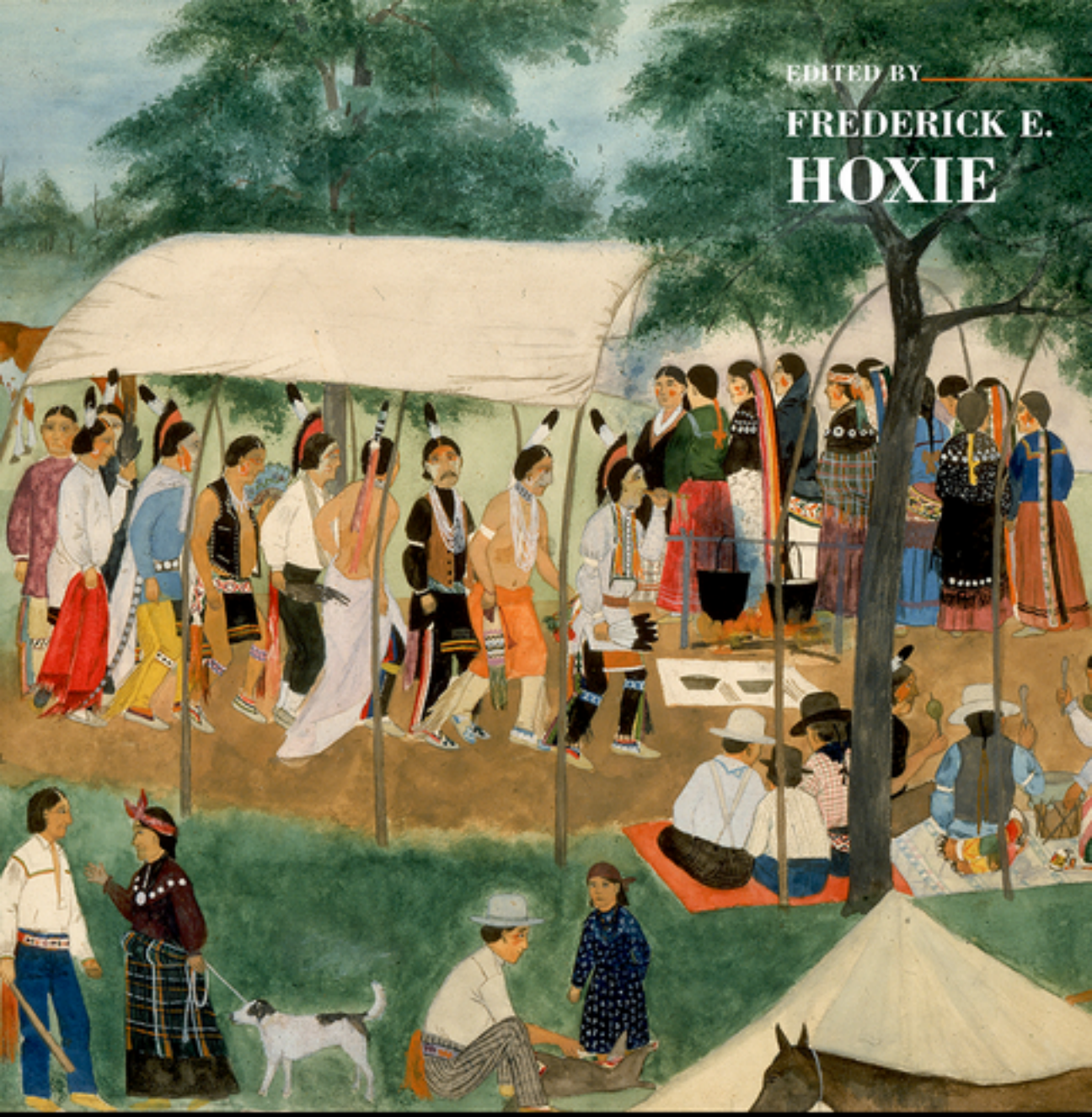

EDITED BY

FREDERICK E. HOXIE

The Oxford Handbook *of* AMERICAN INDIAN HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION

FREDERICK E. HOXIE

There is an old academic joke that never fails to get a laugh: scholarly debates are so intense because the stakes in them are so low. It is a good joke, but unfortunately it obscures a central feature of academic life: rather than being trivial, vigorous argument and extended discussion are essential to the generation of new knowledge. As laughable as academia's penchant for endless palaver may be, debate is a basic tool for researchers in the humanities and social sciences, no less than for their counterparts in the physical and biological sciences.

In history we are continuously discovering new facts or learning new aspects of the facts we already know. As a result we can never be entirely sure that we understand the meaning of the events we study. History is never "just the facts"; it is an evolving universe of facts plus the meanings we attach to them. We write history by fitting facts together to create narratives or interpretive arguments about the past that have meaning for our readers. Even though historians spend the bulk of their time working alone in archives and libraries, they make "history" through discussion and debate with other scholars. And the stakes in those debates can actually be quite high.

Nowhere is the importance of historical debate more obvious than in the writing of American Indian history. During the last decades of the twentieth century, explorations of the nature and meaning of the Native experience on this continent triggered an explosion of interest in the subject and a tidal wave of new books, scholarly articles, and essays. These quiet, academic events transformed the academy's—and the general public's—understanding of Indian people in the United States.

A century ago, the nation's most celebrated historian wrote that the history of the United States was animated by the struggle of European settlers and their progressive ideas to overcome the hostility of the North American wilderness. In his famous essay on the frontier in American history, Frederick Jackson Turner argued that the "peculiarity of American institutions" could be attributed to "the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people—to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of

the frontier into the complexity of city life."[1] For most of the twentieth century, scholars adopted this framework.

Turner's view was a progressive one. He believed the United States could become a model of democracy and social equity for the world. Fair enough. But embedded in his progressive view were several debilitating assumptions about Native people:

- European culture was dynamic and modern; indigenous North Americans, by contrast, were static and backward.
- Native people dwelled in a wilderness; European settlers and their descendants were compelled to destroy that wilderness in order to launch an age of progress.
- Indians were primitive, their economic and political lives were backward and unsophisticated; the European settlers were cultured and cosmopolitan.
- Indigenous lifeways were the antithesis of modern life; Indians by definition could not live in modern cities or participate in modernist movements in art, literature, music or philosophy.

Over the course of the twentieth century, a substantial historical literature grew up around this framework. It featured stories of heroic pioneers who endured confrontations with Indians,[2] Native heroes who struggled against the tide of history to defend their people from inevitable defeat,[3] and portraits of tribal cultures whose communal values and dramatic ceremonies represented an attractive alternative to modernity.[4] John Collier, who later became Commissioner of Indian Affairs during the New Deal, reflected the power of that attraction when he described the Pueblo peoples of the American Southwest as living in a "Red Atlantis," a lost world.[5]

Historians have challenged—and now largely overturned—those longstanding assumptions. Contentious arguments and intense debate have produced a "New Indian History" that has brought an entirely new perspective on the Native past and its meaning to students of United States history. Today that new perspective dominates academic discussion no less than Turner's views dominated historical writing a century ago. These changes have also generated new debates. As a result, rather than replacing Turner's views with a new orthodoxy, the New Indian History has generated new questions and fresh explorations of Native history.

This handbook will provide a guide through current scholarship on the Native American past. It will make clear how historians have recast the academic understanding of Indian people and will serve as a window on emerging areas of research and on the new debates that preoccupy contemporary scholars. The handbook comprises thirty chapters organized into three categories: chronological histories, regional histories, and histories of "big" historical themes. The chapters have been edited to prevent overlap and to insure that each contains a maximum amount of new and challenging information. The authors range from veteran scholars to junior colleagues who are only now becoming prominent in the academic arena. Most are academic historians, but "history" in this handbook is defined broadly, as an enterprise taken up also by an

array of talented people ranging from anthropologists, literary critics, and journalists to demographers, social critics, and artists.

The chapters in this handbook not only illuminate recent research, but they also point the way to future studies and fresh topics. As the New Indian History was gaining momentum in recent decades, the lives and concerns of Native people themselves were shifting significantly. Today it appears we are on the verge of a new era of Indian history—and therefore of historical writing. For example, in many US states, tribes are a permanent and powerful feature of the political landscape. They are active in court, in electoral politics and in local business affairs. Across the nation, Native cultural expressions are a steady presence in the arts, literary, and musical scenes, and in artistic performances, productions, and exhibitions. Native people are visible everywhere, from college campuses to corporate boardrooms to NASA spacecraft awaiting their launch into the heavens. These new contexts generate new questions. (We wonder, for example, how the frameworks created by the New Indian History help us to understand a world where a Florida tribe owns the Hard Rock Hotel chain, Native artists display their work at the Venice Biennale, and the name of a professional football team is endangered by a national campaign orchestrated by Indian activists.)

This handbook contains both information and ideas. The information reflects the best and latest scholarship on all the major topics in American Indian history. The ideas represent our disciplines' best thinking about the Native societies, the meanings we might derive from Native experiences in the United States, and the avenues we might pursue in the future to more fully understand those experience. (Our focus here is the territory that became the United States. This arbitrary decision certainly obscures the transnational nature of many Native communities, but it is driven by practicality, considerations of space, and the fact that the nation-state has been the context in which the descendants of hundreds of diverse indigenous peoples became known as American Indians or Native Americans.) This information and these ideas—together with the substantial bibliographical resources the chapters also provide—should equip readers with the tools necessary for exploring these vast and exciting subjects.

The remainder of this introduction will draw on the handbook's chapters to describe in greater detail the contributions the New Indian History has made to scholarship over the past thirty years, as well as to explore some of the new issues and unresolved questions that now demand our attention. The sections to come will provide both a short "history of Indian history" and a guide to the dilemmas and complexities that lie ahead.

The New Indian History

Two cascading series of events—like two lines of falling dominos—crashed into each other at the end of the 1960s to produce the New Indian History. Within the United States, a variety of dramatic social upheavals that had begun in the aftermath of the Second World War produced a civil rights campaign determined to overcome white

supremacy as a prominent aspect of national life and to dismantle the legal structures that fixed segregation and racial discrimination as features of American life. Among academics, a second movement sought to democratize and broaden the writing of American history by expanding the roster of actors who were considered important enough to be studied. By the decade of the 1960s, researchers were beginning to produce exciting new scholarship on slaves, women, working people, immigrants, and families. They sought to make the stories told in history books relevant to the tumultuous society around them.

In the political arena, public support for civil rights focused initially on African Americans, but over time activists in other racialized communities linked their concerns to the national crusade for equality. By the decade of the 1960s, Asian Americans concerned with immigration reform, Latinos focused on the rights of wage workers, and Native Americans committed to the revival of their tribal communities had each created movements that challenged the prevailing assumption of white supremacy and questioned the concept of "melting pot" assimilation in which all people would combine into a homogeneous whole.

As the civil rights movement grew in power and influence, the general public became increasingly aware of American Indian communities and their experience of injustice within the United States. This interest—and the national visibility accompanying it—encouraged Native activists to speak out. In 1961, for example, the leaders of the National Congress of American Indians and their academic allies organized an unprecedented gathering in Chicago. For the first time in American history, hundreds of reservation-based and urban Indians met to hammer out a common agenda for the future. Operating without the supervision of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, participants in the Chicago conference approved a carefully worded "declaration" calling for stronger tribal institutions and greater Indian control over local services such as health care and education. Within a few years, the Community Action Programs in Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" allowed impoverished groups within the United States to apply directly to the Office of Economic Opportunity for assistance. This innovation—which at the time seemed best suited to Appalachia and blighted urban neighborhoods—suddenly put one of the Chicago conference's goals within reach.[6] This shifting political climate, in turn, triggered a burst of new interest in Native traditions, languages, and ceremonies, and fostered new, more vocal Native activists who called for community "self- determination" and a return to tribal ways.[7]

In the academy, many of the scholars committed to "new" histories of women, slaves, children, and immigrants also had grown impatient with their discipline's habit of distorting or overlooking the Native past. They were supported by a small group of historically minded anthropologists who called themselves ethnohistorians and by clusters of scholars in subgroups of the American field (colonial history, the history of the West, legal history, the history of the South). They pointed out that Indian people were hardly bit players in the past and they argued that the ability of Native communities to devise strategies for survival amidst a torrent of adversity deserved careful study.

At the beginning of the 1970s, two books appeared on the nation's bestseller lists that brought together these two paths of change. Their appearance clarified the need for a new Indian history. First, Sioux activist Vine Deloria Jr.—a thirty-six-year-old veteran of the Washington policy world—published *Custer Died For Your Sins*, a scathing collection of essays on contemporary American Indian life. "Indians are like the weather," Deloria wrote in the book's opening paragraph, "everyone knows all about the weather but none can change it."[8] He made fun of public ignorance of Indians and dismissed the missionaries and social workers who had long tried to separate Native people from their culture. Other groups have difficulties, he wrote, "we Indians have had a plight."

Barely a year later, Dee Brown, a librarian at the University of Illinois and part-time popular historian, published *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. Brown wrote that "the culture and civilization of the American Indian was destroyed" by the United States but that "millions" of the Indians' words and statements "are preserved in official records." Out of these words, he declared, "I have tried to fashion a narrative of the conquest of the American West as the victims experienced it." As they explored the narrative to come, Brown added, readers should imagine American history "facing eastward."[9] Brown's fluid style, his use of Native voices, and his unblinking attention to the relentless violence inflicted on tribes carried an emotional power that captivated his audience. Despite its view that Indian people were "victims" whose way of life had been destroyed (a confusing claim given the rising tide of Indian militancy at the time), the book became an international sensation.

A few months after *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* reached the bestseller list, historian Robert Berkhofer from the University of Wisconsin published a pivotal essay that made Deloria's and Brown's challenge to the academy clear: it was time, Berkhofer wrote in the *Pacific Historical Review*, for a "New Indian History." "Political agitation outside the academy and disciplinary trends within point to a new focus on American Indian history," he wrote. "The great desideratum in writing Indian history" was now "putting more of the Indians into it." In addition to suggesting new topics, Berkhofer also proposed a new theme: "the remarkable persistence of cultural and personality traits and ethnic identity in Indian societies in the face of white conquest and efforts at elimination or assimilation."[10]

Berkhofer's essay called for the demolition of the old Turnerian framework. By urging a focus on "persistence," he also signaled that Native people should be viewed as dynamic actors, not passive, backward people destined for disappearance. He demanded that tribal communities be viewed as part of the modern scene; they should not be confined to a primitive past or a "wilderness" homeland. Finally, Berkhofer urged his colleagues to set aside their discipline's parochial assumptions about Indian behavior. When anthropologists labeled certain actions "tribal," for example, he pointed out that they were doing nothing more than concealing individual behavior "behind abstract conceptions." The influence of culture on behavior should "be determined from empirical data," rather than assumed.[11] And historians who interpreted Native actions solely from documents produced by whites similarly were likely being duped into thinking that Indians were always "passive objects responding to white

stimuli rather than . . . individuals coping creatively . . . with the different situations in which they found themselves."[12]

Berkhofer gave ample credit to the anthropologists and dissident intellectuals who had long been calling for a more rigorous approach to cultural histories, but his call for a "New Indian History" was eloquently argued and perfectly timed. The essay appeared just as the nation's first university programs in American Indian studies were being established at the University of Minnesota, UCLA, the University of California, Berkeley, Washington, Arizona, and Cornell, and at the moment when Chicago's Newberry Library and other research centers were beginning to sponsor new scholarship in the field through grants and fellowships. Two new journals, the *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* (which began at UCLA in 1971) and *American Indian Quarterly* (sponsored by University of California, Berkeley, and launched in 1974), were also poised to bring new approaches to Native history to a wide academic audience. Berkhofer's essay went largely unnoticed outside these academic circles, but it captured the central themes of the new approach and his concluding admonition was quickly embraced by a broad cast of activists and scholars. Native experience, he declared, "is complex and its history ought to be no less so."[13]

New Knowledge

The tenets of a New Indian History outlined by Berkhofer forty years ago now have almost universal support. The eight major chronological chapters that make up Part I of this handbook, for example, contain a number of themes that reflect a collective rejection of the old Turnerian framework. Most striking is the insistence that indigenous peoples in North America were adaptive and flexible in their relationships with each other as well as with colonial powers and, later, the United States. Prior to 1492, we learn, Indian communities had been quick to adopt new technologies and to embrace innovations that came to them through trade or new social movements. This habit continued during the colonial era as new conditions brought about by the arrival of European people, diseases, and tools challenged old ways of living.

The authors in Part I also emphasize that the Native societies struggling with new economic and social challenges were engaged with a global process of economic change and colonization. Throughout the era of European colonization, Indian tribes formed new commercial and diplomatic relationships with powerful outsiders while they sought to preserve their own community traditions and autonomy. In this sense, they, like their counterparts in colonized Asia and Africa, sought to shape a future that would be consistent with ancient and deeply held values, including the centrality of kinship and the preservation of ties to sacred powers. Similarly, as Native communities faced an expanding United States government intent on dispossessing them from their lands and forcing them to adopt Euro-American lifeways, they—like other colonized people—sought trade-offs that would enable them to preserve as much of their old

lives as possible. These chronological chapters delineate much of the "complex" past Berkhofer identified in 1971.

The chronological chapters also offer an alternative to the view that Native history marked a continuous, downward trajectory that produced nothing other than defeat and disappearance. The focus of each chronological chapter emphasizes the diversity of Indian experiences and the ongoing Native habit of creating hybrid identities from the traits and possibilities available to them. Sometimes these new identities were social and communal—as when several indigenous groups would coalesce into one—and other times they were political or national—as tribes united to seek "pan-Indian" goals in the arenas of religion or diplomacy. These chapters describe the forces of colonialism and dispossession with unflinching rigor, but they also allow us to see the resilience and creativity of Native people as they adapted to new conditions. Their authors thus demonstrate a central tenet of the New Indian History: that Indian people were and remain historical actors—subjects—as well as objects of conquest.

While the chronological chapters underscore the resilience and adaptability of American Indian people over the past 500 years, the nine chapters in Part II devoted to major regions and tribal groups have a great deal to teach about persistence and enduring values. They note, for example, that despite popular Turnerian conception that tribes have fixed and timeless identities, Native communities have survived in every corner of the United States by adapting themselves to new—and frequently changing—conditions. They demonstrate that the demands of adaptation might be so extreme as to require a group to combine with neighbors or to adopt large numbers of strangers into their midst. At the same time, they also explain that the core elements of community identity frequently—perhaps typically—survive. They may survive through recognition of their common history, or of persisting social customs, such as a matrilineal form of defining family membership, or through a common allegiance to particular sacred landscapes—or all three. The central elements of group identity, the authors write, often form a glue that holds people together through the most horrific events. As a consequence, each of these community-focused chapters traces a Native identity and history that predates the arrival of Europeans and continues to the present day.

The regional and tribal history chapters also illuminate the role of resistance and political activism in maintaining community identities and loyalties. Pressed to migrate to new territories or to surrender their homelands altogether, Indian people in the United States have tended to turn to their closest kin and deepest common values to forge new identities as political communities. Those new loyalties—invisible to outsiders and sustained both by individual will and community tradition—enabled groups to endure repeated disappointments yet emerge resilient when conditions changed. It is also clear from these chapters that tribal and regional loyalties have deep roots that have been kept in the forefront of community attention by ceremonies, oral history, and sacred objects. Thus, while the authors of these nine chapters hardly paint a picture of uniform victory, they make it clear that for Indian people the twenty-first century has brought a shift in visibility and influence roughly comparable to the changes witnessed among the decolonized peoples of the globe. That shift owes as much to the tenacity

and internal strength of Native communities as it does to the waning of formal colonialism and an improving legal and political environment.

While the inspiration for the New Indian History came from many quarters, it is striking that so much of what Robert Berkhofer called for in his 1971 essay has been put into practice. Each of the chapters in this volume contains a list of suggested readings that explore their topics more deeply. The vast majority of these volumes appeared after 1980 and most after 1990; this pattern reflects both the scale of the new history and a quickening pace of scholarly production.

Despite the evident power of the New Indian History, the most recent generation of scholarship has done more than simply apply a set of 1970s principles to the Native past. Authors in this field are a diverse, creative, and contentious lot. The New Indian History has not only demolished the old Turnerian framework, but it has also brought forward new questions and concerns. Much of the New Indian History was revisionist. Its advocates were eager to correct the public's distorted understanding of US history and to highlight a neglected aspect of the national past. The goal of the new history's pioneers was to replace old, misguided assumptions with accurate, three-dimensional portraits of Native life. And as the chapters in this volume demonstrate, that process of replacement has occurred. Despite the persistence of racist names for sports teams and outlandish stereotypes in the popular culture, the idea that Indian people were unalterably backward and that their cultures stood apart from major historical events has disappeared from serious discussions in the field.

But while scholars were dismantling Turner's old ideas, they were also discovering new topics and new themes. Their innovations have expanded the scope of American Indian history and stimulated new debates. And the field has begun to move in new directions. As was the case forty years ago, the origins of this new movement are complex, but they emerge from the globalized postcolonial world that now views culture and ethnicity as transnational phenomena, that exist independent of national borders. In this world, scholars are increasingly interested in Native Americans as colonized people who have survived the onslaught of European imperialism and American expansion and who now resemble other postcolonial peoples in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. They argue that modern American Indians have not just devised new national identities, but they have reestablished their claims to an indigenous nationhood. Because the capacity of Indian people to change, to reinvent their cultures, or to adapt to new settings is now so widely accepted, academic writers see little significance in comparing the Native American adaptation to the assimilation of American immigrants or the civil rights struggles of racial minorities. And contemporary scholars are less concerned with "correcting" the national narrative of the United States than they are with portraying Indian people as distinct actors on the global stage.

The final section of chapters in this volume, "Big Themes," illustrate several aspects of this new, "indigenist" approach to the Native past. The topics here are largely generic in the sense that, unlike the chronological and regional chapters in the other two sections, they are about broad categories of human experience rather than distinctive aspects of United States history. The chapters range across many cultures and time

periods to describe the essential themes within each topic; several draw on the experiences of Native people outside the United States to illustrate their points. All view American Indians as colonized people, objects of a violent process of expansion that began in the sixteenth century and extended into the twentieth. The authors in this section also assume that the forces assaulting Native Americans—missionization, dispossession, forced acculturation, and exclusion from an emerging new nation-state—have also assaulted indigenous peoples worldwide. While acknowledging the distinctive experience of North America's people, authors in this section note both the global impact of Europe's overseas conquests, and the complex identities that have emerged in decolonized societies during the postcolonial era. Whether in business, politics, the arts, or social and intellectual life, contemporary indigenous people—like their counterparts across the globe—are shaping new institutions and creating identities that are at once modern and culturally distinct.

Despite their widely different topics, the chapters in the volume's final section indicate that "indigenist" scholars share a number of common ideas and concerns. First, they assert that an essential set of values guides Native actors, whether they are artists, religious leaders, or community politicians and businessmen. Ideas about kinship, reciprocity, land, or religious practice may appear in different ways and at different times, but they continue to define the core elements of indigenous culture. Second, most of the authors in this volume—in each of the three sections—view the Native defense of their communities as a defense of Native sovereignty. Because indigenous people are not simply a domestic ethnic group or racial minority, their interests are national and their authority over their property, ideas, traditions, and other features of community life should be viewed as comparable to the authority of a sovereign ruler. Thus, for example, disputes over treaty language and the interpretation of federal protections promised in treaties are viewed as contests of sovereigns. On the one hand, the United States, seeking to extend its sovereign authority over indigenous peoples; on the other, the effort of tribal leaders to reserve aspects of their sovereignty within the context of the American nation state. Third, and related to the concern for sovereignty, is the fact that indigenous communities have always faced the task of controlling how they would be represented in the public arena, particularly within the venues controlled by outsiders. Much of Native history, they argue, can be viewed as a contest over representation—over who will speak for indigenous communities, and how Native understandings of the world will be interpreted to the broader culture. Finally, most modern scholars argue that a large proportion of indigenous agency has focused on subverting the ideas and expectations of colonial authorities, whether it be their ideas about religion, gender, art, justice, or civilization. To be indigenous, these authors suggest, is to live in a world of irony—to understand that surface realities are usually at odds with conventional wisdom or society's definition of common sense.

A final caution. While placing the thirty chapters in this book in three broad categories might help us grasp the central ideas in the New Indian History as well as the more recent shift toward an indigenous approach to the Native past, it would be foolish to assume these chapters fall neatly into three separate piles. The central ideas of

the New Indian History suffuse all of the chapters to some extent, and the shift toward what I would label Indigenous History is evident in many of the contributions to Part I and Part II, as well as in the section on BigThemes. The concern for sovereignty, for example, is evident in many times and places, as are attempts to control the process of representation and to define the central elements of Native culture. Taken together the chapters should communicate the enormous scale and range of recent scholarship in American Indian History as well as its dynamic and rapidly shifting intellectual concerns.

New Questions

Scholarly debate is perpetual, so it should not be surprising that this introduction ends with a new set of questions and challenges for those who seek to understand—and contribute to—new research in American Indian history.

One set of questions relates to the idea of progress in history. Now that Native Americans have been reconciled with the story of European settlement in North America, what do we make of Frederick Jackson Turner's old assumption—that American history is a narrative of progress? What does that term mean in the context of the new Native history? Alternatively, if Frederick Jackson Turner's linear vision of historical progress is now revealed as inaccurate—if the story of the United States is not the story of Enlightenment Europe's march across North America—then what are the central elements of the national narrative? The New Indian History suggested that despite the violence and dispossession that accompanied national expansion in the United States, Native people demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt and change to new circumstances. Might they therefore be viewed as the progressive agents of a multicultural view of the American past? Was their survival a kind of victory that demonstrated, if not the progress imagined by Turner, at least the triumph of individual courage, determination, and creativity in a democratic society? Might the New Indian History actually demonstrate that cultural and racial differences it has exposed and described were ultimately overcome by the nation's democratic institutions? Could—ironically—the critical narrative of the New Indian History ultimately support a rehabilitation of Turner's narrative of progress? Perhaps.

The courage and creativity of Native people deserve some recognition, but a story of progress? Perhaps it would be more accurate to describe the Native American experience as a demonstration that the United States is, in the end, like other nations; bigger perhaps, richer, but with nothing particularly noble or progressive in its past. Just as Indian peoples share a kinship with the colonized peoples of Asia and Africa, so the American nation should best be understood as another example of colonial rule. After all, Native Americans in 1776 largely opposed the creation of an independent settler government in North America. And eleven years later they did not participate in the creation of the federal government. The framework of settler colonialism which has

recently been adopted by a number of scholars, affirms this view.[14] According to its proponents, European settlers, rather than acting as "colonists," organized themselves into imperial enterprises determined to eliminate Native communities and conquer the continent for their own benefit. The settlers were not agents of European empires; they created their own colonial regime which they developed and extended across the nineteenth century. While Indian people may have survived this process, indigenous scholars would argue, that survival hardly constitutes an example of progress.

Another set of questions is related to the distinctive values of indigenous societies. If American Indians have demonstrated such extraordinary versatility and inventiveness, what are the boundaries of their creativity? Is there a point where modern Native people—business entrepreneurs, scientists, artists, astronauts—are so imbued with the freedom and spontaneity of a historical moment that they lose touch with their roots and disappear as indigenous people? Can a group be both modern and tied to an ancient set of values and traditions? When does the tie between those two poles snap?

These questions challenge historians and readers to choose. Progress or not. Native or not. Modern or not. These choices haunt our debates and preoccupy our reflections on both the past and the present. At the same time, however, as students of human history, we know that people and events rarely fall neatly into one interpretation or another. Binaries seldom get us to the heart of the matter. Binaries frame questions, but they cannot describe the complexities and ambiguities of human experience. We end with these questions because they frame the point where historians reach the limits of their authority. Unanswered questions mark the end of our path.

Literature follows no such rules, so it is fitting to close this introduction with a brief reflection on Ojibwe author Louise Erdrich's prize-winning novel *The Round House*.[15] Narrated by Joe, a thirteen-year-old Indian boy whose mother was raped on reservation land by a white assailant, who later escaped prosecution because of the limits placed on the authority of tribal courts, the story reaches a climax as the young man comes to realize the absurdity of living in a tribal territory that is both "sovereign" and under federal jurisdiction. Joe believes this absurdity is only compounded by the fact that his father is a respected judge in the tribal court. One night while Joe and his father are sitting alone together in the kitchen of their home, the young boy confronts the older man. How, he wonders, can this man serve such a powerless local government, a tribal authority that is little more than an artifact of colonial rule?

He asks, "Why do you do it?"

As Joe's father considers his response, he searches inside the refrigerator and finds one of the casseroles his neighbors had brought over in the immediate aftermath of the assault on his wife. Erdrich writes:

> He pulled something from deep on the back shelf. . . . It was [an] uneaten casserole, there so long the noodles had turned black, but stashed near enough to the cold refrigeration coils that it had frozen and didn't stink yet.
>
> Why I keep on. You want to know?

> With a savage thump he turned the casserole over onto the table. He lifted off the pan. The thing was shot through with white fuzz but held its oblong shape. My father rose again and pulled the box of cutlery from the cabinet counter. I thought he'd gone crazy at last and watching him I could hardly speak.
>
> Dad?
>
> I'm going to illustrate this for you, son.
>
> He sat down and waved a couple of forks at me. Then with cool absorption he laid a large carving knife carefully on top of the frozen casserole and all around it proceeded to stack one fork, another fork, one on the next, adding a spoon here, a butter knife, a ladle, a spatula, until he had a jumble somehow organized into a weird sculpture. . . . Then sat back stroking his chin.
>
> That's it, he said. . . .
>
> That's what, Dad? I carefully said. The way you'd address a person in delirium.
>
> That's Indian law. . . .
>
> He pointed to the bottom of the composition and lifted his eyebrows. . . . Uh, rotten decisions? . . .
>
> Okay Dad, I said, quieted. How come you do it? . . .
>
> The casserole was starting to ooze and thaw. My father arranged the odd bits of cutlery and knives so they made an edifice that stood by itself. . . .
>
> These are the decisions that I and many other tribal judges try to make. Solid decisions . . . We are trying to build a solid base here for our sovereignty. We try to press against the boundaries of what we are allowed, walk a step past the edge. . . . What I am doing now is for the future, though it may seem small, or trivial, or boring, to you.

The brilliance of this passage is both its representation of legal progress for American Indians—thoughtful decisions built on the rotten base of colonialism—and the impact of this realization on a curious young boy standing on the edge of manhood. Joe's father not only described the complexity of being a tribal official in the United States, but he also set out a pathway into the future. Without denying the violence and tragedy of the Indian past, he evoked a tradition of adaptation, persistence, and service to an Indian future. It is a stunning image and a vivid illustration of the choices—both in interpretation and in action—that lie ahead.

This confrontation between Joe and his father captures many of the tensions among contemporary students of American Indian history. These tensions and the questions they generate fuel modern debates over the Native past and will surely inspire new historical discoveries and narratives. Joe's father explained, in effect, that Native American cultures are deeply intertwined with the institutions and peoples of the United States, and that Indian people like him have composed their own version of the past within this complex and multifaceted environment. He didn't defend his service in the Indian courts, but placed it in a longer historical narrative that stretches into the future. He urged his son to hold two contradictory ideas in his mind simultaneously; to appreciate both the tragedy of the Indians' colonized status and the remarkable (and perhaps inspiring) story of Native adaptation and survival, a story that stretches back centuries and promises to continue far into the future.

The alternative is to reject all the pile of rotten food and tangled cutlery and build some new order on a foundation of truth and direct action. Perhaps the "progress" of Indian history leads only to dreary scenes like this one: a boy and his father, victims of violence and powerless to act. By putting this question before a young Native boy, Erdrich seems to lay it clearly before the coming generation of American Indians.

It seems appropriate to end this introduction with the injunction that, like Joe, modern historians need to expand their vision so that they might examine both the deep complexity of Native experience and the enduring wrongs suffered by Native people as victims of colonialism. The scholarship of the past generation has begun to reveal the remarkable story of indigenous survival in the United States while asking that students of all backgrounds reflect on the legacy embedded within it. And as this process unfolds, the debates will continue and the stakes will remain high. There is more New Indian History to come.

Notes

1. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Frontier in American History*, ed. Frederick Jackson Turner (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 2. (Originally published in 1920).
2. See, for example, Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York: Macmillan, 1958); Larry E. Ivers, *British Drums on the Southern Frontier: The Military Colonization of Georgia, 1733–1749* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974); and Turner's own, *The Advance of the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1904) .
3. See, for example, Ethel T. Raymond, *Tecumseh: The Last Great Leader of His People* (Toronto: Glasgow Brook, 1915); Stanley Vestal, *Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux: A Biography* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957); and Chester Anders Fee, *Chief Joseph: The Biography of a Great Indian* (New York: Wilson-Erickson, 1936) .
4. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this genre is John G. Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* (New York: William Morrow, 1932). Others include books by Indians such as Luther Standing Bear's *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1933) and works of literature such as the Pulitzer Prize-winner *Laughing Boy* by Oliver La Farge (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1929) .
5. John Collier, "The Red Atlantis," *Survey Graphic* 49, no. 1 (1922): 15–20.
6. See George Pierre Castile, *To Show Heart: Native American Self-Determination and Federal Indian Policy, 1960–1975* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998) .
7. See Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like A Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: New Press, 1996); Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008); and Bradley G. Shreve, *Red Power Rising: The National Indian Youth Council and the Origins of Native Activism* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011); and Frederick E. Hoxie, *This Indian Country: American Indian Activists and the Place They Made* (New York: Penguin, 2012), chap. 8.
8. See Hoxie, *This Indian Country*, 364.

9. Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), xv, xvi.
10. Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., "The Political Context of a New Indian History," *Pacific Historical Review* 40, no. 3 (1971), 357, 358.
11. Berkhofer, "Political Context of a New Indian History," 363.
12. Berkhofer, "Political Context of a New Indian History," 364.
13. Berkhofer, "Political Context of a New Indian History," 382.
14. See Frederick E. Hoxie, "Retrieving the Red Continent: Settler Colonialism and the History of American Indians in the United States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31, no. 6 (2008), 1153–67. Recent examples of books using this framework are Walter L. Hixon, *American Settler Colonialism: A History* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), and Gary Clayton Anderson, *Ethnic Cleansing and the Indian: The Crime that Should Haunt America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014) .
15. New York: Harper Perennial, 2012. *The Round House* won the 2012 National Book Award. The passage quoted here is from pp. 227–228.

PART I

MAJOR CHAPTERS IN THE NATIVE AMERICAN PAST

CHAPTER 1

AMERICA IN 1492

CAMERON B. WESSON

The global transformation of economies, political systems, and cultural practices produced by the beginning of sustained interactions between Europeans and Native Americans beginning in 1492 are well known. European-introduced diseases decimated Native American populations, and the newcomers' rapacious desire for ever more land displaced countless Native communities. European economic practices enmeshed Native Americans within emerging international capitalist markets while their statecraft simultaneously drew Native peoples into the violent international conflicts. Furthermore, not content to merely remake the social and material worlds of Native Americans, missionaries from numerous European religious traditions worked relentlessly to convert indigenous communities to Christianity, thereby transforming many spiritual practices and beliefs. Native American peoples were arguably the first to experience the myriad social, political, and economic disruptions we now refer to as *globalization*. Strangely enough, although we know a great deal about the continuing consequences of these encounters, we know comparatively less about the nature of many Native American cultures immediately preceding their "discovery" by Europeans.

Despite numerous clues concerning the nature of precontact indigenous societies contained in European documents, historians have long noted the early witnesses to cross-cultural exchange in the Americas wrote with particular objectives in mind. Despite their value, these early records were not compiled by people intent on recording accurate culture histories or significant ethnographic archives. For that reason, the examination of precontact Native American societies has primarily become the purview of archaeology. However, just as historians confront the inadequacies of the documentary record, archaeologists also face a series of problems with their primary data sources. These concerns are most critical with regards to issues of preservation, for most archaeological sites contain only a small fragment of the range of material items once present. Additionally, modern chronometric dating techniques such as radiocarbon dating frequently yield date ranges spanning 100 years or more, providing insufficient chronological control to permit differentiation between precontact, immediate contact, and postcontact era archaeological sites in every case. Perhaps most surprising

to those unfamiliar with the discipline of archaeology, among the most vexing problems faced in the reconstruction of precontact Native American societies are the various (often contradictory) theoretical perspectives employed by the archaeologists themselves.

This chapter examines the contributions archaeology has made to our understanding of Native American societies on the eve of sustained contacts with Europeans. It also highlights some of the more prominent disciplinary-specific issues regarding both data and theory that have hampered the development of a more complete understanding of Native American daily life prior to European contacts. We begin with a brief discussion of archaeological attempts to understand pre-Columbian Native societies and then turn to the present state of knowledge regarding archaeological reconstructions of precontact Native American cultures. Those seeking more in-depth examination of the issues are directed toward the sources listed in the accompanying bibliography. Most useful are *The Oxford Handbook of North American Archaeology* (2012), edited by Timothy Pauketat, and *North American Archaeology* (2005), edited by Timothy Pauketat and Diana DiPaolo Loren.[1] As with all scholarly endeavors, the perspectives currently espoused by archaeologists regarding precontact Native American societies will continue to evolve as new research questions, additional data sources, novel theoretical approaches, and a growing emphasis on collaboration with extant Native American communities call into question previous perspectives.

Continuity, Change, and Coalescence

Scholars traditionally have divided American archaeology between *historic* archaeology—characterized by research addressing societies possessing documentary records—and *prehistoric* archaeology—consisting of the study of societies that left no documentary sources. Although this divide has started to close over the past two decades, archaeologists from these separate subfields largely have failed to actively engage each other, preferring instead to pursue independent research agendas with few concerted efforts to reconcile their perspectives. As a consequence, for much of the twentieth century, North American archaeology was composed of one group of scholars studying postcontact Native American societies and another devoted to their prehistoric ancestors. The two groups had little contact with each other or with the Native American societies they studied. This division led, in turn, to a significant gap in research directed at Native American societies during the period immediately prior to and immediately following initial contacts with Europeans. As archaeologist Kent Lightfoot has suggested, the separation of prehistoric and historical archaeology "detracts greatly from the study of long-term culture change, especially in multi-ethnic contexts," and is detrimental "to comparative analyses of archaeological materials from different aged contexts."[2]

When early North American archaeologists did attempt to bridge the gap between pre- and postcontact societies they began with a form of historical projection rooted in an ecological-functionalist paradigm long since abandoned in archaeology. From this functionalist perspective, culture was seen as evolving in concert with its local natural environment and designed to ensure long-term social stability and to resist change. To ecological-functionalists, cultures always sought equilibrium within the entire range of social institutions and relationships; in their view, change was anathema to the orderly operation of a community. In advancing this culture as status quo perspective, ecological-functionalists commonly made use of the *direct historical approach*, a view that advocated the explicit use of historical documents to examine the nature of earlier (often much earlier) precontact societies. For example, Waldo Wedel (1938) used this perspective to examine connections between the historic Pawnee and prehistoric Lower Loop Focus village sites in Nebraska. Wedel wove together evidence from early documents, oral history, and culture trait lists to suggest that the Pawnee occupation of the region had long predated the arrival of Europeans.[3]

Most ecological-functionalists also adopted a peculiar literary form common to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthropology called the *ethnographic present*. As commonly employed, the ethnographic present allowed anthropologists to define the "ideal" form of a culture by combining a mélange of source material—literary, historical, and ethnographic—without regard for their time of origin or the unique contexts which produced them. The combined use of the *direct historical approach* and the *ethnographic present* allowed ecological-functionalist scholars to combine various shreds and tatters of ethnographic information recorded anytime during the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries—by almost any source—to produce synthetic, ahistorical depictions of Native American societies that placed primary emphasis on cultural continuity rather than examining postcontact culture change. Cultures were thus rendered as if they were constant, timeless, and unchanging.

Once these reconstructions were produced, scholars and other experts could employ them to interpret both contemporary Native American cultural practices and archaeological materials across a sweeping timeframe. Thus, despite the myriad perturbations Native American societies experienced following their initial interactions with Europeans, ecological-functionalist researchers produced a series of cultural reconstructions depicting Native American cultures as essentially unaffected by these interactions. Scholars working within this paradigm produced a series of synthetic studies of Native American societies, with those of John R. Swanton (widely considered the father of American ethnohistory) providing a prominent example. Swanton wove together various accounts of the Southeastern Native American peoples from numerous sources ranging in time from the Hernando de Soto expedition (1539–1543) to his own ethnographic research in Oklahoma in the 1910s and 1920s. The result was a synthetic perspective of the Creek and other Southeastern societies that was used to interpret everything from the construction of earthen mounds five centuries prior to the arrival of Columbus to the design of baskets made in early twentieth-century Oklahoma.[4]

Functionalist views fell out of favor in anthropology and archaeology by the mid-twentieth century, largely because they produced historical tautologies—fusing past, present, and future in an endless, timeless, and static cycle of self-definition. It would seem patently absurd to modern scholars to try to understand the nature of the ancient Germanic peoples when first contacted by the Roman Empire by reading the contemporary magazine *Der Spiegel*. Nor would it seem particularly worthwhile to search Tacitus for information that might be helpful in interpreting contemporary German international relations, but that approach would be similar to the methodology employed by many functionalist scholars seeking to understand the nature of precontact Native American societies a century ago. At the same time, anthropology no longer embraces the assumption that culture is inherently conservative or that indigenous societies are timeless and unchanging. In fact, most contemporary models of culture employed by archaeologists and anthropologists stress the importance of invention, adaptation, resiliency, conflict, heterogeneity, and hybridity within all societies—especially within the unique contexts of globalization.

In contrast to the ecological-functionalists, another group of scholars advocates a view that focuses on the impacts of European colonialism. This approach argues that the impact of European colonial expansion on indigenous peoples was so profound that historical documents alone have limited value in helping us understand the precontact cultural practices of their ancestors. Such views commonly employ the concept of *acculturation*, a term that assumes colonized societies set aside their preexisting cultural traditions and adopted both the material items and cultural practices of their "dominant" colonizers.[5] In its most extreme form, these acculturationists suggest that contemporary Native American cultures are forever severed from their precontact predecessors through a process of cultural disruption, collapse, and loss. As archaeologist Robert Dunnell has written, "modern Indians, both biologically and culturally, are very much a phenomenon of contact and derive from only a small fraction of the peoples and cultural variability of the early sixteenth century."[6] Viewed from this perspective, historic Native American societies were fundamentally distinct from their precontact ancestors, making unified historical perspectives linking the precontact and post-contact eras of these groups virtually impossible. On the other hand, as archaeologist Bruce Trigger argued, "gratuitous revisionism is no less misleading than the discredited assumption of cultural immutability it seeks to replace."[7]

Contemporary archaeologists dealing with these issues of cultural stability and cultural change have opted for a middle path, acknowledging cases of broad cultural continuity while also accepting the premise that the past five centuries encouraged the development of novel cultural practices that would be largely unrecognizable to the ancestors of contemporary Native Americans. Central to this latter perspective are related notions of cultural hybridity and coalescence, views that define culture as a lived, collectively negotiated, and constantly changing field of human experience. The forms, meanings, and expressions of culture are seen as constantly changing as contemporary practitioners create their own meaningful social worlds through novel combinations of historical precedent (cultural traditions) and individual initiative and

collective experiences. Recent archaeological scholarship on the nature of precontact Native American societies does not take historical documents at face value nor does it dismiss them out of hand. Instead, contemporary scholars have found a way to stress the complementarity of archaeological data, historical documents, ethnographic accounts, and oral histories in examinations of precontact Native American societies.

Additionally, although the fields of history and archaeology have much in common, there are several critical epistemological differences that also complicate our knowledge of precontact Native American societies. North American archaeology developed not as a distinct field, but as a component of the larger social science discipline of anthropology. Thus, the traditional objectives of North American archaeology are somewhat distinct from those of history. These differences were magnified with the rise of the *processual paradigm* in archaeology during the 1960s. Processualists expressed a desire to remake archaeology as an explicit natural science. Borrowing heavily from physics, chemistry, and biology, these scholars proposed that archaeology transcend its role as "handmaid to history" and adopt the hypothetico-deductive method common within the natural sciences.[8] They believed this transition would allow archaeology to test complex models of human cultural development and define universal nomothetic laws for human social behavior—freed from the particulars of individual cultures, regions, or temporal periods.

Most germane to the present discussion, processualists held up historical particularism—an interest in any one culture or time period without reference to that case's universal cultural implications—as an exceptionally egregious scholarly error. In their view, archaeology was a science devoted to unearthing the laws of social change, while history was an antiquarian enterprise focused on particularistic narratives. Successive generations of twentieth-century North American archaeologists were actively discouraged from becoming experts on the Cherokee, Iroquois, Tlingit, or Mandan, or even the seventeenth, eighteenth, or nineteenth centuries. Instead, processualists encouraged archaeologists to consider themselves experts on social inequality, environmental exploitation strategies, or some other aspect of general social theory they considered germane to higher levels of scientific investigation. Individual sites, or even entire cultures, were considered only as important as their ability to provide the data required to assess higher-level archaeological theories. By the early 1970s, adherents of processualism dominated graduate faculties and grant-funding agencies, relegating those archaeologists working to advance our knowledge of individual societies (so-called *culture historians*) to the peripheries of the discipline.

Although prior to the 1960s, North American archaeologists had made examination of local sites and regional cultural developments their primary objectives, these studies became far less important during the rise of processual archaeology. By the 1990s, however, processualism was seen as having largely failed to deliver on the promise of universal laws of cultural process and began to fall out of favor with many archaeologists. This theoretical crisis helped give rise to *postprocessual* archaeologies, representing a diverse group of theorists who drew inspiration from the application of various postmodernist perspectives in the broader humanities and social sciences.[9]

Unlike the processualists, postprocessualists viewed explorations of individual cultures, subgroups, and local histories as meaningful scholarly projects. Such changes in scholarly orientation prompted renewed attempts by archaeologists to bridge the traditional precontact and postcontact divide. The distinctions in these two theoretical approaches are explored in greater detail in Robert Preucel's edited volume *Processual and Postprocessual Archaeologies: Multiple Ways of Knowing the Past* (1991).[10]

The rise of postprocessualism has produced a resurgence of archaeologists conducting research designed to examine particular Native American culture histories and to develop synthetic, diachronic perspectives linking precontact and postcontact Native American societies. Those seeking to understand better Native American societies at the dawn of sustained contact with Europeans are working to retrieve the evidence used by earlier cultural historians in the production of their ahistorical depictions while drawing upon the insights of anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and others studying the impacts of globalization on a range of contemporary societies.

We are presently in a new era for North American archaeology—an era in which scholars are free to examine cultural uniqueness and local culture histories. Archaeologist Timothy Pauketat, one of the primary advocates of this approach, calls this emerging paradigm *historical processualism*, suggesting that it "reorients the questions that we ask, relocates the processes that we seek to explain, and revises how we understand cause and effect."[11] Historical processualism offers a more balanced approach than the traditional extremes of continuity and change, stressing instead cultural coalescence and hybridity while acknowledging that identity formation is a dynamic and iterative process. The following exploration of precontact Native American social life draws heavily from the results of several recent studies grounded in this perspective.

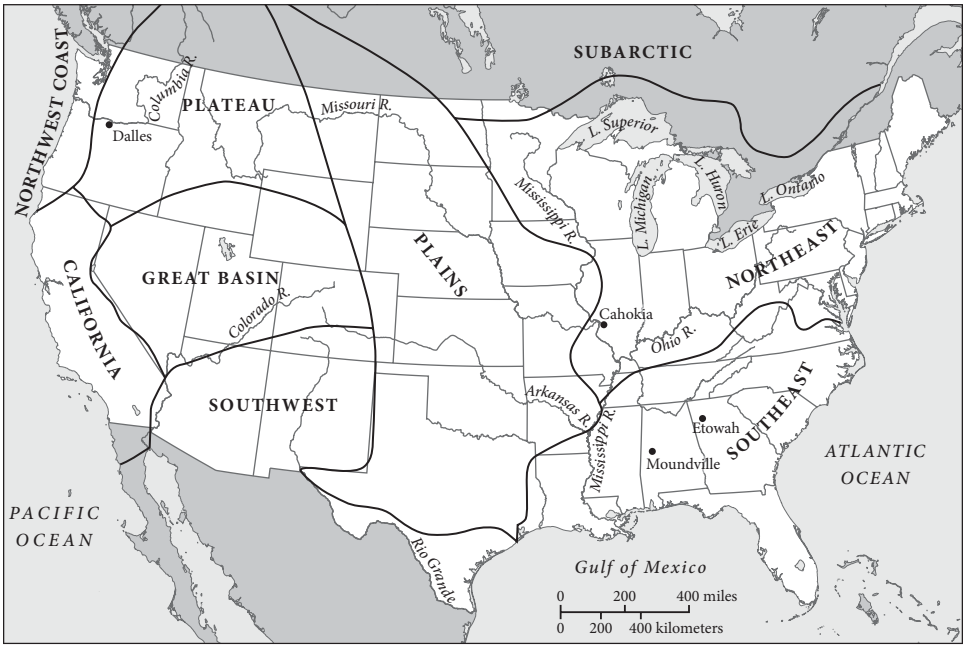
Complexity and Diversity in Precontact North America

Although it has become increasingly common for the general public to define Native American peoples through a series of cultural stereotypes developed during the late nineteenth century and widely promulgated through mass media during the twentieth, the reality is that at the time of first contact (and beyond), North America was home to a greater level of cultural and linguistic diversity than Europe. When dawn broke over North America on October 12, 1492, an estimated five to ten million people, speaking more than 300 distinct languages, lived on the continent. Given this incredible diversity, it is commonly difficult for scholars to capture the full range of cultural experience of Native American peoples. Thus, cultural anthropologists and archaeologists have developed a regional framework for examining broad commonalities among Native American cultures.

Developed during the 1890s and popularized in the early twentieth century by pioneering anthropologists Clark Wissler and Alfred Kroeber, the *culture area* concept was based on cultural similarities shared by Native American societies inhabiting the same geographic region. Several culture area schemes have been proposed for North America, but the one most commonly used in archaeology consists of nine areas: the Arctic (not shown on map), California, Eastern Woodlands (commonly subdivided into the Northeast and Southeast), Great Basin, Great Plains, Northwest Coast, Plateau, Southwest, and Subarctic (Map 1.1).

It should be noted that use of culture areas in North American archaeology has been criticized since at least the 1920s for failing to deal with the observed cultural diversity within each of these proposed geographic regions, and it has also come under renewed criticism for what some believe to be its inherent form of environmental determinism. The use of culture areas has also reinforced the notion that Native Americans of different regions lived in discrete, bounded communities, splintered by language and custom, in relative isolation. However, as will be discussed below, archaeologists have identified far more linkages between precontact North American societies (and individuals) through interregional trade and exchange networks, religious ideologies, political systems, elaborate kinship systems, and other means than were previously envisioned.

Although there is general dissatisfaction with the taxonomic pigeonholing represented by the culture area concept, this perspective remains firmly ingrained in



MAP 1.1 North American Native culture areas

scholarly practice and continues to be employed in almost all contemporary textbooks and other scholarly materials dealing with Native American societies. Given its continued widespread usage and the limitations on the length of this chapter, I have chosen to make limited use of the culture area concept in organizing the subsequent discussion. However, readers should be aware that the various cultural practices discussed are not representative of the fullest possible range of practices found within each region, but are simply individual case studies drawn from the diverse array of sociocultural practices found throughout the continent in the late fifteenth century. Those desiring more detailed information are directed toward the source material listed in the bibliography.

Native American Identities

As an archaeologist working on both sides of the prehistoric-historic divide, I am commonly asked if the inhabitants of late precontact sites I excavate in central Alabama were Alabama, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, or from some other well-known tribe. In truth, they might be the antecedents of one, a portion, or all those historically known groups (and others as well). Although we commonly think of Native American tribal identities—as well as our own—as longstanding and fixed, anthropological explorations of cultural identity reveal them to be highly fluid and responsive to a variety of historical social factors. Just as there was a time before the development of modern identities (e.g., American, Irish, Italian, or Ecuadorian), so there was also a time before the emergence of unique Native American identities in historic period. Additionally, archaeologists commonly find it difficult to identify the prehistoric predecessors of historic Native American culture groups because identities are not always expressed through material culture.

This inability to connect identities across space and time is also complicated by the jarring impacts of European contact and colonialism, including the mass movement of many Native American peoples across the continent. Linguistic evidence, archaeological materials, and historical documents provide evidence that many historic Native American cultures of the Midwest and Southeast were displaced from their homelands in the eastern Great Lakes and mid-Atlantic region early in the contact period. Some scholars have recently suggested that the late precontact world of the Eastern Woodlands became a "shatter zone" as a result of the initial colonization, with the resulting social upheaval leading to the formation of a series of new ethic and tribal identities across the region. These ideas are explored with considerable depth in Robbie Ethridge's edited volume (2009) *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone*.[12] Although these transformations in identities were dramatic, they also simultaneously demonstrate the ability of culture, as an adaptive system, to respond to emergent situations. As such, cultural identities are always a mixture of both internally and externally defined notions of who and what someone is.

There are certainly deep connections between the Native American groups of the historic period and their precontact ancestors, but archaeologists commonly find little utility in discussing these connections in terms of ethnicity. Instead of cultural identities in the traditional sense, archaeologists refer to precontact *archaeological cultures*, defined as unique configurations of material and spatial attributes that are identifiable in the archaeological record. Thus, the late precontact Southeast is commonly referred to as having been occupied by Mississippian societies (ca. AD 1000–1500) who shared a series of distinct cultural practices observable in the archaeological record. There is little doubt that the Mississippians were the antecedents of historic Southeastern Native American cultures, but the processes of ethnogenesis for specific historic societies are so bound within the historical forces of contact and colonialism as to make direct connections between these groups exceptionally tenuous.

With that said, groups from North American regions that experienced the least direct contacts with Europeans, particularly those of the Arctic, Subarctic, Great Basin, and Plateau, appear to have the clearest cultural connections between precontact and postcontact social identities. The sporadic nature of early contact between Native peoples and Europeans generally meant that groups like the Southern Shoshone maintained many cultural practices and forms of ethnic identity that transcended the precontact-postcontact divide. However, even groups in relative isolation were indirectly affected by the presence of Europeans in North America decades before experiencing the first direct contacts. Recent studies by Kathleen Hull (2009) for the Yosemite in California, as well as Laura Scheiber and Judson Finley (2012) for the Crow and other groups of the Rocky Mountains and Northwest Plains provide excellent examples of just such cases.[13]

However, as archaeologist Joe Watkins has suggested, archaeologists have shown reluctance to explore the connections between extant tribal groups and their precontact ancestors, preferring instead "the tyranny of the archaeological culture concept," which serves to "create walls that act to separate contemporary people (and their cultures) from their archaeological heritage."[14] To bridge this divide, many archaeologists are now engaging extant Native American communities in novel ways, becoming collaborators with Tribal Historic Preservation Offices and other stakeholders in attempts to make our work more relevant to descendant communities. An excellent example of such collaborative efforts is that between Stephen Silliman and the Eastern Pequot. In this collaboration, Silliman seeks not only to share his research findings with the tribe but to involve tribal members in constructing the basic archaeological questions his research addresses.[15] The emerging emphasis on collaboration is exemplified by recent volumes by Joe Watkins (2001), Jordan Kerber (2006), Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and T. J. Ferguson (2008), and Stephen Silliman (2009).[16] However, there remains much work to be done as archaeologists seek more holistic ways of connecting contemporary Native American communities—and forms of identity—to precontact archaeological sites and cultural expressions.

Social Organization

Like that of all human societies, Native American daily life was grounded in a series of social relationships, beginning with the family. Nonetheless, as we can see in our own contemporary experience, there are considerable differences in just how families are defined. Native American families were defined by a series of culturally specific relationships that often stand in stark contrast to the nuclear family with which Europeans are most familiar. Archaeologists tend to favor data generated in their own studies when examining precontact social organization rather than relying on historical documentation. This is in part because Europeans recording elements of Native American social life were commonly ignorant of kinship systems other than their own and because Native American societies of the postcontact period frequently went through radical transformations of social organization following European contact and colonization.

Many precontact Native Americans groups in the Northeast, Great Plains, Southeast, Southwest, and other regions had a general bias toward matrilineal family structure. In these systems, social relationships traced through women formed the basic building block of all subsequent social relationships, with little importance placed on familial connections through the father's line. Biological fathers were important to their offspring, but the primary male parenting responsibilities in these systems fell to the mother's brother. This relationship, referred to by anthropologists as the avunculate, is thought to have been a tacit social recognition that marriages are frequently unstable and impermanent, with relationships between women and their brothers considered less volatile and longer lasting.

Most Native American societies practicing matrilineal kinship also observed matrilocal postmarital residency, with married couples and their children living either with the wife's family or other members of the mother's kin group. Women commonly owned all domestic property—including the house itself—and controlled the productive labor of household members. Archaeological evidence to support the widespread existence of matrilineal kinship systems throughout North America is found in the size and spatial layout of houses, genetic relationships and other distinct morphological features shared by those interred within or adjacent to domestic structures, and a range of design elements on pottery and other items bearing stylistic embellishments related to female domestic activities that demonstrate transgenerational occupation of these structures by closely related women.

At the same time, many Native American societies in the Arctic, California, Great Plains, Northeast, Plateau, and other regions tended to favor family structures based in patrilineal systems, where primary social relationships were based on connections through the father's family. In these systems, family relationships traced through men formed the basic building block of all subsequent social relationships, with less importance placed on connections through the mother's line. In contrast to matrilineal societies, most patrilineal societies practiced patrilocal residency, where married couples

resided with the husband's family or closely related kin. As with archaeological evidence to support the widespread existence of matrilineality, patrilineal kinship systems are identified through the size and spatial layout of houses, genetic relationships and other distinct morphological features shared by those interred within or adjacent to domestic structures, and the presence of female-related craft production items indicative of transgenerational household occupancy by women who were unrelated.

Although more detailed definitions of Native American kinship systems is beyond the scope of this chapter, suffice it to say that other structural forms beyond the immediate kin group were of critical importance in defining one's larger social standing within the community. Native American families commonly were grouped into larger levels of social organization, beginning with totemic clans and progressing through higher levels of more abstract forms of kinship and social organization. Clans were used to link individual lineages into larger social groups, and are commonly viewed by scholars as a form of extended family. Clans were instrumental in defining social relationships not just through the normal means of kinship, but through purported descent from a remote ancestor—often represented as a supernatural force or animal spirit existing in primordial time. In addition to clans, some Native American societies recognized even more abstract forms of kinship and social organization (phrateries and moieties) that linked clans into even higher orders of social organization.

Not drawn exclusively along lines of kinship, numerous Native American cultures also had secret societies that played important roles within their communities and formed an additional level of social organization. Ancestral Puebloan societies of the Southwest, the Iroquois of the Northeast, and groups in other regions possessed a series of secret societies that controlled various forms of ritual knowledge. As exemplified by the Chippewa Midewiwin, this knowledge was needed to ensure the health and well-being of the community and its people. Additionally, Native American societies of the Great Plains, including the Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Apache, and others, possessed military societies that encouraged men to demonstrate their bravery in warfare and thus earn greater levels of social honor and higher social standing for themselves and their kin. Archaeological evidence to support the presence of these institutions in precontact Native American societies is taken from the identification of ritual structures, medicine bundles, specialized ritual toolkits, and other items emblematic of heightened social rank. Robert Hall's *An Archaeology of the Soul* (1997) does an excellent job of drawing together evidence of these systems from across the Great Plains and Eastern Woodlands.[17]

Another critical element of Native American social organization that bears examination is that of gender. In addition to its importance in defining the previously discussed kinship systems, gender also formed a key component in defining one's work and bore upon forms of social organization. Although there was tremendous diversity in gender roles recognized by precontact Native American societies, many groups placed emphasis on women as life-givers, preferring women to gather food, tend crops, care for children, and manage the household rather than engage in the same life-taking tasks that were assigned to men. Thus, many of these same societies placed value on male roles as

hunters, warriors, and traders. However, not all societies were equally rigid in assigning such gender roles or in defining gender itself. Many Native American societies of the Great Plains and Eastern Woodlands recognized supernumerary genders like the Two-Spirit (*berdache*), further demonstrating the diversity and complexity of Native American precontact social organization. A growing number of recent archaeological studies have examined aspects of gender within precontact Native American societies, representing another fertile area of scholarship in which many prior assumptions about the nature of social organization are being challenged. Excellent studies in works by Donald and Hurcombe (2000), Eastman and Rodning (2001), Frink and Weedman (2005) examine these issues in greater detail, while a more contemporary perspective—with important implications for these practices in prehistory—can be found in Gilley (2006).[18]

Political Organization

Discussions of Native American political organization commonly depict these systems as acephalous, highly egalitarian, and lacking explicit political hierarchies. Although this pattern may have been evident in some societies immediately following the most extreme population declines accompanying sustained contact with Europeans, it certainly wasn't true of most Native American societies of the precontact period. In actuality, many Native American societies possessed elaborate political networks, including rigid hierarchies that produced the rough equivalent of distinct social classes. Additionally, rather than being confined to a series of autonomous self-governing communities, as many as a million precontact Native Americans belonged to large, integrated, multicommunity polities commonly referred to by archaeologists as tribes and chiefdoms.

The most complex Native American political systems of the precontact era were found in the Eastern Woodlands, eastern Great Plains, and Southwest. Although not all societies in these regions were part of such systems, during the period from AD 1000 to 1500 many communities became components of highly integrated political confederacies that linked thousands, and in some cases tens of thousands, of people into identifiable political systems. The largest and most powerful of these systems is thought to have developed at the Cahokia site near present-day Collinsville, Illinois. Although considerable debate exists concerning the precise nature of the Cahokia polity, some scholars suggest that Cahokia possessed state-like qualities, controlling the production and distribution of natural resources and people for hundreds of square miles.[19] Others suggest that Cahokia lacked a political class that could control those functions, but even these scholars see Cahokia as possessing a hierarchical political system governing thousands of people in the American Bottom region.

Although no other Eastern Woodland polities appear to have reached the same size and scale of Cahokia, similar polities arose across the Eastern Woodlands, including

Moundville in Alabama, Etowah in Georgia, and numerous other sites, with evidence of trade and exchange between Cahokia and Mississippian societies throughout the region. Political position within these societies is thought to have been based on inheritance, with individual lineages providing leadership transgenerationally. Leaders in Mississippian communities controlled surplus foodstuffs within their communities, enacted elaborate political and religious ceremonies, controlled the importation of high-status goods, sponsored highly skilled artisans in the production of finished goods, commanded large armies, and sponsored large community-wide feasts.

Archaeological evidence from a range of sites throughout the Eastern Woodlands and eastern Great Plains provides evidence of the power of these societies and their rulers, but evidence of these highly centralized political organizations is also found in the chronicles of Hernando de Soto and other early Spanish expeditions. These conquistadors provide descriptions of the extreme degree of power and authority archaeologists believe resided with Mississippian rulers. Although these societies disappeared not long after the effects of European-introduced diseases swept through Eastern North America, the political structure of Mississippian groups is thought to have been a direct antecedent of the geographically expansive multiethnic confederacies, like that of the Creek, that developed in the postcontact era.

Meanwhile, many other contemporary groups throughout North America were engaged in their own forms of political activity. These societies demonstrate a wide range of political forms, including *band* societies, where decision making is not vested permanently in any one person or group but instead is based on a constant jockeying for social position among so-called *Big Persons*, to slightly less hierarchical forms of chieftainship, where constant checks were placed on leaders by their followers so as to limit their ability to amass resources and power in pursuit of self-aggrandizement. In all of these societies, people possessed the ability to "vote with their feet" should political life become untenable, placing checks on the creation of durable, transgenerational political dynasties within their communities. David Anderson's *Savannah River Chiefdoms* (1994) and Elizabeth Ferniss's work on sociopolitical processes in the Plateau region (2004) provide excellent reviews of the political dynamics of these societies and the ways in which individuals acted to undermine centralized political authority.[20]

Despite this considerable range of political organization, almost all Native American societies recognized various forms of social ranking in which individuals, families, and clans within a society held differing positions in relation to each other. However, these systems were highly fluid, with individuals capable of engaging in acts designed to improve their social standing vis-à-vis members of society. In addition, social institutions like the potlatch of the Northwest Coast could have the opposite effect. Potlatch feasts and associated gift giving exploited the virtues of generosity to create a social leveling mechanism designed to reinforce the egalitarian social principles and to ensure that no one could amass enough material possessions or social prestige to disrupt the community's social and political relationships.

Archaeological research into the political organization of precontact Native American societies appears to have reached its pinnacle in North America during the

processualist era. During the 1970s and 1980s, archaeologists used their data to assess several hypothetical models for the development of transegalitarian political systems. Given the extreme diversity of political organizations developed by Native American societies, archaeologists employed a variety of analytical techniques to determine the precise nature of political institutions and relations within these various societies. Thus, determining whether a particular society was a Big Personage or a chiefdom, or explaining why no incipient states developed in precontact North America became compelling research issues. Because the overwhelming desire of processualists was to create a universal understanding of the human condition, we now recognize that they frequently shoehorned their data on Native American political systems into predetermined categories rather than describe the unique manifestations of political life with each society. Timothy Pauketat explores these ideas most forcefully in *Chiefdoms and Other Archaeological Delusions* (2007).[21]

Fortunately, North American archaeologists are presently attempting to remedy this "one size fits all" perspective by stressing the importance of archaeological data related to the lived experience of individuals who participated in large social and political systems. This approach has opened an area of study where the emerging historical-processualist paradigm holds considerable promise for challenging the status quo and revealing new insights into precontact Native American political organization and daily life.

Trade and Exchange

As with other areas of precontact life, the economic practices of Native American groups varied widely. Some societies were content to produce for their own needs and avoid the development of extensive trade networks, while others developed economic practices necessitating the overproduction of locally available items to fuel intergroup exchange that brought nonlocal exotic raw materials and goods into their communities. However, the degree to which these systems are seen as having been organized and controlled by a centralized authority is a matter of considerable debate among archaeologists.

It is important to foreground any discussion of trade with an explicit recognition that most exchanges took place within the community, with individuals, lineages, clans, and other social groups seeking to commemorate marriages, births, deaths, and other important moments through the exchange of goods. These exchanges often involved food, skins, pelts, ceramics, and other commonly available items, but could include esoteric items lacking obvious utilitarian functions as well. In contradistinction to our capitalist-derived notions of economics, these interactions are not seen as involving the concepts of commodities, value, and profit, but were instead manifestations of reciprocal exchanges reinforcing group membership, community bonds, and social cohesion. However, these exchanges were certainly capable of being used to leverage enhanced

social position for one of the exchange partners, and many archaeologists see the social relationships these exchanges created as integral to the development of nonegalitarian sociopolitical relations in certain areas of North America.

Although there is ample evidence of interregional trade and exchange networks, there is presently no available archaeological evidence to support a contention that prior to the arrival of Europeans there were any true market systems in North America. In fact, most archaeologists appear to be in general agreement that the exchange systems linking North American groups (both intra- and interregionally) were somewhat episodic affairs, making use of both down-the-line (see description below) and face-to-face trade. However, few studies have attempted to quantify the sheer volume of items being traded. Instead, most scholarship on trade and exchange has focused on the identification of nonlocal raw materials and finished goods, seeking to identify their ultimate points of origin and possible routes of exchange.

Among the most elaborate mechanisms presently known by archaeologists for trade and exchange existed among Native peoples of the Plateau region, where at least two centers, The Dalles, Oregon, and Kettle Falls of the Columbia River served as annual centers for intergroup exchanges. This system linked societies beyond the geographic confines of the Great Basin, including some groups from as far away as the Great Plains, Pacific Northwest, and California. Similar systems are proposed to have been present in the agricultural villages on the Upper Missouri River, but much additional research is needed to demonstrate their presence.

Among the best evidence for transcontinental trade is the presence of exotic nonlocal raw materials, such as marine shell, copper, galena, and various types of stone, as well as a range of imported finished goods, such as ceramics. These items were routinely traded throughout North America, with copper from the Great Lakes and southern Appalachians, marine shells from the Gulf Coast, and obsidian from the Rockies found at scattered archaeological sites throughout the continent. However, the amount of these materials found at any one site is generally quite meager, making the identification of specific exchange mechanisms responsible for the movement of these items the subject of considerable debate. It seems likely that these relatively rare items were traded episodically through a series of short-distance, face-to-face relationships commonly referred to by archaeologists as "down-the-line" trade.

Perhaps the most unusual elements of trade identified in North American contexts are scarlet macaws, a Central American species prized for its beautiful red plumage. Evidence of macaws in North America is thought to indicate trade that linked precontact societies of the American Southwest with the various cultures of Mesoamerica to the south.[22] Although these birds may not have possessed a commodified value in the traditional sense, archaeologists believe the desire to import, care for, and breed these exotic parrots was driven by the ritual, social, and political value derived from such powerful visual demonstrations of cultural connections to Mesoamerican civilizations.

In addition to material items that one often thinks of when considering trade and exchange, archaeologists have also identified the importance of items we might consider comparatively mundane, such as salt. Salt appears to have been one of the most

important trade commodities in North America, with several scholars proposing that it formed a central component in regional exchange networks. The importance of salt in Eastern North American trade has been of particular interest to archaeologists. As with other items of trade, salt's perishable nature makes its identification in the archaeological record more difficult. Scholars have had to rely on indirect evidence and speculation. Nevertheless, a series of archaeological studies have demonstrated the presence of specialized ceramic vessels for the extraction, processing, and transport of salt, thereby giving researchers some concrete indication of its importance. One of the best reviews of salt production and exchange is found in Ian Brown's (1999) examination of precontact salt manufacturing at Avery Island, Louisiana.[23]

When considering intersocietal and interregional trade, it is also critical to consider the importance of information as an item of exchange. Like salt, knowledge often defies our preconceived notions of the types of things exchanged between societies. However, contemporary international disputes over intellectual property rights demonstrate unequivocally that certain forms of knowledge possess the qualities normally reserved for material objects. The spread of domesticated plant species like maize strongly suggest that there were mechanisms of trade and exchange among and between Native American societies that cannot easily be understood with the present theoretical models commonly employed by archaeologists.

In addition, the comparatively rapid spread of Mississippian culture across the Eastern Woodlands suggests that the various forms of knowledge and cultural practice developing at Cahokia and other sites in the American Bottom spread through a variety of means—transforming the lifeways of local groups in the process. These emerging practices included the construction of large earthen platform mounds, the use and display of elaborate ritual items, and ostentatious funerary rituals—practices commonly seen as closely associated with the growing power of social elites. Although the extent to which these groups saw their identities as having been altered through this process of Mississippianization is debatable, there is little question that the exchange of information that made this process possible is yet another instance of trade and exchange that requires additional archaeological investigation.[24] Thus, rather than simply viewing precontact Native American trade and exchange through the capitalist lens with which we are most familiar, a broader, more encompassing scope is needed when addressing exchanges in nonmarket systems like those of precontact North America.

Environments and Religion

Much has been written about Native American environmental exploitation strategies since the publication of Shep Krech's *The Ecological Indian* in 1999.[25] Krech's central thesis was that precontact Native Americans did not live harmoniously with their natural environments, but they exploited local resources to the limits of their technological abilities. Such views are considered blasphemy among those in the ecological

community who frequently invoke the image of Native Americans as protectors of the environment whose example can teach us much about our own contemporary struggles with environmental sustainability.

Setting aside the polemical furor surrounding Krech's work, archaeological research demonstrates that precontact Native American societies in every region of the continent were innovative and industrious people. They made use of locally available subsistence resources, and commonly introduced new species of plants and animals into their local environments as well. Prior to sustained contacts with Europeans, Native peoples adopted a variety of strategies in order to meet their subsistence needs. Based in part on the opportunities afforded by local environments, the size of their communities, and preexisting subsistence traditions, various Native Americans groups practiced foraging (both terrestrial and maritime), horticulture, and agriculture, or a mixed system combining various elements of these techniques. All of these practices altered local environments, but rather than reducing environmental diversity, many of them actually increased biodiversity while allowing greater amounts of food to be produced. The complexity of this evidence challenges conventional thinking about sustainability and anthropogenic environmental modification, suggesting that such Western concepts are inappropriate for understanding the diverse relationships Native Americans had with their natural environments.

Examining Native American adaptations to local environments was one of the hallmarks of processualist archaeology. However, these studies were comparatively limited in theoretical vision, resulting in a series of highly detailed analyses of "paleoenvironment, paleoecology, and subsistence economies"[26] that emphasized environmental adaptation and were therefore little more than "econo-think."[27] Contemporary scholars have engaged Native American–environmental interactions with an entirely new agenda. Thus, rather than addressing resource niches and catchment areas, these scholars, heavily influenced by phenomenology, approach the environment through more symbolic and interpretive lenses, focusing on the natural environment as a source of culturally vital symbolic meanings and a field for human agency rather than merely a set of external physical constraints to which cultures must adapt.

Drawing inspiration from contemporary work such as Keith Basso's *Wisdom Sits in Places* (1996) and Robert Hall's *An Archaeology of the Soul* (1997), these recent studies blur the lines between environmental studies and religious studies.[28] Not coincidentally, many Native Americans have maintained for some time that places, natural resources, and religious ideologies are all interconnected. Thus, the forced removal of many Native Americans from their ancestral homelands during the historic period represented challenges not only in negotiating a continuing relationship with new homelands, but also in leaving behind vitally important elements of their religions and identities. Archaeologists addressing the precontact period are engaging these connections in new and productive ways. Timothy Pauketat's recent volume, *An Archaeology of the Cosmos* (2012), examines the role of religious beliefs in the rapid development of Cahokia and the spread of Mississippian religious beliefs, iconography, and other cultural practices across the Eastern Woodlands.[29] Meanwhile, Steve Lekson's *Chaco*

Meridian (1999) examines similar aspects of the development of the Chaco phenomenon in the Southwest.[30]

Such studies represent critical movements in archaeological research because they avoid the application of European perspectives on indigenous peoples' relationships to each other, the material world, and the cosmos. These new perspectives examine those relationships from the point of view of the Native American inhabitants of this continent, both in the past and in today's descendant communities. Additional examples can be found in work of F. Kent Reilly (2004) and George Lankford (2008), who attempt to develop more complete understandings of Eastern Woodlands ideological systems through the analysis of archaeological materials and Native American religious beliefs.[31] The results of all these studies demonstrate a far more complex set of relationships than had been previously proposed between precontact Native American peoples, their natural environments, and their religious systems.

Concluding Thoughts

The present summary represents only the faintest of outlines regarding the diversity of cultural practices in North America immediately prior to sustained contact with Europeans. Those seeking more in-depth information on these topics should consult the materials cited throughout this chapter as well as those listed in the bibliography. In addition to those materials, several excellent museum collections devote considerable space to displays of Native American material culture from both pre- and postcontact periods. Of particular importance are those collections at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of the American Indian, the American Museum of Natural History, the Field Museum in Chicago, and Harvard's Peabody Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Many smaller regional museums, like the University of New Mexico's Maxwell Museum, the University of Oklahoma's Sam Noble Museum, and the Florida Museum of Natural History, also have excellent exhibits that focus on local histories.

In addition to published materials and museum collections, every region of North America boasts major Native American archaeological sites available for public tours. Many of these sites, like Mesa Verde and Chaco Canyon in the Southwest are part of the United States National Park Service, while others are managed by state, provincial, or local governments, and still others are maintained by local historical societies. Many of these sites, including Cahokia, also have superb museums that help place these sites within larger regional and historical frameworks.

As I have suggested throughout this chapter, archaeological knowledge is always provisional, with the addition of new data and the application of new theories challenging preexisting perspectives. In essence, describing the nature of Native American social life prior to sustained contact with Europeans involves something akin to hitting a moving target. To complicate matters further, contemporary archaeologists must also use their expertise to challenge longstanding and widely held stereotypes regarding the

nature of precontact Native American societies. Despite these difficulties, we can be certain that the precontact Native cultures of North America were far more diverse and complex than any of the theories archaeologists have previously devised to understand them. In addition to the knowledge gained from ever new archaeological investigations of precontact sites in North America, there is ample evidence that an emphasis on scholarly engagement with descendant communities holds the potential to reveal even more about pre- and postcontact Native American experiences. In the end, the most meaningful sources of information about the ancient past may prove to be living Native American peoples.

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CHAPTER 2

EUROPEAN INVASIONS AND EARLY SETTLEMENT, 1500–1680

ROBBIE ETHRIDGE

The story of the European invasion into North America centers on the collision of two worlds—the emerging modern world of Europe and the centuries-old world of American Indians. In 1500, Indian life in North America was lived out in a purely indigenous world; by 1680, Native people lived on the edge of an expanding and conflict-ridden European world and in a new social landscape that included not only Indians but also Europeans and Africans. The meeting of the American and European worlds propelled Native people into a time of profound social transformation. This meeting was not peaceful, or orderly; it was marked by warfare, violence, struggle, disease, and hardship for all involved. And there can be little doubt that eventually the European world prevailed over the Indian world. But the meeting also opened new opportunities, new possibilities, and new ways of doing things for both Natives and newcomers. Over these 180 years, Native America was transformed, and the indigenous inhabitants were changed. Their lives and histories became intertwined with those of Europeans and Africans. The result was a transformation of both worlds and a melding of them into a single, colonial one.

Shatter Zones

The disturbances in Indian life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have not been difficult to identify. The archaeological and documentary evidence attests to the disappearance of Native polities, movements of people into tightly compacted and heavily fortified towns, a dramatic loss of life, multiple migrations and splintering of groups, the coalescence of some groups, and the disappearance of many others. Despite such

disruptions, Indians did not disappear. Across the continent, Native people responded to the European invasions in myriad ways, from violence and resistance to accommodation and negotiation. Many Native groups coalesced into large, formidable polities that would profoundly affect much about how the history of America unfolded over the next 300 years.[1]

Some of the forces that caused these disruptions and subsequent transformations include military losses and cultural exchanges with early Spanish colonizers, the introduction of Old World diseases, and the consequences of political and economic incorporation into the modern world economy. Although one can point to such generalities as the causes of the transformation of Native America with European contact, the impact of the European invasions played out differently in different regions and for different Indian polities and social groups. The full transformation of the Native world, then, must be viewed against a larger interpretive framework so that each instance of collapse and restructuring can be understood as a distinctive phenomenon.

Scholars have begun constructing such a framework for the American South, the arena where the most dramatic early encounters occurred. They call Southeastern North America at this time the "Mississippian shatter zone."[2] This label offers a regional frame for integrating events and people from the Mississippi Valley to the Atlantic into a single interactive world. The Mississippian shatter zone, however, was not the only shatter zone created in the early years of colonialism. Disruptions to Native life were likely more dramatic in the Southeast than in any other area of the territory that would become the United States, but we can identify other shatter zones in other areas of the continent (Map 2.1).

In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, European sailors and fishermen explored portions of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastlines, and small expeditions of Spaniards set off from New Spain exploring parts of the American southwest. Spain would spearhead the colonial project in North America, but Spanish colonial efforts to settle there did not begin until the early 1500s when, following the conquest of the Aztecs and Incas, Spain set her gaze northward. The largest efforts launched by Spain in the first half of the century were Hernando de Soto's expedition into the present-day American Southeast, in 1539, and Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's campaign into the present-day American Southwest, in 1540. Both expeditions inaugurated a series of changes to Native North American life that would grow in intensity over the next 150 years. In the Southeast, de Soto landed in present-day Tampa, Florida, before moving north and then west. The de Soto expedition explored the Southeastern heartland but failed to establish a colony. Coronado moved from present-day Mexico into the American Southwest, venturing as far as present-day eastern Kansas, but he too failed in establishing a permanent Spanish presence in the area.[3]

De Soto's entrada encountered dozens of chiefdoms in the Southeast. These chiefdoms were relatively small; most consisted of a large administrative center and small farming towns strung along a river. The population of a chiefdom typically numbered from 1000 to 5000 people, although chiefdoms sometimes joined together into confederations of larger military and political proportions called "complex" and "paramount"

MAP 2.1 Arenas of early contact

chiefdoms. Most prominent among these were the paramount chiefdoms of Apalachee, Cofitachequi, Coosa, Tascaluza, and several large and formidable chiefdoms along the Mississippi River such as Casqui, Anlico, and Quigualtam. Native peoples in the Southwest, on the other hand, were organized into independent farming Pueblos, some with large population centers that numbered in the thousands, such as Zuni, Hopi, Tigeux, Pecos, Jemez, Taos, and Acoma. Both Coronado and de Soto depended on the food stores of Native people to feed their armies and the livestock in their expeditions. Because of his large force and his need for local supplies, Coronado made extended stays at the largest of the Pueblos—the Zuni, Hopi, and Tigeux. De Soto, too, spent entire winters with local chiefdoms. Such extended stays and the ransacking of entire regions for food led to depletions of local resources which had quite serious repercussions. Although Native people knew much about utilizing wild plant and animal foods, such a shortage of stored cultivated crops would have meant hardship for all and starvation for some. Plus, the leadership of Native polities partly derived from being able to procure and secure stores of food for just such emergencies, and if the leadership failed on this count, polities also would have been subjected to political unrest.[4]

De Soto's expedition came as a conquering army, and in the cases of those chiefdoms that saw intense action, the direct military assault of the Spanish may have precipitated their collapse. The Coronado expedition also encountered Native resistance and on more than one occasion engaged in large-scale warfare such as that at Tiguex, in which whole Pueblos were destroyed and many of the inhabitants were killed or scattered.[5] One can see that in both cases geopolitical landscapes were reconfigured when

towns were destroyed or abandoned, political alliances reshuffled, and local leadership strained or usurped. Both the Coronado and de Soto expeditions were the first hammer in the creation of colonial shatter zones.

Indians elsewhere also came into contact with Europeans in the sixteenth century but with different results. Jacques Cartier, under the French flag, attempted to settle a colony on the St. Lawrence River, near an Indian town inhabited by the Stadacona, near present-day Quebec. Cartier undermined relations with the Stadacona by kidnapping high-level Indians and ignoring Stadacona requests. Without Indian support, the colony was doomed to failure. Another relatively brief encounter occurred when English colonists organized by Sir Walter Raleigh settled Roanoke, on the coast of present-day North Carolina. This colony, too, was short-lived—colonists were forced to abandon the colony when supply ships failed to return from England. What happened at Roanoke is still a mystery; the word "Croatoan" carved on a nearby tree hints that the fates of the colonists were somehow linked with that of the local Croatoan Indians.

Disease and incorporation into the modern world economy came on the heels of these early encounters. Immediately after the Coronado and de Soto expeditions, the Spanish launched a handful of Catholic missions to convert the Indians in present-day Florida and south Georgia and the Southwest to the Catholic faith. As they launched these missions, the friars focused mostly on those aspects of Native life that conflicted directly with Catholicism: polygamy, polytheism, "idolatry" (worshiping Native deities), and the Indian ball games. The friars and Spanish officials did not attempt to topple local leaderships. Instead, they hoped to co-opt Native leaders in order to establish Spanish authority and to conscript Indian labor for growing corn, building facilities, and maintaining new roadways. At the same time, the friars and Spanish personnel brought with them new kinds of fruits and vegetables, as well as cattle, horses, pigs, iron tools, and other elements of Spanish life, all of which were soon incorporated into Native lives as well.[6] The tenor of life in and around these missions became a blend of Spanish and Indian.

The conscripted labor system of these missions, however, undermined Indian health and well-being. For example, recent bioarchaeological studies have revealed that the Indian populations across Spanish Florida suffered from malnutrition, severe and physically damaging labor practices, as well as other associated health risks from displacement into work camps. Native peoples in both the Southwest and Southeast became quickly disaffected with life in the Spanish missions, and violent Native revolts punctuated the entire mission period—evidence that unrest and discontent existed among large numbers of mission Indians.[7]

With increased contacts between Europeans and Indians, Old World diseases began to circulate through North America. Exactly when introduced diseases made their first appearance in North America is difficult to discern. In the southern reaches there are some hints that Spanish slavers who raided the Atlantic and Gulf coasts or who made their way into present-day northern Mexico may have infected some North American populations decades before the de Soto and Coronado expeditions. And scholars are still in debate over whether the de Soto and Coronado expeditions spread disease.

The earliest concrete evidence for disease in the Southeast and Southwest comes from the records of the Spanish missions in the early seventeenth century, and these records leave little doubt as to the widespread occurrences of Old World diseases among the Indians to whom they ministered.

Although European powers did not attempt another colony in the Northeast until decades after the early encounters of Cartier and Raleigh, in the intervening years European explorers, fisherman, traders, privateers, and others trafficked with local Indians along the coasts of New England and eastern Canada. There is some evidence that the Indians with whom they had contact may have contracted diseases such as influenza and dysentery. The first well-documented case of widespread disease in the Northeast occurred after French, Dutch, and English settlement in the area, from 1616 to 1619, when Indians from present-day Maine to Massachusetts suffered from an introduced ailment. Further south, along the mid-Atlantic coast, English settlers at Roanoke and Jamestown undoubtedly infected their Indian neighbors in the first few decades of the seventeenth century. As colonization and trade intensified with sustained European contact, so did the disease episodes, and disease began to spread along the trade routes European and Indian traders were canvassing. By about 1650, disease had spread from the east, north, and west to meet at the Mississippi River, thus infiltrating much of North America.[8]

Indian population losses from Old World diseases in the seventeenth century are difficult to calculate, and the estimates range from 30 percent to 90 percent. Current interpretations conclude that although population losses could be severe in an area, there is no evidence for a catastrophic loss of life across North America before sustained European contact. Rather, epidemics were localized occurrences, albeit with high mortality rates. The epidemics were also serial, occurring with regularity about every seven to ten years, and carrying off approximately 20–30 percent of a local population at a time. One exception to this is the so-called Great Southeastern smallpox epidemic, a pandemic in 1698 that spread from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River, carried by the traders, slavers, and slaves involved in the colonial Indian slave trade. Today scholars still accept a 90 percent loss of Native life after contact, but this loss now appears to have occurred over about 200 years (from roughly 1550 to 1750) in a gradual, not steep, demographic decline and only after sustained European contact. In addition, scholars agree that disease was but one factor in the demographic decline, and they now point to contributing factors such as incorporation into the modern world economy, slaving, internecine warfare, dropping fertility rates, violent colonial strategies such as genocide, and general cultural and social malaise from colonial oppression.[9]

Certainly the introduction of Old World disease epidemics and cultural exchanges with early Spaniards had profound effects on Native life. But these instabilities, epidemics, and exchanges in and of themselves were not transforming. The engagement of Native peoples in the world economy through contact with the English, French, and Dutch was the final hammer to complete the shatter zones, and Native peoples adapted and survived by revamping their social, political, and economic orders.

Incorporation through Violence

With the economic decline of Spain and Portugal in the late sixteenth century, the European nations of France, England, and the Netherlands began an intense competition through colonization for global economic supremacy. During the seventeenth century, England, France, and the Netherlands were knitting together a global economy by articulating economic circuits such as the Atlantic trade circuit with the Asian trade circuit. And although the American colonies were in the Atlantic circuit, they were still a subset of the larger global economy. In this light the English, Dutch, and French colonies in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were strategic commercial outposts situated in a global periphery through which European core countries vied for and extracted labor and resources. By the late seventeenth century, the Netherlands had withdrawn from North America, and France and England were now in a contest for the Atlantic arena, with England finally emerging as the core area by the early eighteenth century.[10]

The North American overseas ventures were largely one set of commercial endeavors among a host of many others that crisscrossed the globe. And the North American settlements served mostly as extractive trade factories in the inaugural decades of European colonialism. These settlements may have been small and overwhelmed by Indian populations, but they were a conduit through which the economic power of the core countries flowed. Hence, one should not look on the American colonies and colonists themselves as wielding extraordinary transforming power over Native life, but rather it was the system in which they served that was so transformative. It was not Quebec, Albany, Plymouth, Jamestown, or Charles Town that created colonial shatter zones; it was the global commercial power of the Netherlands, England, and France as funneled through these settlements. Each colonial outpost competed with the others to establish its commercial networks. In every case, their first commercial ventures included inaugurating a trade with local Indians, and soon several of these outposts became flourishing cities founded on commerce with Indians across the eastern Woodlands. In the Northeast, the Iroquois and Dutch became close trade partners, and Fort Orange (present-day Albany, New York), settled in 1614, emerged as their commercial center. In New France, French traders enlisted numerous Indian groups across the St. Lawrence River, Hudson's Bay, and Great Lakes region, and after Quebec City was founded in 1608, it soon became the hub of the French and Indian trade empire. British colonists settled Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, but they would first have to wrest control of the Chesapeake from the Powhatans before emerging as a major commercial center in the 1640s. Soon after its founding in 1670, Charles Town developed into the most aggressive trade center in the Southeast and English traders there sought Native allies across the South in their lucrative trade enterprises.

European entrepreneurs engaged local Indians in trading beaver, deer, and other animal skins and furs. In its initial formulation, this trade more resembled indigenous

diplomatic gift giving, wherein two parties exchanged gifts as symbolic gestures of alliance. In only a few years, though, Native people came to understand the Indian trade as commerce, which involved commercial exchanges. Although diplomatic gift giving continued throughout the next centuries, Indian men and women throughout the eastern Woodlands now also engaged in commercial exchanges of goods.

In addition to skins and furs, early European traders kept up a brisk trade in Indian slaves. Slavery was not new to North American Indians at contact and most Native groups practiced an indigenous form of slavery in which war captives sometimes were put into bondage. Large-scale captive taking, as occurred during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, however, was most likely not conducted during the precontact era but came about with the colonial commercial slave trade. As in pre-contact slavery, slaves sold on the commercial market were obtained in war through raiding and the capturing of prisoners. Male captives were usually killed as in pre-contact days, but noncombatants were now spared and taken as war captives. The fate of war captives varied. Captors sometimes consigned them to forced labor with no social rights. In some cases, captors adopted captives into a kin group, used them in prisoner exchanges with their foes, married them, gave them as gifts of alliance, obtained ransoms for them, or used them to forge trade alignments. By far, though, the vast majority of captives after contact were sold to Europeans, who either kept them as slaves or sold them on the Atlantic slave market.[11]

The commercial trade in Indian slaves provides a window on the transformative power of the modern world economy. In the slave trade, Indian groups were responding to a powerful dynamic wherein Indian men incurred debts when they accepted guns, ammunition, metal tools, and other items from European traders. European traders in turn requested that the debt be paid in slaves and skins. Armed with European-manufactured weapons, Indian groups raided rival groups for slaves. Members of the unarmed group would then have to acquire guns with which to defend themselves, and they in turn would become slave raiders. The result was a vicious cycle of slaving, trading, and weapons escalation.

What did Indians get in exchange for their animal skins and human commodities? The evidence points to any number of items, including brass and copper objects, steel knives, blades, fishhooks, iron hoes and axes, beads, bells, and alcohol. Indian women petitioned their husbands, brothers, and fathers to purchase cloth, metal pots, and sewing implements. Cloth, especially, was outpaced only by munitions as a commodity in high demand. By far, though, the items most desired were guns and ammunition. There is a standing question about why Indians wanted these new armaments, especially since it is unclear whether owning these early trade guns gave any group a military edge. Opinions are divided. Some scholars understand that these weapons, no matter how poorly made or ineffective, still would have revolutionized Indian warfare; others have proposed that Indian men sought them as status symbols and not as implements of combat. One thing is certain—when guns became available, Indian people went to extraordinary lengths to acquire them.[12] Scholars also remain divided over the extent to which Native communities became dependent on European-manufactured

trade goods before 1700, in general. Whether dependent on them or not, there can be little doubt that not only guns, but also metal tools, became part of life after they were introduced to Native peoples. In many cases, Native people were so intent on gaining and controlling access to these trade items that their commercial ambitions came to dominate many aspects of their lives. The results would transform Native America.

The concept of the shatter zone, as the name implies, takes violence to be attendant to imperialism and the birth of the early modern world. It also takes violence to be part and parcel of capitalist incorporation. Indigenous people who lived and participated in the colonial world also contributed to and sometimes created colonial violence. This is especially true when indigenous people became involved in commercial slave trading. Of all the types of colonial commerce, the commercial trade in slaves required a high level of force as a necessary accompaniment to trade. In other words, whereas trading in furs or skins did not necessarily involve warfare, trading in slaves did because it required force.

Certainly warfare penetrated Indian life throughout North America before contact, so much so that war, not peace, may have been the accepted state of affairs. Once Europeans arrived, however, one can see that Native war efforts became entwined with market interests and international commerce. As warfare became tied to commercial interests, indigenous mechanisms for mitigating war and brokering peace broke down. An initial result of integration into the market economy was that it generated militaristic Indian societies who held control of the trade. In addition, Europeans exploited intra-Indian hostilities and fanned the flames of war in order to keep the trade flowing. In short, as Indian commercial interests in the colonial Indian trade intensified, so did warfare and the militarization of those Native groups who sought to control the trade. The result was the creation of shatter zones, or large regions of widespread dislocation, migration, amalgamation, and, in some cases, extinction of other Native peoples.[13]

The Iroquois, who lived in present-day upstate New York, are perhaps the most famous example of a militaristic Indian society. During the early years of European trade in the latter half of the sixteenth century, the Iroquois were effectively blocked from the trade. Algonquian-speaking Montagnais and Algonquians controlled the nascent French trade along the St. Lawrence River. The Hurons, living south of there, moved closer to the trade towns and within the next few decades they became primary trade partners of the French. This Huron-French-Algonquian trade nexus excluded the Five Nation Iroquois from the northern trade circuit. The Iroquois were also barred from the South. The English opened trading posts in the Chesapeake Bay region, after the Virginians had successfully defeated the Powhatans in the 1640s. Sweden, too, established a trade depot on the Delaware River in 1638. The Susquehannocks, Eries, and Piscataways closed in around the Chesapeake in order to take advantage of these trade opportunities. They succeeded in controlling all trade links into the interior, thus preventing the Iroquois from gaining access to the Chesapeake trade circuit.[14]

When the Dutch settled Albany, Dutch traders entered into a trade agreement with the local Mohicans. The Iroquois understood the Dutch presence as opening an opportunity for them to have unfettered access to the trade and they began a series of

wars against those groups such as the Mohicans blocking their way to the European trade centers. Iroquois warfare, however, was predicated on an older tradition of the mourning war. In mourning wars, Iroquois sought Indian captives to replace their dead through a ceremony known as "requickening." When commercial activity expanded during the seventeenth century and when Iroquois deaths from introduced diseases climbed, the Iroquois mourning wars gained new meaning. Their goals proliferated and came to include the acquisition of hunting lands and the creation of a monopoly power over commodities like beaver skins. The Mohicans took the first blow, and were eliminated by 1628. The Iroquois successfully dispersed the Montagnais and Algonquians, and refugees fled to the Hurons. By 1649, Iroquois attacks in the so-called Beaver Wars (1648–57) led to the breaking apart of the Hurons and their allies the Petuns, Neutrals, Wenros, and Eries. Iroquois warriors also dealt a severe blow to the Susquehannocks and drove them into an alliance with the British in Maryland.[15]

Even those groups outside the sphere of Iroquois wars suffered an increase in warfare, hostility, and raiding for captives and slaves. When the British settled the colonies of New England, Indians such as the Naragansetts, Wampanoags, Mi'kmaqs, Pequots, Munsees, Delawares, and Abenakis entered into trade agreements with the British and the Dutch. However, over time, relations inevitably frayed because of continued losses from disease, the demands put on local Indians by European traders and settlers, and the colonists' increasing appetite for Indian lands. Seventeenth-century Native New England was marked by a series of debilitating disease epidemics and Indian wars, such as the Pequot War, Kieft's War, the Peach War, the Esopus Wars, and King Philip's War. In addition to the high death tolls, hundreds of captives from these wars were sold to European and Indian slavers and shipped to the Caribbean.[16]

In the American Southwest, Indian captives and slaves circulated among both Indians and Spaniards, where they became as integral to the economy as later black slaves were in the American South. The Pueblo Indians had long-established trade relations with Plains and Great Basin hunters and gatherers such as the Utes, Navajos, and Apaches. Captives had also been one of the exchange items in this circuit. But with the presence of the Spanish, and especially with the growing demand for Indian laborers for Spanish colonists and in the Spanish mining operations in northern Mexico, raiding for captives increased dramatically in the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth centuries. In addition, the nomadic groups acquired horses at this time, and as mounted raiders they were even more formidable. The Utes, Navajos, and Apaches raided the Pueblo Indians, but the Pueblo Indians also raided the nomads. By the late seventeenth century, Apache raiders also assaulted groups farther removed, such as the Caddos, who lived in east Texas and western Louisiana. In many cases, Indian slaves and captives were taken in as kin or concubines by both Indians and Spaniards, weaving a network of kinship that cross-cut ethnic lines and built a unique multiethnic social nexus. Even so, the violence begat by the rampant raiding for slaves underlay the region, and Indians turned on other Indians as well as Spaniards.[17]

Slaving also made its way into the French territories in and around the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River. With the Huron control broken, the Ottawas, Potawatomi, and

Ojibwe Indians from the upper Great Lakes stepped into the breach and became vital to the French fur trade. The groups in the Illinois confederacy in the Midwest had early on understood the importance of the Mississippi River as both a north-south trade corridor and a gateway to the west. In the early seventeenth century they placed themselves in a strategic arc along the middle and upper Mississippi River. By the middle of the seventeenth century they controlled the trade throughout the Midwest and they consolidated politically. They became fearsome slavers, raiding groups to the south, north, east, and west.

Iroquois raiders, seeking to extend their hunting range, came up against this Illinois bulwark and waged a brutal war against them for over twenty years. The Iroquois also launched raids against the Miamis and any former enemies who had moved into the region. They also leveled attacks against the Ojibwes, Ottawas, and others involved in the French trade. Their raiding even took them as far south as Chickasaw country, in present-day northern Mississippi. Indian slaves derived from these conflicts circulated through New France and were oftentimes adopted by their Indian captors or used in alliance building, but many were sold to French colonists who used them as guides, concubines, domestic servants, trade house laborers, as well as for alliance building.[18]

The American South, however, suffered the brunt of the Indian slave trade. Here, Charles Town and Jamestown traders first enlisted as slavers a Piedmont group, the Occaneechis, and the Westo Indians, a group of Eries who had migrated first to Virginia and then to the Savannah River in present-day Georgia. From 1650 to 1680, the Westos and Occaneechis controlled the trade throughout the Southeast, and terrorized Indians across the region through their incessant slave raiding. The Occaneechis were diminished in Bacon's Rebellion, a conflict that has recently been cast as an Indian trade war. Then, in the 1680s, a group of Charles Town entrepreneurs who wanted to open the trade to other Southeastern Indian groups, hired a group of mercenary Shawnees who had moved to the Savannah River to extirpate the Westos. Charles Town traders then fanned across the South, enlisting as slave raiders the Apalachicola, Hitchitees, Tallapoosas, Abihkas, and Alabamas (groups who would later form the Creek Confederacy), as well as the Chickasaws, Esaws (later known as the Catawbas), Yamasees, Cherokees, and Shawnees. Virtually every major group in the South was now slaving. They raided French- and Spanish-allied Indians as well as each other as slaving spun out of control. Tens of thousands of Indians were put into bondage. In the South, European slavers shipped Indian slaves to the West Indies and South America to work on the plantations and in the mines, as well as throughout the American colonies to New England, French Canada, and French Louisiana, where they were used as domestic servants, concubines, urban laborers, and small-scale agricultural laborers. Scores were also sold to planters and others in Jamestown and in Charles Town. Here Indian slaves began to meld their lives with African slaves. Most, however, were shipped off the continent to never again see their homelands.[19]

The incorporation of indigenous people into the modern world system through the Indian slave trade did not proceed peacefully or calmly. As we have seen, wherever and whenever market forces appeared on the scene through European colonization,