000 hotel rooms.⁴ The area plays host to 3.1 million visitors annually and can host up to 55,000 visitors per day. The local population remains at a modest 5,600 permanent residents (WDVCB 2013: Wisconsin Dells Area Information).

³ The Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial moved from its original location at the site of Stand Rock to a venue in the city of Wisconsin Dells/Lake Delton in 1999 and 2000. The date of "official" closure varies dependent on whether individuals include this new location or not. The dates I use here regarding closure are based upon my father's resume, in which he lists 1990-1996 as the dates he managed the performance. The Indian Ceremonial was managed by a different Ho-Chunk individual, Carson Funmaker, during the summers of 1997 and 1998.

⁴ The Dells Visitor and Convention Bureau lists 5 outdoor waterparks and 4 indoor waterparks open to all tourists on any day. An array of resorts, hotels, and campgrounds also exist that only allow guests to access their waterparks. Of these accommodation options, 12 have large outdoor waterparks, 5 have medium outdoor waterparks, 9 have small outdoor waterparks, 10 contain large indoor waterparks, 7 contain medium indoor waterparks, and 6 contain small indoor waterparks (WDVCB 2013: Wisconsin Dells Area Info).

Why do individuals, both Native and non-Native, want to bring back the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial? What is the significance of this show and cultural tourism to the area and its people? Wisconsin Dells continues to thrive economically through the waterpark industry and the Ho-Chunk peoples have since developed a strong casino gaming industry. Business and work opportunities abound for local Native and non-Native residents. Why then are people so nostalgic for past enterprises? What did cultural tourism do for these local residents? These were questions I sought to answer in my research. The significance of cultural tourism changes depending on Native or non-Native status; however, the importance of it to individual growth and community development for each group remains. My research reveals how cultural tourist attractions provided publicly visible spaces for the perpetuation of Ho-Chunk cultural identity and the development of the tribe as an economically and politically powerful nation. The shift from cultural tourism to the waterpark industry also caused non-Native American locals to reflect on what it means to be a Wisconsin Dells resident. The local identity of non-Native peoples rests in town history which is deeply entrenched in the cultural tourism of Native American peoples. This history of shared interaction and work environments explains how and why the city and its residents continue to identify with Ho-Chunk peoples and culture.

Review of the Literature

The main arguments and ideas influencing this paper's conclusions come from both tourism and non-tourism literature. The main authors I cite have backgrounds in anthropology or history and all do research in Native North America. The issues and topics covered focus on the construction of Native American identity, how this plays into national and local identities, the use of oral history and memory work among Native individuals, and the larger issues of

establishing sovereignty (being recognized as distinct political entities) as indigenous peoples in North America.

Situating Tourism Studies in Native North America

The literature regarding tourism scholarship has shifted over the years from a focus on authenticity to an examination of the diverse ways tourism affects the most intimate of spaces. From constructing national and local identities to examining host and guest relationships and constructions of race/the Other, the theoretical shift has been toward acknowledging individual agency. As Bruner states, “There are no persons without agency, without active selves, except possibly as described in the pages of some 1930’s academic journals” (2005:12). Studies now examine the ways tourism affects everyday life and the choices and reasons for individuals and groups engaging with the industry.

Within Native American literature, ethnography and scholarship of the past two decades has focused on issues concerning identity, self-representation, and self-determination. Peers (2007) examines the connection between cultural tourism and self-representation, whereas Cattelino (2008) examines the role of business (tourism) in relation to Native American sovereignty and self-determination. Tourism in this sense breaks away from a reliance on cultural knowledge and its display to one that utilizes the economy to perpetuate cultural identity and activities. Tourism and its effects are as multi-faceted as the individuals that engage in it.

Laura Peers’ *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions* (2007) has the most direct connections to the tourist industry as her work examines five different historic reconstructions that employ Native interpreters as part of their living history sites. Rather than being passive players in tourist settings, Peers shows how Native interpreters exert their own agency, identity, and history to a tourist population that carries many

misconceptions due to the way national histories are portrayed with Native Americans consistently viewed as hostile or subjugated individuals. In the examples portrayed in her ethnography, tourist settings act as contact zones or “borderzones,” a term coined by tourism scholar Edward Bruner (2005), in which Native peoples can engage in meaningful dialogue with dominant society. In these instances, Native interpreters’ indigenous knowledge is placed on an equal or higher level than the tourists with whom they interact, reversing typical Native/non-Native interactions.

In *Playing Ourselves*, Peers illustrates how much of contemporary tourism work by Native peoples centers on deconstructing and correcting Native American stereotypes. This is juxtaposed against the national cosmology of the North American frontier, in which Native peoples’ roles have been inaccurately minimized. Peers examines the use of tangible objects and their authentic or inauthentic representations at pioneer reconstructions, the interactions between tourists and Native interpreters, and the ability of visitors to overcome preconceived ideas of Native peoples. Ultimately Peers argues that the process of correcting stereotypes and educating the public cannot fall to Native interpreters and individuals alone. The owners and administrators of such sites must also recognize the problems that Native interpreters face and assist them in shaping the messages presented to tourists.

Within the anthropological discipline, the origins of tourism research are often credited to Valene Smith who published her book *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* in 1977, subsequently legitimizing the research of tourism within the discipline (Wallace 2005:1). However, the serious study of tourism and its analysis within social settings truly began in 1976 with Dean MacCannell’s publication *The Tourist* which examined the “authenticity” of staged cultural performances. MacCannell argued that tourists are on a quest for authenticity, a chance

to get away from modernity and experience something more “real” and quaint than their everyday lives.

Subsequent tourism scholars continued to engage with MacCannell’s research and address issues of authenticity to the point of problematizing the word itself. Urry’s (1990) scholarship directly addressed MacCannell’s in arguing that tourists were more multi-faceted in the types of experiences they sought and were aware of the “inauthenticities” prevalent in tourist settings. Some tourists, who Urry defines as the “post-tourist,” even purposefully engaged in the inauthentic for their own fun and amusement. While Urry wrote on behalf of the tourist, Erik Cohen (1988) wrote on behalf of the host, or the Native, in these scenarios by pointing to the limiting nature of words such as “authenticity” that do not allow for cultural change.

Cohen argued that tourism was often viewed as an inauthenticating force that commodified culture and destroyed or diluted the meaning of cultural products. However, this idea was tied to a Western conception of authenticity that imposed “traditional” and “static” beliefs onto an Other. Cohen argued for authenticity as a negotiable term that could be fluid in the same manner of societies and, therefore, culture. He ultimately argued for a study of emergent authenticities, or how items created and produced for tourists can come to be seen as inherent markers of cultural identity. Tourism studies should focus on the new values or meanings ascribed to tourist performances that reflect cultural values and have cultural significance, not just monetary value (Cohen 1988).

Tourism studies have since moved away from the examination and discussion of authenticity to broader ideas on tourism’s presence and interactions in local and global settings. Several scholars have examined the idea of tourism as it relates to national identity and state-produced messages. Colleen Cohen (1995) examines tourism’s role in constructing national

identities through marketing campaigns of the British Virgin Islands. Enloe (1989), Alexander (1997), and Johnston (2001) also research state-produced messages and relate them to images of the body in tourism. Enloe (1989) examines the use of women's bodies in tourism to create state-produced messages. She uses the example of world's fairs which placed the "Other" on display in order to reinforce Western women's domestication through the approval of masculine imperial conquering. Alexander (1997) examines the use of women's sexualized bodies in tourism of the Bahamas while the state simultaneously seeks to construct a specific view of women and heterosexuality among the local residents. Johnston (2001) expands on the idea of "Othering" in tourism in her research on gay pride parades and the attendance of them by heterosexual individuals. Johnston argues that "when the dominant culture defines some group as different, as Other, the members of those groups are imprisoned in their bodies. Dominant discourse defines them in terms of bodily characteristics" (2001:192). Anxiety exists in the absence of physically-identifiable traits. Dominant society feels uneasy when they cannot distinguish the Other body from the Self. Gay pride parades present a space where homosexual bodies are more easily distinguished from heterosexual bodies.

Other scholars have sought to expand on previous research regarding host and guest interactions. Maoz (2005) re-explores Urry's (1990) the *Tourist Gaze* to illustrate how tourists are not the only individuals "gazing" in the tourist setting. The locals gaze back as well. Host communities have their own agendas and ways of subverting and directing the tourist gaze and their own opinions on how tourists behave and act. Locals and tourists both have expectations and preconceptions of each other, illustrating Maoz's (2005:235) conclusion that "power is everywhere and is not tied to a particular group." Salazar's (2005) research expands on this idea of a mutual gaze to its role and purpose in tourist settings. Salazar uses the term "glocalization"

in his research on Indonesian tour guides in Jogja which examines the tour guide's need for an understanding of the global world that tourists come from in order to present a more "local" experience for visitors. The term glocalization then is used to illustrate how the global influences the local, and in turn, the local influences the global.

Roland's ethnography *Cuban Color in Tourism and La Lucha* (2011) combines multiple aspects of these arguments to illustrate the many ways that tourism interacts with and can affect a group of people. Roland's research on Cuba shows how state-produced messages of tourism can be used by local individuals for their own empowerment and employment. By playing on ideas that tourists have of Cubans, these individuals can access an economic sector otherwise unavailable to them by playing host to foreigners. Roland's work illustrates the complexity of tourist interactions and how they play into socio-political settings.

Tourism literature focusing on Native North America also followed a pattern of trends similar to general tourism scholarship. Native America tourism research initially paid attention to authenticity and the negative effects of tourism before eventually moving to research that emphasized the agency of tourism's players and the complexity of tourist interactions in larger social and political contexts. Early tourism research in Native North America focuses heavily on cultural tourism in the American Southwest because it was the most visible and heavily marketed. Earlier research (Howard and Pardue 1996) documents the life and work of Frederick Henry Harvey, the owner of a food service company to the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway, who played a large role in opening the Southwest for mass tourism. Due to the focus on Fred Harvey, Native peoples remained passive agents in these early works. This would change as tourism scholars paid increasingly more attention to Native performers and artists.

Erve Chambers states that “many of the anthropological studies of the impacts of tourism...focus on communities and regions that have only recently begun to experience tourist activity. This is not true of places like the American Southwest” (2010:29). Other scholarship on tourism and Native peoples disrupts this idea by examining the long-standing relationship of tourism in Native America in places outside of the Southwest. Tribal museum ethnographies, such as those by Erikson (2002) and Isaac (2007), incorporate tourists and anthropologists as categories of individuals that have historically pried too much into Native lives, causing the need for a space designed for outsiders to come in, be hosted, and receive information about the tribe in a legitimizing format. The creation of tribal museums is then seen in terms of Native agency, in that tribe’s willingly choose to create and engage with the institution of museums on their own agenda and for their own collective personal benefit.

Parezo and Troutman (2001) and Nesper (2003) further highlight this emphasis on agency by reconstructing the history of past tourist attractions to show how Native peoples entered tourism on their own terms and for their own self-advancement. Both do so by examining one event in one community and recounting how this situation played out from the indigenous perspective. “The ‘Shy’ Cocopa Go to the Fair” recounts the story of Cocopa involvement in the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, the largest world’s fair ever constructed (Parezo and Troutman 2001:4). Despite the negative ways in which Native peoples were portrayed, many of them participated in the world’s fairs of their own free will. As the authors point out, “the fair offered families a chance to travel and earn money from the sale of their art and performance of other types of cultural capital...at a time when many of their previous economic pursuits were no longer possible” (2001:7). This, however, does not mean that Native individuals jumped at the chance to take part in the fair’s activities and the Cocopa proved to be

the most difficult group to commission for attendance at the fair. It took several months of negotiations before the tribe finally committed on sending a small group of 15-20 individuals to participate at the Exposition.⁵

Nesper (2003) interviewed members of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians in his article “Simulating Culture: Being Indian for Tourists in Lac du Flambeau’s Wa-Swa-Gon Indian Bowl.” Similar to the Cocopa at the world’s fair, Nesper shows how the Indian Bowl, created in 1951, was both a “dilemma and an opportunity” (2003:447) for the Lake Superior Band of Chippewa but that Wisconsin Native Americans had been participating in similar tourist ventures for over 50 years prior. However, one of the key differentiating features was that the Bowl was held on tribal lands and the “content of the presentations was largely controlled by Indian people” (Nesper 2003:451) as opposed to being staged on non-Indian lands and written by non-Indian peoples.

In light of this body of literature, Peers (2007) contributes by emphasizing the agency of Native peoples entering the cultural tourist industry and providing the reasons behind these decisions as ones related to the Native American struggle for self-representation and self-determination. By examining non-Native national cosmology and visitor reactions to Native interpreters, Peers also emphasizes the importance of including both Native and non-Native individuals in the analysis of tourism research since both play critical roles that influence each other and the decisions to engage in cultural tourism. Examining tourist spaces as contact zones

⁵ The reason behind the Cocopa’s decision to ultimately attend the Exposition remains unknown. Parezo and Troutman (2001:20-21) note from the archival record that Edwin Cushman, Jr., the man who had been sent to negotiate with the tribe, spent extended time in the community negotiating length of stay and compensation for the group. In the end the Cocopa attended the Exposition, but they and many other Native groups left before the end of their contracts due to poor living conditions and illness that affected both Native peoples and non-Native organizers (Parezo and Troutman 2001: 26-27).

allows for a broader discussion of tourist space as it relates to the relationships and interactions between Native American and non-Native peoples.

Situating Native Americans in Relation to History & Business

Peers' (2007) ethnography examines one way that tourism has been appropriated by Native individuals to further their own self-interests through the process of educating the general public. This can be viewed as an outward-looking approach that relies on successful cross-cultural communication and engagement by both Native and non-Native individuals as opposed to groups or tribes. Jessica Cattelino (2008) examines another aspect of Native engagement in tourism and Western business, the fungibility of money to enable self-determination and cultural perpetuation. Cattelino's ethnography, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty*, explores the history and changing nature of the Seminole tribe of Florida as they exert their sovereignty through strengthening their economic power and using it to gain political leverage through economic self-sufficiency.

In *High Stakes*, Cattelino connects cultural identity to money, arguing that poverty is the greatest devastator of culture rather than Western business practice. She argues that "popular and scholarly theories of money's abstracting and deculturalizing force blind us to the ways that people undertake political acts of valuation in the course of exploiting money's fungibility" (2008:3). Cattelino describes how sovereignty is material and money is political, since the ability to gain economic strength also results in the ability to gain and exercise political power. Sovereignty relies on a group's ability to enter nondominated interdependent relationships with other governments on local, state, and national levels. Engagement in Western business practice, particularly as it relates to businesses such as casinos which fall outside of the cultural tourism category, can then be seen as internally-based approaches to Native American self-determination.

Casino monies are reinvested into tribal infrastructures and tribes are able to rely more on themselves than on outside groups.

Both Peers (2007) and Cattelino (2008) examine business and tourism as it relates to larger issues of self-determination and Native American identity. Why is identity construction so important? How do non-Native American peoples fit into this? Philip Deloria's *Playing Indian* (1998) seeks to answer the larger question of why "white" people dress up as Indians. His book takes a historical look at the continued appropriation of Native American "identity" by white Americans in the process of forming a new American national identity. Beginning with the Boston Tea Party, Deloria moves through time detailing the various ways in which "white" Americans have constructed Native American identity with and against their own in order to suit the purpose of nation building. Indian identities are entwined with national American identity because of the "unfinished state" of being American.

Nesper's (2003) article uses Deloria's argument to situate the cultural tourism of Lac du Flambeau Indians in both time and space. Nesper reveals northern Wisconsin as an ideal market for cultural tourism in the 1950s because "white" Americans sought experiences to differentiate themselves from the conformist society depicted in communism and the Soviet Union. These Americans began looking for sources of individual identity with "Indians who played Indian for them" (Nesper 2003:456).

Deloria (1998:5) writes that "race has, of course, been a characteristic American obsession—and the racial imagination has been at work on many different groups of people, Indians included. But Americans—particularly white Americans—have been similarly fixated on defining themselves as a nation." Deloria's research examines the ways in which Native American identity is used and constructed by non-Native peoples, and how this is a historical and

ongoing trend. His research focuses on non-Native identity construction through the *appropriation* of Native identity, which implies an unjust taking of cultural markers by peoples unaware of Native American experiences and history. This is an important distinction to make regarding the use of Native American identity in constructing local and national identity. What happens when Native identity and cultural markers are not being *taken* in Deloria's sense of appropriation but are still being used in constructing a local identity based on a shared history of involvement in the tourist industry?

The final scholar, Julie Cruikshank, though not as pervasive in my concluding theoretical arguments, informs my research methodology and interpretation of fieldwork data. Cruikshank's research deals with oral history work and the collection of life stories among First Nations groups in the Yukon Territory. Cruikshank states that "recording a life history is usually a social activity. It is the collaborative product of an encounter between two people, often from different cultural backgrounds, and incorporates the consciousness of an investigator as well as that of a subject" (1990:x). She uses oral histories to explain cultural processes rather than using them as supporting documents to ethnographic research.

Cruikshank also points to the use of traditional stories to talk about contemporary events. This act of using the past to inform the present and vice versa reflects Halbwachs' (1950) work on memory. The past is made sense of in the context of the present. However, we must also remember that memory is both individual and collective and that nostalgia can trivialize aspects of the past. Halbwachs (1950:51) argues that "the most painful aspects of yesterday's society are forgotten because constraints are felt only so long as they operate and because, by definition, a past constraint has ceased to be operative." Memory, like history (Trouillot 1995), may also contain silences.

Regarding oral history, Cruikshank writes that we must “hear and understand these stories as being told thoughtfully and purposefully, as being grounded in everyday life and as having political consequences” (1998:162). Moreover, the relationship between the audience and the storyteller is important because meanings change depending on the listener, which she illustrates through the use of international storytelling festivals which attract both Native and non-Native audience members (Cruikshank 1998). The facts that I am a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation and in many cases a friend or family member of the people I interview are important because it affects the stories told and the types of meanings and interpretations I take from them. The present must also be kept in context because it informs the types of stories told.

Concluding Remarks on the Literature

Native peoples of North America have long been engaged in the tourist industry. Yet many anthropologists and other scholars have glossed over the role tourism played in shaping tribal histories and trajectories. Many business case studies exist that examine tourism and its monetary gains and successes or failures in Native communities. However, this literature review presents current topics being discussed in relation to tourism and indigenous peoples in North America from an anthropological and historical standpoint. Tourism is increasingly becoming a more recognized and legitimate form of study that reveals how Native peoples have actively been engaged in the tourist industry over many years for their own purposes. Tourism, as the literature reveals, serves a multitude of roles and can be appropriated to benefit Native peoples in their quest for self-determination and sovereignty.

My research seeks to expand on this literature by analyzing how cultural tourism led to the development of the Ho-Chunk Nation and the Wisconsin Dells community as they are today. I argue that tourist spaces offered an economic opportunity that provided areas for Ho-Chunk

individuals to gather in ancestral lands and maintain public visibility in the absence of a Wisconsin reservation. The decision to engage with tourism can be seen as a strategic move on the tribe's path to self-determination and political sovereignty. These tourist spaces, however, also served as a vital contact zone between Ho-Chunk peoples and non-Native residents of the Wisconsin Dells community in facilitating cross-cultural interactions and forming Wisconsin Dells local identity as it is perceived today.

Research Methodologies

My original research proposal was to document the history of the Dells Park Indian Village, the experiences of individuals living and working there, and the experiences and history of Native Americans employed as river boat guides in Wisconsin Dells. I argued that the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial had been sufficiently documented, yet these other two attractions remained largely silenced in the historical record.⁶ During the summer of 2010 I started my preliminary fieldwork by conducting formal interviews with Ho-Chunk individuals who lived or worked at the Dells Park Indian Village and the Riverview Boat Line. I also conducted interviews with non-Native American individuals from the Wisconsin Dells community that could shed more light on these attractions and their owners. At the end of this summer, I returned to the University of Colorado at Boulder to start analyzing major themes and reflect on the larger questions I would seek to answer in my Master's thesis.

Two major themes revealed themselves during the course of this first summer—the importance of communities and a space to gather, and individuals' continued emphasis on the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial. From this summer came a host of questions. Why this emphasis

⁶ Silenced in terms of fact creation (Trouillot 1995:26). Little to no documentation existed regarding these two attractions.

on space and community? Why was the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial a central talking point? What did it mean to grow up during this time period, and what impact did cultural tourism have on an individual's and a community's development? This first summer also revealed a gap in my research. In seeking to record the undocumented history of these Ho-Chunk individuals' lives and experiences, I had failed to equally include the non-Native American voice and perspective.

By the end of summer 2013, I had conducted formal interviews with a total of twelve Ho-Chunk individuals and nine non-Native American residents of the Wisconsin Dells community. I use these oral histories to inform my own understanding of the time periods in which these attractions were open, and the importance of this history and memory to Native and non-Native communities. In addition to formal interviews, I examined the works of previous scholars investigating history and life in Wisconsin Dells and the Ho-Chunk Nation. To complement previous scholarship and questions left unresolved from formal interviews, I also conducted primary research at the Wisconsin State Archives. I combine all of this research to construct a better understanding of the region, the community, and the individual in regards to Native American cultural tourism in Wisconsin Dells.

On Being a N/native Anthropologist

I arrived at my fieldsite already situated in community histories, dynamics, and politics in ways that both incorporated and preceded my own personal life history. The most important and influential aspect of my personal life came from my position as a member of the Tallmadge family. I often arrived to interviews already situated as my father's daughter and sometimes even my grandfather's granddaughter. This family lineage preceded me not only during my interviews but also in the earliest stages of life after college.

After completing my undergraduate degree in Anthropology and Museum Studies, I began a re-housing and cataloguing project for the Winnebago Indian Museum, a private collection of artifacts originally owned by my grandparents Roger Tallmadge and Bernadine Miner-Tallmadge which has since transferred to my father's generation. The Ho-Chunk Nation generously helped offset the re-housing costs by contracting me as an independent consultant for one summer as I bought the materials and equipment to begin the re-housing and cataloguing process. During the course of this re-housing, I made my first visit to the Ho-Chunk Nation Traditional Court.

The Ho-Chunk Nation Traditional Court is one of four courts in the Judiciary Branch of the Ho-Chunk Nation. The Traditional Court consists of tribal elders and provides guidance concerning customs and traditions as it relates to the law and the Ho-Chunk Nation constitution. I had been advised by a mentor in the Ho-Chunk Nation Heritage Preservation Department to approach the Traditional Court and inform them about the Winnebago Indian Museum re-housing project. I provided additional updates as the project progressed.

During our discussions, Stand Rock was brought up as a potential new site for the Winnebago Indian Museum and with it the desire by Ho-Chunk Nation members for someone to re-start the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial. I was told that the process of re-starting the Ceremonial would be difficult, but then again, I should know because I was Lance Tallmadge's daughter. At the time of this particular visit to the Traditional Court, I brushed off the comments of re-starting the Indian Ceremonial because it wasn't my goal and I remember feeling a vague annoyance that I continued to fall into my father's shadow and legacy as one of the last managers of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial.

My desire to separate myself from my father's history translated into my initial research proposal. Before I began my research in anthropology, I went again to the Traditional Court to see if my topic of studying cultural tourism, specifically non-Indian Ceremonial attractions, would be alright. The Court granted their approval. However, in the process of obtaining both their verbal and their written approval I found myself relying again on my father who I needed to speak on behalf of me as an older male in the Traditional Court setting.

In the end, despite my personal desires to move away from discussions of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial, I found myself unable to exclude it from my research. I continued to enter situations throughout my research already positioned as a member of the Tallmadge family and entangled in a history that preceded me. Furthermore, Stand Rock was and is a central talking point in the Ho-Chunk and Wisconsin Dells communities. Much more could be said about the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial than I have covered in my research. However, I hope what I have included can serve as a launching point for action relating back to the Traditional Court's original discussions regarding the importance of the Ceremonial to the Ho-Chunk community and how it can be re-opened again permanently in the future.

Native anthropologists often find themselves in an interesting dilemma as both a subject and a researcher in the anthropological discipline (Ulysse 2007:130). This is a position I have found difficult to navigate when it comes to the knowledge and status I possess as a member of the various communities I study. How much of my own experience growing up in Wisconsin Dells should I include in my research? How do I account for the fact that many of the people I interviewed are family or have some sort of connection to my family as friends or distant relatives? This close relationship to the community as a member of it is something that native anthropologists have to consider and think deeply about. Unlike most ethnographers we do not

get a clean break from our fieldsite locations. My fieldsite is my home. The individuals I interview have placed their trust in me, and they are people that upon completion of my research I must go home to.

In the case of Wisconsin Dells, I am a “Native” anthropologist in the sense that I am a member of the tribal nation that I study. I am also “native” in the sense that I grew up as a resident of Wisconsin Dells and I worked for the boat company as a tour guide for several years. I often related to the people I interviewed as an individual with shared experience and knowledge. If I did not share experience, as in the case of the Dells Park Indian Village which closed before I was born, I am at least knowledgeable and familiar with the history of the area and its people.

The concept of “situated knowledge” as critique of standard notions of objectivity was posited as early as 1988 by Donna Haraway, who deconstructed ideas of objectivity and subjectivity in anthropological research. She argued that to be truly objective a researcher must acknowledge their situated positions and the partial truths (Clifford 1986) they collect in the field. In this sense, each anthropologist brings a unique perspective to the table, one that is often situated in self-identity and outward appearances such as gender, ethnicity, et cetera.

Ulysse (2007) and other scholars (Goldstein 2009; Roland 2011) write of the research process as an “embodied endeavor, one in which lived and felt experiences, through all the senses, is integral to both the data collection processes and the knowledge produced” (Ulysse 2007:129). My situated knowledge rests in the fact that I have participated in cultural tourism as a Native American dance performer from the time I could walk until as recently as August 2013. I am a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation and I grew up in the city of Wisconsin Dells. Despite being in the field for a total of four “official” months, I often knew the individuals I interviewed for many years prior and had an established rapport of trust with them. I connected to them as

student, daughter, niece, and friend. For the most part, I understood the world they lived in because I had been raised in it myself.

That being said, there was still a lot I did not know and much that had to be pieced together for me. Even individuals in a community are not privy to all sides of a story, or to histories that go unwritten and remain in memory. Throughout the course of my research I was consistently surprised at people's words and actions. Many of these surprises I have noted in written text, but others go unnamed or unmarked. These moments of surprise and unanticipated actions often gave me the greatest insight and I would have to pause and reflect on what had happened or what I had heard. There are still many surprises in research that come to N/native anthropologists despite how long you've lived in or how well you think you know a community. If anything, my research revealed to me just how much I did not and still do not know.

Decolonizing Methodologies

When I applied to graduate school in anthropology I remember one of my grandmothers telling me I could do so much more with my life. Anthropology was hardly a worthwhile profession. Her statement came at an unexpected time and I was unprepared on how to address her with the changes that have happened in the discipline. Her reprimands, however, pointed to the dark side of anthropology and the contentious history between anthropologists and Native peoples. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a researcher of Maori descent, states that "from the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism;" research in an indigenous context "stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful" (1999:1). Despite the negative history of research in indigenous communities, many indigenous

peoples have now taken up the task of doing research at home. Smith writes on this phenomenon and takes note of the ways that Native peoples attempt to “decolonize” their research methods.

Decolonizing methodologies have been an important part of my own research process that involve choosing to do research that can be beneficial and valuable to the community, receiving the appropriate research approval, and disseminating my work back to communities in understandable and appropriate formats. Throughout the course of my research, I have consulted and shared my ideas and conclusions with members from both the Ho-Chunk and Wisconsin Dells communities. Several, which I did not interview, remain unnamed in the written text but encouraged my research questions and conclusions and provided insight into areas and connections I never would have thought of myself. I presented on my initial research conclusions to the elders at the Wisconsin Dells Tribal Aging Unit before beginning the thesis writing process. Since writing I have circulated drafts of my thesis to interviewees and others in the Wisconsin Dells and Ho-Chunk communities. However, reporting back and sharing knowledge is “never ever a one-off exercise or a task that can be signed off on completion of the written report” (Smith 1999:15). As Smith goes on to say “sharing knowledge is also a long-term commitment” (1999:16). I hope and expect more discussions, critiques, feedback, and advice to take place in the aftermath of writing this thesis. At least I hope the research process does not end here.

In addition to receiving Traditional Court approval, I also went through the process of obtaining Ho-Chunk Nation Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. I found out about the Ho-Chunk Nation IRB late in my research. It is a relatively new board formed only within the last decade that, similar to a university’s IRB, is charged with making sure that research done on human subjects is ethical. The Ho-Chunk Nation IRB states that “conventional IRBs rarely

consider the cultural, traditional, or customary practices of Sovereign Nations, like the Ho-Chunk Nation. The HCN IRB would prevent unnecessary and possible intrusive research on our people, communities, and properties” (HCN 2013: HCN IRB History). Although more tribes are forming IRB committees, researchers often fail to engage with these groups due to both lack of knowledge (as in my case) or through consciously-made decisions to not engage in the tribal review process.

Because of receiving Traditional Court approval, I was granted IRB approval from the University of Colorado at Boulder in June 2011. However, I remained unaware that the Ho-Chunk Nation also had an IRB until September 2013 when I was writing up my analysis. I contacted the Ho-Chunk Nation IRB secretary to explain my situation and begin the process of obtaining Ho-Chunk Nation IRB approval, which was granted retroactively to my project in November 2013. Due to this delay and my own unawareness, it is important to note that all of my interviews were conducted prior to receiving Ho-Chunk Nation IRB approval.

Within this thesis I have tried my best to interpret the stories shared with me in manners appropriate to their original meanings and contexts. I have also made conscious decisions to exclude certain statements that I believe community members may not want publicly shared. My research questions and analysis emerge from overarching trends and subject matters that occurred in interview conversations along with larger contemporary discussions happening in the Wisconsin Dells and Ho-Chunk communities. By discussing my research methodologies I hope to have shed some light on how I conducted my research, including mistakes I’ve made, that can prove useful for other N/native researchers fumbling through this process of conducting research in one’s own community.

Chapter Summaries

My introductory chapter presents a general overview of my research, the arguments I make, and how this fits into the existing body of tourism literature. My fieldsite is my hometown. I work as both a Native and a native anthropologist by studying the tribal group to which I belong and by being a former employee in the Wisconsin Dells tourist industry. This chapter provides more insight on my background and perspectives along with my research methodologies and the insights I bring to the field. My overarching research goals deal with analyzing how cultural tourism can shape and develop a community and its individuals, and I analyze this in the context of two groups: the Ho-Chunk Nation and Wisconsin Dells residents.

Chapter two details the history of the Wisconsin Dells area and its inhabitants. I explain how Wisconsin Dells has been a place of significance for Ho-Chunk peoples before, during, and after the cultural tourism era of Wisconsin Dells. The area also held significance for non-Native peoples due to its location and economic development. The non-Native settlement of Wisconsin Dells occurred during a time of Ho-Chunk removal from the area. By the time Ho-Chunk peoples returned the Dells was already on its path to becoming a premier tourist destination due to its natural landscape. Tourists, however, also took an interest in the “vanishing” Indian during early Wisconsin Dells tourism, leading to Ho-Chunk peoples becoming part of the main tourist scenery. In this chapter I introduce three main attractions: the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial, the Dells Park Indian Village, and the Riverview Boat Line. I analyze how Ho-Chunk peoples interacted with these settings, ultimately arguing that tourist spaces were appropriated and became Native spaces in the absence of reservation lands.

Chapter three analyzes local and cultural identities, particularly as they relate to the self-identity of non-Native Wisconsin Dells residents. Wisconsin Dells history has become entwined

with cultural tourism and its association with Native peoples, causing non-Native locals to also identify with the Ho-Chunk community. I analyze this development through the use of tourist spaces as contact zones, arguing that the standard relationship of White Self versus Native Other changed in the tourist context. Rather, local residents, both Native and non-Native became the “insiders” or the “hosts” with tourists taking on the role of “outsider.” This shared history of long-term interaction and work in the tourist industry led to the development of a Wisconsin Dells local identity that incorporates Ho-Chunk cultural identity. Non-Native identity as based on Native culture differs in this scenario from standard notions of identity appropriation. Identity in this sense becomes shared rather than taken and rests on more nuanced cross-cultural understandings. However, the two communities ultimately remain separate.

Chapter four dives in the business analysis of the three attractions’ managers and focuses in particular on the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial. In this chapter I seek to answer questions regarding the initial success of these attractions and why, despite many years of being one the main Wisconsin Dells attractions, the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial ultimately ceased to exist. This chapter presents insight from business management studies that explain the importance of leadership types and value of trust between managers and employees. In the case of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial, I also explore archival documents in order to understand the financial situation of the Indian Ceremonial under non-Native management, and how this relates to the later financial situation of the Indian Ceremonial under Native management. I argue that in present times, the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial would be best presented as a non-profit enterprise but that further studies should be done regarding the economic climate and nationwide cultural tourism trends of the 1990s before engaging in such a venture.

Chapter five describes the path of political sovereignty within the Ho-Chunk Nation beginning with the reorganization process and the gaining of federal recognition in 1963. The nature of tribal sovereignty is analyzed on both a nationwide scale and as it relates to the Florida Seminole and the Wisconsin Ho-Chunk. Cattelino's (2008) work on the Florida Seminole gaming industry provides a crucial basis for the understanding of political sovereignty as it relates to economic self-sufficiency. I argue that the Ho-Chunk Nation follows a similar trajectory to the Florida Seminole in regards to Western business practice. Both tribes initially engage in cultural tourism as a means of making money and both eventually shift to business ventures not based on cultural performance. By becoming economically self-sufficient, both tribes have the ability to exercise political sovereignty by entering into nondominated relationships with local, state, and federal U.S. governments. I end with examining other ways that money, and the increase of it, has affected life within the Ho-Chunk Nation and how this relates to individuals' remembrances of the cultural tourism era.

CHAPTER II: “WE USED TO LIVE THERE EVERY SUMMER:” WISCONSIN DELLS & HO-CHUNK PLACE MAKING

The area now known as Wisconsin Dells rests in the heart of Ho-Chunk territory, both presently and in the past. Prior to and during early European contact, Ho-Chunk lands extended from Michigan to Illinois. This territory and annual Ho-Chunk migrations were based on seasonal subsistence patterns. Maize and other agricultural cultivation occurred during warmer months in the north, and hunting and fishing occurred during colder months in the south. Wisconsin Dells served as a major stopping point during the annual journey from the northern lodges to the southern hunting grounds (Hoelscher 2008:23).

More than being a physical resting space, Wisconsin Dells was also imbued with spiritual significance due to oral history and the landscape of the area.⁷ The *Thunder in the Dells* documentary, produced in 1992 by Ootek Productions, demonstrated the long-standing relationship and the significance of the Wisconsin Dells area to Ho-Chunk peoples. The Ho-Chunk narrator, Lance Tallmadge,⁸ states:

Our people would camp here on their annual migrations from northern villages to the southern lodges. They would meet in the Wisconsin Dells because of the force of the river, the rocks, and they would utilize this area to renew themselves physically because of the hard journey, but also spiritually because of the force of the nature here. [Erikson 1992]

Steven Hoelscher, who has done recent scholarly work with the Ho-Chunk Nation, connects Tallmadge’s statement to an earlier one made by Albert Yellow Thunder⁹ in the 1940s, who links Wisconsin Dells landscape to Ho-Chunk renewal and rejuvenation. Albert Yellow Thunder states: “My people come here because of the rock images, the enchantment of the canyons, the evergreen banks, the winding river... Their hearts are made free by the things they

⁷ Stand Rock in particular has often been associated with spiritual activity.

⁸ My father. Lance Tallmadge is the second son of Bernadine Miner-Tallmadge (Ho-Chunk) and Roger Little Eagle Tallmadge (Miniconjou Sioux).

⁹ The grandson of Chief Yellow Thunder (Wah-con-ja-z-gah).

see and feel and smell” (Hoelscher 2008:18). Hoelscher’s section on the significance of Wisconsin Dells to Ho-Chunk peoples also incorporates Ho-Chunk oral history concerning the origins of the Wisconsin River and the canyons the river carved through Wisconsin Dells.

The Wisconsin Dells region has been a gathering place for Ho-Chunk peoples before, during, and after the cultural tourism era of the city. Yet how did mass tourism and Native peoples come to be joined together? Furthermore, how were cultural tourist attractions viewed by Ho-Chunk peoples? The history of non-Native settlement and Ho-Chunk removal in the region provide insight into how tourist attractions became economic opportunities and gathering spaces for Ho-Chunk peoples that refused to be removed from their ancestral lands.

History of the Area and its People

Hochungra, or *Hocak* (Ho-Chunk) for short, means “People of the Big Voice” or “People of the Sacred Language.” Today the Ho-Chunk are one of eleven federally recognized tribes in the state of Wisconsin, the most of any U.S. state east of the Mississippi River. The tribe has approximately 7,000 tribal members (HCN 2013: Media Kit Right Side) and is spread throughout south-central Wisconsin with the Nation’s headquarters in Black River Falls, approximately 75 miles northwest of Wisconsin Dells.

The Ho-Chunk occupied land in the western Great Lakes region for thousands of years (Loew 2001:40), and there is significant archaeological evidence to back this claim. According to the archaeological record, Ho-Chunk peoples are descendants of the Mississippian culture and can be linked back to Cahokia through the legend of Red Horn. Pre-contact Ho-Chunk lands would have spread from upper Michigan throughout Wisconsin and down to northern Illinois

(Hoelscher 2008:25). They were and are considered one of the most powerful indigenous nations in the region.

Ho-Chunk oral tradition states that the tribe originated at Moga-Shooch—the “Red Banks”—located near Green Bay, Wisconsin. According to this oral history, the Ho-Chunk are the original peoples of the area and surrounding tribes are said to have derived from them. This claim is supported by linguistic and ethnographic evidence. As part of the Siouan-language family, the Ho-Chunk are most closely related to the Iowa, Oto, and Missouri tribes. Oral tradition explains that these three tribes split from a larger Ho-Chunk Nation around the year 1570, a claim supported by Iowa, Oto, and Missouri tribes’ continued references to Ho-Chunk peoples as their grandfathers. The full reasons for this break-away remain unknown. Loew (2001:42) speculates this split had to do with the environmental stress of a growing population and contention with neighboring and encroaching tribes. More distantly, the Ho-Chunk are also related to the Osage, Quapaw, Omaha, Kansa, Ponca, and Mandan peoples (Loew 2001; Hoelschler 2008).

Ho-Chunk Removal from Wisconsin

The Ho-Chunk first came into contact with Europeans in 1634 with the arrival of French explorer and fur trader, Jean Nicolet, and missionary Father Marquette. The Ho-Chunk developed a trade relationship with the French and lived in relative harmony for 150 years until white settlers began encroaching on their territory (HCNDHP 2013: About Us). Population decline coupled with an increasing reliance on European trade items left the tribe vulnerable to newcomers drawn to the area for the purpose of mining lead and galena (Loew 2001:42).¹⁰

¹⁰ Galena is the primary ore mineral of lead (Ralph and Chau 2013: Galena). For more information on the importance of galena and lead-mining to south-central Wisconsin, eastern Iowa, and northwestern Illinois, please see the documentary *The Rush for Grey Gold: How Wisconsin Began* (Ootek Productions 1998).

The Northwest Territory, incorporated as a territory of the United States in 1788, included the present-day states of Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. Wisconsin subsequently became part of the Indiana Territory in 1800 (WSHS 2013: The Creation of Wisconsin Territory). When the United States made the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 to acquire lands west of the Mississippi River, the Ho-Chunk suddenly found themselves in the middle of “U.S” territory rather than on its edges. With this acquisition came an increased amount of white settlers to the area.

Tensions rose and finally reached a climax in 1827 when word spread that several Ho-Chunk individuals had been executed at Fort Snelling. In retaliation, Ho-Chunk leader Red Bird responded by attacking a home of squatters near La Crosse, Wisconsin, and a group of miners near Praire du Chien, Wisconsin (Loew 2001:43). Red Bird evaded capture by U.S. officials for three months, but finally turned himself in during the fall of 1827 in order to avoid an all-out war. He expected to be put to death immediately. Instead he and his men were captured and sent to prison over the harsh winter months (OWA 2012: The Surrender and Captivity of Red Bird).

A Ho-Chunk delegation was sent to Washington D.C. to plead for the release of Red Bird and his troop. They eventually were able to gain an audience with President John Quincy, who agreed to the pardon on the condition that the Ho-Chunk would cede all of their lands south of the Wisconsin River. The delegation agreed without knowing that Red Bird had already passed away (Loew 2001:43-44). This cession marked the first of many for the Ho-Chunk in coming years.

The Ho-Chunk ceded territory in 1829, 1832, and 1837. The last cession occurred one year after Wisconsin became its own territory. It was the largest and hardest cession on the Nation because with it came forced removal and reservation life. The nature of this final cession

is also greatly contested. Prior to the cession, a Ho-Chunk delegation had been sent to Washington D.C. to stress the importance of keeping what remained of their territory. The Ho-Chunk took care to send tribal members that did not have official authority to sign away land rights. Through much pressure and coercion, the U.S. government obtained signatures from these delegation members to relinquish the last of Ho-Chunk lands (Hoelscher 2008:56). The delegation knew they did not have the authority and believed the tribe would have time to get the situation straightened out before removal, which translators said would occur after eight years. The translation of the treaty proved incorrect, however, and the Ho-Chunk were removed within eight months (Loew 2001:46).

The first removal relocated the tribe to northeastern Iowa. In 1846, the tribe was moved to northern Minnesota where the Ho-Chunk found themselves acting as a buffer zone between warring factions of the Dakota and Ojibwe tribes. The Ho-Chunk implored the federal government to move them to better lands away from the fighting and closer to fertile land along the Mississippi River. In 1855, the tribe was relocated to Blue Earth in south-central Minnesota (Loew 2001:46).

Formation of Wisconsin Dells as a non-Native settlement

During this period of Ho-Chunk removal, the region including Wisconsin Dells was growing steadily as a series of frontier towns. Non-Native settlers and families were rapidly moving to the area with the majority being of German and Polish descent (MKIGAS 2013: Ethnic Groups in Wisconsin). In June of 1856, the city presently known as Wisconsin Dells was given the name “Kilbourn City” in reference to Byron Kilbourn, president of the La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad (DCHS 1995:25).

The town would later officially change its name to Wisconsin Dells in 1931 so that tourists could better identify the town with its original and main attraction, the sandstone cliffs. The “Dells” refers to the sandstone rock formations that line the banks of the Wisconsin River as it passes near the city of Wisconsin Dells. “Dells” comes from an Anglicization of the French word “dalles” meaning “layers of flat rock” (WDVCB 2013: History of Wisconsin Dells). The sandstone cliffs served as an important regional marker for explorers and settlers, so the area had long been unofficially known by this name.

The history and placing of Kilbourn is a contentious one at best rooted in westward expansion, growth, and ultimately economics. The town prospered due to the decisions of the La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad to build a railroad bridge spanning the Wisconsin River at the present-day location of Wisconsin Dells. This decision came at the cost of another city further downstream, the town of Newport, which had been in negotiations with the rail line to build the bridge there.

Newport and Wisconsin Dells histories are often intertwined, since many settlers of the dying town of Newport moved to Kilbourn for better opportunities. The first documented non-Native settler of Newport arrived in 1849. In 1850, Joseph Bailey and John Marshall, two of the town’s earliest settlers received permission from the state of Wisconsin to build a bridge across the Wisconsin River at the mouth of Dell Creek. This location became the site of Newport, which was officially founded in 1852 (DCHS 1995:23).

The town’s residents and incoming settlers knew that the La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad Line would have to build the railroad bridge somewhere near the vicinity of Newport. Due to this well-known fact, the town of Newport grew rapidly within a short period of time. By

1855, the town had acquired 1,500 residents. Urban planning for the area indicated the town hoped to achieve an eventual population of 10,000 (DCHS 1995:23).

Disappointment came to the settlers of Newport when the Wisconsin River Hydraulic Company, an organization proposed by the vice-president of the railroad line to avoid responsibility for damage to landowners caused by flooding, began to survey and buy tracts of land two miles upstream at the future site of Kilbourn. In February of 1856 the official announcement came regarding the decision to build the dam¹¹ at its current location upstream of Newport. The La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad bridge followed (DCHS 1995:24-25).

Newport became a ghost town and was abandoned by its residents, many of them moving their families and some even physically relocating their houses to Kilbourn City. Remnants of the town of Newport remained near the mouth of Dell Creek until the summer of 2008 when the levy holding back Lake Delton broke, causing the dammed waters of Dell Creek to drain rapidly into the Wisconsin River. The damage caused by this rapid outflow of water washed away several houses, a stretch of County Road A, and the last of the stone pillars marking the abandoned site of Newport.

The Origins of Wisconsin Dells as Tourist Destination

As Newport fell into decline, Kilbourn City grew into an ever-increasing tourist town due to its ease of access and its proximity to the river and the rock formations. One major boost of visitors to the area resulted from landscape photography produced by local Dells' resident, Henry Hamilton Bennett. His most famous piece titled *Leaping the Chasm* was produced in 1886 and

¹¹ The permanent Kilbourn hydroelectric power dam was finally built in 1908. The dam rose the water level about 17ft (DCHS 1995:150). During this time period, locals and tourists feared the dells might close forever. The rising water flooded out rock formations, filled in the old river bed to create Black Hawk Island, and flooded the swampy marshland by Stand Rock to create Stand Rock Bay. Despite these fears, tourism to the dells continued. The raised water level also made the Witches Gulch and Stand Rock more accessible via the river.

showcases the experimental work he was doing with fast-acting emulsions. The photo, which depicts his son Ashley in mid-air leaping from the mainland to a rock formation known as Stand Rock, was showcased at a national photography contest in Chicago. The hype over this photo, and the scenery behind it, is often credited as the main reason tourists began flocking in droves to Wisconsin Dells.

Bennett was born in 1843 and grew up in Brattleboro, Vermont. His family—carpenters by trade—were enticed to relocate to Kilbourn in 1857 by the job prospects of building a new town. When the Civil War broke out, Bennett left Kilbourn to join the 12th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry only to be sent back after a gun misfire crippled his right hand. Unable to do carpentry work anymore, Bennett bought a photography studio in 1865 from river raftsman Leroy Gates and proceeded to make a living taking photographs of the sandstone formations along the dells of the Wisconsin River. By the 1870s, Bennett's photography began to be published and used as promotional material for the railroad lines (DCHS 1995:69-70).

Early tourism and its associated imagery in the Dells largely centered on the river and the scenic rock formations. Leroy Gates, the raftsman from whom Bennett had purchased his photography studio, began giving rowboat tours of the area as early as 1856. Rowboats remained the primary way for visitors to see the river scenery until 1873 when Captain Wood purchased a steamboat named the *Modocawanda*. A few weeks later Captain Bell also purchased a steamboat and named it the *Dell Queen*. These steamboat purchases are one indicator of the mass tourism that was entering the region (DCHS 1995:136-137). By 1874, a documented 6,000 visitors toured the dells, some coming as far away as New York, Boston, and New Orleans. However, most came from locations in the surrounding Midwest (Hoelscher 2008:23).

Tourism and the Ho-Chunk Return to Wisconsin Dells

H.H. Bennett, the landscape photographer, also took an interest in photographing Ho-Chunk individuals. One of the first and best-selling of Bennett's "Indian" photographs depicted Ho-Chunk leader Chief Yellow Thunder at his homestead near Kilbourn in 1873, the same year the U.S. government embarked on their last major removal of Ho-Chunk from the state of Wisconsin (Hoelscher 2008:5). Various Ho-Chunk families and individuals, such as Chief Yellow Thunder, refused reservation life, and many returned to their homelands in Wisconsin both during and after the removal periods.

After the Ho-Chunk had been moved to Blue Earth in 1855, the land base of their new reservation was cut in half from 18 square miles to 9 square miles in 1859 (HCNDHP 2013: About Us). When the Civil War broke out in 1861, many Ho-Chunk men joined and fought for the Union Army. While the men were away, a Sioux uprising occurred in 1862, causing non-Native settlers in the region to pressure the U.S. government to remove both the Sioux and the Ho-Chunk from the area (Loew 2001:46).

Ho-Chunk peoples were then moved to South Dakota. The removal came in 1863 during a particularly harsh winter. Ho-Chunk leader Baptiste pleaded with President Lincoln to let his people wait until springtime to make the journey on foot, but the move would not be rescheduled. Over 550 of the nearly 2,000 tribal members died making the journey to the Dakota Territory (Loew 2001:47). The death and desolation of the journey and the new lands produced a great deal of fear and anxiety among the surviving tribal members, and the majority of them fled to seek refuge with the Omaha tribe in Nebraska. In 1865, the federal government ceded part of the Omaha reservation to the Ho-Chunk and this became the tribe's permanent reservation land (Loew 2001:47). A faction of the tribe remains on the Nebraska reservation to this day. They are

known as the Winnebago tribe of Nebraska and are considered a distinct political entity separate from the Ho-Chunk population that would eventually settle in Wisconsin (Figure 1).

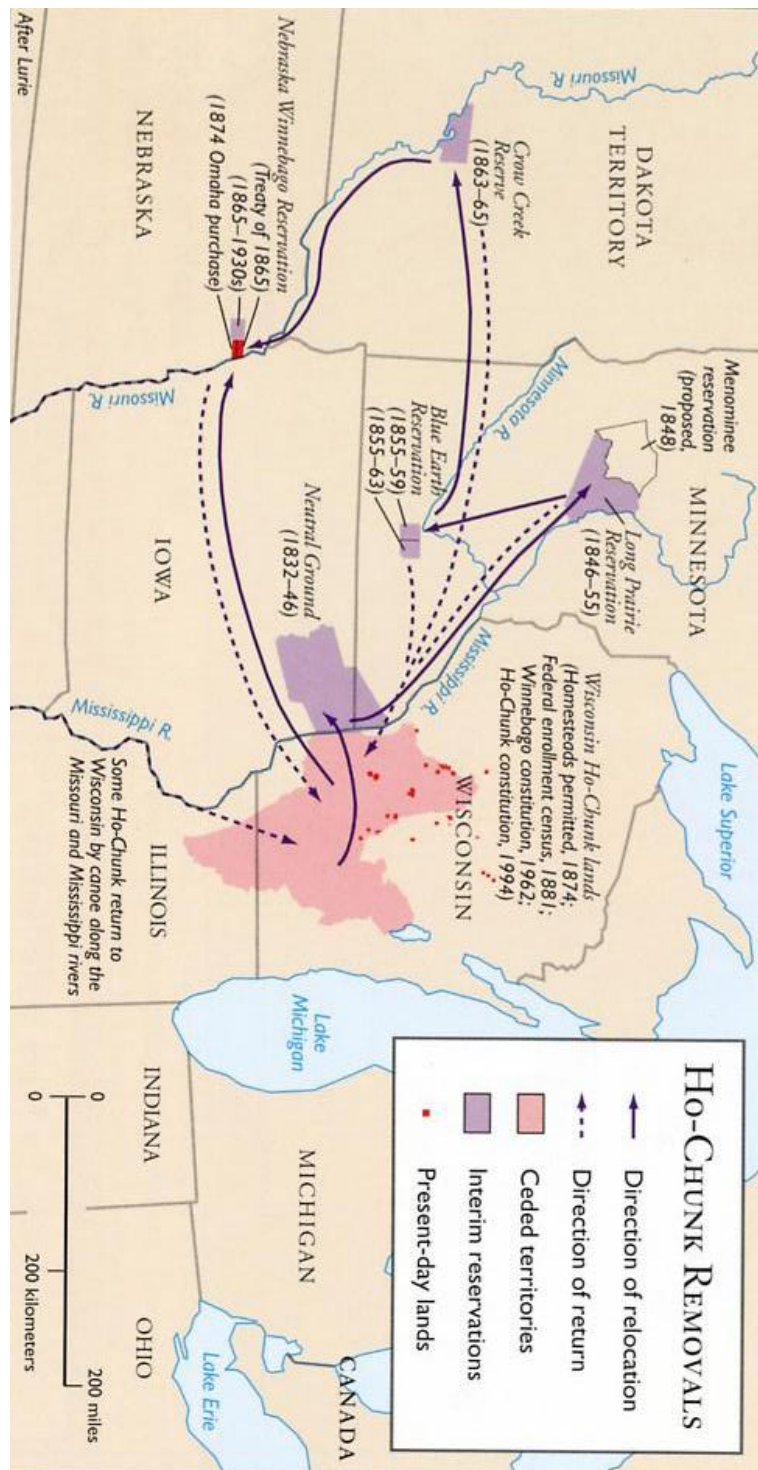


Figure 1. Nineteenth-century Ho-Chunk Removals. Courtesy of Zoltan Grossman maps (<http://academic.evergreen.edu/g/grossmaz/zoltanmaps.html>, accessed November 1, 2013).

The Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin are descendants of the renegade bands of Ho-Chunks that returned to their homelands in Wisconsin with each removal period. So many Ho-Chunk returned to their ancestral lands that federal troops were called in every few years (1840, 1844, 1848, 1863, and 1873-74) to round up these “illegal” fugitives and send them to the reservations out west (Hoelscher 2008:58). The dedication of these people to remain in their homelands became apparent and eventually the state of Wisconsin passed an act in 1881 which allowed the Ho-Chunk to purchase 40-acre homesteads (Loew 2001:48).

By the time tribal members were allowed to purchase these homesteads, the Ho-Chunk were left with the poorest farming grounds and allotments spread throughout the state of Wisconsin. Ho-Chunk communities clustered around regions such as La Crosse, Tomah, Black River Falls, Nekoosa, Trempleau, Wittenburg, and Wisconsin Dells. Seasonal work became a major source of employment due to poor farming and limited subsistence hunting.

During this era tourists also started taking an increased interest in the “vanishing Indian.” As early as 1890, the Dells Country Historical Society (1995:142) documents Bennett purchasing an order of sweet grass baskets and Indian dolls from a traveling salesman for tourist sale. The ever-increasing interest in Native culture by tourists presented a unique business opportunity for Ho-Chunk returning to the Wisconsin Dells area. The seasonal work afforded by the tourist industry provided a way to earn income while utilizing indigenous knowledge and lifeways. Pay for displays of cultural performance eventually became a huge source of economic income for Ho-Chunk performers from the 1920s to the 1990s.

History of Cultural Tourist Attractions

As the town grew and times changed, Native culture became an increasingly important part of the tourist economy. This interest in Native culture peaked in the 1950s (Hoelscher

2008:30) and eventually met a steady decline from the 1970s-1990s. By 2000, all attractions based on Native American culture and displays of performance ceased to exist.

Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial

The Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial is the first and most-remembered of the three attractions that I research. The idea for it began in 1916 when Sanborn and Winslow White Eagle, two Ho-Chunk men from the area, began performing for tourists on the riverbanks near Stand Rock when the Dells Boat Company steamboat would pass by on its daily evening trip (Curry 1995:19). The show became officially established in 1919 through the efforts of Captain Glen Parsons, a pilot and general manager of the Dells Boat Company; George Crandall, an environmental activist and founder of Dells Boat Company; and a group of Ho-Chunk headed by Russell Decorah (Arndt 2005:53). These early shows ran during a few days or weeks during the summer season, rather than being an established summer-long attraction.

In 1929 the Parsons-Crandall partnership ended with Parsons leaving to create his own show at his Indian Trading Post on present-day River Road in Wisconsin Dells. George Crandall's daughter Phyllis was left in charge of the show at Stand Rock and officially named it the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial. Under Phyllis' management, the show ran from June to September with passengers arriving nightly by boat (DCHS 1995:178).

Phyllis Crandall-Connor managed the show for 25 years before passing management on to the Harold B. Larkin American Legion Post in 1955. During Phyllis' time as director, the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial gained national fame and distinction. In 1933 the Ceremonial closed for the season and the performers at Stand Rock traveled to Chicago to live and perform at the Century of Progress events at the world's fair. Following the trip to the fair, other Native groups began participating in the Ceremonial line-up, such as the Zuni who were officially

introduced to the show in 1935. By 1940 the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial received the distinction of being the only all-Native American show in the United States. Though still primarily staffed by Ho-Chunk individuals, the show now included acts and performances by individuals from a variety of tribes such as Cochiti Pueblo, Zuni Pueblo, Apache, Objjwe, and Hoopa (DCHS 1995:179).

The American Legion managed the show until 1979 when a Ho-Chunk group, the Neesh-la Indian Development Corporation headed by Alberta Day, took official management of the show. Under Neesh-la's management, the board of directors became entirely Ho-Chunk by 1987. Neesh-la passed management on to other Ho-Chunk individuals in 1988 (DCHS 1995:180) and the show struggled with dwindling attendance in the early 1990s. The show which since its inception had been held near the site of the Stand Rock rock formation, left its original location in an attempt to continue running and moved closer to the main strip of tourist activity in 1999. Still wanting to keep true to its original appeal, the new site offered an outdoor amphitheater and sandstone rock formations that depicted the natural beauty of the area. The new location lasted two seasons before closing in 2000.

Dells Park Indian Village

The Dells Park originally began as a campground in 1922 when the Crandall family bought property across the river from the Dells Boat Company office building. During this time the Ceremonial was still in its early stages of development and the performers would often camp seasonally near the amphitheater or near Hulburt Creek below the Kilbourn Dam. As the tourist interest in Native culture grew, the Crandall family invited Stand Rock performers and their families to camp at the Dells Park instead (DCHS 1995:232). The amount of Ho-Chunk families

camping at these sites for tourist consumption eventually grew and several other “villages” appeared in the area during the latter years of the Dells Park.

In 1932 the Crandall family built an Indian Trading Post at the camp site and hired Roland Dyer—later nicknamed “Pipe” for his tendency to carry around a smoking pipe—as the manager (DCHS 1995:232). The Trading Post sold various Native American arts and crafts and also offered food and drinks that both visitors and Ho-Chunk families enjoyed. The Ho-Chunk families camping at the Park in wigwams also sold their own basketry and jewelry. In 1933 when the Ceremonial closed so the performers could travel to the world’s fair, an impromptu show was staged at the Dells Park (DCHS 1995:179). Later other Ceremonial performers from other tribes also set up shop at the Dells Park. The ties between the Park and the Ceremonial always remained strong and performers would travel by boat or by bus from the Park to Stand Rock.

The original Dells Park closed in 1956, though other Indian villages for tourists remained in the area. This particular type of attraction seemed to dwindle out during the 1960s and early 1970s. As a result, many of the individuals I interviewed regarding these villages were very young when their families camped at these locations.

Riverview Boat Line

The Riverview Boat Line is one of the earlier, though not the earliest, formal boat companies to provide guided tours of the Wisconsin River. The company was established in 1921 by Oliver and Irene Helland, Irene’s father William Stanton, and her brother Walter (Bud) Stanton (DCHS 1995:153). The company’s major competitors included the Dells Boat Company, founded in 1911 by George Crandall, and the Olson Boat Company, founded before 1918 by Grover Olson. A series of independent boat owners also competed with these three major lines,

many of them founded as a result of a tourism boom during World War I (1914-1918) (DCHS 1995:151).

These boating lines competed primarily along the Upper Dells, or the river above the Kilbourn Dam, because this is where the prime scenery is located. Riverview Boat Line also established a partnership with Dells Boat Company for the river below the dam (DCHS 1995:300), known as the Lower Dells. In addition to their boating operations, Riverview also operated a series of souvenir shops, a penny arcade, a dance hall, and Hotel Helland (DCHS 1995:153; 300).

The founders of Riverview Boat Line, like many other long-standing Wisconsin Dells families, had been in the area since the town's early days. Oliver Helland was born on Christmas Day in 1889 on his family's farm in Newport and he married Irene in Kilbourn on June 26, 1916. Oliver Helland was a key player in forming the city's Chamber of Commerce and in officially changing the city's name from Kilbourn to Wisconsin Dells (DCHS 1995:300). Oliver and Irene Helland had three sons and two daughters who continued the legacy of Riverview Boat Line until it was eventually subsumed into the larger conglomeration of Dells Boat Tours, made up of Riverview Boat Line, Olson Boat Line, and Dells Boat Company.

The time period of Riverview Boat Line history that I focus on occurred during the 1960s and 1970s when the company was largely managed by Stanton Peter Helland. Pete Helland grew up spending much of his youth playing in the Dells Park Indian Village which was located across the river from the offices of Dells Boat Company and Riverview Boat Line. He hired multiple Ho-Chunk individuals for both the Upper Dells and Lower Dells boat tours.

Cultural Tourism and Native American Space

As a non-reservation tribe spread throughout south-central Wisconsin, tourist spaces became important early gathering places for the community to join together and pass on cultural knowledge. Prior to the development of large-scale Ho-Chunk housing areas, the Dells Park and the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial were places where major events in the Ho-Chunk community, such as birthdays and other celebration gatherings, occurred during the summer months in Wisconsin Dells. Ho-Chunk individuals appropriated tourist space as community space because there was no singular location (such as a reservation) to gather together as Ho-Chunk people.

Peers (2007:63) argues that “touristic spaces have thus long been appropriated by Native performers to create ‘new spaces for defining new parameters of identity, livelihood, and meaning.’” She cites the typical ways in which tourism has been used to benefit tribes, such as economic benefit and self-representation. However, she also points to the historic ties between forced assimilation policies and the rise of cultural tourism, such as world’s fairs and Wild West shows, to showcase the “vanishing” Indian before they disappeared. The tourist space provides a crucial role in combatting erasure by making it visible and providing a relatively safe space to continue being “Native.” Tourist spaces then offered a place to perpetuate culture and avoid assimilation. It offered a place to gather and pass on the knowledge of what it means to be Native American or a member of a specific tribe and carry on that identity. For the Ho-Chunk it also provided a means to remain publicly visible in ancestral lands, an important step to gaining federal recognition and ultimately political sovereignty in later years.

Ideas of space and place have permeated both anthropology and human geography research. A 1993 seminar of scholars at the School for American Research (SAR)¹² posited that

¹² Now known as the School for *Advanced* Research in Santa Fe, NM.

this type of research emerged from an inquiry into place and lived experiences dealing with rootedness, uprootedness, and transrootedness; and the theorizing of social identities (Feld and Basso 1996:3-4). Globalization in particular had its effects on anthropological theories concerning space, place, and culture. During the 1990s several anthropological scholars called for a separation of place and culture, arguing that peoples—and, therefore, *cultures*—are not neatly contained to one locality (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Appadurai 1992). Space should be seen as fluid and changing versus place which is limiting and tied to a distinct locality.

Within Native American studies, the concept of place often surfaces in relation to cultural identity. Many tribes assert and argue their connection to places for political and legal reasons such as land claims, water rights, federal recognition, and religious practice. Place and identity get connected to ideas of ancestral homelands or the uprootedness of leaving the homeland during forced migration. Urban American Indian scholars examine cultural identity and separation from reservation lands since nearly two-thirds of the American Indian population live in urban environments (Fixico 2001:ix). Fixico (2000) examines the difficulties associated with being isolated from home communities and the creation of new Native community environments within the city. Straus and Valentino (2001) also examine this creation of pan-Indian spaces in urban environments through the rise of urban Indian centers and how urbanization has also led to discoveries by individuals of their Native heritage, facilitating the development of Indian identities and connecting individuals back to specific tribes. Native Americans continue to find ways to connect with each other and perpetuate cultural identities whether it is tribally specific or pan-Indian in nature.

Ho-Chunk Recollections and Use of Tourist Spaces

Ho-Chunk peoples fall outside of the assumed dichotomy between reservation Indians and urban Indians. They remained in their ancestral lands. However, they lived in or near towns with non-Native settlers. Prior to the tribe gaining federal recognition in 1963, tribal members (rather than the tribe as a collective) held individually-owned allotments of land. With Ho-Chunk individuals spread throughout the state, tourism presented a venue to gather together, perpetuate Ho-Chunk cultural identity, and engage in cultural transmission.

Janice Rice, one of my first interviewees, provided a strong basis and starting point in helping me understand the nature of cultural tourism and Ho-Chunk peoples. She provided valuable insight on the Dells Park Indian Village, along with other Indian villages in the area that were built as tourist attractions. She described general layouts of these villages, named other Ho-Chunk families living at these sites, and offered personal opinions that would be reflected in later interviews with other people. At the end of our breakfast together at the Ho-Chunk casino's Sunrise Café, she stated:

I had a lot of fun. I don't think of it necessarily as...you know some people when they think of it—when they think of Indians and tourists and mascots and stereotypes—I don't, you know, I didn't really feel like it was that way. I felt like what a learning experience that was to have human interaction and just know how to be in the public and how to meet people. [Janice Rice interview, July 18, 2011]

One of the most perplexing revelations for those outside my community, especially for those in academia, has been the idea that Ho-Chunk peoples spoke fondly of attractions like the Dells Park and even spoke highly of their time at these sites. Peers argues that cultural tourism literature often “fails to engage with Native perspectives, and is far more influenced by the emphases of academic discourse than by the experiences of Native people working in this sector” (2007:57). All of the individuals I spoke to about the Dells Park shared fond memories and

experiences. In most cases the people I interviewed were children during their time at the Park or other villages. Most presented their time as carefree and fun.

Willard Lonetree, an elderly Ho-Chunk man, provided more insight regarding the importance of tourist spaces such as the Dells Park Indian Village. “I lived there. We used to live there every summer,” he recalled at the beginning of his interview. “And I do have fine memories of that place. It was unique to say the least *because it’s the last known village of our people*.” He would later re-emphasize this point in his concluding remarks, “It’s a fact that it was really nice to live among people. *Our own people*. There was always something happening” (interview, July 21, 2011, emphasis added). Willard’s interview detailed the busy nature of life at the Indian villages and the sadness at the end of the summer when it was time to move back to permanent homes for the school year. At the Park, communication occurred quickly between the lodges, and individuals grew close and kept up on each other’s lives.

There was also the opportunity to meet other Native peoples. Willard Lonetree recalled how he grew up with the Zuni silversmiths, who set up shop in the Dells Park during the day and performed at the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial in the evenings (interview, July 21, 2011). Individuals from other Native tribes also worked at the Dells Park. Karen Martin (interview, July 14, 2011) recounted her memories of a Florida Seminole man that wrestled alligators at the Park. On one occasion, she remembered the alligator escaping from its enclosure, and the individuals living at the Dells Park being put on high alert.

Basso (1996:74) writes that “Whenever the members of a community speak about their landscape—whenever they name it, or classify it, or tell stories about it—they unthinkingly represent it in ways that are compatible with shared understandings of how, in the fullest sense, they know themselves to occupy it.” The individuals I interviewed were primarily children that

got to see family they usually were unable to see during the school year. Individuals would travel to the Dells Park for the summer season from all over south-central Wisconsin. Living at the Indian villages provided a means to stay in close contact with grandparents and inadvertently learn “traditional” Ho-Chunk by simply living it every day.

The 2011 re-staging of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial brought up many memories for Ho-Chunk individuals that had engaged in cultural tourism. Sanford LittleEagle, in attempting to describe the situation to younger generations of Ho-Chunk, wrote the following text in a newspaper article on Ho-Chunk experience in Wisconsin Dells and the emotions the Indian Ceremonial in the park brought forth:

For those of you who were not aware, in the big little town of Wisconsin Dells, there was a powerhouse school for singing and dancing where many families worked, scrubbed, or sang for a summer job at the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial... For many local families it was a summer family reunion as families rejoined their families from other parts of Wisconsin as they relocated to work in the Dells area for the summer, many baking, making baskets, working on the boat tours, and at Fort Dells, but every night they came together to put on a show. [LittleEagle 2011:16]

The Indian villages provided gathering spaces for Ho-Chunk families and areas where children learned about Ho-Chunk song, dance, and games. Cultural tourism in general also had a large influence on the perpetuation of traditional Native art. Melanie Sainz described her experiences traveling around with her mother, who made a series of home visits when the tribe was preparing the paperwork required to file for federal recognition:

Art was an economic engine at the time when I grew up. When I would go to homes TV dinners were the big thing. So you had to have those metal TV trays... But every TV tray, at least one of them, had beadwork going. And that could've been little pins to sell either to my dad or Duane over at Parsons, you know, at pow-wows or something like that. Or they were working on a regalia because they needed that regalia to dance at the Ceremonial. [Melanie Sainz interview, August 8, 2013]

Melanie, an artist herself, shared this story to illustrate the decline in traditional arts since cultural tourism ended. Other individuals also reflected on the changes occurring in the transmission of Ho-Chunk cultural knowledge. Willard Lonetree contemplated if anyone still knew the songs that were sung for the Moccasin game, a popular gambling game played by tribal members for themselves and for tourist view at the Dells Park (interview, July 21, 2011). Janice Riced worried that children were not able to immediately recognize and identify the songs for dances without taking cues from older Ho-Chunk individuals (interview, July 18, 2011).

Creating Space for the Tourist Gaze

My own experience working as a Native dance performer during the summer of 2013¹³ led me to realize another important aspect of cultural tourism in creating Ho-Chunk spaces, the construction of space meant for the tourist gaze. MacCannell (1976:92) describes this as a front-stage versus back-stage dichotomy, where “the front is the meeting place of hosts and guests or customers and service persons, and the back is the place where members of the home retire between performances to relax and to prepare.” For MacCannell, the back-stage is the indigenous way of protecting the “real” authenticity that tourists seek.

This idea of indigenous peoples creating a designated space for non-Native visitors appears recently in tribal museum ethnographies. In writings by Erikson (2002) about the Makah Cultural and Resource Center and Isaac (2007) about the A:shiwí A:wán Zuni tribal museum, tourists and anthropologists alike appear as prying outsiders trying to consume Native identities. Both authors describe how each tribe, separately, came to the conclusion to build a tribal museum as a safe place and legitimizing institution to represent, protect, and perpetuate cultural identities. Part of the self-representation resulted in the concealment of knowledge to outsiders,

¹³ The venue was Viroqua’s Wild West days. The organizer of the fair hired a Ho-Chunk individual to put together a dance troupe. I danced with the group for two performances my last day in the field.

but ultimately the title of museum was chosen for each community as a way to let tourists and travelers know that this was a place they could come to learn about what it means to be Makah or Zuni along with history from the tribe's perspective. Museums, as a form of cultural tourism, protected Makah and Zuni-only cultural spaces from the eyes of prying outsiders.

The Ho-Chunk, like the Makah and Zuni, also played host to a number of anthropologists throughout the years.¹⁴ One anthropologist, Grant Arndt (2005), examines the evolution of the Ho-Chunk pow-wow into the highly organized Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial, a performance created specifically for tourist consumption. Arndt's arguments reveal an underlying tension between a desire for a communal atmosphere and the demands and expectations of non-Native spectators. His story begins with the 1908 Black River Falls Homecoming pow-wow and a charging of admission to non-Native spectators the following year (2005:46). A local newspaper critiques the pow-wow and its organizers for not creating enough entertainment and not providing enough context and understanding to non-Native attendees (2005:51). This sets the historical backdrop for the development of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial, a show with a set program of dances approved for tourist view and an announcer to explain each dance or item to those unfamiliar with Native American culture. By directing the attention away from traditional gathering places, it kept these areas safe from the tourist gaze while simultaneously catering to this need for consumption.

¹⁴ Anthropologists studying Ho-Chunk communities include Paul Radin, Nancy Lurie, Steven Hoelscher, and Grant Arndt among others. Despite Paul Radin's work *The Winnebago Tribe* being solicited as the "single best authority on the subject" (Google 2012: About The Winnebago Tribe), it is well-known knowledge among Ho-Chunk tribal members to be skeptical of his work. Radin's main informant often made up stories and information for the anthropologist.

Summary

Wisconsin Dells has always played an important role in perpetuating Ho-Chunk life and culture. In the past, the Dells served as a central stopping point on annual migrations for Ho-Chunk peoples traveling from northern to southern territories. Like many Native peoples, the Ho-Chunk underwent a period of removals in the 1800s as the United States continued its Westward expansion. In the middle of the removal period, the city of Wisconsin Dells was founded by non-Native American settlers.

Despite forced removals, Ho-Chunk peoples continued to return to their ancestral homelands. By the time Ho-Chunk individuals were able to buy land in Wisconsin, the city of Wisconsin Dells was growing as a tourist destination. Those returning to the Wisconsin Dells region utilized the tourist industry to create and appropriate Native communal spaces. Sites such as the Dells Park Indian Village and the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial became important places which perpetuated Ho-Chunk cultural identities and contributed to the transmission of cultural knowledge. The seasonal work presented a time and place for Ho-Chunks spread across south-central Wisconsin to gather together and see family and friends not normally seen during the rest of the year. Tourist attractions such as the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial also offered a means to protect other cultural venues from tourist view. Overall, cultural tourism provided a unique venue in the absence of reservation lands that was utilized for cultural transmission and the perpetuation of Ho-Chunk cultural identity in ancestral lands. More importantly, it provided a publicly visible space for the continuation of Ho-Chunk culture, which would prove crucial later in establishing federal recognition and ultimately political sovereignty.

CHAPTER III: CONSTRUCTING LOCAL & CULTURAL IDENTITIES

The nearly 80-year foray into cultural tourism left a deep impression on both Native and non-Native American local individuals. Native peoples frequently deal with (de)constructing Native identity in tourism work. However, in Wisconsin Dells tourist spaces also became contact zones that facilitated interactions and long-standing relationships between Ho-Chunk peoples and local non-Native residents of the city. Present-day Wisconsin Dells identity is deeply tied to its images and remembrances of the past, causing Wisconsin Dells residents to connect town heritage to the Native American/Ho-Chunk community. What exactly is Wisconsin Dells identity and in what ways is it connected to Ho-Chunk cultural identity?

Native Americans and non-Native American Identity

The seminal work on the use and construction of Native American identities by “white” Americans comes from Philip Deloria’s book *Playing Indian* (1998). He argues that this particular form of identity appropriation is part of a larger nation-building process in the U.S. Throughout the book, Deloria demonstrates key points in U.S. history where the image of Native Americans were either embraced or shunned as part of a larger quest to form a National American (United States) identity. During the American Revolution, colonists embraced Native American identity because “Indians represented instinct and freedom. They spoke for the ‘spirit of the continent’” (Deloria 1998:3). Once the Revolution ended, however, Native Americans represented something much different, “oppositional figures against whom one might imagine a civilized national Self” (Deloria 1998:3).

This idea of forming self-identity in relation to the “Other” is not a new concept in anthropology. In fact, Trouillot (2001) reveals anthropology’s use of this distinction in the

making of an academic discipline. Johnston (2001) illustrates how this concept of Othering is used in the tourist setting as it relates to the body. She examines the Self—Other dichotomy and how it is used to construct a visible and identifiable norm within gay pride parades. In the case of homosexuality, anxiety occurs because outside of the gay pride parade members of the group are not readily identifiable by their physical bodies. Within the parade this distinction is clearer and deviation from the norm is more, but not fully, accepted. Johnston demonstrates how the tourist space lessens the anxiety associated with the “Other” and makes their identities more “acceptable” by placing them on display.

Similar uses of the Self and the Other have been used to compare and contrast indigenous societies with Western civilization in order to raise the position of the latter. World’s fairs are some of the earliest and most obvious examples of how Western societies used Native peoples to justify themselves and provide reasons for the continued subjugation of Native peoples. As described by Parezo and Troutman (2001:4), “world’s fairs were established, universal meccas for the display and dissemination of knowledge about the peoples of the world and their material and technological accomplishments. The fairs also served as tools for the imperialist countries who staged them to justify and essentially celebrate the subjugation and dispossession of indigenous peoples worldwide.”

At world’s fairs, Native peoples were put on display in live exhibits designed to showcase the progress of civilization with its culmination in Western science and technology. Their display becomes problematic, however, in that Native peoples were only exhibited as “relics of the past” (Peers 2007: 38). The anthropologists that constructed these exhibits wanted to create a specific romanticized and “authentic” version of various Native groups—one that did not allow for the culture changes or adoptions of Western technologies occurring among Native

peoples. An authentic and romanticized version had to be portrayed, because without the presence of indigenous peoples and displays of their “savage” ways, “neither male nor female fair-goers would have been able to feel so confident about their own place in this emergent world” (Enloe 1989:27).

(De)Constructing Public Native American Identity

Redefining, or rather deconstructing, Native American identity has become a popular topic among Native scholars and researchers in recognizing the changes in Indian Country since European contact and the diversity of contemporary Native American peoples. Part of this literature deals with acknowledging the identities imposed upon Native peoples by others and by themselves through anthropology, governmental policy, education systems, and public media. Native peoples have often been presented as romanticized subjects of the past or ethnographic objects frozen in time.

Vine Deloria, Jr. remains well-known for being one of the first Native scholars to identify and call out anthropology as one of the leading influences in creating the problems of identity and governmental policies placed on Native communities today. In *Custer Died for Your Sins*, Deloria (1969:81-82) argues that, “The massive volume of useless knowledge produced by anthropologists attempting to capture real Indians in a network of theories has contributed substantially to the invisibility of Indian people today... Not even Indians can relate themselves to this type of creature who, to anthropologists, is the ‘real’ Indian.”

Gonzales (2001:177) also points to the works of early anthropologists, stating that, “much of our understanding about American Indians comes from the study of Indian tribes as static, rigidly bound entities, marked by a group’s style of dress, language, religion, material culture,

and culturally patterned behaviors.” Lobo (2001:xiv) notes the disparity between the study of urban Indians and anthropological research, which generally focused on rural communities. She attributes this to “turf wars” between anthropologists and sociologists in which anthropologists studied Indians and sociologists studied urban environments. The popular stereotype then, created through the study of Indians by anthropologists, stresses the rural setting which is reinforced through media and public education.

Romanticized histories, economic need, and the difference between local and tourist perceptions of Native identity are factors that play into the complexities of Native Americans and the tourist industry. These factors interrelate into how the association and presence of Native peoples within tourism developed and how a large focus of Native-owned tourism or Native individuals engaging in tourism today is for the purpose of combatting stereotypes. Peers (2007:60) observed in her research that Native peoples working in cultural tourism often focused on “fighting prejudice, communicating revisionist knowledge about their ancestors, and on learning skills and knowledge which support their personal identities.” Native interpreters used their positions to change tourists’ perceptions about Native peoples and correct historical inaccuracies.

Tourist Spaces as Contact Zones

A careful analysis of Native actors (Parezo and Troutman 2001; Nesper 2003; Peers 2007), has led to a greater understanding of Native American agency and the ways in which Native peoples engage in cultural commodification for their own benefit on their own terms. The Native interpreters interviewed by Peers (2007:60) reveal much more personal and social reasons for engaging with non-Native individuals such as counteracting racism, revising history, and

learning the skills and knowledge that support their own personal identities. The reasons for engaging in cultural tourism have varied drastically over the years and include aspects such as economic benefit, travel opportunities, places to perpetuate traditional arts and crafts, and areas to promote Native American self-representation.

Peers (2007:141) also argues that tourist spaces can act as contact zones, and uses Pratt's (1992:4) definition of contact zones as "social spaces where disparate cultures, meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination." Peers is not the first to adapt the idea of contact zones to a tourist setting. Clifford does so with museums (1997) and Bruner (2005) expands on the idea, calling them "touristic borderzones."

Peers analyzes the interaction between tourists and Native interpreters at historic frontier reconstructions to see if these interactions make any difference in visitor understandings of Native identity. She finds that many visitors are highly intrigued by the concept of meeting a "real" Native American and discovering more about their culture in both the past *and* the present. She says that many are often "surprised that a vibrant community still exists" (Peers 2007:137).

Of course there is no single tourist gaze, but in these areas where touristic spaces act as contact zones, interpreters have higher degrees of power and authority in challenging misconceptions and stereotypes. Peers discovered that most visitors receive new information surprisingly well and are "not locked into predetermined ways of thought;" by challenging myths and stereotypes of the past and present, Native tourism workers ultimately challenge relations of power (Peers 2007:165).

Ho-Chunk Interactions with Tourists

The tourist attractions in Wisconsin Dells both catered to and dispelled Native American stereotypes. Ho-Chunk individuals working in the tourist industry fielded many tourist questions

and corrected misassumptions. Each of the attractions I researched involved interaction with tourists on some level that both dispelled and perpetuated stereotypes. However, I should note that many of the people I interviewed did not spend much time talking about their interactions with tourists. The focus instead was on daily life, communal living, and remembering fond memories made with friends, family, and co-workers.

At the Riverview Boat Line, guides during my father's time and earlier were required to dress in faux regalia, which for my dad included a traditional ribbon shirt, headband, and corduroy pants. The uniform of non-Native tour guides consisted of light button-downs and breathable shorts due to the hot summer weather. Despite how warm my father's outfit was in comparison to the non-Native guides, my father recalled how he "bought into" these ideas of how to interact and present himself to tourists. Finally during one particularly warm stretch of weather, my dad decided to discard his faux regalia and don the attire of the non-Native tour guides. His sales remained the same and he continued wearing the regular boat uniform throughout the rest of his time at the boats. My dad believed his decision paved the way for later tour guides who were no longer required to dress in "Native" attire such as his sister Melanie Sainz and his relative Samantha Day (Lance Tallmadge interview, July 6, 2011).

The boat tour guides fielded many tourist questions during their one- or three-hour trips on the river.¹⁵ However, the individuals living at the Indian villages also received their fair share of questions. At the Dells Park Indian Village, tourists would often ask if Ho-Chunk peoples lived at the Park year-round. Questions like these were met with varying responses.

Janice Rice and Connie Lonetree both recalled answering these questions with truthful explanations. They explained that the Dells Park Indian Village was a set of summer homes tied to the tourist industry. Families lived in their respective houses during the school year. However,

¹⁵ The Lower Dells boat tours are one-hour tours and the Upper Dells boat tours were three-hour tours.

alternate answers also emerged to make light of the situation, to direct tourists to think with common sense about the questions they were asking, or to provide entertainment to Ho-Chunk individuals in the vicinity. Janice Rice recalled one individual joking with a tourist over how difficult it was to shovel snow with moccasins in the winter (interview, July 18, 2011).

Ho-Chunk individuals found amusement in their interactions with tourists. Ed Lonetree remembered how one tourist at the Dells Park happened upon a private Ho-Chunk party. Upon seeing the tourist, another Ho-Chunk individual began announcing a line-up for a performance. “There was no program,” Ed laughed at the story. “But he saw those tourists and started going on like he was an emcee” (interview, July 27, 2011). Janice Rice also recalled how she watched the teenagers at the Park “being silly and crazy with the tourists.” She cites two Ho-Chunk individuals in particular. One would pretend to only know Hocak, and the other would pretend to be his translator. “They kept me laughing,” Janice said after we both finished laughing at her account (interview, July 18, 2011).

The Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial also built in time for tourists to meet with performers during intermission. This was the time when audience members could come to the stage and take photographs with the Native performers. The intermission session was used on a smaller scale to teach visitors about contemporary Native peoples by having them meet and talk to them directly.

Ho-Chunk Interactions with Non-Native Local Residents

In Wisconsin Dells, however, tourist spaces did not only serve as contact zones between tourists and Ho-Chunk peoples. They also served as contact zones between the Ho-Chunk and non-Native American residents of the Wisconsin Dells community. The local non-Native American residents of Wisconsin Dells interacted with Ho-Chunk individuals on a much longer and more prolonged scale than tourists visiting the area. Individuals worked together on the river,

at various land-based attractions, and in town. The Ho-Chunk were not separated from town activity and individuals attended school together and worked together in areas outside the tourist industry as well. Relationships formed, in some cases being multi-generational, between Ho-Chunk and non-Native families.

These relationships became most evident to me when I sat down to interview non-Native individuals who had lived in the area and spent extended time with Ho-Chunk peoples.

Joe Edmunds, a non-Native family friend and former co-worker at the boats, took time at the beginning of our interview to explain his relationship to me on the recorder:

My connection with Kendall is her father [Lance] is brother to one of my very good friends, Randy Tallmadge. We [Randy and Joe] were classmates and the family connection goes back farther than that. My mother and her [Kendall's] grandmother Bernadine Miner were classmates and friends through school, and the generation before that George Miner and my grandfather Jess Edmunds worked together building the Rocky Arbor State Park during the Civilian Conservation Corp Days. [Joe Edmunds interview, August 6, 2013]

Joe's introduction revealed the history of interactions between Ho-Chunk individuals—my family in particular—in relation to his. The connection between the Miners and the Edmunds dated back to the 1930s and these relationships were remembered and held onto. Prior to this conversation, I had known Joe as the individual my uncle Randy “adopted” into the family as his brother. As Joe stated, the two had been close friends throughout high school and thereafter. However, I was unaware of the long-standing history between our two families and how far back that history went. His establishment of our lineages not only showed how long our families had known each other, but it was also a very Ho-Chunk trait to do in situating your relationship context with another person.

Another surprise came from the non-Native Williams family, who lived as dog-handlers and caretakers for the boat company at the site of Stand Rock. In the middle of our conversation,

Pete Williams referred to himself using the Ho-Chunk word for “white person” when explaining how at one time he had been the Native American home-school coordinator for the Wisconsin Dells school district (interview, June 30, 2013). I exclaimed in surprise at his use of the word, laughing that he had so casually and unexpectedly used it.

Pete Williams and Joe Edmunds were two non-Native individuals who had spent extended time in the presence of Ho-Chunk peoples and picked up some of their words and mannerisms. They show to one extent the types of cross-cultural exchange occurring between Native and non-Native residents of Wisconsin Dells. A story told by my father, Lance Tallmadge, about his time working on the Lower Dells boat tours in the 1970s illustrates the more common knowledge shared by Native American and non-Native local residents concerning Native American culture and identity:

Sometimes it was difficult when you would get those very blatant racist remarks or comments. The stereotypes. I remember one boat trip. The trip had gone well like thousands of others. I was going through the boat selling the booklets or the packets. We had packets then. There was a middle-aged woman... looked like she came from a relatively well-to-do family. Comfortable anyway. Family was very nice, very polite, as they were getting on the boat. As I was going through the boat after having passed out the packets and going through collecting them for the sales, she asked if she could ask me a question.

I said, “Absolutely. You know that's what we're here for.”

And she asked, very directly, “Why don't Indians grow feathers anymore?”

I thought she was just kidding. I thought she was just joking around with me. But it kind of took me aback a little bit and I wanted to make sure I heard her correctly. And so she said, “You know I've always seen pictures of Indian people wearing their feathers. And I was just curious why Indians don't grow feathers anymore.”

And again I thought she was just having fun with me. So I told her, “Well, it's summertime. It's molting season. You know, all our feathers have dropped off.”

And she deadpanned looked at me and said, “Oh! Well that makes sense.”

And I, you know, it was the most ridiculous question that I could ever imagine anybody even coming up with. I was just appalled at the ignorance that somebody could actually have. You know, just...

I told my captain about it and I'm sure she could probably hear him laughing. She was sitting on the upper deck. I'm sure she had to hear him laughing 'cause he just roared. I mean, it was just... [The conversation pauses as we both

laugh] He'd been on the river for a lot of years, Ed Jahn, "Honker," they called him. I thought he'd heard and seen it all, you know, but that was a new one on him too. [Lance Tallmadge interview, July 6, 2011]

My father's story reasserts Peers' argument of Native interpreters facing stereotypes and being in positions to combat them. However, his story also reveals the difference between the non-Native tourist and the non-Native local. In this instance, non-Native Honker Jahn (the pilot) also recognizes the absurdity of the question and bursts into laughter. Other Native boat guides like Pat Day and Samantha Day emphasized the familial-like relationships that formed at the boat company between all co-workers. "I still run into my old [non-Native] captain, John Rector. And it's hard to believe, you know. He's still like family. You know, we're all like family over there," Pat Day mused (interview, July 15, 2011). Samantha Day even jokingly complained about her non-Native pilot being a "big brother" figure because he knew her family and kept a watchful eye on her antics throughout the summer (interview, July 29, 2011).

The Ho-Chunk and Wisconsin Dells Identity

In constructing Wisconsin Dells identity, the Self—Other dichotomy deviates from the standard formula of "White self" versus "Native other." Rather it takes on the form of "insider" versus "outsider," and in the tourist industry the "outsider" is almost always the tourist. This becomes most evident in the shared local knowledge of inappropriate or ignorant questions to ask Native Americans and Wisconsin Dells residents. Various questions regarding the town community include "What time does Wisconsin Dells open?," "What is the admission fee to Wisconsin Dells?," and "Is Wisconsin Dells a theme park?," several of which appear on the Wisconsin Dells Visitor and Convention Bureau's FAQ page (WDVCB 2013: Most Frequently Asked Questions). The misperception here is that the Dells is a tourist destination only, and

individuals unfamiliar with the area will often be surprised that a community of local residents exist.

When I interviewed Brian Landers, the mayor of the city of Wisconsin Dells, about his involvement in the Indian Ceremonial performances in the city park, he conveyed to me a feeling he's received from the Dells community at large. "There was a lot of things that we miss about the Dells," he began. "I was hearing people of older generations than me... reminiscing and saying we don't do those things anymore, and I thought we really gotta get back to who we are as a city and as a tourist destination" (interview, August 20, 2012). He described the Dells as a unique blend of nature, culture, and wonder—nature through the boat tours and the river scenery, and culture through the Native American emphasis and Ho-Chunk living in the area. Landers was not calling for an overthrow of the waterpark or adventure park industries, but rather an acknowledgement and an emphasis on *why* the Dells became a popular tourist destination in the first place. He connects this to the town's identity in stating "The Native American community is our culture" (interview, August 20, 2012).

The local identity of the city rests in its historical relationship with Ho-Chunk peoples through the tourist industry which facilitated increased cross-cultural interaction between Native and non-Native peoples. This differentiated the Dells from surrounding towns with Ho-Chunk communities in such a way that Wisconsin Dells local identity became deeply entwined with Ho-Chunk and Native American identity through attractions such as the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial, the Dells Park, and the Winnebago Indian Museum.¹⁶ The last remaining publicly visible ties are evident through the Wisconsin Dells school mascot, the Chiefs, which has

¹⁶ The Winnebago Indian Museum is a privately-owned collection of artifacts owned by the Tallmadge family. Roger Little Eagle Tallmadge began the collection during his youth and originally used his living room as exhibition space. The museum was built to accommodate the growing collection and was open to public access. The museum operated until the 1990s. The collection is now managed by Melanie Sainz, the second daughter of Roger and Bernadine Tallmadge.

undergone some controversy in recent years but continues to maintain a base of support by Ho-Chunk and non-Ho-Chunk individuals.

Nostalgia and reminisces for the past can be seen through multiple venues. Ad-Lit Inc., a brochure distribution company owned by a local non-Native family, began a website called “Vintage Wisconsin Dells.” The website features historic photos and postcards divided into categories. The Native American section currently features 88 photographs (VWD 2013: Native Americans). A facebook group has also emerged, created by another non-Native local, Jake Beard. The group called “Lake Delton/Wisconsin Dells (Before 1995)” was created in January 2011 and now has over 1000 members. Jake Beard cites most members as being residents or former residents of Wisconsin Dells (interview, July 19, 2013). The group posts images of Wisconsin Dells before the waterpark era and individuals reminisce and provide more information about the photographs through likes and comments. Jake’s personal interests lie in real estate and architecture so many photographs depict old hotels, restaurants, and other buildings in the city. However, the facebook page also includes an array of other attractions, including old brochures, postcards, and pamphlets of Native American attractions (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Facebook Discussion of Tom-Tom Dancer at Stand Rock. Photo courtesy of Lake Delton/Wisconsin Dells Photos (Before 1995) facebook group.

The Wisconsin Dells Visitor and Convention Bureau has also made a move to promote older attractions and shops. The Bureau categorizes any attraction in existence for more than 40 years as being “classic” Wisconsin Dells (WDVCB 2013: Classic Wisconsin Dells). Although all Native American-based attractions have ceased to exist, a variety of other “classic” attractions remain such as the Tommy Bartlett show¹⁷ and the boat tours. The historic downtown also offers a host of long-standing fudge shops and bars belonging to this “classic” category. The city has made an effort in recent years to revive the downtown life since many “classic” attractions struggled to stay open in the wake of the waterpark industry.

In speaking with Samantha Day, one of the Ho-Chunk organizers for the Indian Ceremonial performances in the park, she remarked on how “the waterparks took over what the Dells was really all about” (interview, July 29, 2011). Her remarks came after a discussion we had about the present state of the boat company, which she had worked at about 25 years prior to

¹⁷ The Tommy Bartlett show features water-skiing acts, family comedy, and land- and air-based stunt acts.

me. Samantha worked at the Riverview Boat Line when the boats were still a main tourist attraction. The Upper Dells boat tours made three shore-landings instead of two, tours went out with full loads, and visitors would still be left on the docks waiting for the next boat to leave. During my last years of working for Dells Boat Tours, we were lucky to leave with half-loads.

The re-staging of the Indian Ceremonial in 2011 and 2012 drew an overwhelming number of local residents who attended in support of the show. A headcount in a *Dells Events* opinion piece by Kay James estimated 600-700 individuals in attendance, which more than filled the tiny park just half a mile east of the city's downtown tourist scene. Moreover, the attendees were mostly local residents. Hardly any tourists ventured that way. Kay James wrote:

The sight of them [the performers] and just the atmosphere in the park was that this was something we hold dear and consider to be part of our heritage. I don't mean that in terms of usurping the Ho-Chunk culture, *but in terms of how we share life here*...I found the atmosphere at the event profoundly emotional - not sad, but engendering a deep sense of community, perhaps... The sadness did come because the ceremonial was for so long a special part of the area for tourists and locals. Growing up I do not think that a summer went by that we did not at least once go to the ceremonial... Mom also would always mention the friendship between Chief Evergreen Tree and my grandparents – her parents. He often stayed with them and for a time, so did Roger Tallmadge. *Everyone has connections of one kind or another to the ceremonial*. [James 2011: Kay's Comments, emphasis added].

The show brought back many memories for Ho-Chunk families and for non-Native American residents of Wisconsin Dells. The attendance for the 2011 and 2012 Indian Ceremonials illustrated just how much cultural tourism and Native American culture had become a point of pride and heritage for the entire town—a signifier of Wisconsin Dells identity. I had also gone to attend this performance and I remember the atmosphere in the crowd. In the weeks prior to the first performance, residents shared stories about the last time they saw the show. They recalled what it was like and remembered the awe and excitement they felt as audience

members.¹⁸ Down at the boat docks¹⁹ several of the old-timers made mention of the re-staging to me, inquiring about the new show or lamenting over the fact that they could not go due to work.

My mom, cousin, and I were one of the earliest ones to arrive and by the time we got there we already had to park half a block away. A group of Ho-Chunks were sitting near the stage with lawn chairs and blankets unfolded. Upon seeing my *kunika* (grandmother) Marian I told her about seeing a bald eagle on our drive over. The sun was breaking through the cloudy skies. Marian informed me that she knew the weather would be good, even though earlier it looked like it might rain. The weather had to be good because this was a momentous event. As more people streamed in, Bowman Park filled up. The majority of people I saw at the first show were local residents and other individuals that were familiar with the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial. They were people whose families had lived in Wisconsin Dells for generations.

Some local families did not attend the performance, though it was not for lack of support. Ezra Williams, the son of Pete Williams, shared his thoughts: “I thought it wouldn’t be the same not at Stand Rock. I don’t know why I didn’t go, but I remember thinking that it just wouldn’t be the same.” Ezra currently lives out at Stand Rock as the dog-handler for the boat company and he has watched the grounds deteriorate since the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial closed (Figure 3). In talking about his time living at Stand Rock he remarked how “it was strange to watch it go, knowing what it had been when it was running and having seen the show so many times” (interview, July 17, 2013).

¹⁸ Working at the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial as a dancer was considered prestigious, especially during its most popular times as an attraction. Many Ho-Chunk individuals would watch the show as spectators rather than performers due to the competitiveness of receiving a dancing position.

¹⁹ Dells Boat Tours called me in periodically during my 2011 field season to drive charter boats or cover for individuals that needed time off.

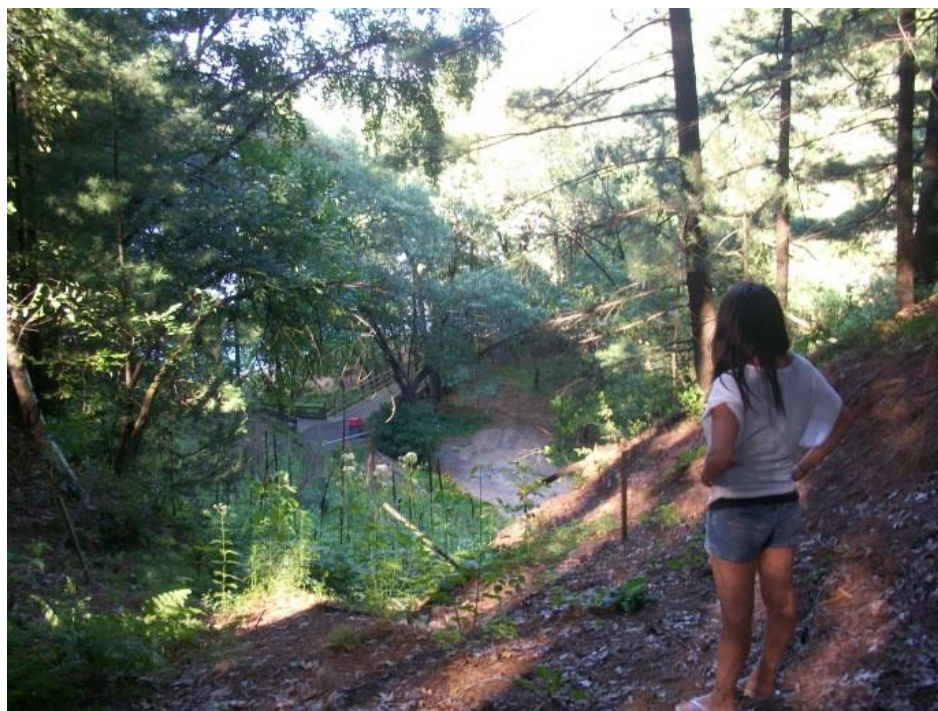


Figure 3. Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial Grounds 2013. Photo courtesy of author.

The recognition, awareness, and support of Native culture and its individuals, however, does not imply that the two communities were ever cohesive despite the overlaps and shared experiences being in the tourist industry. Many non-Native locals described their friendships with and awareness of Ho-Chunk peoples with me during interviews. Pete Williams, however, was an anomaly that paused to reflect on his friendships and the separate nature of the Native and non-Native communities. Pete began by attributing his friendships and connections with Ho-Chunk individuals as related to socioeconomic class. When he was a child very few Native Americans, despite working seasonally in the tourist industry and maintaining jobs elsewhere, ever achieved the wealth that the attraction owners or other long-standing local white families did. In our interview, he went on to reflect on the building of Indian Heights, a Ho-Chunk housing division near the old Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial grounds.

“A lot of the Native Americans that I knew lived in homes in town,” Pete recalled; “Then when Indian Heights was built they moved out there” (interview, June 30, 2013). He went on to

speculate that since then it seemed like there was a “parting of the ways” that seemed almost natural. The tribe was historically scattered. With the advent of a community housing space and a community center, both the Ho-Chunk and the non-Native American communities spent less time together, an action that he speculates as mutual on both sides.

When I asked if the communities seemed more cohesive prior to the building of Indian Heights, Pete responded with his own story of cultural unawareness and what he believed was happening all along:

I’m not sure if I could sense a cohesiveness. Born of ignorance, primarily that a lot of non-Native Americans never really understood or knew the culture. I never knew it was the Ho-Chunk. It was always Winnebago to me until relatively recent. I mean, you know, growing up it was Winnebago. And when people started saying they were Ho-Chunk I remember thinking, “Really? You’re not Winnebago?”

“Well, yeah but actually we’re Ho-Chunk.”

I didn’t know that and I grew up and lived with a number of Native American friends. You know, went to school with them. And we’re talking small school. My class was like a hundred people maybe. Then over the years it just seems like there was just not as much interaction. Maybe I’m wrong. I think there was more interaction. Maybe not necessarily a cohesiveness in a community sense. [Williams family interview, June 30, 2013]

The separated nature of the two groups can be found in a variety of Wisconsin Dells tourist and historical literature, which seek to include the Ho-Chunk as part of Wisconsin Dells history (typically in a pre-European sense) but set them apart from the non-Native American settlement and growth of the town. Old tourism brochures and boat guide books often have a section on Ho-Chunk peoples that portray them as objects of the past by using old black-and-white photos taken by H.H. Bennett in the late 1800s.

The Dells Country Historical Society book, *Others Before You* (1995), takes the standard approach found in many U.S. history books by detailing Ho-Chunk (Native American) history in terms of pre-European Wisconsin Dells. The book also incorporates Ho-Chunk peoples in the

time after non-Native American settlement at Wisconsin Dells, but like many tourism brochures the Ho-Chunk are emphasized mainly in regards to their role in the tourist industry rather than as active members of the Wisconsin Dells community. In the appendix which features a list of long-standing Wisconsin Dells families, one Native American surname is listed. That name belongs to Albert Yellow Thunder, a prominent Ho-Chunk figure in Wisconsin Dells cultural tourism.

What does this exclusion of Ho-Chunk peoples mean? Whether this exclusion is intentional or not, what does it say about “how we share life here” and the disjuncture between written history and memory? Halbwachs (1950) writes of nostalgia as remembering the past as better than the actual reality, and that society makes sense of the past in the context of the present. Both Native and non-Native locals point to a past that indicates Ho-Chunk peoples and non-Native Wisconsin Dells residents had more interaction with each other than in the present. This gives the suggestion that the two communities might have been more, though not entirely cohesive in the past.

However, the written text excludes this interaction, a type of silence that might be explained in part by Trouillot’s scholarship in *Silencing the Past* (1995). How do silences in the historical record occur? Trouillot (1995:26) argues that silences occur at four crucial moments: fact creation, fact assembly, fact retrieval, and retrospective significance. Albert Yellow Thunder is a well-documented Ho-Chunk individual and so are the major performers at the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial who also appear in *Others Before You* (DCHS 1995). What happens to other Ho-Chunk individuals that remain largely undocumented (erased through a lack of fact creation)?

Due to time constraints, I was unable to ask the Dells Country Historical Society how they assembled the information for their book. However, I do believe this written history

provides some insight into the dynamics of the communities and the underlying separate nature of the two. Both Ho-Chunk peoples and Wisconsin Dells residents have produced their own separate and unique written histories that often leave the other group out. Although more interaction occurred in the past, and genuine relationships continue into the present, the two communities ultimately remain separate and distinct groups.

Summary

Tourist spaces served as contact zones not only between Ho-Chunk peoples and tourists, but also between Ho-Chunk peoples and non-Native American residents of Wisconsin Dells. This allowed for a different kind of relationship that falls outside of the White Self versus Native Other dichotomy. Tourists became the “outsiders” and both Native and non-Native locals became “insiders” and “hosts.” These long-term interactions through the cultural tourist industry created relationships and bonds that continue to the present and affect local identity. Nostalgia and shared history plays a huge role in the shared desire of both Native and non-Native individuals to bring back cultural tourist attractions like the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial.

However, this shared history of interaction also diverges from standard notions of cultural appropriation in which non-Native identity is based on Native American identity. In the case of Wisconsin Dells, identity is not appropriated or “taken” in the ways which Deloria describes. Rather the identity comes from shared history and engages in more meaningful and nuanced cross-cultural understandings. However, this does not mean that the two communities are cohesive. As the waterpark industry continues to grow and more families and foreign employees move to the area, the desire to emphasize what the Dells “was really all about”

increases. The identity of Wisconsin Dells residents is rooted in the history and memory of pre-waterpark Wisconsin Dells, in cultural tourism and the Ho-Chunk community.

CHAPTER IV: ATTRACTIONS OWNERS AND BUSINESS ANALYSIS

It should not have come as a surprise to me when several of my interviewees spoke highly of the business owners and managers for whom they worked. For some these individuals were simply “nice.” For others, they were seen as key business figures when it came to working with Native individuals and presenting the work ethics of the Western business world. The Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial in particular served as a cross-cultural bridge for many years, and emotion and nostalgia have a huge impact on the request for its return. Financial data and business analysis help to round out the picture in analyzing the feasibility for its return. Business analysis can also offer insight as to why these attractions flourished from the 1920s to the 1970s and why these businesses engaged the local population in unique ways tied to identity and cultural perpetuation. Lastly, ideas of business leadership and management can aid in interpreting public reaction to the closure of these attractions and how people make sense of failure.

Leadership & Trust

It is important to examine the relationship and dynamics between Native American employees and non-Native business attraction owners to aid in understanding why and how these attractions worked and succeeded. Leadership skills and styles are one element related to successful business management. The stereotypical and traditional views of competent Western business leaders often consist of individuals perceived as ruthless or extremely charismatic and gregarious. However, quantitatively-based leadership studies point to a different kind of successful leader, one that aligns more closely with indigenous values. These individuals lead with modesty and humility and view themselves as equally accountable for the company’s

success or failure as their employees. These studies argue that being a successful leader means being a team player who works for the good of the organization rather than for individual benefit.

In “More Like Ourselves” (2010), Bunten argues that organizational structures of leadership differ between indigenous-owned and non-indigenous owned tourism ventures. Rather than being owned by a single individual, indigenous-owned tourism businesses are “collectively owned” (2010:297) which automatically builds in a system of checks and balances to “ensure that the good of the community, including members who cannot speak for themselves, is upheld... Many Indigenous communities will go the extra mile to ensure that cultural relations are maintained even if it means sacrificing some profits or efficiency” (2010:297). Bunten argues that indigenous peoples should incorporate more of their core values into Western business practice through collective leadership and sustainable resource practices. Rather than acting like the “white” businessman, indigenous peoples should infuse Western business practice with their own local values in order to be “more like themselves” (2010:306).

Quantitatively-based Western business studies also support Bunten’s views regarding leadership. Leadership styles that are more community-oriented produce more efficient and financially profitable companies. One important element in successful business management is the degree of trust exhibited between employees and managers because it has significant impact on the success of businesses in regards to addressing problems that arise in the workplace. Business studies regarding trust and its correlation to managerial problem-solving started appearing in the 1970s as a way to understand differing group dynamics.

Zand (1972) created a quantitative study that evaluated problem-solving efforts in high-trust groups in comparison to low-trust groups. Each group was given a similar scenario, with the high-trust groups ultimately being more effective in managerial problem-solving. Zand

(1972:229) explained his rationale for engaging in such a study by stating “there is increasing research evidence that trust is a salient factor in determining the effectiveness of many relationships, such as those between parent and child, psychotherapist and client, and members of problem-solving groups. Trust facilitates interpersonal acceptance and openness of expression, whereas mistrust evokes interpersonal rejection and arouses defensive behavior.” Zand’s findings also suggested that perception is difficult to change. Ideas of trust and mistrust are reinforced in group behavior unless there is marked or prolonged behavior indicating otherwise.

Zand’s study was re-created years later with the results published in 1978 by R. Wayne Boss. The second study was done to incorporate a more varied group of participants, a different business case scenario, videotaping for reflection and follow-up analysis, and the ability of participants to observe and reflect on the problem-solving scenarios of their own team and of others. Boss’ results matched those of Zand. The effectiveness of solving a scenario correlated to the type of trust or mistrust exhibited in the group. Boss’ study also revealed that issues of trust were not readily apparent to participants. Many participants felt relieved after de-briefing that their ability or inability to effectively solve a situation was not based on differences of inward personality (1978:338-339) but by the instructions given to them in the scenarios (being told at the beginning that they either trusted or did not trust the managers).

Issues of trust can greatly affect working relationships, a point which Zand and Boss evaluate and prove quantitatively. High levels of trust encourage more supportive and efficient working relationships, whereas low levels of trust can cause breakdowns between managers and employees. The importance of trust in managerial-employee relationships continue to reappear periodically throughout business leadership studies, further illustrating the importance it continues to play in addressing problems or situations that arise at the workplace.

Business management and leadership has also been greatly influenced in recent years by renowned leadership researcher, Jim Collins, who maintains a management laboratory in Boulder, Colorado, which researches and consults with corporate and social sector executives. Collins incorporates statistical and qualitative analysis to inform his research on what makes great leaders and great companies.

A five-year research project by Collins and his team unveiled a hierarchy of leadership personas and skills which lie on a scale of increasing leadership qualities from 1 to 5. Level 5 leaders possessed humility and professional will in addition to all of the skills indicative of lower levels. Level 4 leaders were able to motivate groups to high performance and seek a clear vision. Level 3 could organize people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of predetermined objectives. Level 2 worked toward group achievements and could work effectively in group settings. Level 1 could make productive contributions through their own talents and skills.

Collins' piece titled "Level 5 Leadership: The Triumph of Humility and Fierce Resolve," published by the Harvard Business Review in 2001, deconstructs the core myth that successful business leaders require gregarious and larger-than-life personalities. Collins (2001:3) himself noted that "our discovery of Level 5 leadership is counterintuitive. Indeed, it is countercultural" and he proceeds to explain how he attempted to downplay the role of top-level executives in his research, but in the end, his research team argued they could not. There was "something consistently unusual about them" (Collins 2001:3) that was supported by empirical data when compared to similar companies that failed to achieve the same levels of success and greatness.

Level 5 leaders were unique in combining a deep sense of personal humility with intense professional will. They had great ambition for the company and often gave credit to others rather

than themselves. In contrast, inflated egos and attention-seeking executives often produced mediocre companies or even led to a company's demise when leaders set themselves up for success but failed to select an adequate successor, therefore setting the company up for failure.

Level 5 leaders do not get recognized in the same way as other types because they turn so much of the attention away from themselves. At the end of his article, Collins remained unsure if Level 5 leadership was something inherent or if it could be learned. However, he did argue that the skills and capabilities of Level 5 leaders could be applied without the humility and a company would still be good, though not necessary great. Overall, Collins' research supports the idea that company leaders and those in managerial positions are important elements to take into consideration when analyzing business success. How do non-Native attraction owners play into the success of these businesses?

Business Owners & Investment in Ho-Chunk Life

Phyllis Crandall-Connor, Roland Dyer, and Stanton Peter Helland may or may not be Level 5 leaders as Jim Collins would describe it, but they did exhibit qualities indicative of Level 3 or higher. They shared qualities related to investing in Ho-Chunk peoples, creating supportive and respectful environments, and putting these interests at the forefront of business and/or personal life. They formed quality relationships that were memorable and long-lasting, and they provided economic opportunity in times when it was scarce for non-reservation and reservation Indians.

Janice Rice attributed her work success to her start at the Indian Village, citing how observant little children are and how much they can learn and absorb. Her time spent interacting with tourists helped her cross-cultural and communication skills in general. Yet before this she

reflected on something else. “A lot of the kids that were there [working at attractions] were college-bound or going to college. Everyone that was doing jobs and dancing and tour guiding and stuff like that, they were all college-bound kids. That was another thing I liked about the boat company and the different tourist attractions. If you were going to be going away to college, then they gave you this chance to do stuff when they could’ve taken a white person with dark hair and just put a headband on them and made them act the part. They took real Ho-Chunk kids and—”

I interrupted her. “Took care of them?”

“Yeah,” she responded. “And then they ended up doing great things. Going away to college and doing great things for their communities. Doing really interesting things. So I think it was a good experience” (interview, July 18, 2011).

With Janice being one of my first interviews, I did not immediately take notice of her comment. However, when I interviewed Marian Miner, I realized there was much more to the conversation of business leadership. Non-Native managers and owners like Stanton Peter Helland (Riverview Boat Line) and Roland Dyer (Dells Park Trading Post) were invested and aware of the life and struggles in the Ho-Chunk community as reflected in the activities they did outside of work. The ability to work with and understand Ho-Chunk peoples was also cited by non-Native individuals that knew Pete Helland (Ken Foster interview, July 6, 2011) and Roland Dyer (Jean Reese interview, August 2, 2011). Jean Reese,²⁰ the daughter of Roland Dyer, explained how her father was hired by the Bennetts and Crandalls to work at the Dells Park Trading Post: “My father started working at the Postcard Shop.²¹ And then when they got this idea about this Indian Village and all that stuff they wanted him because he knew the tribe pretty

²⁰ Jean Reese is more commonly known as the granddaughter of H.H. Bennett.

²¹ The Postcard Shop was a store owned by the Bennetts in association with H.H. Bennett’s photography.

well” (interview, August 2, 2011). This investment and interest in Ho-Chunk life also appeared in the archival record when I searched for Phyllis Crandall-Connor, the original manager of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial.

In describing Stanton Peter Helland, Marian reflected on his initial involvement with Ho-Chunk peoples in his youth:

Growing up Pete Helland used to swab the deck on those launches early in the morning. He had to get that done by the time that first boat was ready to go out at eight o'clock. So if he was all done by eight his day was over. He could do whatever he wanted. So he would spend his days at the Dells Park with my cousins, the Decorah boys. He picked up a lot of Hocak [the language]. A lot of Ho-Chunks didn't know that he understood. [Marian Miner interview, July 26, 2011]

She went on to provide different examples of Pete's language proficiency of Hocak using incidents in which she had spoken instructions or comments to another Ho-Chunk individual in the vicinity and Pete had responded. On the several occasions this happened, she always laughed with how much he remembered. She also talked about how Pete taught his children Hocak and how Pete's kids had used it around her own. She cited instances in which Pete's son asked her daughter in Hocak to pass things like the salt or pepper on the table or if she'd like to skip class with him and his friends.

In addition to Pete Helland's proficiency in the Hocak language, Marian also related his knowledge of Ho-Chunk culture and ways of living. In the following story, Marian describes how Pete passed on this knowledge to his wife so that she would know how to welcome in Ho-Chunk guests if he were ever away:

Bobbette, she was told that when *Wunkshiks* (Native Americans) came she was supposed to invite them in, set them down, and give them something to eat and to drink. He [Pete Helland] said, "That's the Ho-Chunk way. You just don't come in and start visiting. They make something for you to eat. Even if you offer them water, coffee, or tea. You offer them something."

So some *Wunkshik* women came, went up there to see Pete about something and he wasn't home. But she invited them. "Oh, just follow me." So she took them to the kitchen, poured them coffee, and got something out and put it in front of them. "Here you can eat. Sit down and enjoy the coffee and eat this." They kind of looked at each other. "Uh, my husband told me this is what I was supposed to do. This is what you Ho-Chunks do. And I was supposed to follow the ways." [Marian Miner interview, July 26, 2011]

In turning the conversation to the Indian Heights housing community, Marian revealed the legacy behind Dyer Avenue, one of the main roads in the housing development.:

Pipe [Roland] Dyer is the one that bought the property in the first place here... He bought it 'cause that's when the tribe was just trying to organize. And he said, 'Well, you get it organized. I'll buy property where ten homes can be made. And that's all that's gonna be on that property is just the ten homes only.' That's what his specifications were. [Marian Miner interview, July 26, 2011]

The housing development has since grown to well over ten homes. Marian stated that this was partially a result of lack of documentation. No one could find Dyer's original specifications, which had originally allotted much of the land to cornfields. "But it was all Pipe's idea," Marian recalled. "He created the Indian Heights," a fact which she believes not many people in the tribe know today (interview, July 26, 2011).

Marian was the individual that was able to best describe these former business owners because she was one of the older individuals I interviewed and because she interacted with them both in and outside of specific attraction scenarios. She attended Wisconsin Dells Chamber of Commerce meetings and her sister Bernadine had a large role in gaining the tribe federal recognition and organizing it in the 1960s. Other Dells Park or Riverview Boat Line employees that spoke about Roland Dyer and Stanton Peter Helland were considerably younger. Individuals remembered Dyer as the manager of the Trading Post who gave them candy and paid them to dance in the pee-wee pow-wow. Pete Helland was remembered as an individual that sought Native American guides, particularly those who proved themselves worthy of the job, as in the

instance of Pat Day (interview, July 15, 2011) who was offered a guiding position after saving the life of a drowning tourist. In her concluding thoughts about Roland “Pipe” Dyer, Marian stated:

There’s a lot of people that have come and gone that have somehow or another performed a couple seasons or more than several seasons at the Ceremonial, and some of them have even worked for Pipe Dyer. He had a lot of workers that came and would come back year after year. They knew what kind of the work that he wanted and were able to perform for him. He showed the *Wunkshiks* (Native Americans) work ethic. You don’t say you’re going to work and then be there a couple hours and leave. Showed them what it was like to hold down a job and to be there every day. And he was a fair man to work for. [Marian Miner interview, July 26, 2011]

In contrast fewer individuals spoke of Phyllis Crandall-Connor, though this probably had to do in part with her time at the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial. Fewer children danced in the Ceremonial. The performers were primarily adults. Ed Lonetree, one of the former dancers, recalled that during World War II they had to hire teenagers because all of the men had enlisted in the military. His wife, Connie, remembered “Mrs. Connors” as “a real nice lady. Her and her sister. There was a sister she had too that were sponsors for performances. So they were very nice. Very friendly” (interview, July 27, 2011). Phyllis Crandall-Connor handed over management of the Ceremonial to the Harold B. Larkin American Legion Post in the mid-1950s.

The descendants of Henry Hamilton Bennett, the photographer whose photo made Wisconsin Dells famous, collected a wide range of Wisconsin Dells memorabilia and records, including those of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial since the Crandalls joined the Bennett family through the marriage union of George Crandall to Nellie Bennett. While Phyllis goes largely unnamed in my research interviews, her presence in the Wisconsin State Archives is quite strong.

A series of paperwork from the Harold B. Larkin Post no. 187 of the American Legion in the 1960s documented the early history of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial. The paperwork was filed to establish the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial as a non-taxable entity, arguing that since its beginning it was created for the economic benefit of Ho-Chunk peoples, that it empowered Native individuals to feel proud about their culture, that it preserved intangible cultural art forms that would otherwise be difficult to capture (song and dance as opposed to material culture), and that it served as a vital educational component to non-Native audiences that rarely came in contact with Native American individuals (SRALM 1961).

In regards to a public audience, the American Legion stated “The Post hopes that the public has come to understand the Indian better, to treat his problems better, and to accept him into the American community because of the increased knowledge of the Indian’s traditions, customs and history gained through the Stand Rock presentations.” In regards to public funding, the American Legion argued that “Were it not for this means of giving the Indian an income, the United States government and/or state and local governments would be called upon to contribute his support.” The American Legion concluded by arguing that the Ceremonial was not for financial gain and that the Legion did not profit from it. The purpose of the Ceremonial was to present “living ethnology,” which was altogether educational, cultural, and patriotic.

The document included an early history of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial with sections crossed out and re-written in pencil. Of interest was the section about Phyllis which was nearly crossed out in its entirety. The original document read:

In 1929, the manager of the boat company quit and the Indians were left with a “Pow Pow” [sic] and several white performers, but no manager.

Phyllis Crandall Conner, a descendant of Bennett, became interested in the Indians when she allowed some of them to camp on her property and to sell their trinkets – in competition with a white trading post which was doing business on her land. She conceived the idea of presenting an authentic ceremonial, and

building up a tradition of excellence among the Indians of the area, as well as supplementing the Indian's meager income. Therefore, she assumed the duties of manager in 1929 and, as a start, fired all the white performers. She then conferred with the Indians and discovered the type of ceremonial they wanted and the dances and traditions they would present. [SRALM 1961]

This section became edited and shortened to similar statements I have read in history articles about the Ceremonial: "In 1929, the manager of the boat company left the company and Phyllis Crandall Connor volunteered to carry on after conferring with the Indians and discovering the type of ceremonial they wanted and the dances and traditions they would present." Phyllis' "interest" in the Ho-Chunk is erased in the official version, though her curiosity is made apparent in the unedited text along with the Indian Ceremonial's original use of non-Native performers. The Legion later re-emphasized the financial benefit of Phyllis' Ceremonial, "Upon her wish, the Indians received all the profits; she served the ceremonial for ~~some thirty years~~ a quarter of a century without pay."

The H.H. Bennett Collection at the Wisconsin State Archives also included an array of personal correspondence from Phyllis Crandall-Connor, much of which came from her time at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. The Ceremonial had received enough attention under her short management thus far that she had been one of the first individuals selected to bring a group of Native Americans to perform and live at the fairgrounds. Phyllis organized Ho-Chunk and other Native American performance groups during her time at the Century of Progress, and it was through this connection that the Ceremonial added non-Ho-Chunk performers to its annual summer line-up.

In her correspondence (PCCC 1933), it becomes evident that Phyllis does not have the same rapport with non-Ho-Chunk performers as she did with the Ho-Chunk individuals she managed. In a letter dated to a woman named Petty and to her father on Memorial Day (year

unmarked), she writes: “I am so thankful for the Winnebago – the Hopis are refusing to do the Flute Ceremony although I am not quite ready for it.” Little is revealed about Phyllis’ interactions with Ho-Chunk peoples through this letter, other than a probable better working relationship through years of interaction in the Dells area.

The only type-written correspondence in the Crandall-Connor letters was from Phyllis to her Aunt Mollie in 1934. She begins by writing: “How shall I write about my work with the Indians?” She goes on to talk about “her” Indians, their non-reservation status, and therefore their inability to receive aid from the federal government. She hopes that “someday these people may make a comfortable and independent living” through the sale of arts and crafts, which she is trying to revive and engage with along with her desires of using the Indian Ceremonial in preserving their “beautiful dances.”

The clearest view to understanding how Phyllis feels about Native peoples comes from her second page of the typed letter. She writes: “To me the Indian will never seem dull or unadaptable, and while seemingly unprogressive I wonder if we could progress any faster under the same handicaps? – The lack of understanding, race prejudice, the difficulty of languages and ‘reservation’—I doubt that we could.” Her letter ends with her stating that she has an Indian friend waiting on her and that she must go to attend to him or her.

Phyllis’ letters and history in the archives do not fully reveal her interactions with Ho-Chunk peoples or the breadth of her opinions and thoughts about them. However, they do shed some light on her life and thoughts of working with Native people, and the ultimate goals of her work, which was to provide Native peoples with a source of income, retain their culture, and aid in their advancement in mainstream culture. Phyllis ran the Ceremonial for the longest of any of the managers. It is remarkable that she had so few problems because this trend would fail to

continue in the latter half of management by the American Legion and the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial would eventually close in its original location under Native American management.

Ceremonial Management in Latter Years

Phyllis Crandall-Connor transferred sponsorship of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial to the Harold B. Larkin Post no. 187 of the American Legion in 1942, a transaction the Post calls “philanthropic” in nature (SRALM 1961). In 1954, she transferred land ownership to the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF), a group that managed large tracts of land along the Wisconsin River through the Dells prior to it being managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. In the mid-1950s, full management of the Ceremonial was handed off to the American Legion. Under the American Legion’s direction, visitor attendance expanded and a parking lot was built to accommodate tourists traveling via car rather than by boat, which had been the standard method of traveling to the Ceremonial up until that point.

Joe Edmunds, the last steamboat captain on the Wisconsin River, recalled how in the 1970s the boat company would ferry approximately 900 visitors nightly to the Ceremonial, filling up the Clipper Winnebago (originally a steamboat, now converted to twin diesel engines) and five double-decker tour boats (interview, August 6, 2013). By this time, the American Legion also advertised a 600 car parking lot and enough room in the amphitheater to fit 2,200 people (Stand Rock Brochures n.d.).

However, in the 1970s, another phenomenon occurred, the movement among Ceremonial performers to form a union. A letter to all Ceremonial performers, dated somewhere between April and June 1970, cited questionable financials as the primary reason to unionize, believing that the Ceremonial made more money than the American Legion stated. If this was true then

wages should increase for the performers since the Legion as a non-profit entity could not pocket the difference. The letter in part reads:

Dear fellow performer,

We take this opportunity to urge you, with facts and justifiable reasons, to VOTE YES on both ballots on June 30, 1970. You have been furnished with a host of questionable figures by a non-profit white organization who refuses to make its bookkeeping public.

Legion officials have now furnished you, the performer, for the very first time in the history of the Stand Rock a list of our wages. Why just now? They did because for once the Indian performers stood up together for their rights. [...]

It is we the Indian performer who bring in the money for the American Legion. That is exploitation. Indian talent and art form is not that cheap! Figures we received from the American Legion this week are not true. Other sources reliable have given us figures different from those given out by the American Legion. These sources indicate that the Harold B. Larkin Post \$187 [sic] made a considerable profit last year. [SRALM 1970]

In response to the call to unionize, the American Legion released a series of informational letters (SRALM 1970) to performers, one of which included a list of all performer's wages and another which included marketing, administration, and grounds management financial data. In the June 24 information letter, the American Legion admitted to receiving an average of \$182,967 in gross receipts per year. Of this, approximately \$68,162 was paid to Ceremonial performers, \$27,000 was paid to WARF for rent, \$30,000 was spent on advertising, \$14,000 was paid for administration expenses, and \$5,500 was paid in state taxes.

The June 25, 1970 letter reveals more information regarding the unaccounted for net of \$17,000 per year, which the Legion revealed to have gone to upkeep of the Legion building, children's playground equipment, two rescue fire trucks, youth activities, scholarship funds, medical equipment, patriotic and community services, and the purchase of land for low-income housing for individuals of American Indian descent. In the 1961 filings to make the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial a non-taxable entity, the Legion had listed its revenue break-down as having 50% of gross receipts going to Ceremonial performers, 20% to WARF for rent, 15.5% to

grounds upkeep, and 4.75% going to transportation expenses (a bus ran between the Dells Park Indian Village and the Ceremonial) and loan funds to tide Indian Ceremonial performers over the winter months when the show was not in session (SRALM 1961). Admittedly, much can change over the course of a decade and the 1969 financials show taxes paid to the state of Wisconsin. The Indian Ceremonial performers in 1969 were also receiving less than half of gross receipts, which was below the original claims proposed by the Legion in 1961 (SRALM 1970).

Whether or not these claims were valid, the American Legion and Stand Rock Union situation reflect Zand's (1972) and Boss' (1978) arguments on the importance of trust in relationships between managers and employees. By the end of the 1970s, the American Legion was no longer manager of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial. Management was transferred to the Native American-owned Neesh-la Corporation headed by Alberta Day, a local area Ho-Chunk woman. Jack Anchor, a local non-Native individual and member of WARF, oversaw the transfer and provided business advice to the Neesh-la Corporation. He admitted (Jack Anchor interview, August 20, 2012) that the Corporation took some of his advice and rejected other aspects of it, a trait he viewed as neither positive nor negative but necessary to Neesh-la's development as an organization. Jack's work for Neesh-la occurred in 1978 and lasted for roughly one year. His recollection of WARF's decision to transfer management to Neesh-la included a reflection on Neesh-la's leaders:

Alberta had a very strong personality. She came in with William Thundercloud... They were very strong personalities. That was kind of the impetus for the transition. Had it not been for that kind of interest on the part of the tribe, that kind of pressure, I don't know that WARF would have said ok... So it was a concerted effort on the part of the tribe to take it over. [Jack Anchor interview, August 20, 2012]

Other Ho-Chunk individuals, Pat Day in particular, talked about the work and dedication of Alberta Day to helping and improving her local community. She worked extremely hard for

the well-being of the tribe and was an individual that many Ho-Chunks could look up to (interview, July 15, 2011). Unfortunately, the Neesh-la Corporation failed to reach its economic goals and management was transferred to other Native individuals in the show's final decade.

Attendance was in an overall decline by the 1990s. Joe Edmunds, who had worked for the boat company in the 1970s and spent the following decade in various jobs outside of Wisconsin, remembered his surprise upon returning to the boats in the 1990s and seeing only one double-decker tour boat go upriver for the Ceremonial performances:

As I look back on it, it probably shouldn't have [surprised me]. Changes in the demographics, changes in I guess the reason people were coming to Wisconsin Dells. When I was here in the 70s, the scenic beauty, the natural river, that was the primary draw. And there were other attractions—miniature golf and the regular tourist stuff—but that was sort of secondary. By the time I came back in the 1990s, the waterpark phenomenon had begun. It was really starting and today that is apparently the major draw. The splash-zoom crowd we call them. So I guess maybe, yeah, I remember thinking, “Gee, we used to fill the Clipper and five boats. And now we don't and I wonder why that is?” [Joe Edmunds interview, August 6, 2013]

Another non-Native local resident expressed his honest reaction of anger upon hearing that the Ceremonial was closing in the mid-1990s:

I was really angry that the tribe did not financially support it when I believed it was in the position to do so. I know that the tribe at that point was growing and becoming as far as a government standpoint a fledgling nation... not that it wasn't for centuries. And the casino, I believe, was up and going. The smoke shop thing was doing real well... And it seemed to me that the tribe had the financial ability to promote that. And I was really angry that they didn't... I was really disappointed that the tribe didn't come together to really promote something that I felt was a bridge, a cultural bridge. You know I'm not privy to the growing pains that they were going through or the politics... I'm sure that had a factor to it too. But I was angry.

The Ceremonial, as my family can attest as one of the last managers,²² was not a huge money-making show in the 1990s. When the show transitioned from non-Native to Native

²² Lance Tallmadge, my father, was the manager of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial in the early- to mid-1990s. He took over management from Chloris Lowe, who managed the show directly after Neesh-la.

American ownership, the Native American managers decided to change the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial business model from a non-profit to a modest for-profit enterprise. However, with rising operation costs coupled with a decline in attendance, the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial struggled in its latter years before it moved into the city in the late 1990s and eventually closed down for good.

Concluding Business Analysis

The Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial and other Native American attractions in the Wisconsin Dells area flourished in early years due to a combination of business knowledge and expertise, leadership qualities of attraction owners, interest on behalf of tourists, and ultimately the support of Native individuals working at these attractions since without them these attractions would have ceased to exist. In the case of the Ceremonial, we must also take seriously the claims of the American Legion and the archival records of Phyllis Crandall-Connor in understanding that Indian Ceremonial was never a large money-making enterprise. For individuals like Phyllis or the American Legion, the Indian Ceremonial served as a philanthropic gesture, a means for educating the public about Native American life and for providing economic opportunity to local Ho-Chunk in the area. For later Ho-Chunk managers this was a for-profit business, one that struggled during the 1990s when tourist attendance declined. In latter management, leaders—no matter how good or proficient in managing people—could not continue investing in the Indian Ceremonial in light of declining sales and a possible nationwide downturn in cultural tourism. Although leadership is an important factor in business success, it is not and should not be the only factor in determining business success or failure. The economy,

financials, and nationwide and local trends should also be considered in analyzing business success and failure.

In an excerpt on *How the Mighty Fall* (2009), Jim Collins notes that one factor overriding sound judgment can be previous success. A business like the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial was successful for so many decades that its revenue decline and subsequent closure came as a shock for many in the community. However, the decline had been ongoing for many years, and a lack of diversification in other business areas meant that managers and owners could not weather financial losses. With a resurgence of interest in Native culture and life, tourist interest in such a show may be on the rise again. A re-opening of the Ceremonial should be taken on with the knowledge that such a performance may be better served as a non-profit, especially in its formative years and that the need to have owners and managers diversified in other business areas is key to keeping the show open during times of economic downturn when tourist travel and attendance declines.

CHAPTER V: POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY & THE HO-CHUNK NATION

The road to organization and federal recognition was long. In 1928, the Ho-Chunk submitted a case with the U.S. Court of Claims to obtain redress for past wrongs to the people by the U.S. government. This case failed and when the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) began offering tribes the opportunity to create constitutional governments in 1934, the Ho-Chunk declined, unwilling to accept IRA funds until their claim was settled in Ho-Chunk favor (Loew 2001:51). In 1949, the Wisconsin Ho-Chunk and the Nebraska Winnebago joined together to file a common claim to the Indian Claims Committee for payment of over one million acres of unfairly ceded land. The Wisconsin group in charge of filing this claim eventually became known as the Wisconsin Winnebago Business Committee (HCNDHP 2013: About Us).

The Wisconsin Winnebago Business Committee dedicated itself to the health and well-being of tribal members. They began looking into the issue of whether a non-reservation tribe could receive benefits from the IRA. Their answer came when a federal official uncovered an obscure 40-acre Ho-Chunk homestead that had been declared tribal trust land. With this small land base as encouragement, the members of business committee began drafting a constitution for the Ho-Chunk Nation (Loew 2001:52). The constitution was ratified by the tribe in 1963 and officially approved by the Assistant Secretary of the Interior on March 19, 1963 (HCNDHP 2013: About Us). In 1974, the Ho-Chunk Nation won their case with the Indian Claims Committee (Loew 2001:52).

As of 2010, the Ho-Chunk Nation had over 7,000 tribally enrolled members with nearly 5,000 of them still residing in Wisconsin (HCN 2013: Media Kit Left Side). The majority of these members reside in the south-central part of the state. Business acumen and the opening of several casinos have helped the tribe grow immensely in recent years. The Ho-Chunk Nation

employed approximately 3,200 individuals as of 2010 with 75% of these being non-tribal members (HCN 2013: Media Kit Left Side). Presently the Ho-Chunk Nation is one of the largest employers of Sauk and Jackson Counties.

Displays of cultural performance still remain a modest source of income for several Ho-Chunk individuals today. However, the Nation as a whole relies largely on the tribe's casino and gaming ventures as the primary source of economic income. Tourism remains an important part of tribal members' lives due to their proximity to areas such as Wisconsin Dells and the tribe's reliance on individual tourists entering the casino. Cultural tourism has ceased to be a primary source of economic income. Rather, the tribe has invested in various business enterprises that complement the casino industry and fall under the hospitality sector such as hotels, convention centers, and convenience stores.

Tribal Sovereignty in the United States

Self-determination, self-representation, politics, and sovereignty are all topics analyzed and studied in recent Native American scholarship and ethnography. Strong, in her 2005 article reviewing "Recent Ethnographic Research on North American Indigenous People," notes that scholarship within the last two decades focus on continuing aspects of Native life such as language, culture, politics, and history. However, this scholarship can also be viewed as interesting case studies related to "social processes such as domination and resistance, dependency and sovereignty, cultural production and transformation, and self-determination and self-representation" (Strong 2005:254). Interestingly, Strong notes that ethnographic research in these areas is increasingly happening in institutional settings such as tribal schools, museums, cultural centers, casinos, tourist complexes, tribal offices, tribal courts, and social service

agencies—areas where “scholars can contribute to community-based research without intruding on private life” (2005:256).

This move to institutional settings has to do in part with ethnographic research increasingly coming under control of tribal governments. Strong cites groups like the Navajo Nation which have developed their own Institutional Review Board because they have hosted so many anthropologists over the years. Other groups control research initiatives through tribal councils, tribal research centers, and directing research to local concerns that will accomplish tribal goals. Strong refers to this as an “anthropology of mutual engagement” (2005:256), and it acknowledges the changes throughout time and U.S. federal legislation to increase self-governing power of Native American tribal nations.

However, Native American tribes “have always been separate political entities interested in maintaining their own institutions and beliefs” (USCHR 1981:527) and the United States has historically recognized these groups as separate political entities through the establishment of treaty and trade agreements. In more recent years, the Obama Administration has undertaken the task of organizing the White House Tribal Nations Conference, which is intended to provide tribal leaders from the 566 federally-recognized tribes the “opportunity to interact directly with the [U.S.] President and members of the White House Council on Native American Affairs” (White House 2013: President Obama Announces 2013 White House Tribal Nations Conference). The conference is intended to strengthen government-to-government relationships between the United States and tribal nations and to improve the lives of Native Americans in the U.S.

Part of the Obama Administration’s focus has been to promote and strengthen tribal economic development. In the opening quote on the final report of the 2011 Tribal Nations Conference, President Obama states:

I believe that one day, we're going to be able to look back on these years and say that this was a turning point. This was the moment when we began to build a strong middle class in Indian Country; the moment when businesses, large and small, began opening up in reservations; the moment when we stopped repeating the mistakes of the past, and began building a better future together, one that honors old traditions and welcomes every Native American into the American Dream. [White House 2012:i]

The report consists of sections regarding increased access to capital, business loans for entrepreneurial start-ups, leadership training, job training, and developmental infrastructures such as energy development, communication services, water infrastructures, and home loans. These sections indicate a move to making tribal groups self-sustaining and self-sufficient, very different from earlier approaches in which the U.S. considered Native American groups to be dependent wards of the state who needed the federal government to protect, assist, and make decisions for them (USCHR 1981:530).

These earlier approaches led to a system in which Native American tribes became highly dependent on the U.S. government which ultimately undermined tribal sovereignty by forcing groups to rely on the federal government for even their most basic needs. Despite the movements to increase tribal governance and self-determination, many Native American groups still rely on the United States for large amounts of support and aid. The extent to which Native American tribes rely on federal funding as part of treaty rights was explicated during the U.S. government shutdown of 2013. Tribes without gaming and other business income use federal funds for services such as nutrition programs, financial assistance for the needy, and foster care payment. Some groups like the Crow Tribe and Yankton Sioux rely on federal monies for heating assistance in the winter months. The Crow Tribe of Montana took a preemptive approach during the shutdown by furloughing 300 employees on October 2, 2013, which resulted in cuts to programs such as home health care for the elderly (ICTMN staff 2013: First in Line).

In addition to immediate effects on reservation communities, the U.S. government shutdown resulted in the furloughing of over 2,800 Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) employees. BIA programs that were halted include management and protection of trust assets, federal oversight on environmental assets, archaeological clearances, and disbursement of tribal funds for tribal operations including tribal government requests (ICTMN staff 2013: 2000-Plus Indian Affairs Employees Told Not to Come to Work). Tribal leaders such as Ron Allen, chairman of the Jamestown S’Kallam Tribe, stated in a report to indigenous media outlet *Indian Country Today* that the shutdown could be devastating for the majority of tribes who do not have internal funding from gaming and other enterprises to fall back. Edward Thomas, president of the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes, also voiced his concerns about the shutdown and its effects on his tribe (Capriccioso 2013: Government Shutdown Frustrates Leaders):

Many of our 28,000 tribal citizens live at the very edge of survival and depend upon our tribe’s ability, with federal funding, to provide critical human services. Any interruption in federal funding, especially for a self-governance tribe like ours without gaming or other substantial economic development, means we must borrow money – from an expensive line of credit we cannot afford – to meet our payroll obligations to child welfare workers, to job trainers, to housing workers, and to natural resource subsistence protection.

The 2013 U.S. government shutdown served as a startlingly reminder of the degree to which the U.S. government influences and has a stake in tribal governance through funding. Non-dependency and non-reliance on the U.S. federal government then rests largely in the ability to become economically self-sufficient. Jessica Cattelino, however, argues that sovereignty should not be measured along a singular axis of autonomy and dependency. Rather, self-determination is tied to “relational autonomy, with freedom based not on independence but on nondomination” (2008:163). Sovereignty is realized through relations of interdependency, where both parties give and take and rely on each other.

Cattelino's research examines the economic development of the Florida Seminole tribe through its gaming industry and how economic self-sufficiency has allowed the tribe to exert greater political influence and ultimately its sovereignty on local, state, and national levels. By being able to give and not only receive revenue, "power relations are articulated, established, or challenged... with giving comes respect and power" (2008:174). Her research reveals both the fungibility of money and the materiality of sovereignty. However, it also builds on earlier scholarship regarding indigenous sovereignty in which the term often includes the ability to construct one's own identity.²³ The idea of sovereign nationhood is so important that synopsis notes from the 2012 White House Tribal Nations Conference reveal that tribal leaders called for a clarification of their relationship with the U.S. as "nation-to-nation" as opposed to "government-to-government" (The White House 2013:9).

The Ho-Chunk Nation Today

The Ho-Chunk Nation received federal recognition in 1963 as a sovereign nation. Prior to this in 1961, a group of Ho-Chunk individuals began investigating the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 which established legal self-governance of Native American assets to tribal governments within the United States (HCN 2013: Historic Ho-Chunk Timeline). Over time, the Ho-Chunk Nation would go from 40 acres to 8,717 acres as of 2010 (HCN 2013: Media Kit Right Side).

In 1962, the Ho-Chunk Nation's first constitution was drafted by Nathaniel Decorah, Reverend Mitchell Whiterabbit, Ulysses White, Gilbert Lowe, Albert Lowe, Floyd WhiteEagle,

²³ Sider (2003), a historian who worked with the Lumbee and Tuscarora tribes, argues for sovereignty in terms of identity self-construction as it relates to U.S. federal recognition process which ultimately determines which Native groups the United States chooses to recognize as sovereign nations. The requirements for federal recognition involve historical, anthropological, and genealogical aspects that require applicants to provide proof regarding continuing tribal membership and governance structures that pre-date European contact.

Robert Blackdeer, George Whitewing, Sr., and James Smoke (HCN 2013: Media Kit Right Side).

Various aspects of the constitution have changed throughout the years, such as the formal change of the tribe's name from Winnebago to Ho-Chunk in 1994. However the emphasis on tribal governance and sovereignty remain, as dictated by the Ho-Chunk Nation preamble to the constitution:

We the People, pursuant to our *inherent sovereignty*, in order to form a more perfect government, secure our rights, advance the general welfare, safeguard our interests, sustain our culture, promote our traditions and *perpetuate our existence*, and *secure the natural and self-evident right to govern ourselves*, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Ho-Chunk Nation. [HCN 2013: Constitution of the Ho-Chunk Nation, emphasis added]

Despite the Ho-Chunk being recognized by the U.S. federal government as a distinct sovereign nation in the 1960s, it took decades for the Nation to gain the powerful political form it holds in the state of Wisconsin today. Throughout the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s, the Ho-Chunk Nation as a political-legal body spent much of its time creating a substantial land-base in Wisconsin for its peoples and services. The first sites to be acquired were areas of historic and cultural significance, followed by Ho-Chunk housing areas, areas for future business, and land for government offices.

In 1964, the pow-wow grounds were established as tribal lands in Black River Falls, about 75 miles northwest of Wisconsin Dells, followed by the acquisition of the Indian Mission property nearby. In 1966, the Ho-Chunk housing community, Indian Heights, was established just outside of Wisconsin Dells with the help of Roland Dyer, the former manager of the Dells Park Indian Trading Post. In 1971, the Ah-oo-cho-ka (Blue Wing) housing site was established near Tomah, followed by the Sand Pillow housing site in 1976 in Black River Falls (HCN 2013: Historic Ho-Chunk Timeline).

The 1980s ushered in an era of land acquisition for future business development and Ho-Chunk governance. In 1980, the Nation acquired the lands for the Ho-Chunk casino and convenience store outside of Wisconsin Dells. In 1982, the property for DeJope Bingo was acquired outside of Madison, WI, and a smoke shop was opened in Baraboo, roughly 15 miles south of Wisconsin Dells. The following year smoke shops were also opened in Tomah and Black River Falls.

In 1989, the lands were acquired for the Ho-Chunk Nation Executive offices and the Tribal Courts in Black River Falls and in 1990 the lands were acquired for the Ho-Chunk Language Division in Mauston. In 1992, the Ho-Chunk formed their gaming pact with the state of Wisconsin and the following year had grand openings of three casinos—Majestic Pines in Black River Falls, Rainbow Casino in Nekoosa, and Ho-Chunk Casino in Wisconsin Dells. In 1995, the Ho-Chunk Nation officially moved their main departments (except for the Language Division) to the Black River Falls building, making this the headquarters of the Ho-Chunk Nation government.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the Ho-Chunk Nation expanded rapidly with more housing developments, the building of community centers, tribal elder centers, wastewater treatment facilities, distribution and warehouse centers, convenience stores and gas stations, fitness and health facilities, casino and convention center expansions, and various other properties such as a buffalo farm (now closed), a multiplex cinema, veterans service office, and the Kingsley Bend effigy mounds (HCN 2013: Historic Ho-Chunk Timeline).

These business and property expansions have shaped the Ho-Chunk Nation into the powerful political body it is today. The Nation is divided into four government branches—General Council, Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. The first is the “voice of the people,” an

annual meeting of all tribal members that can vote and overturn decisions made by the other branches of government which, like the U.S. government system, are made up of elected officials.

Part of the Ho-Chunk Nation's political strength lies in its gaming industry (Figure 4) which provides revenue to both the tribe and the state of Wisconsin. As of 2013, the Ho-Chunk Nation operates six tribal gaming facilities in Black River Falls, Madison, Nekoosa, Tomah, Wisconsin Dells, and Wittenburg (HCGW 2012: Ho-Chunk Gaming Wisconsin); proposals and plans have been made for another casino in Beloit, which could have the potential for drawing crowds from northern Illinois and Chicago. The Ho-Chunk Nation is currently the largest employer in Sauk and Jackson counties (Worknet 2013: Jackson County summary; Sauk County summary), being in charge of over 3,000 employees (HCN 2013: Media Kit Left Side). Sauk County includes a portion of the city of Wisconsin Dells and the Ho-Chunk gaming facility outside of it, and Jackson County includes the tribal government offices in Black River Falls.



Figure 4. Ho-Chunk Gaming Locations. Photo courtesy of Ho-Chunk Nation Business Department (<http://www.ho-chunknation.com/?PageId=230>, accessed November 1, 2013).

The Ho-Chunk Nation and Sovereignty

The Ho-Chunk Nation follows a trajectory that aligns with the Florida Seminole in regards to economic success in the tourist industry and sovereignty asserted through nondominated interdependent relationships with local, state, and federal governments. Like the Seminole, the Ho-Chunk began in a cultural tourist setting which not only provided economic income, but also aided in the public visibility of establishing Native claim to land and identity in Wisconsin, specifically in the Wisconsin Dells region.

Many indigenous peoples around the world began engaging in cultural tourism as an economic development strategy during the 1900s, and the Seminole were no different. Cattelino (2008:40) argues that, “the marketing of culture and of craft objects has enabled new and meaningful modes of cultural expression” for Seminole peoples, but that it was also made the idea of Seminole culture measurable, identifiable, and commodifiable (Cattelino 2008:31).

Craft production earned Seminole women supplementary income whereas alligator wrestling did likewise for the men. Cattelino (2008:47) states that, “what began as an economic pursuit grew into a marker of cultural heritage,” through the union between culture, gender, and labor. This union of business with identity, *as a marker of identity*, made it difficult to tease apart the relationship between the two when the Seminole eventually engaged in business not reliant on their cultural heritage. This divorce of business and Native identity caused non-Native outsiders to question Seminole identity as it related to stereotypical ideas of poor, rural Indians unable to fend for themselves or be successful in Western business. Cattelino’s argument is that, “twentieth-century Seminoles repeatedly chose economic modernization as the best possible way to preserve, not abandon, distinctive identities” (2008:58). Their decisions to pursue economic development opportunities uncoupled the union between culture and labor, such as the opening

of smoke shops and casinos, and allowed them greater self-representation because they gained more political power from their ability to become economically self-sufficient. Freedom and sovereignty rest in a tribe's ability to construct their own identity and perpetuate their culture even when it seems to go against traditional ideas of Native Americans in the U.S.

When individuals in the Wisconsin Dells area think of the Ho-Chunk today, the casino frequently comes to mind. The tribe focuses many of its resources and attention on the gaming industry because of the wealth it has brought to the Nation. Gaming revenues have allowed the Ho-Chunk to invest in social and political infrastructures such as housing, elder care, the tribal government, and language and heritage preservation that define and reinforce internal Ho-Chunk identity. However, the critique from non-Native American residents is that the Ho-Chunk, due to the shift of the casino being their main economic endeavor and the subsequent withdrawal from the cultural tourist industry, are now only known for and associated with their ties to gaming enterprises.

This conflation of Ho-Chunk identity with the gaming industry is also felt among tribal members interacting with a larger non-Native audience. A former employee of the Nation stated that a re-branding process occurred at the casino and convention center facilities to make a distinction between Ho-Chunk gaming enterprises and the Ho-Chunk Nation as a government. As part of this effort, the Ho-Chunk Nation government seal was removed from areas related to Ho-Chunk gaming and other business aspects of the tribe. "It just seemed like everything was muddied when you start sticking the Nation [government imagery] in there and that seemed like the trouble," stated Anne Thundercloud (interview, July 17, 2013), former Public Relations representative of the Ho-Chunk Nation. "When you think 'Oh Ho-Chunk. Oh casinos.' You know, it's like 'No, that's a government.'"

The need to separate business and government is slowly coming to a head as the Ho-Chunk Nation begins a process to do exactly that. Inset leaflets have been included in a variety of *Hocak Worak* publications²⁴ throughout 2013 explaining the argument for and the subsequent process of creating a Ho-Chunk business corporation not directed by the tribal government. The proceeds of the corporation would still go to fund tribal government offices and organizations, however, the business decisions and management would not be dictated by government officials. The special legislative edition of the *Worak* from May 17, 2013, argued that “the separation of business and government would enable the Nation to diversify its non-gaming businesses... For many years, the Ho-Chunk Nation has discussed the importance of, and need for, improving its businesses and economy. The Nation has realized the need to diversify and develop additional business entities” (HWSLE 2013: Insert). This move would eliminate government bureaucracy and politics from business and allow the Nation to shift its primary focus away from the gaming industry.

The separation of business and government has the potential to allow the Ho-Chunk Nation to enter new and strategic business ventures that shift away from a primary focus on building tribal infrastructures. It also allows the Nation to develop more efficient processes that address the two main aspects of the Ho-Chunk Nation right now—government *and* business. Although Anne Thundercloud states that the Ho-Chunk Nation is a government, which it is in its most legal sense, tribal elder Marian Miner stated in her interview that “the Ho-Chunk Nation is a business” and not just Nation (interview, July 26, 2011). She called attention to the fact that tribal employees were not trained in standard business affairs such as dress and phone etiquette, aspects she learned from working at the Dells Park and in subsequent jobs interacting with non-Native peoples.

²⁴ The Ho-Chunk Nation newspaper, circulated and widely read by Ho-Chunk tribal members nationwide.

The Ho-Chunk Nation, as a strong political and economic player in Wisconsin and the United States today, has created many opportunities for its tribal members that were unavailable in the past. The number of jobs available working for tribal enterprises and Native peoples has increased significantly. Gaming revenues have also allowed many Ho-Chunk individuals a way out of poverty and paths to higher education. The economic strength has also allowed the Nation time and resources devoted to preserving and perpetuating Ho-Chunk cultural identity. Yet at the same time it has created a sense of entitlement to gaming revenue and services from the Nation, along with a separation from the surrounding non-Native communities.

Cattelino (2008) observes this phenomenon of entitlement to services and revenues within her research on the Florida Seminole, defining it as an over-reliance on tribal government and equally as problematic as an over-reliance on the U.S. federal government. Within my research, both Ho-Chunk and non-Native individuals commented on similar aspects of this situation during interviews and discussions of whether cultural tourism like the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial would ever be possible again.

On one end of the spectrum was a non-Native local historian who believed that Ho-Chunk individuals would be unwilling to leave their well-paying jobs at the casino in order to take up lower-paying jobs in cultural performance. On the opposite end were several Ho-Chunk individuals who believed that re-opening the Ceremonial or engaging in other forms of cultural tourism was possible but that it would take a group of Native individuals to get such a project started. The key points in the latter scenario involved a shared emphasis on the project needing to be a group effort rather than individual and that the initiative would have to start from within the Ho-Chunk community.

Several of the individuals I interviewed noted the issue of entitlement and the decline of work ethic among younger generations of Ho-Chunk. Dells Park employees at varying points in their interviews commented on growing up in an era where everyone worked. The situation was both fun and difficult, and ultimately rewarding. “All the teenagers all had jobs,” Janice Rice recalled (interview, July 18, 2011). “That was something cool now that I think about it. Growing up, the teenagers, everybody worked. There wasn’t anybody who was sitting there like, ‘I haven’t got a thing to do’ and just being really lazy. Everybody had a job. So it was always inspiring because I saw the role models for work. You go to work, do your job, you get money. You get yourself a new pair of shoes or whatever it was.” Individuals working at the Dells Park and at the boat tours proudly claimed that this was when they learned work ethic and the skills that made them successful in future employment. But how does this translate to younger generations of Ho-Chunk who are growing up in a time when the Nation provides everything, including a substantial trust fund for simply graduating high school?

“I’m really frustrated with what is happening with our young people when they graduate from high school and they’re just eighteen and they receive over X [number deleted] dollars. They haven’t really worked for it. You know getting a high school education, yeah, there is effort. I know. I’ve seen it... but it’s not enough to compensate you X dollars,” argues Melanie Sainz (interview, August 8, 2013), who is embarking on a new venture to increase knowledge of traditional arts through her non-profit LEAF (Little Eagle Arts Foundation) which will also provide fiscal literacy to Native artists and Ho-Chunk youth. “They don’t know how to use it [the trust fund money],” she adds. “A lot of them are just buying material things or things for their family members. They have nothing to show for it 24 months later. I think it’s critical that we learn that money is a fabulous tool, but if you’re just going to be a consumer with it you’re

supporting the economics of your community—but is it really helping to take you to the next level?” Melanie, who toured around the country as Miss Indian America in 1980, received her own start at the Riverview Boat Line. Her experience at the boats, along with growing up as the daughter of Roger Little Eagle Tallmadge,²⁵ taught her the value of cross-cultural interaction but also the responsibility to give back to the community, or—in her case—communities, as she cites both the Ho-Chunk Nation and Wisconsin Dells in making this statement.

The Ho-Chunk Nation government is also aware of the issues facing Ho-Chunk youth in receiving large sums of money at a time when they don’t have the knowledge to invest it properly and end up spending and loaning it all out within a short period of time. The Ho-Chunk Nation created a Trust Fund Task Force to address this issue and sent out a questionnaire survey to all Ho-Chunk individuals who had already received a trust fund upon graduating high school. Results of the survey were published in the *Hocak Worak* and emphasized a need for fiscal literacy with individuals stating they were too young or uninformed to know how to properly invest and manage trust fund monies at the time they received them (Legal News 2013:11).

Outside of business and financials, my conversation with Marian Miner also turned to the need for Ho-Chunk youth to have increased interaction with non-Native peoples. Marian, who was part of a team that received a grant to teach traditional cultural classes (such as how to make regalia and cook), emphasized this point: ““We gotta start teaching our kids how to conduct themselves. That’s how you’re gonna grow,’ I said. ‘That’s how this is gonna grow,’ I said. Yeah, you are *Wunkshik* (Native) but you can’t act like a *Wunkshik* all the time” (interview, July 26, 2011). Marian’s statement calls attention to the decreased interaction of Native youth with non-

²⁵ Roger Little Eagle Tallmadge, my grandfather, was a well-known community liaison that worked on building cross-cultural relationships between the Ho-Chunk and non-Native American peoples. Roger himself was adopted out of the Miniconjou Sioux tribe to a Welsh-American family. When passing through Wisconsin Dells he met Bernadine Miner, a local Ho-Chunk woman and my grandmother, at the Dells Park. They married and he remained in the area until his passing in 1979.

Native individuals. Although interaction still occurs, it is not on the same scale as it used to be during the height of the cultural tourism years in Wisconsin Dells.

Summary

Native American groups in the U.S. today continue to struggle for self-determination and political sovereignty that empowers them to stand on equal footing with local, state, and federal governments. Cattelino (2008) argues that the ability to become economically self-sufficient relates to the ability to exercise political sovereignty. The 2013 U.S. government shut-down illustrated the degree to which tribal nations rely on U.S. federal funding as designated through treaty rights. However, it also illustrated the importance of becoming economically independent.

The Ho-Chunk Nation provides an example of a tribal nation that followed a similar trajectory to the Florida Seminole. Through an engagement in Western business ventures, the Ho-Chunk Nation became a powerful political figure in Wisconsin through its gaming industry, which gave the tribe economic self-sufficiency and ultimately the ability to enter nondominated interdependent relationships with local, state, and federal governments. On a state scale, this is illustrated through the payout of casino revenue to the state of Wisconsin and through millions of dollars of philanthropic donations annually to eleven Wisconsin counties (HCN 2013: Media Kit Left Side). Similar to the Florida Seminole, the Ho-Chunk perpetuated their cultural identity through economic means, first within the cultural tourist industry in Wisconsin Dells and second through the gaming industry in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Dells cultural tourism offered a space for visibility to Ho-Chunk peoples in the past and today sits as a valuable economic location in its regards to attracting visitors from all over the Midwest. The Ho-Chunk Nation continues to re-evaluate its current means in obtaining and exercising economic power and political sovereignty

through economic diversification, and the community seeks to address issues that have arisen as a result of the sudden increase in wealth among Ho-Chunk peoples.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

Despite the popularity and local resident turn-out in 2011 and 2012 for the Indian Ceremonial performances in the park, the show did not continue in 2013. About halfway through this summer, I asked several members in the community, both Native and non-Native, if they knew about any plans for the show to continue. No one had heard anything.

I scheduled a meeting with Mayor Landers to update him on my research and to find out what was happening with the Indian Ceremonial performances. Would the shows continue in 2013? Was the planning for it just late? Brian Landers informed me that he had contacted members of the Ho-Chunk Nation regarding the show, but his Native American partners had not gotten back to him.²⁶ He did not feel comfortable putting the show together by himself since it was our culture on display. He believed he could not organize the performances without Ho-Chunk guidance (conversation, July 12, 2013).

Although the park performances were put on the backburner, talk of a permanent home for the show came up during our conversation. The mayor updated me on the progress he had made regarding the site for a proposed cultural center as part of a state-funded grant for Wisconsin Dells. The Riverwalk Project—a plan to clean up and build a tourist walkway along the Wisconsin River near downtown Wisconsin Dells—includes an educational center as part of the final phase of the project. The center was originally supposed to be for environmental education. However, the proposed plans were being re-written for a cultural center because this seemed more inclusive and could talk about town history and the Native American community.

²⁶ In follow-up correspondence (facebook message, October 3, 2013) with Samantha Day-Thaler, she said that Brian Landers did not contact her family regarding Indian Ceremonial performances for the 2013 summer season. She heard he was working with someone else. Due to time constraints, I was unable to reach Mayor Landers again concerning who he actually contacted for the summer of 2013.

In a previous conversation, Brian Landers said he wanted the home of the cultural center to be at the old site of the Dells Park (interview, August 20, 2012). The railroad bridge crossed the river at that point and individuals could cross on the trestles between the city's downtown and the site of the Dells Park. The mayor's goal was to extend the Riverwalk across the railroad bridge so that it would naturally start or end at the proposed cultural center. Limited progress had been made regarding this stage of the project and, like the Indian Ceremonial performances, the mayor did not want to push forward with a cultural center until consulting with and receiving Ho-Chunk Nation approval and partnership. His attempts to meet with upper government officials in the Nation had not gone through and he did not know when or if they ever would.

The mayor had made a similar statement nearly a year prior during our first interview. He believed that local residents supported the idea of bringing the Ceremonial back, but he was having difficulty contacting the right individuals in the Ho-Chunk Nation government to make this idea a reality. He had been advised back then of the bureaucratic nature of the Ho-Chunk government by an elderly Ho-Chunk woman. He knew that the process would take time, even years, to reach any real conclusions. As Landers put it, "I have a lot of ideas but it's your heritage. It's your culture. We shouldn't have the city of Wisconsin Dells dictating to the Ho-Chunk people what this is going to be" (interview, August 20, 2012).

I remembered feeling a mild confusion after leaving my initial meeting with the mayor in August 2012. Many individuals I interviewed talked about the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial on their own accord without any prompting. It was a place that held significant cultural meaning and memory for both Native and non-Native individuals in the area. Many wished that it would be brought back. On the several occasions I had gone to Traditional Court prior to starting my research (for matters concerning the Winnebago Indian Museum), the Stand Rock Indian

Ceremonial was always brought up at some point in the conversation, primarily in regards to the desire to bring it back but also in regards to the paramount work it would take to do so.

When the mayor said he believed individuals in the community (Native and non-Native) longed for the Indian Ceremonial and wished to see it reopen, I believed it too because I had heard it myself. However, there was a disjuncture happening between the mayor of Wisconsin Dells and the Ho-Chunk Nation. When I finally voiced aloud my confusion to my father one day, he responded simply with, “You know why.”

I did know, but I hadn’t wanted to say it. Pete Williams had pointed out in his interview, “You know back in those days, a lot of Native Americans worked for non-Native Americans. Today a lot of non-Native Americans work for Native Americans” (interview, June 30, 2013). The Ho-Chunk carry a memory of working for many years under non-Native management in the tourist industry, of being the workers and rarely the owners. With the advent of the casinos, the Nation became economically powerful enough to stand on its own without help from outsiders. The casino revenues provided the financial base to build economic and social infrastructures that provide services to Ho-Chunk individuals and have allowed many a way out of poverty.

When my father told me I already knew the answer to my confusion, he was right. I did. The Ho-Chunk Nation does not want to be governed by anyone else, which means if a Ceremonial or Culture Center can ever be opened, the proposal and creation has to come from the Native American side.

* * *

Tourism permeated the lives of Ho-Chunk peoples and non-Native residents of Wisconsin Dells in a multitude of ways related to identity, place, work, and sovereignty. For Wisconsin Dells residents, tourism of the Ho-Chunk became part of the town’s culture and

identity. The rise of the waterpark industry and the closure of Native American-based cultural attractions caused local residents to reflect on what it means to be a Wisconsin Dells resident. What is Wisconsin Dells identity? It isn't the waterparks or the go-kart tracks or any of the new attractions. It isn't even tourism in general. Wisconsin Dells identity is deeply entwined with Ho-Chunk identity because of the shared history of living in the area and being dependent on attractions of Native peoples for so many years.

The Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial, Dells Park, and the boat tours became gathering places for everyone in the community, not just Native peoples. These spaces acted as contact zones between Native American and non-Native American residents, delegating the position of Outsider to the tourists who only visited the Dells for brief intermittent periods of time. For Native individuals, these attractions also served as distinct markers of identity, as sites where it was safe to be Native and where Ho-Chunks specifically could gather together and celebrate publicly in ancestral lands. These attractions were visible markers of Ho-Chunk attachment and presence in the area, and these attractions allowed for a continuation of Ho-Chunk lifestyle and cultural identity in their Native homeland in the absence of reservation lands.

The Ho-Chunk also slowly moved out of the cultural tourism sector to the gaming industry, a move which provided the tribe with the means to build themselves economically as a nation and invest in tribal infrastructures and institutions that reflect and promote Ho-Chunk cultural identity and values. Among these include elder centers, community centers, heritage preservation, and language preservation facilities. Yet memories of cultural tourism remain despite its absence for over a decade.

Both Ho-Chunk peoples and members of the Wisconsin Dells community have remembered with nostalgia the days of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial and other attractions

of cultural tourism. These places certainly led to the development of the Nation as a powerful political and economic body today. In the past, these attractions provided spaces for Ho-Chunk peoples to gather and opportunities for employment and work. Today the Nation fills these needs for Ho-Chunk peoples in other venues, through tribal employment and tribally-owned community spaces.

The reasons for engaging in cultural tourism have varied drastically over the years among Native peoples. Earlier forms of cultural tourism such as world's fairs, Wild West shows, and the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial allowed for economic benefit, the opportunity to travel, and the chance to be in settings where traditional skills were still valued. Despite all its negatives, tourism has also allowed for the renewal of indigenous culture through the survival of Native arts, crafts, song, and dance (Peers 2007). These types of traditional knowledge were identified by several Ho-Chunk individuals I interviewed who remarked on the lack of knowledge about specific songs, dances, and traditional art forms among Ho-Chunk youth. Tourist venues such as the Dells Park served as Native spaces for cultural transmission of song, dance, art, and games. The loss of traditional art forms is also evident in the current dwindling number of traditional black-ash basket makers. While once a main source of income for Ho-Chunk women during the days of the Dells Park, the production of black-ash baskets has declined drastically and only a handful of basket makers remain in the Wisconsin Dells area today.

Cultural tourism also presented the opportunity for education. As Peers' notes, one of the most important aspects for the Native interpreters she worked with was the ability to fight prejudice and challenge national histories (2007:79). Stories of correcting tourist misperception existed at each of the three Native attractions researched. Although this rarely seemed to be the

main reason for engaging in cultural tourism work in the past, it could serve as a motivating reason in the future.

In order to make a well-informed decision on whether to engage again in the cultural tourism sector, additional business analysis and cultural research must be done. Regarding the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial, a better understanding of the financial and economic situation in cultural tourism on a national or state-wide scale would provide a more complete analysis of the reasons for the show's failure after many years of success. More research on the leadership and management styles of the Ho-Chunk individuals managing the show in its latter years would also prove useful in figuring out whether it was management, financials, the economy, a broader downturn in cultural tourism nationwide, or a combination of several factors that ultimately forced the show to close after an almost 80-year run. Other unanswered questions for further research include the reasons behind the earlier-than-expected transition of management from the American Legion to the Neesh-la Corporation, along with the outcome of the proposed unionization of Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial performers in 1970. Ho-Chunk Nation politics and the investment on economic tribal infrastructures in the 1980s and 1990s may also partially explain the decline in cultural tourism. For both personal reasons and time constraints, I was unable to provide more analysis and data surrounding the downfall of the Stand Rock Indian Ceremonial in my research.

Performance work in contemporary times serves mainly to provide supplemental income rather than a major source of money. Tribal employment now provides reliable and stable income as opposed to the seasonal work offered by cultural tourism. With the Nation's move to the separation of business and government through the formation of a Ho-Chunk Corporation, the economic income of the tribe and its members should continue to rise.

As the Nation continues to move forward and exert its sovereignty and identity as a Native American political *and* economic body, the ways in which Ho-Chunk peoples invest money become increasingly important. Cattelino (2008) shows how money, by itself, can provide enough freedom and power for cultural perpetuation because it frees up time to invest in such activities. However, the most powerful sovereignty is interdependent and requires more than just an internal focus. These partnerships must be strategic and must be for the good of tribal members. To indigenize capitalism and culturalize commerce requires the incorporation and merging of traditional Native American values and Western business practice. Profit is not only measured in terms of money, but also in terms of collective social, cultural, and political gains toward self-representation and self-determination (Bunten 2010:296-297).

What will be the next step in Ho-Chunk history? If they decide to re-enter the cultural tourist industry, what will be its purpose now? Will it be a matter of self-representation, an educational tool, an exercise of sovereignty, or a combination of the three? Throughout my research I have sought to answer why cultural tourism was such a large part of Ho-Chunk history, and I have argued that it provided a safe space for Ho-Chunk peoples to *be* Ho-Chunk in ancestral lands along with providing economic opportunity that aided in cultural perpetuation. As the Nation makes its decisions for future growth, it is important to reflect on what is already known, on where Ho-Chunk peoples were in the past and how it affected the development of the Nation and its members, in order to make informed decisions for the future.

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