

Native Peoples and Tourism: An Introduction

Larry Nesper, *University of Wisconsin–Madison*

This special issue of *Ethnohistory* reflects current scholarly work on how issues of indigenous representation and identity are worked out in the context of different kinds of tourism. Each article examines the ways in which local peoples engage with imported Western institutions in the service of local agendas. These institutions include public sites, such as fairs, tribal museums, cultural villages, and specialized sites for cultural performance, and, also, casinos. The first three modalities of representation have long histories in Europe and the United States. The last is a recently emergent nexus that foregrounds the relationships among education, commerce, and entertainment, which are somewhat backgrounded by the first three.

Frederic Gleach's article on the Jamestown Tercentennial, held in 1907, reveals a period that is the furthest in time from our own and examines the ways in which images of the local Indians were deployed by agents of the dominant society to legitimize the successor state and nation; it also discusses how the contemporaneous Powhatan people's representation of the non-Indian version of their own past came to be the sign of their own ethnic distinction. Following on the conventions established at the world fairs in Paris in 1889 and Chicago in 1893, we see a historical phase in the lives of indigenous people wherein they faced the challenge of deploying the dominant culture's appropriations in the service of their own local agendas.

Larry Nesper's essay effectively follows on this theme as it documents the ways in which local Anishinabeg identity at Lac du Flambeau in Wisconsin during the ethnically homogenizing 1950s was articulated by cultural performances that both confirmed non-Indian cultural stereotypes of Indians and offered a Flambeau-centric history of the relationship between

Indians and non-Indians in the region. This genre represents a kind of mediate form between the complex that includes the Wild West Shows and the nineteenth- and twentieth-century ethnic villages and tribal museums, the last the subject of two articles in the collection.

Gerhard Schutte's essay on the representation of indigenous peoples in South Africa offers a complementary case of celebrating primitivism in the construction of a "new" nation since the referendum in 1992 that began the disassembling of the apartheid regime. Building on the tradition of ethnic villages at the world's fairs, private corporations have developed a series of tourist attractions that seek to rewrite the history of the nation while at the same time essentializing the internal cultural differences of the groups that now make up the nation of South Africa. Schutte deals explicitly with the political economy of representation in this case that provides such a strong contrast to the other articles in this collection.

Elaborating and detailing the theme of the political economy of cultural identity in a global context, Alicia Re Cruz's contribution on the Mayan engagement with the tourist culture of Cancún analyzes the implications for these two very different communities. She traces the history of these towns and shows how *milpa* (maize cultivation) production and ideology form the bases of identity in Chan Kom and how this mode of production both succeeds and fails in organizing migrants' assimilation into the "capitalist-tourist" mode of production in Cancún. One of the outcomes is that tradition is commodified. Another is that 'Cancún' is reified among the traditional Mayas and assimilated to the category of *uay* (male witch) and provides a counter-identity against which Mayan identity is articulated.

Marie Mauzé and Patricia Erikson both examine how tribal museums as commercially viable tourist attractions represent native identity on the Northwest Coast. Mauzé's essay deals with how the repatriated objects originally confiscated in the 1922 Dan Cranmer Potlatch are organized in the Kwagiulth Museum and in the U'mista Cultural Centre in British Columbia. She shows how both museums assume a responsibility to educate the public—the tourist service, as it were—organizing their presentations by different cultural axioms. The former is concerned with representing local identity as a historical feat of cultural survival and emphasizes the difference between Indians and non-Indians; the latter celebrates the distinctness of the local group's social constitution, attending to the central value of hierarchy. Erikson analyzes the exhibit entitled *Riding In His Canoe*, at the Makah Cultural and Research Center in Washington State, an institution that has come to assume many of the social functions formerly carried out in a traditional longhouse. The exhibit features the history of cultural innovations made by Young Doctor, a late-nineteenth-, early-

twentieth-century cultural broker and entrepreneur who simultaneously revitalized and commodified Makah cultural practices as the Makah came to see and situate themselves in a larger set of political and economic relations in the region.

If the contributions to this point in the collection suggest a history of the indigenous struggle for control of the process of representation in a tourist domain, John Bodinger de Uriarte's article addressing the generative aspects of a tribal representation undertaken in the high-profile, highly capitalized Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center and the Foxwoods Resort Casino is the culmination of this history. The author examines how the identity of a community is coming to be imagined via the appropriation and reassembly of both historical cultural objectifications of local identity as well as pan-Indian symbolism, by and in the production of, an emergent nation with a long and complicated history of accommodation.

Finally, Kathleen Adams and Michael Harkin present commentaries on the essays, amplifying and contextualizing the theoretical issues they raise and relating them to their own ethnographic and ethnological work. Harkin co-organized "The Mirror of Commerce: American Indians and First Nations in the Tourist Trade" session at the 1998 Meeting of the Society for Ethnohistory. Adams was the discussant for the papers in the "Indigenous People and Tourism" session at the 1998 Central States Anthropological Society meeting.

The first drafts of all of these articles were presented at one of three sessions on indigenous peoples and tourism held at the 1998 and the 1999 Meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory and at the 1999 Central States Anthropological Society meeting.