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## Savage and Statesman: Changing Historical Interpretations of Tecumseh

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One of the most romantic of all figures is the great failure who almost succeeds. Perhaps this explains America's enduring fascination with Tecumseh (1768-1813), the man whose Indian confederacy opposed the advance of the United States into the Old Northwest territories. Equal to the white expansionists in strategy, gifted with a compelling personality and undeniable conviction, Tecumseh at last fell before the guns and numbers of his adversary. He climbed to the mountain only to see his people turned from the promised land.

Beyond the metaphors of romance, Tecumseh has proven memorable because his life typified the Indian cultural pattern of decline, revitalization, and defeat. Tecumseh was born to the Shawnee, a tribe whose ancestors had occupied the southeast and Ohio River regions since prehistoric times. In 1765 the Iroquois, who claimed hegemony over the Shawnee, ceded the bulk of what is now Kentucky to the British, and after the American Revolution this territory became part of the United States. As the remaining Shawnee migrated into Indiana and northwest Ohio, their culture began to disintegrate under the combined pressures of white settlement, white missionaries, and white liquor. The Shawnee decline ended abruptly in 1805, however, when Tecumseh's younger and hitherto feckless brother experienced a series of visions that began an Indian revitalization movement. Under the name Tenskwatawa ("the Open Door"), and often called the "Prophet," Tecumseh's brother led a return to traditional Shawnee values, founded Prophetstown in modern-day Indiana, and drew followers from other tribes throughout the Old Northwest region. During these years of flux

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Tecumseh rose to prominence. Although more gifted as a warrior than a religious leader, Tecumseh worked for six years to expand the alliances based on his brother's cult. White settlers naturally viewed these developments with alarm, and in 1811 General William Henry Harrison defeated an Indian band led by Tenskwatawa at the Battle of Tippecanoe. Thereafter the Prophet lost influence, and the Shawnee revitalization quickly changed into a series of military alliances under the leadership of Tecumseh. The Shawnee joined with the British in the War of 1812, and after repeated Indian victories Tecumseh fell—by hands unknown—at the Battle of the Thames on October 5, 1813. The Thames debacle ended Shawnee resistance and British-Indian alliances forever, and the tribe dispersed to reservations in Ohio and Kansas.<sup>1</sup>

These events, so redolent of Old Testament saga, naturally inspired a string of biographies. Indeed, because Tecumseh's life has been written so often and with such different purposes and assumptions, these biographies provide an index of larger Indian historiographic trends. The first body of literature, coming from a predominantly antebellum romantic school, portrayed Tecumseh as the noble savage. This forceful interpretation persists in popular and academic writings to the present day even though it faded after the Civil War. Reflecting the concerns of postwar industrialization, as well as the Indian wars then raging in the Far West, historians began to qualify praise for the noble savage and to stress the squalor and disarray of Indian life—features which they attributed not to white cultural invasion but to some flaw within the character of the Indians themselves. This new "expansionist" school still respected Tecumseh's leadership, but it contained reminders that Indian culture must yield to Euro-American practices. A third school, founded by Frederick Jackson Turner, wrote at a time when the west was settled, the frontier closed, and the Indian vanquished. In their fascination with effects of westward expansion, the frontier school lost concern with Indian culture and produced a consensus history in which Indian wars amounted to little more than distracting disagreements on the road to a single national character. The frontier view yielded to a series of highly diverse reactions. After the 1930s, some historians carried on the Turnerian mission; others came from the nascent Indian rights movement; and still another group used Indian biography as a vehicle for escaping to an innocence and adventure which seemed lost in the America of the 1940s and 1950s. Not until the late 1960s did a clear direction emerge in the New Indian History school, a group that borrowed its concern for minority perspectives from the polit-

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<sup>1</sup> From R. David Edmunds, *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (Boston, 1984), 1-3, 11, 61-72, 75-81, 153-59, 210-12, 213-14, 224.



ical activism of its day and took its methods from the new interdisciplinary approach that incorporated such fields as anthropology and psychology. The romantic, the expansionist, the frontier, the post-frontier, and the New Indian History: these are the five schools that have interpreted Tecumseh for the reader of history.

Although Tecumseh was no role model for the white settlers who poured into Ohio before 1812, soon after his death he appeared as the heroic savage who represented all the best of man's natural qualities. To this effect, a much-quoted letter in the 1820 *Indiana Centinal* stated:

Every schoolboy in the Union now knows that Tecumseh was a great man. He was truly great—and his greatness was his own, unassisted by science or the aid of education. As a statesman, a warrior and a patriot, take him all in all, we shall not look upon his like again.<sup>2</sup>

Far from paradox, the *Centinal* letter was a natural reaction to the passing of an Indian leader. Now that Tecumseh could no longer challenge their claim to the Ohio Valley lands, settlers dismissed the charge of savagery and instead praised his charisma and statesmanship. They took pride in Tecumseh as part of the region's past. He became the "good" Indian whose better qualities had passed in myth, as his lands had passed in reality, into the hands of the whites.

This question of "good" vs. "bad" Indian often had less to do with moral absolutes than with where one was standing relative to the acquisition of land. Since the time of Columbus, Europeans had employed a dualistic myth about the Indians. The good Indian, the docile and hospitable native who welcomed the fruits of white civilization, willingly gave the land to the newcomers and thus legitimized their acquisitions. The bad Indian, the native who resisted European encroachment, was usually portrayed as sexually wanton and wantonly violent, often a cannibal, a creature whose intractability justified the excesses of removal. In reality, of course, Indians seldom fell so neatly into these divisions. This ambiguity was especially true of Tecumseh, who was by all accounts an expert orator; a man of arms who restrained his fellow warriors from gratuitous violence; and a leader who was capable of far-reaching strategies and alliances, contrary to the usual allegations that Indians lived only for the moment. But as the case of Tecumseh shows, contradictions between myth and reality could be resolved by the bad Indian's death and transfiguration. To twist an old phrase, the dead Indian became a good Indian.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Glenn Tucker, *Tecumseh: Vision of Glory* (Indianapolis, 1956), 325.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the good and bad Indian, see Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York, 1978).



Courtesy of Indiana Historical Society.



But the homage to Tecumseh in the *Centinal* letter reflected more than a regional reaction. As white settlers began to spill over into the western lands, often through violent acts of dispossession, the popularity of stories involving the noble savage became a cult that engaged the entire nation. Tecumseh's own history was integral to this change. By ending the power of the Indian tribes in the Old Northwest, the Battle of the Thames further separated the hubs of popular and literary culture in the East from the actual scenes of white-Indian conflict. As the boundary of the frontier receded further westward, Indians became the subject of romantic discourse, the literary property of urban gentry who faced the tomahawk only in curiosity shops. James Fenimore Cooper's Chingachgook was the classic literary formulation of this good Indian. First appearing in 1823 in *The Pioneers* and reappearing in three "prequels," Chingachgook embodied the stoic, fearless, and improbably skilled native. The same motif functioned in the harpooner-savages of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) and in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855). Simultaneously, in politics the new heroes were the men who had fought Tecumseh, who had gone into the Ohio Valley like Indians, who as warriors had lived the life of the Indians, and who in victory claimed to have imbibed the Indian's virtues, as a primitive hunter imbibes the strength of his quarry. William Henry Harrison (and Tyler too) became president; Richard Johnson, one of many who claimed to have killed Tecumseh, became vice-president. The Indian wars also advanced the careers of Andrew Jackson, Lewis Cass, Sam Houston, and David Crockett. As the nation incorporated the land which had been Tecumseh's, Americans began to discover his greatness as well.

Two antebellum narratives typify the romantic school and the interpretation of Tecumseh as the good Indian. Benjamin Drake's *Life of Tecumseh*, published in 1841, provided for many years the most reliable version of the life of the Shawnee warrior. Drake's account was remarkably free from the apocrypha common in later biographies; instead it chronicled Tecumseh's military exploits. *Life of Tecumseh* drew upon interviews with actual eyewitnesses and attempted to reconstruct some of the principal actors' more stirring addresses. The author, however, did not maintain an attitude of clinical detachment. In praising the virtues and accomplishments of Tecumseh, Drake proved himself to be one of those visionaries often found in expanding nations; his writings project a sense of the absolute limitlessness of human potential. Drake reminds the reader of William Prescott, a more able if equally romantic historian, with the claim that Tecumseh, "but for the power of the United States, would, perhaps, have been the founder of an empire which

would have rivalled that of Mexico or Peru."<sup>4</sup> Drake undoubtedly placed immoderate emphasis on the Battle of Tippecanoe, arguing that in it the "ardent enthusiasm which for years had sustained . . . [Tecumseh], in the hour of peril and privation, was extinguished."<sup>5</sup> Finally, Drake offered little analysis of the Prophet's mystical experiences and doctrines, except to say that Tenskwatawa "adroitly caught up the mantle of the dying prophet, and assumed his sacred office."<sup>6</sup> As a romantic, Drake dealt in Faustian energies, bold speeches, and cataclysmic reversals.

John Frost's *Thrilling Adventures Among the Indians* (1856) provides another romantic narrative. In his compendium of Indian stories of all variety and of questionable authenticity, Frost offered chapters on both the Shawnee Prophet and his warrior brother. Missionaries reported on the Prophet's numerous miracles of healing and foresight. The story of Tecumseh involved a Kentucky captain employed by the British to survey central Ohio. One night some starving Indians enter the surveyors' camp, where they join in the surveyors' supper of roast bear; at one point a young warrior delivers the most eloquent prayer of thanks ever heard by the whites. Years later the captain learns that the warrior was none other than Tecumseh himself. True to legend,

he possessed all the courage, sagacity, and fortitude, for which the most distinguished Indian chiefs have been celebrated; and more than this, he was always disinterested and true to his word. . . . His watchful mind was ever on the alert, his enmity never slumbered, and he was a stranger to personal fatigue.<sup>7</sup>

As might be gathered, Frost often preferred a tall tale to the staid company of fact. But few of his Indians manifested the romantic excellence of Tecumseh. *Thrilling Adventures* instead dealt largely with bad Indians, whom Frost found revolting enough and whom he recognized as an impediment to progress. Lest there be any doubt regarding a link between his tales and the concerns of contemporary expansion, he prefaced *Thrilling Adventures* with a plea to "reclaim" the Indian for civilization.

If Tecumseh was lucky enough to die at the onset of American romanticism, he was equally lucky to die before the flourishing of

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Drake, *Life of Tecumseh and of his Brother the Prophet; With a Historical Sketch of the Shawanoe Indians* (1841; Cincinnati, 1858), 235. A similar but far less complete account appeared two years later in B. B. Thatcher's *Indian Biography* (New York, 1843), 181-225.

<sup>5</sup> Drake, *Life of Tecumseh*, 234. In reality, the greater part of armed Shawnee resistance still lay ahead.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 86. Tenskwatawa had apprenticed himself for a time to an elderly shaman, although his performance in that office appears to have been anything but adroit.

<sup>7</sup> John Frost, *Thrilling Adventures Among the Indians: Comprising the Most Remarkable Personal Narratives of Events in the Early Indian Wars, as Well as of Incidents in the Recent Indian Hostilities in Mexico and Texas* (Philadelphia, 1851), 185.



racial intolerance in the years after the Civil War. This mood of racism amplified themes visible in Frost's *Thrilling Adventures*, specifically, the need to reclaim the Indian and Indian land. But suddenly Americans had grown impatient, and writers held that the Indian must surrender with deliberate speed.

Several factors account for the new expansionist mood. First, the laying of transcontinental telegraphs and railroads immediately opened the west to commercial exploitation. Indian wars no longer needed to be fought on Indian terms.<sup>8</sup> Second, the Civil War had shattered many of the illusions that the nation might reach utopia through reform. Where reformers had once hoped to bring about social progress, leaders instead cracked down on those standing in the way—not only the moral offenders within American society but also the indigenous peoples still outside.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the postwar years witnessed a dramatic increase of immigration from southern and eastern Europe. Afraid of losing social hegemony, the older immigrant stock began to employ Darwinian theory to characterize themselves as the race best suited to rule. If Italians and Poles were doomed to racial extinction, what future could there be for the American Indian?<sup>10</sup>

The most popular manifestations of the new mood were dime novels, those penny-dreadfuls that sprang up during and after the Civil War. Consonant with America's westward expansion, the dime novels celebrated the pioneer vanguard of Indian removal. The pioneer was a clear adaptation of Cooper's Natty Bumppo, a man who synthesized white moral ideals with the Indian's nature skills; but to allow for mass consumption, the dime novelists simplified the complexities drawn by Cooper. The feats of the frontiersman became truly superhuman, while Cooper's repertoire of Indian types narrowed to a single and unpleasant enemy. Indians became anachronistic, often vicious, obstructionists. Finally, as historian Robert F. Berkhofer observes, "the last battles with the Plains Indians after the Civil War did not harm sales or improve the images of the Indians in dime novels."<sup>11</sup>

The animus toward native Americans in this period carried through all levels of literature. Frontier elegies that had prospered

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<sup>8</sup> Glenn Porter, *The Rise of Big Business, 1860–1910* (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1973), 40–43.

<sup>9</sup> The best known example is Helen Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor* (Boston, 1887). For a modern overview, see Robert Winston Mardock, *The Reformers and the American Indian* (Columbia, Mo., 1971).

<sup>10</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1955), 149–57.

<sup>11</sup> Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 99. See Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), 59–70, 90–111, on the evolution of the western hero. The most significant change was that later characters divested themselves of much of Natty Bumppo's hostility to civilization. They became more politically acceptable and less emotionally provocative.

before the war now yielded to contempt for savages who would impede the growth of American civilization. One of the more comprehensive overviews of manifest destiny, Frank Triplett's *Conquering the Wilderness* (1887), epitomizes this Indian-hating tone. The Indian's style of warfare, Triplett reported,

is not the open combat of the Caucasian, but the midnight attack with all of its attendant horrors or robbery, rapine and murder. Lacking the unyielding nerve and indomitable courage of the superior race, he depends invariably on the sudden surprise . . . he is seen to be filthy in person, speech and action; cowardly in combat; selfish in feeling, brutal in mind, and false in everything.<sup>12</sup>

Triplett's racial invective signaled more than the end of romanticism; it echoed the Anglo-Saxonism which older elites were then directing against the new immigrants. Of equal significance, it revealed the terms Americans would soon be using to describe Philipinos, Cubans, and Nicaraguans.<sup>13</sup> Back east, out west, and in foreign lands, the expanding nation was taking up the "white man's burden" to impose cultural and political domination upon other races.

The white man's burden weighed heavily upon *Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet* (1878) by Edward Eggleston and Lillie Eggleston Seelye. Eggleston was one of the less famous patrician historians in a century of such authors, and his writings typify the gradual secularization of earlier religious faith in America as a millennial kingdom. The descendant of old-stock immigrants, a man who had achieved some success as a Methodist minister, and an editor of religious educational material, Eggleston had participated first-hand in the creation of Anglo-Saxon cultural hegemony. His greatest success, however, came when he began to produce popular histories depicting the growth of America as the unfolding of providence.<sup>14</sup> His version of events in the Old Northwest naturally shared this assumption.

While *Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet* retained the respect which older romantics had shown for Tecumseh the man, this respect was nonetheless qualified. "Tecumseh had the pride, the energy, and the fortitude of his race," Eggleston and Seelye reported. "In intellect and humanity he was superior to them, but all their fierce antipathies were in him."<sup>15</sup> For them the salient feature was

<sup>12</sup> Frank Triplett, *Conquering the Wilderness: or New Pictorial History of the Life and Times of the Pioneer Heroes and Heroines of America* (New York, 1889), 49.

<sup>13</sup> Interestingly enough, one of the conquerors of the wilderness examined in greater depth here was William Walker, the would-be ruler of Nicaragua. *Ibid.*, 667-705.

<sup>14</sup> For complete biographical information on Eggleston, see William Randel, *Edward Eggleston* (New York, 1963). Lillie Eggleston Seelye was his daughter.

<sup>15</sup> Edward Eggleston and Lillie Eggleston Seelye. *Tecumseh and the Shawnee Prophet: Including Sketches of George Rogers Clark, Simon Kenton, William Henry Harrison, Cornstalk, Blackhoof, Bluejacket, the Shawnee Logan, and Others Famous in the Frontier Wars of Tecumseh's Time* (New York, 1878), 23-24.





### TECUMSEH AND THE PROPHET

THIS DEPICTION REPRESENTS TYPICAL STEREOTYPES OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN. BOTH FIGURES ARE DRAPED IN ROBES SYMBOLIC OF THE NORTHERN PLAINS; TECUMSEH IS EVEN ADORNED WITH A PLAINS INDIAN HEADDRESS.

Reproduced from John Frost, *Thrilling Adventures Among the Indians* . . . (Philadelphia, 1851), 180.

less Tecumseh's Indian character than the inexplicable presence of Anglo-Saxon qualities, the curiosity of this genetic anomaly. A second manifestation of the Egglestons' racial attitudes was their failure to distinguish the Shawnee from other tribes; they were merely a band of "arrogant pride and warlike ferocity,"<sup>16</sup> and thus were presumably quite similar to the mounted Indians then struggling on the Great Plains. Third, the authors discounted religious customs. In Tenskwatawa they found one whose "main characteristics were cunning and a certain showy smartness," who "was neither courageous, truthful, nor above cruelty."<sup>17</sup> Finally, although certain of Tecumseh's virtues, Eggleston and Seelye hastened to reassure the reader that in the divine scheme of things his vision was unacceptable, for it "is not desirable that a savage race . . . should possess a fertile country capable of supporting a hundred times as many people in the comfort and enlightenment of civilization."<sup>18</sup>

This faith in a movement toward white civilization was the chorus which united most nineteenth century historians. It derived in part from the intellectual models employed. Prior to the 1890s, the chief disciplines of the American university were theology and philosophy,<sup>19</sup> each identifying a progression in which mankind emerged from sin, savagery, or ignorance into a state of redemption and civilization.<sup>20</sup> But while these disciplines hovered in the abstract, the historian (and the early anthropologist) tried to anchor them to reality by locating material evidence of progress. Historians therefore wrote with a teleology in mind. The triumph of the divine kingdom corresponded with the appearance of farmhouses along the Wabash and Tippecanoe rivers; the final unfolding of the World Spirit lay in the triumph of socks and shoes. White-Indian history lent itself naturally to this reading. Whether Indians represented some edenic past or a state of original sin, they were inevitably to yield—as the child yielded to the man, as Canna yielded to the Hebrew, as Satan yielded to Christ—to the Europeans, who brought with them reason, ethical maturity, and Christian redemption. Early romantics like Drake and Cooper had tended, as romantics, to be somewhat backward-looking and wistful in ap-

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 326. Eggleston's views were not always consistent; despite his evident endorsement of Indian removal, he denounced the United States intervention in Cuba and throughout his life remained a liberal Republican opposed to overseas expansion. See Randel, *Edward Eggleston*, 149.

<sup>19</sup> Lawrence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University, 1890-1910* (Chicago, 1965), 21-56.

<sup>20</sup> In terms of philosophy, I have in mind the variants of Hegelianism which included Josiah Royce; but nineteenth century American Christianity in general tended toward the teleological.



proach. But their immediate successors turned to the future. Changing with their times, these later authors applied to the old teleology a pseudoscientific gloss; Darwinian vocabulary and precepts took the course of history from the hands of the divinity and placed it on the more secure ground of material science.<sup>21</sup> Still the inevitability of the Indian's passing remained an unquestioned tenet. And precisely because the Indian was doomed, because his defeat had been foreordained, American civilization bore no responsibility but merely acted its appointed role.

Bound to both national myths and national interests, the story of the doomed Indian lived for a long time, especially in the pens of Boston gentry. Edward Channing's *A History of the United States* (1917) failed to mention that part of Shawnee history dealing with the Prophet, but grew expansive over the topic of an Indian who possessed white virtues. As Channing remarked, "Tecumseh was one of those rare Indians of whom there are not more than half a dozen within the limits of American annals . . . He was opposing the march of human history, but his efforts were praiseworthy and his success remarkable."<sup>22</sup> But there were even later holdouts. James Truslow Adams's *The March of Democracy* (1932), that stalwart of so many family bookshelves, offered the same ambiguous praise: "These two men, the finest perhaps that the savages developed in their history, conceived the statesmanlike plan of reforming the Indians . . ."<sup>23</sup> As long as American history remained the unfolding of the divine plan (and the opinion is by no means dead), the case of Tecumseh would cause wonder at the sad, inscrutable logic of providence.

Although subsequent authors refined this notion of a secularized providence, they were not necessarily more sophisticated in their understanding of native societies. Frederick Jackson Turner was one of these. Historian of the American frontier, Turner in one sense continued the work of the pioneers themselves. Just as they had removed the Indian from the western territories, so Turner removed the Indian from the pages of history. Turner's celebrated thesis of the effect of the frontier on national character holds that the movement westward encouraged individualism, self-reliance, optimism, democracy, and a belief in progress. The Turner thesis conveniently ignored the fact that western settlers were often ruthless and violent and bent on racial extermination. Indeed, in his 1920 collection of essays, the entire discussion of the Shawnee resistance movement consisted of the following sentence: "Tecumthe,

<sup>21</sup> Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 133-49.

<sup>22</sup> Edward Channing, *A History of the United States*: Vol. IV, *Federalists and Republicans, 1789-1815* (New York, 1917), 442.

<sup>23</sup> James Truslow Adams, *The March of Democracy, A History of the United States*: Vol. II, *A Half Century of Expansion* (New York, 1932), 76.



Courtesy of Indiana Historical Society.



rendered desperate by the advance into his hunting grounds, took up the hatchet, made wide-reaching alliances among the Indians, and turned to England for protection."<sup>24</sup> Thus, while Turner showed a keenness of insight into many areas of national development, he also failed at times to move beyond the perspectives of the pioneers themselves.

Turner's indifference reflected the times. With the frontier closing, the Indian wars fought, and the nation moving toward urban mass culture as a result of a half-century of industrial growth, the question of indigenous peoples seemed as antiquated as Cotton Mather's periwig. For the remaining tribes there was the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, which arranged to break reservation lands into private holdings with the purported goal of creating a class of yeomen farmers. The racial assimilation that Thomas Jefferson and others had so long desired was now at hand.<sup>25</sup> Little wonder, then, that Turner ignored what seemed to be a discarded social influence in his search for the origins of the emerging national character.

But assimilation (1887-1934) proved more difficult than imagined. Inadequate federal resources, indifferently applied, as well as the stubborn persistence of preindustrial culture, hindered the birth of these would-be yeomen. Too often, reservation lands fell prey to white investors, and the reservation Indians found themselves in a decline as wretched as that suffered by the Seneca and Shawnee one hundred years earlier. This process of "assimilation through attrition" ended temporarily in 1934 when Congress, following the leadership of an idealistic Indian Affairs commissioner named John J. Collier, passed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA). The IRA legitimized tribal status, incorporated tribal lands as communal property, upheld tribal law, and allocated money to repurchase lost reservation lands and move the tribes toward self-sufficiency. Reorganization probably saved Native American culture from extinction; like other policies of the New Deal, it has survived, somewhat diluted, to the present day, despite repudiation by the more socially conservative administrations which followed.<sup>26</sup>

The changes of Indian policy since the Dawes Act had only limited effect on the ethnohistories which immediately followed

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<sup>24</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Middle West," in *The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1920), 126-56, quotation p. 134.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of plans to assimilate the American Indian during the age of Jefferson, see Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1973):

<sup>26</sup> The many reversals of Indian policy since the Dawes Act are chronicled in Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (Tucson, Ariz., 1977); and Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1986). The renewed interest in Indian culture within the American intellectual community was part of its larger fascination with primitive society as a testing ground for the role of culture in determining human behavior. During the 1910s and 1920s biological theoreticians such as Fran-

Turner. Some chose to perpetuate the Turnerian tradition. Ray Allen Billington, Turner's academic grandchild and chief apostle, was far more concerned with fleshing out details of the master's vision than with deciphering obscure policy wars. His immensely popular *Westward Expansion* (1949, now in its fifth edition) portrayed the Americas as virgin land, in which Indians survived only long enough to do battle and perish. Regarding the resistance of the Shawnees, Billington claimed that Tecumseh used his brother's religious movement as a means to foster the military confederacy, and that Tenskwatawa acted under the instruction of Canadian trappers.<sup>27</sup> Although Billington certainly felt the connection between frontier history and his own time (the closing chapter of *Westward Expansion* is a virtual hymn to the New Deal), the sense of academic mission which drove him to write thirteen frontier histories and a biography of Turner clearly distracted him from the matter of Indian cultures, both past and present. One gathers that what Billington called the post-frontier era of "closed-space existence" was to be a white man's era.<sup>28</sup>

Another reaction to Turner during this post-frontier period was the retreat to romanticism. Ever dominant in the popular imagination, the romantic influence prevailed in such pieces of juvenile literature as Augusta Stevenson's *Tecumseh, Shawnee Boy* (1955) and Anne Schraff's *Tecumseh* (1979). The romantic savage also featured prominently in Allan Eckert's *The Frontiersman: A Narrative* (1967), a historical novel with the style and merciless conventionality of James Michener. *The Frontiersman* drew heavily upon Drake and Eggleston/Seelye and even on the dubious Frost for its information; it forced Tecumseh once more through forbidden trysts and campfire oration. Beneath its historical trappings, *The Frontiersman* was the retelling of the Natty Bumppo

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cis Galton and Charles B. Davenport had dominated the "nature-nurture" controversy with their accounts of superior and inferior races. In the nativist mood of these decades these concepts held sway; both in their original form and through popularizers such as Madison Grant, they enjoyed a wide currency among the American people. But in the 1920s Franz Boaz retaliated with the paradigm of cultural anthropology. In his wake came Margaret Mead and her mythologized version of the Samoans; Ruth Benedict and her study of the Zuñi; and John Collier, who succeeded in translating these ideas into practical policy. Much of the ferment begun under Boaz continued, through various cultural enthusiasts, on to the Indian political activists and the New Indian History school of the present day. For a discussion of the origins of cultural anthropology and the quest for the primitive, see Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 1-109; and Hamilton Cravens, *The Triumph of Evolution* (Philadelphia, 1978), 89-120.

<sup>27</sup> *Contemporary Authors: A Bio-Bibliographical Guide to Current Writers . . .* (New Revision Series), see under "Billington, Ray Allen, 1903-1981." Billington received his Ph.D. from Wisconsin in 1926 and later studied at Harvard under Turner devotee Frederick Merk. Regarding comments on Tecumseh, see Billington, *Westward Expansion*, 275.

<sup>28</sup> Billington, *Westward Expansion*, 755.



story (here girded around the backwoodsman Simon Kenton); its popularity offers proof that during a decade of radicalism there remained a strong market for traditional values.<sup>29</sup> One final sampler of the literary mythology may be found at the conclusion of Carl F. Klinck's *Tecumseh: Fact and Fiction in Early Records* (1961). A collection of original and secondary sources relating to Tecumseh history (26 of the 140 passages come from Drake), the book includes a sample of poems on the Ohio River's fallen son, including a passage from that interminable American epic, *The Fredoniad*.<sup>30</sup>

The valedictorian of this popular school was Glenn Tucker, whose *Tecumseh: Vision of Glory* (1956) revived the image of Tecumseh as the Indian Pericles. Tucker had studied literature at Columbia University before serving as an infantry captain in World War I; he worked for most of his life as a correspondent and advertiser, and only upon retirement in the 1950s did he begin to produce a series of battle histories which included *High Tide at Gettysburg* (1958) and *Chickamauga* (1961). His professional creed was appropriately rough-and-ready: "Look with suspicion on much interpretive history," he cautioned, for history "should be an unbiased recital of the facts."<sup>31</sup>

Not surprisingly, Tucker's biography is highly interpretive, presenting an Indian romanticized even beyond the standards of the previous century. It perpetuates such apocryphal tales as young Tecumseh and Daniel Boone becoming blood brothers, although the two apparently never met, and portrays in astonishing and improbable detail the Indian's courtship of the white settler Rebecca Galloway. Tucker revealed Tecumseh's preference for *Hamlet* and observed that Rebecca "read him enough history to enable him to talk familiarly about Alexander the Great."<sup>32</sup> Although Tucker reviewed much useful information about the Prophet's religious conversion, he nonetheless concluded that the Prophet's religious code was secretly devised by Tecumseh himself.

*Tecumseh: Vision of Glory* is an exciting and highly readable work; the prose, particularly the more reflective passages, reminds one of Cooper. But the reader suspects that after the Great War, Tucker transferred to the armchair infantry, where he set about idealizing those warriors whose daring and individualism contrasted with the corporate monotony of midcentury America.

<sup>29</sup> In the denouement of *The Frontiersman* (Boston, 1967), Kenton identifies another Indian body as Tecumseh's, thus sparing the fallen warrior the indignity of being carved up for souvenirs.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Emmons, "The Fredoniad," in Carl F. Klinck, ed., *Tecumseh: Fact and Fiction in Early Records* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1961), 221-31. This four-volume poem dealing with the War of 1812 originally appeared in 1827.

<sup>31</sup> *Contemporary Authors: A Bio-Bibliography Guide to Current Authors and Their Works* (First Revision), see under "Tucker, Glenn (Irving), 1892-."

<sup>32</sup> Tucker, *Tecumseh*, 79.

A third and more overtly political reaction to Turner appeared two years later. Alvin M. Josephy's *The Patriot Chiefs* (1958) chronicled nine Indian resistance movements, from the league of Hiawatha to the final collapse under Chief Joseph. Alvin Josephy's innovation was to establish parallels between past Indian struggles, the contemporary Indian rights movements, and the Third World nationalism which blossomed after World War II. The struggle for liberation, he implied, had been here at home all along, concealed in American histories and ignored in the present day. Of all the ideas current in the post-frontier period, it was this which would prove most influential among the next generation of ethno-historians.

Like Tucker, Josephy was not a professional historian. He was, however, far more involved than Tucker in the realities of Indian affairs; his insight into the past came from decades of defending liberal social policy against conservative retrenchment. After the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the major issue concerning Native Americans was the effort to reverse Collier's program of federal sponsorship and to insist once more on assimilation. Roosevelt's first two successors were staunch assimilationists who wanted Indians to enjoy the privilege of being "self-made men." World War II itself had brought new levels of prosperity and employment, neutralizing threats of political unrest which had originally inspired federal sponsorship of such groups as labor, agriculture, artists, intellectuals, and through an umbrella effect, Indians. With a more contented populace, the cost of aid to the reservations suddenly began to feel burdensome. The postwar years were also a time of more vigorous assertion in world affairs, a time when bringing the "American way" to developing foreign countries became a national priority; inevitably, many urged this same policy for heterogeneous groups within the nation itself. In its worst sense, this quest for internal homogeneity blended into McCarthyism, for it became dangerous to espouse such causes as reservation autonomy: tribal property, after all, might be taken as communism.<sup>33</sup> But when tracing the immediate causes of neo-assimilation, it is important to remember that the Indian community was itself divided over the issue. Indians had served in large numbers during World War II and had gained new exposure to whites; as the nation entered a period of consensus and conservatism, many Native Americans expressed a desire to join that elusive current known as the mainstream. All of these factors combined to reverse the course established by the IRA.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> In fact, the reservations were a type of communism, although hardly with the ramifications imagined by the McCarthyites.

<sup>34</sup> Regarding the postwar assimilationist trends, see Philp, *John Collier's Crusade*, 214-36; Fixico, *Termination and Relocation*, 3-20.



Josephy had worked at a variety of jobs, including Roosevelt's Office of War Information, 1942–1943, before becoming involved in Indian politics and eventually authoring the 1969 *Report on Indian Affairs* for Richard M. Nixon. This report studied the question of terminating federal wardship and support for the tribes. Liberals like Josephy denounced the idea as a scheme to break up Indian culture and expropriate Indian land; other less altruistic whites opposed termination for fear that the financial burden of maintaining the reservations would fall to the states. Nixon—who, like Roosevelt, was facing a mood of social unrest—eventually decided to maintain sponsorship.<sup>35</sup>

Whereas Tucker, an Eisenhower Republican, celebrated the romantic struggle of the individual, Josephy, a New Deal Democrat, stressed respect for emerging minorities. *The Patriot Chiefs* minimized questions of religious revitalization; it stripped Tecumseh of his mythic qualities and instead stressed his political leadership among a people threatened by aggressive and affluent neighbors. In this light, the Shawnees came to resemble the Cuban, Egyptian, and Indonesian nationalists of the late 1950s. Josephy remarked:

In modern days, world opinion which endorses the right of self-determination of peoples might have supported before the United Nations his dream of a country of, by and for the Indians. But the crisis he faced came too early in history, and he failed.<sup>36</sup>

Josephy spoke disapprovingly of American aggression against the Indians. Instead of colonialism, he favored the very programs that many American liberals were then advocating for emerging Third World nations; "They need—and most welcome—the material benefits of modern American civilization, its education, medicine, technical training, and planning and development of Indian resources."<sup>37</sup> That is to say, Josephy called for aid programs for Indians along the lines of the Peace Corps and the Alliance for Progress.

The late 1960s witnessed a minor revolution in the New Indian or ethnohistorical school, a movement which demanded an Indian past on Indian terms. In part, this search for the other forefathers reflected exhaustion of the major political narrative school. But it related to deeper social upheavals as well. American Indians had added their voice to the decade of unrest in 1969 when a small band seized Alcatraz Island in order to dramatize Indian

<sup>35</sup> *Contemporary Authors* (New Revision Series), see under "Josephy, Alvin M., Jr., 1914–."

<sup>36</sup> Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *The Patriot Chiefs: A Chronicle of American Indian Resistance* (Middlesex, Eng., 1961), 132.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

grievances. In 1973 members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) barricaded themselves and eleven hostages in a reservation trading post at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, the site of the infamous 1890 massacre.<sup>38</sup> On the literary front, there appeared Vine Deloria's polemical *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969) and Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970), a book which remains the most arresting of the western Indian narratives and which opens, significantly enough, with a quote from Tecumseh himself.<sup>39</sup> Brown and Deloria had antecedents in both popular and academic writing (including Josephy, to whom Indian radicalism owed much); but a people finding themselves in the present feel a special urgency to locate themselves in the past.

It is no great step to see the New Indian school as a cousin to the New Left. Critical of what they considered a decade of consensus attitudes, New Left historians rewrote the American past by exploring the role of special interests, class conflict, and elite cultural dominance. For these ideas the subject of Indian removal was ready-made. The relationship between the two schools was particularly clear in Michael Paul Rogin's *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (1975). Combining Marxist analysis with Erik Erikson's style of psychoanalytic biography, Rogin redefined Jackson as an archetype of the frontier entrepreneur who rose to economic and political success through the process of Indian removal. Though concerned primarily with Jackson and the southern tribes, Rogin drew parallels with William Henry Harrison and the Shawnee Indian resistance.

Rogin based his synthesis of psychoanalysis and economic conflict on the assertion that the "evolution of societies from savagery to civilization was identical to the evolution of individual man."<sup>40</sup> Jacksonian democracy constituted society's equivalent of an oral-aggressive phase in personality development. By moving toward an individualistic, legal, and rational mode of life, Jacksonian America attained a stage of growth in which collectively it was able to suppress the libidinous pleasure principle. Indians reminded the Jacksonians of what they had lost. The Jacksonians resented the original Americans for their seeming oneness with primeval nature, with the idyllic womb state, and despised them for practicing an apparent irrationality which the economic liberals of this era believed they had suppressed. Indians were there-

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<sup>38</sup> Stephen Cornell, *The Return of the Native American Indian Political Resurgence* (New York, 1975), 6.

<sup>39</sup> Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York, 1969); Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York, 1970).

<sup>40</sup> Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York, 1975), 6.



fore children, and the task of their white fathers was to raise them to maturity. But because white society paralleled in its psychological maturity the oral phrase of personality growth, it resented the "otherness" of the Indians and sought to destroy that "otherness" by possessing and consuming it. Hence the enactment of this parent-child relationship was the removal of the native and the incorporation of his land into a market economy.<sup>41</sup> In Rogin's view, these measures were the key to pre-Civil War America: sale of the southern Shawnee lands, and subsequent expulsion of the Creeks, Cherokees, and Choctaws, permitted the expansion of commercial cotton farming, which in turn provided the capital for America's conversion to the new economy. Furthermore, men like Jackson and Harrison learned the personal advantages of Indian wars. Indian resistance movements were at once Oedipal and anti-capital, so that leadership in suppressing those movements made one the father figure of one's own society. And through their control of Indian removal, which for the moment bound together sectional interests, the new fathers were able to lead national expansion.<sup>42</sup>

If the impetus for ethnohistory was partly political, the methods it chose came from the social sciences. As James Axtell has written, the field stresses culture study; unlike traditional anthropology, it focuses not so much on static cultural patterns, but rather on cultural change; and it supplements reliance on written

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 251-79.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 165-205. Twentieth century trends are clear enough in the textbooks. Often the focus has been what emphasis to place on the actions of William Henry Harrison. Earlier authors, although not necessarily enamored of Indian cultures, nonetheless manifested a Progressive skepticism about the doings of their frontier forefathers. No reader should miss Henry Adams's dry account of Harrison in *History of the United States of America during the First Administration of James Madison*; Vol. VI, 1809-1813 (New York, 1890), 67-112. Samuel Eliot Morison's and Henry Steel Commager's *The Growth of the American Republic* (New York, 1930) observed that Harrison was no benign white father and dwelt for two rather complimentary pages on Tecumseh and his brother, "two noble red men indeed" (p. 412). The same held true for John D. Hicks's popular volume, *The Federal Union: A History of the United States to 1865* (Cambridge, 1937). Reflecting the author's skeptical attitude, this work dealt with the matter of Tecumseh at some length and attributed the whole conflict to the misdeeds of white settlers and to the belligerence of Harrison (pp. 281-85). But by 1953, Henry Bamford Parkes's *The United States of America: A History* (New York) could report that "Harrison, Governor of the Indian Territory, was attacked by Indians at Tippecanoe" without feeling obliged to mention that Harrison was at that moment on a march of intimidation against the Shawnee (p. 163). Similarly, Thomas Bailey, in *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic* (Boston, 1956), observed that "the Indians, with insatiable tomahawks, were once more ravaging the frontier north of the Ohio River" (p. 202). Bailey inaccurately reported that Tecumseh and the Prophet were twins: Indians were now losing even their genealogies. In 1968 Oscar Handlin's *America: A History* (New York) returned the blame to Harrison, indicting him for belligerence and double-dealing (p. 292). *America: A History of the People* (Chicago, 1971), by Richard B. Morris, William Greenleaf, and Robert H. Ferrell, also confronted Harrison's role in stirring up the waters, although observing that he acted under the illusion of British-Indian complicity (p. 177). In thirty years, the mainstream texts had gone from conflict to consensus and back again.

documents with attention toward music, folklore, artifacts, and a multitude of other ethnic sources. Furthermore, ethnohistorians obey the historian's duty to a literary production to minimize technical vocabulary without sacrificing profundity of analysis. The New Indian school predictably shies from the polemical style of Deloria, preferring instead that the reader infer moral criticism from well-drawn portraits of the past. The ethnohistorian's oath is to be stylistically strong, anthropologically awake, and morally subtle.<sup>43</sup>

But it was the social sciences which first wedded themselves to history, and not the reverse. One notable breakthrough was anthropologist Anthony F. C. Wallace's *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (1970). Early in his career Wallace had published *King of the Delawares: Teedyuscung, 1700-1763* (1952),<sup>44</sup> an astute if unsurprising narrative. But for the next twenty years Wallace pursued a study of Indian religions, cultures, and revitalization and psychoanalytic theory. As the culmination of these endeavors, *Death and Rebirth* shifted the emphasis from alliances and warpaths to the religion and psyche of the Iroquois. After their near-total defeat in the American Revolution, the Iroquois turned to revitalization under the prophet Handsome Lake. Wallace mapped out a cultural pattern that would appear again and again in nineteenth century history: white intrusion pushes native culture to the point of collapse; a prophet receives divine messages in a trance; through him the gods demand a return to the old Indian religion; they further demand the foreswearing of white practices, especially drinking, but the way of life they prescribe is in reality syncretic and may demand more agriculture and permanent settlement than had been the Indian custom. Adoption of the new religion creates a power struggle within the tribe (for some will be less inclined to change than others, particularly if the prophet-figure threatens their own leadership roles), and when prophecy fails the divine messenger may demand witch-hunts to clear the path of righteousness. In all these elements, the Handsome Lake movement prefigured Tenkwatawa and the case of Shawnee revitalization.<sup>45</sup>

The methods of the New Indian History led to the first bonafide revision of the story of Tecumseh since Drake's initial biography. In *The Shawnee Prophet* (1983) and its companion volume *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership* (1984), R. David Edmunds

<sup>43</sup> James Axtell, "Ethnohistory: A Historian's Viewpoint," in *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York, 1981), 3-15.

<sup>44</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, *King of the Delawares: Teedyuscung, 1700-1763* (Philadelphia, 1979).

<sup>45</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York, 1970). A good exposition of Wallace's theoretical framework appears in Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," *American Anthropologist*, LVI (April, 1956), 264-81.



argues that "Tenskwatawa, the Shawnee Prophet, was the leading figure in the Indians' efforts to resist the Americans,"<sup>46</sup> and that Tecumseh only assumed command when the War of 1812 demanded European-style military skills instead of responses that were more characteristically Indian. If this revision lacks the romance of earlier works, it nonetheless credits the two brothers with an inborn talent for leadership unassisted by settlers, Shakers, Moravian missionaries, or Canadian fur trappers—something the romanticizers were often reluctant to admit.

Edmunds traced the same pattern of cultural decline and rebirth that Wallace had found among the Seneca. The Shawnee suffered tribal dispersal, lost contact with a way of life based on expansive hunting territories, and soon succumbed to alcoholism and land sales. The man who led Shawnee revitalization was, like Handsome Lake, a notorious drinker whose vision of cultural rebirth grew out of the need for personal redemption. Both prophets had been personal failures. Both had suffered in the shadow of relatives more gifted in secular affairs. And both had passed through disappointments immediately prior to the moment of divine contact: Handsome Lake had returned from a drinking spree to find himself humiliated in a Seneca community temporarily under the sway of Quaker missionaries; Tenskwatawa had apprenticed himself as a medicine man, only to be discredited by an epidemic. The two prophets offered a gospel of syncretism, a blend of Indian religion and white culture. Finally, their new cults reflected organizational tensions within the tribes, as they redirected power away from older shamans and political leaders and toward individuals who had hitherto held secondary or even marginal status.<sup>47</sup>

But Edmunds draws revealing differences as well. Whereas Handsome Lake had accommodated white culture through such points of doctrine as sedentary lifestyle, European-style farming technology, and a tolerance for Christianity, Tenskwatawa demanded Indian culture in a less diluted form. White technology and clothing, European food (especially bread),<sup>48</sup> white religion, and white drink all became taboo. Of equal significance, Tenskwatawa adopted highly selective attitudes toward whites themselves. The British and the French were acceptable, but the Americans, he declared, had been created by a demon for evil purposes and were to be avoided at all costs. The difference between the Seneca readiness to incorporate and the Shawnee insularity undoubtedly sprang from the political fortunes of the two tribes. The Seneca were per-

<sup>46</sup> R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1983), x.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-66.

<sup>48</sup> This point is a revealing one, since it suggests a rejection both of European economy and religion, wherein the doctrine of transubstantiation links bread with the divinity.

manently broken by the time of Handsome Lake's visions; they existed as pockets of Indian society in a land of white development. Since they had lost hope of reconquest or tribal expansion, their revitalization depended on modernizing their secular practices while retaining the old Indian cosmology and religion. The Shawnees, however, lived on the frontier's edge, where hope for the ancient freedoms remained alive. Until the disasters of 1811–1813 it must have seemed that such autonomy was still possible. Tenskwatawa's socially and religiously fundamentalist doctrine reflected the Shawnees' surviving military power. Their prophet simply had fewer compromises to make.

Why then did Tecumseh become the principal character of so many histories? Edmunds contends that white scrutiny focused on Tecumseh because he acted in a way more agreeable to white values; his "attempts at political and military unification seemed logical to both the British and the Americans, for it is what they would have done in his place."<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, he was dashing and eloquent, a handsomely framed warrior who, even without the blarney, surpassed in force of personality the liberal expansionists who defeated him. The Prophet, to the contrary, was fat, disfigured, and unsuitable for romance.<sup>50</sup> Thus, despite the fact that Tenskwatawa maintained a degree of tribal leadership after the Thames battle and was integral in leading many of the Shawnees to their Kansas reservation, it was his brother who remained the object of public attention.

The most recent volume of Tecumseh scholarship returns to the traditional political and military narrative. Instead of continuing the anthropological inquiry of Wallace and Edmunds, John Sugden's *Tecumseh's Last Stand* (1985) reviews events surrounding the Battle of the Thames, with an emphasis on its lesser-known British military aspects. Sugden devotes particular attention to the command of Major General Henry Proctor, the British officer who led the campaign against Harrison and whose untimely retreat left the Shawnees unsupported in their last battle.<sup>51</sup> But if this new traditionalism fails to excite, *Tecumseh's Last Stand* also contains material of more compelling interest. Sugden devotes a quarter of the text and a lengthy appendix to exploring the legends surrounding the death of Tecumseh and the location of his remains. Although the facts of these matters are of course lost to history, Sugden's analysis underscores two major points. First, the eyewitness accounts were conflicting and almost wholly tendentious.

<sup>49</sup> Edmunds, *Tecumseh*, 224.

<sup>50</sup> He had accidentally put out one of his eyes with an arrow. See Edmunds, *Shawnee Prophet*, 30.

<sup>51</sup> Proctor was subsequently censured and court-martialed. See John Sugden, *Tecumseh's Last Stand* (Norman, Okla., 1985), 183–86.



White accounts acted as handmaidens to political careers or personal reputations, of which Richard Johnson's was only the most famous. Furthermore, those testimonies tended to change over time. Indian accounts, to the contrary, have spirited the dying Tecumseh from the battlefield, or have even allowed him to escape altogether, retiring him to the same secluded immortality as King Arthur.<sup>52</sup> Of equal importance, Sugden's collection of diverse testimony suggests the importance of retaining apocrypha as a part of American culture. In its pursuit of the internal dynamics of Indian society, the New Indian school tends to avoid the folkloric aspects that for centuries have formed the white's store of knowledge on the subject.<sup>53</sup>

The direction of biographical study on Tecumseh thus reflects the main contours of Indian history. The era of national growth and expansion first tempted its authors to romanticize as arcadians the native people receding before them. As national expansion accelerated, those sentiments yielded to impatience, until the Indian, removed as a threat, was largely forgotten. Only in the aftermath of this term of burgeoning American culture have historians returned to search for an understanding which reconciles the *etic*, the view of whites standing outside that society, to the *emic*, the perceptions and assumptions internal to the Indian cultures. But the persistence of concern over these affairs is perhaps the most revealing fact. The manifestos of progress—now as much as in the time of the iron horse—have always promised a better life, a more equitable world, a liberation from toil and conflict. The failure of this utopia to appear returns the historian to men like Tecumseh, angry voices in a yet-unsanctified past.

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-220.

<sup>53</sup> Historians still need to explore the idea that North American Indians, even after their most celebrated military losses, maintained a day-to-day resistance through such methods as the perpetuation of alternate histories. The obvious model would be James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, Conn., 1985).

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## Coming of Age: Some Thoughts upon American Indian History

R. David Edmunds\*

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In late August, 1967, when I first enrolled in the graduate history program at the University of Oklahoma, I was greeted by a professor of European history who inquired about my research interests. When I rather naively replied that I had written an M.A. thesis upon the history of the Kickapoo Indians in Illinois and that I hoped to continue to study and conduct research upon the tribes of the Old Northwest, he replied, "Oh God! Not another cowboys and Indians buff!" Two decades later Terry Rugeley's perceptive survey of the historiography of Tecumseh and the Indian resistance movement, published in this issue of the *Indiana Magazine of History*, reflects both the many changes that have taken place in the general field of Native American, or Indian, history since that time and the field's emerging (if sometimes begrudged) recognition as a vital part of American history.

During the 1960s most American Indian historians were primarily western historians with a particular interest in Indians. Many graduate history programs offered advanced degrees with specializations in western or frontier history, but there were no Ph.D. programs offering specific fields in Indian or Native American history. For example, the University of Oklahoma, with a rich tradition in western history, a large Indian population in the state, and a university press famous for its *Civilization of the American Indian* series, did not offer a field in Indian history within the history department's Ph.D. program until the 1970s. Indeed, prior to 1970, almost all the scholarship that focused upon Indian history was produced by historians who had received little or no formal course work in the field.

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Much of this scholarship was well researched and well written but rather limited in focus. Many of the historians writing in the 1950s and early 1960s concentrated their efforts upon the development and implementation of federal Indian policy rather than focusing upon the particular perspectives of the Indian tribes. Basing their research upon the reports of Indian agents and other functionaries, these scholars carefully delineated the formulation of federal Indian policy, but their writings probably revealed more about those whites who interacted with the tribespeople than about the Indians themselves. Moreover, in much of this scholarship Indian people were portrayed as the recipients of government action (which they sometimes were), but there was little effort to analyze Indian actions or reactions from the Indians' perspectives. I would not suggest that such work was not sound, for many scholars still consult these monographs for well-organized, basic, factual information regarding Indian policy and its impact upon these tribes, but I would argue that these studies provided few insights into the evolution of tribal culture during the post-contact period.<sup>1</sup> Other volumes written during this time continued to focus upon Indian-white military encounters, especially the warfare occurring on the Great Plains and in the desert Southwest. Characterized by vivid, narrative prose, these accounts often retold familiar, if exciting, incidents (the Apache wars, the Custer campaign, etc.), but they failed to contribute to our understanding of tribal culture.<sup>2</sup>

As Rugeley indicates in his essay, during the 1960s much began to change. Reflecting the academic community's increased awareness of the contributions of minority groups to the historical development of the United States, many historians abandoned the "consensus" interpretations of earlier decades and argued that the culture of the modern United States was not a well-blended bouillon into which minority cultures had smoothly melted but more resembled an ethnic stew or "hash" in which all racial and ethnic groups had been markedly flavored by the predominant culture but in which they had maintained their own separate identities and characteristics.

Political conditions in the United States also contributed to the change. Following the example of the black civil rights movement, younger, more militant Native American leaders emerged from the urban Indian communities, and the catchphrase "Red

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1780-1834* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962). This excellently researched and well-written monograph still remains the standard work upon this subject, but as the title implies, the focus is upon federal policy, not Indians.

<sup>2</sup> See Ralph Andrist, *The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indians* (New York, 1964).

Power" was added to the growing lexicon of civil rights rhetoric. Meanwhile, mired in the agony of Vietnam, Americans who opposed the war found it easy to draw similarities between what they interpreted as modern American imperialism in southeast Asia and earlier usurpation of Indian lands in the West. Indeed, the G.I. term "Indian Country," commonly applied to those parts of the Vietnamese countryside held by the Viet Cong, also reflected the soldiers' appreciation of the parallels. Historians who opposed the conflict also utilized such parallels and attempted to reinterpret the past record of Indian-white relations from a more critical perspective. In some instances, such as Cecil Eby's *"That Disgraceful Affair": The Black Hawk War*, which presented the Black Hawk war in an obvious Vietnamese framework, these similarities are overdrawn. The predominant culture's bleak record of interaction with tribal people, however, provided ample opportunity for such an interpretation, and an American public plagued by self-doubts over the country's foreign policy readily accepted the new, more critical, interpretation of their country's past.<sup>3</sup> It is not surprising that Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, while not very good history, struck a responsive chord and climbed the best seller list, while the guilt-ridden implications in the clever title of Vine Deloria's best selling *Custer Died for Your Sins* also attracted a wide audience.<sup>4</sup>

By the early 1970s Indians were "in," and everyone was jumping on the buckskin bandwagon. History departments across the United States rushed to add courses in Indian or Native American history, and Native American or American Indian programs or departments sprung up at institutions across the American West. Faced with a contracting job market, many American historians, western and otherwise, marketed themselves as "Indian historians" and ventured into the classroom, eager to grab their piece of the new academic turf. Although many of these instructors were well intentioned, some were woefully lacking in their preparation. (I remember one former European historian who already had brought his new Native American history class to their midterm exams and who asked me if the Shawnee Prophet had organized and participated in the 1890 Ghost Dance movement.) Moreover, instructors selecting reading materials for their new Indian history classes found such texts in short supply. Many instructors utilized William T. Hagan's *American Indians*, a good but brief survey of Indian-white relations within the United States; Alvin M. Josephy's *The Patriot Chiefs: A Chronicle of Native American Re-*

<sup>3</sup> Cecil Eby, *"That Disgraceful Affair": The Black Hawk War* (New York, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York, 1970); Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York, 1969).



sistance; or Francis Paul Prucha's *The Indian in American History*, a reader containing previously published essays focusing on the interaction of Indian and non-Indian Americans.<sup>5</sup> All of these works possessed considerable merit, but the need for a broader selection of reading materials continued. Even the publication of Angie Debo's *A History of the Indians of the United States* failed to remedy the problem. Although the volume reflected the perspectives of an author who had spent her life studying the tribes of Oklahoma, its coverage of other tribal peoples was uneven and its organizational format discouraged classroom adoption.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, the nature of the inquiry into the Indian past underwent significant change. For years historians had complained that although anthropologists might have possessed a better understanding of the intricacies of tribal culture, their historical research was inadequate, and they often failed to place their analysis within the broader framework of American life. They knew what was "going on" among tribal people, but they did not know what "was happening." In contrast, anthropologists answered that historians might be well versed in the formulation and application of federal Indian policies, but they remained too closely tied to their traditional primary sources and failed to understand the complexity of tribal culture. They were writing "white man's history." They knew what "was happening," but they really did not know what was "going on."

Yet there were some exceptions. Several scholars, primarily anthropologists, combined their knowledge of tribal culture with sound historical methodology to create a new approach to the study of tribal people, both in the eastern and western hemispheres. For many years Professor Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin had pioneered in this technique at Indiana University, while John C. Ewers's studies of the Blackfeet and other plains tribes also followed in this tradition at the Smithsonian.<sup>7</sup> (I once heard a western historian admit that he really could not define "ethnohistory"; but he asserted, "Whatever it is, John Ewers does it.") In retrospect, however, Anthony F. C. Wallace's publication of *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* probably represents the first of the modern ethnohistories focusing upon Indian people in the United States. Wallace's study of religious revitalization continues to set the standards for ethnohistorical scholarship.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> William T. Hagan, *American Indians* (Chicago, 1961); Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *The Patriot Chiefs: A Chronicle of American Indian Leadership* (New York, 1962); Francis Paul Prucha, comp., *The Indian in American History* (New York, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> Angie Debo, *A History of the Indians of the United States* (Norman, Okla., 1970).

<sup>7</sup> John C. Ewers, *The Blackfeet: Raiders on the Northwestern Plains* (Norman, Okla., 1958).

<sup>8</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York, 1970).

Inspired both by Wallace and the new sensitivity to minority perspectives, historians began to create a "new Indian history," designed not only to place the tribes within the mainstream of the broader American perspective but also to illustrate how Indian people were motivated by their own unique cultural patterns and how those patterns adapted to changes swirling around them. Although Indian people repeatedly have been forced to react to the policies of Euro-Americans, the new Indian history has attempted to analyze the Indian response and to show that tribal cultures have been remarkably resilient, maintaining many tenets of their traditional lifestyles through decades of attempted forced acculturation. Moreover, the new scholarship endeavored to present an "Indian centered" perspective: an account of Indian-white relations that analyzed this interaction from the Indian viewpoint and illustrated that, far from being the pawns of government policy, tribal people devised their own techniques of manipulating a system designed to control them.

The emergence of this new Indian history is closely associated with the D'Arcy McNickle Center for the History of the American Indian at the Newberry Library in Chicago. Founded in 1972, the center is based upon an extensive collection of printed materials (including many rare books and pamphlets found in few other repositories) and is buttressed by the manuscripts of the Ayer Collection. The center has emerged as a "clearing house" for historical research and as an institution whose resources continue to attract scholars from throughout the United States and the world. Led by a dedicated staff, the center regularly awards fellowships to tribal historians from Native American communities throughout the United States and Canada and also provides predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships for academic historians. In addition, during the past two decades the center has sponsored conferences and other academic gatherings focusing upon major issues in this field and has also funded workshops designed to improve the instruction of Indian history in elementary and secondary schools. Moreover, the center regularly publishes bibliographies and other information designed to facilitate both teaching and research. Unquestionably, the McNickle Center at the Newberry Library has played a critical role in the growth of the new Indian history.

During the past two decades this new history has addressed several issues. Almost all Indian historians would argue that the study of their discipline stands upon its own merit. They have been particularly sensitive to charges that the field is an intellectual cul-de-sac, that Indian people have had little impact upon the larger history of the United States. Indeed, much of the reluctance by conservative historians to accept the validity of the new Indian history has been based upon their misconception that Indian people and their history are at best a footnote, a series of incidents to be



quickly mentioned and forgotten in the broader context of the American past. Of course Indians provided some initial resistance to colonization (Metacom's War or Opechanacough's uprisings), participated in the French and Indian War, fought with the British during the American Revolution and the War of 1812, and illuminated the politics of the Jacksonian period, but according to conservative historians these incidents are peripheral to the mainstream of American history in comparison to such subjects as the formation of political parties during the Federalist and Jeffersonian periods, or Whig economic theory during the 1840s.

Fortunately, however, much of the new scholarship places Indians within this broader context and illustrates that their interaction with Euro-Americans had a profound impact upon the history of the United States. Written in 1972, Alfred W. Crosby's *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, examines the consequences of initial European-Indian contact upon both sides and indicates that such intercourse markedly transformed both parties.<sup>9</sup> The exchange provided the Old World with a cornucopia of new food crops; and the transportation of corn, potatoes, manioc, sweet potatoes, and other crops back to the eastern hemisphere not only broadened European, Asian, and African diets but also enabled these people to bring new agricultural lands into production, which in turn reduced famine and encouraged the rapid growth of population. Indians received several domestic animals (horses, sheep, pigs, etc.) from the Europeans, and they rapidly adopted European technology, such as metal implements and firearms. The introduction of Old World diseases among the Indian population of North and South America, however, negated any positive exchange and created a demographic disaster. With no natural immunities, millions of Native Americans fell victim to these maladies, essentially clearing the Indian population from large regions and facilitating white settlement.

Francis Jennings's *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* enlarges Crosby's investigations and illustrates that the European settlers did not enter an untamed land devoid of human settlement but rather took over a previously settled region whose population had almost been exterminated by Old World diseases.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, in Jennings's own words, the eastern seaboard of North America resembled a "widow" more than a "virgin" wilderness: the English who settled in the region had insufficient skills and experience to conquer a wilderness, but their centralized, hierarchial political system enabled them

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<sup>9</sup> Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Conn., 1972).

<sup>10</sup> Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1975).

adroitly to manipulate tribal people. Jennings also illustrates that, far from being the primitive "savages" described by immigrant Englishmen, the Indians lived in tightly knit, well-ordered villages and produced an agricultural surplus. Moreover, Jennings questions whether the Europeans' ethnocentric definition of savagery is applicable to the New England tribes. In summary, Jennings asks his readers to reexamine the relationship between the Indians and the early colonists and to reassess the traditional heroic and moral sanctity usually associated with the colonial powers. Some historians have complained that Jennings's criticism of the Europeans and his vindication of tribal people represent an unrealistic "overkill" from the Indian perspective, but his volume provides considerable "food for thought" and serves as a valuable counterbalance to more traditional accounts of the colonial period.

Another facet of the new Indian history is the adoption by historians of certain theoretical models previously employed by anthropologists, economists, and other social scientists. By far the most successful is Richard White, whose volume, *The Roots of Dependency*, examines the process through which previously independent Indian communities became economically dependent upon their European or American neighbors.<sup>11</sup> Although White's book focuses upon three tribes—the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navájos—his first section, which concentrates upon the Choctaws, provides the best analysis. White describes how the Choctaws, whose economic self-sufficiency carefully balanced horticulture with hunting and gathering, became enmeshed in the southern deerskin trade. He argues that their subsequent reliance upon European trade goods first facilitated the growth of a cattle industry, then encouraged part of the tribe to adopt cotton cultivation. New patterns of tribal leadership emerged as a mixed-blood elite championed acculturation and fought to retain the tribal homeland, while more conservative tribespeople opted for removal to the West where they could pursue more traditional economic activities. The defense of the old homelands enabled the mixed-bloods, whose loyalty previously had been suspect, to emerge as the new Choctaw "patriots," an image that enhanced their political stature within the tribe. White's analysis is quite perceptive and provides one of the best discussions of economic and political change within an Indian community. Since the model was first employed by modern Third World economists, White's discussion enables scholars to place the economic dependency of the Choctaws and other tribes within a broader framework of similar patterns of dependency throughout the western colonial world. Moreover, the similarities between the educated,

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<sup>11</sup> Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1983).



mixed-blood Choctaws and the leaders of many newly emerging modern nations is obvious.

Other historians have concentrated their efforts upon the image of Indian people within the American consciousness and the way in which that image has affected Indian-white relations. In *The Savages of America* Roy Harvey Pearce illustrates that colonists who arrived in the New World brought preconceived notions regarding "savagism" and "civilization" with them and then attempted to place the Indian people whom they encountered within such a context.<sup>12</sup> When they found that the tribespeople would not readily conform to their plans, the Europeans rationalized that Indians were vestiges of a former age or were Satan's minions. Indians must either change or be destroyed, but even if they changed, they would be destroyed as Indians. In *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian*, Bernard W. Sheehan traces these concepts into the early republic and illustrates that missionaries and other philanthropists wished to save the tribespeople from the vices of frontier society, but they also expected them to embrace all the virtues of American society and to become small yeomen farmers. When the Indians failed to accept the entirety of American life, Jeffersonian reformers also became discouraged and eventually opted for removal as the only recourse available for saving the tribespeople.<sup>13</sup> Robert F. Berkhofer's *The White Man's Indian* also traces the image of Indians from the colonial period into the twentieth century and indicates that stereotypes of Indian people have affected both the development of Indian policy and even Indian attitudes about themselves. Examining a cultural milieu that includes science, art, literature, and philosophy, Berkhofer argues that for most non-Indians, the stereotypical image of Indian people has become more real than the actuality of Indian life.<sup>14</sup>

Where is the new Indian history going? What are the particular subjects currently attracting scholars' attention, and what will be the focal point of future research and writing? Certain subjects immediately come to mind. The first is demography. Recent research by Russell Thornton, Henry F. Dobyns, and others, has enabled scholars to reassess their estimates of both the pre-Columbian population and the number of Indian people inhabiting the United States during the early colonial period.<sup>15</sup> Utilizing such data, Jen-

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<sup>12</sup> Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization* (Baltimore, 1953).

<sup>13</sup> Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1973).

<sup>14</sup> Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York, 1978).

<sup>15</sup> Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492* (Norman, Okla., 1987); Henry F. Dobyns, *Their Number Become Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1983).

nings and other historians have argued for a reassessment of Indian culture in comparison to contemporary cultures of the Old World. Other population studies should facilitate additional research into the relationship between different Indian communities and in the general development of life in the western hemisphere prior to the fifteenth century. As the United States approaches the Columbian Quincentennial, it is critical that Americans realize that the Europeans did not "discover" a virtually empty continent populated by only a few "savages." It is imperative to realize that the western hemisphere also shared many patterns of cultural development with the Old World. The Americas were not a nascent backwater eagerly awaiting European development.

Another topic which needs considerably more investigation is the role of métis or mixed-blood people within the tribal communities. Previously labeled as "half-breeds," or "quarter-breeds," these people of mixed lineage have been depicted as cultural outcasts caught between the Indian and non-Indian worlds but denied membership in either existence. More recent scholarship suggests, however, that they played key roles as cultural brokers, or "middlemen," between the tribes and the colonial or federal governments, often working as agents of imperial powers but also interceding for the tribal communities.<sup>16</sup> Obviously many of these people were entrepreneurs, sometimes amassing a personal fortune, but many also served their people. Past assessments of them as unscrupulous opportunists are unfair. Moreover, the rancor they engendered among federal Indian agents probably is a measure of their success. Many of the mixed-blood leaders were well educated by frontier standards, and they were less easily manipulated than the more traditional tribal people. Indeed, rather than being alienated from both the Indian and non-Indian worlds, they were comfortable in both, and their ability to transcend both cultures enhanced their prominence. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries these people held key positions in many of the tribes, and further investigations of their activities will provide scholars with critical insights into the changing tribal cultures and the nature of Indian politics.

Equally important is the crucial role played by Indian women. In the past almost all research has focused upon the activities of Indian men, and although historians have long acknowledged the important roles played by Indian women, they have been remiss in investigating them. More recently, both historians and anthropologists have attempted to transcend the stereotypical role of the passive Indian woman to illustrate that many held influential po-

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<sup>16</sup> Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown, eds., *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1985).



sitions within their communities, but considerably more inquiry into this subject is needed.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, historians need to investigate further the Indian experience in the middle and late twentieth century. Prior to the 1980s most historical scholarship terminated with the Indian Reorganization Act and the New Deal. Recently, Donald L. Fixico has examined the termination and relocation policies of the 1950s, but additional studies of the Indians' role in World War II and of the Red Power movements are needed.<sup>18</sup> Although many Americans still associate Indian people with the past and mistakenly believe them to be "vanishing Americans," they are one of the most rapidly expanding minority groups in the United States. Indeed, the Indian population is burgeoning. In addition, Indians are a minority group no longer primarily ensconced upon reservations in the West. Today, almost 50 percent of the Indian population lives in urban areas. Indians always have been, are, and will continue to be a part of the American experience. Their history is important. Their history is our own.

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<sup>17</sup> See Gretchen M. Bataille and Kathleen M. Sands, eds., *American Indian Women: Telling Their Lives* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1984); and Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870* (Norman, Okla., 1980).

<sup>18</sup> Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960* (Albuquerque, N.Mex., 1986).

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## The Scholar as Detective: Disentangling Fact from Fiction in Accounts of Pioneer History

Bob Hall\*

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When Robert and Helen Lynd published *Middletown*, their sociological study of Muncie, Indiana, in 1929, they included little historical material in the volume. Seven-and-a-half pages on "The Historical Setting" and some scattered references throughout the book to historical material comprised its historical substance. Despite this lack of evidence, however, the Lynds had made a number of definite assumptions about "historical" Muncie. As far as they were concerned, Muncie before 1890 was "a placid county-seat . . . drowsing about its courthouse square," a town where local rather than national or regional influences were dominant and where class differences existed but were not as rigid as they were to become in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Later researchers working with the Muncie manuscript census for 1850 to 1880 were able to show that these assumptions were grossly ill-founded.<sup>2</sup>

The basis for the Lynds' misconceptions lay in the fact that the data for their historical work came from the recollections of elderly townspeople. Overlain by local mythology, such data often provide an unsatisfactory foundation for historical research, and the Lynds'

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<sup>1</sup> Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (New York, 1929), 12-13, 37, 479-80.

<sup>2</sup> See Howard M. Bahr and Alexander Bracken, "The Middletown of Yore—Population, Persistence, Migration and Stratification, 1850-1880," *Rural Sociology*, XLVIII (Spring, 1983), 120-32. It should be noted that because of confidentiality restrictions these manuscript census schedules were not available to the Lynds when they did their research.



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## Chief Tomah's Reply: A Pacific Footnote on the Folklore of Tecumseh

Robert G. Gunderson

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[**Editor's Note:** In January, 1990, the *Indiana Magazine of History* received the following note from Robert G. Gunderson, Indiana University professor emeritus of speech communication and history, concerning an article by Terry Rugeley, "Savage and Statesman: Changing Historical Interpretations of Tecumseh," which appeared in the December, 1989, issue of the magazine: "The author of the article on Tecumseh invites folklore and the collection of apocrypha. So I am prompted to send you the enclosed pacific footnote to his article—a published letter received by none other than the hallowed Lyman Draper giving Chief Tomah's reply to Tecumseh's appeal to the Menominees, presumably at Green Bay in 1810 or 1811." Professor Gunderson's "pacific footnote" follows.]

In a letter to Lyman C. Draper dated Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, January, 1854, James W. Biddle relates the report "from several persons" concerning a council at Green Bay in 1810 or 1811 when Tecumseh urged Chief Tomah and his Menominees to take the war path against Americans. Tecumseh, in these reports, "pictured the glory, as well as certainty of success," of war, and he "recapitulated . . . the number of battles he had fought, the victories he had won, the enemies he had slain, and the scalps he had taken from the heads of warrior-foes. Tomah appeared sensible of the influence of such an address upon his people, and feared its consequence, for he was opposed to leading them into war. His reply was in a tone to allay this feeling, and he closed with the remark to them, that they had heard words of Tecumseh—heard of the battles he had fought, the enemies he had slain, and the scalps he had taken." Tomah "then paused; and while the deepest silence reigned . . . he slowly raised his hands, with his eyes fixed on them, and in a lower, but not less prouder tone, continued '*but it is my*

*boast that these hands are unstained with human blood!* The effect is described as tremendous— . . . and admiration was forced even from those who could not, or did not, approve of the moral to be implied, and the gravity of the council was disturbed, for an instant, by a murmur of approbation—a tribute to genius, overpowering, at the moment, the force of education and of habit.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James W. Biddle, “Recollections of Green Bay in 1816–17” (*Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, Vol. I; Madison, 1854), 49-63, quotations pp. 53-54.