

# *Portrait of* AMERICA

VOLUME ONE: TO 1877



EVENTH EDITION

Stephen B. Oates

# PORTRAIT OF AMERICA

SEVENTH EDITION

VOLUME I

*From Before Columbus  
to the End of Reconstruction*

STEPHEN B. OATES

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY      BOSTON    NEW YORK

**Again, for Greg and Stephanie with my love**

Sponsoring editor Jeffrey Greene  
Senior project editor Rosemary Winfield  
Production/design coordinator Jennifer Waddell  
Senior manufacturing coordinator Sally Culler  
Marketing manager Sandra McGuire

Cover design by Diana Coe; cover image: The Underground Railroad, mural, Dolgeville, New York Post Office, 1940, by James Michael Newell, National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C./Art Resource.

Copyright © 1999 by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system without the prior written permission of the copyright owner unless such copying is expressly permitted by federal copyright law. With the exception of nonprofit transcription in Braille, Houghton Mifflin is not authorized to grant permission for further uses of copyrighted selections reprinted in this text without the permission of their owners. Permission must be obtained from the individual copyright owners as identified herein. Address requests for permission to make copies of Houghton Mifflin material to College Permissions, Houghton Mifflin Company, 222 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116-3764.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 98-72072

ISBN: 0-395-90077-8

456789-DH-02 01 00 99

## PREFACE

Like its predecessors, the Seventh Edition of this anthology stresses the human side of history, suggesting how the interaction of people and events shaped the course of the American past. I chose selections for *Portrait of America* that make history live and that were written for students, not for professional historians. The essays, narratives, and biographical portraits gathered here humanize American history, portraying it as a story of real people who actually lived, who struggled, enjoyed triumphs, suffered failures and anxieties, just like people in our own time. I hope that the anthology is an example of humanistic history at its best, the kind that combines scrupulous and engaging scholarship with a compelling narrative style. Since college survey audiences are not professional ones, they might enjoy reading history if it is presented in an exciting and readable form.

There is another reason why students will find *Portrait of America* edifying: it showcases the writings of some of America's most eminent historians. The prizes their work has won testify to their important places in the galaxy of American letters. Bruce Catton's incomparable books on the Civil War won the Pulitzer Prize, a special Pulitzer citation, the National Book Award, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. James M. McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*—a section of which is excerpted here—received the Pulitzer Prize for history. John Demos received the Bancroft Prize and was a nominee for the American Book Award. Oliver La Farge won the Pulitzer Prize and the O. Henry Memorial Prize. Robert V. Remini's biography of Andrew Jackson received the American Book Award and the Carl Sandburg Award for nonfiction, and Eric Foner's extraordinary new book on Reconstruction garnered the Bancroft Prize and the Francis Parkman Prize of the

Society of American Historians. David Herbert Donald twice won the Pulitzer Prize for biography, and his recent life of Lincoln received the Abraham Lincoln Award. Page Smith and Richard B. Morris won Bancroft Prizes, and Walter LaFeber received the Albert Beveridge Prize. Richard N. Current garnered the Bancroft Prize, the O. Max Gardner Prize, and the George Bante Award. Benjamin Quarles's scholarship earned him a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and an appointment as honorary consultant to the Library of Congress. Many of the other contributors also received significant literary and scholarly awards. Thus *Portrait of America* offers readers a unique opportunity to learn from a lineup of nationally recognized historians and writers.

The Seventh Edition has been extensively revised. It contains ten new sections and a reorganization of the sections on the Jacksonian era and the black struggle for freedom. The new readings are

- Oliver La Farge's trenchant discussion of the Native American cultures that flourished before Columbus and what the European contact did to them;
- John Demos's mesmerizing account of the 1704 Deerfield massacre, which was symbolic of the great struggle between France and England for supremacy in North America;
- Alexander Winston's sparkling portrait of Sam Adams and the coming of the Revolution;
- Stephen Oates's story of Nat Turner's bloody slave insurrection;
- Elaine Kendall's gracefully written account of the struggle to educate women in the early Republic;
- John W. Blassingame's powerful description of the Old South's cruel slave regime;

- Benjamin Quarles's engaging portrait of Harriet Tubman, the most famous conductor on the fabled Underground Railroad;
- Bruce Catton's knowledgeable and entertaining essay on Civil War soldiers;
- Eric Foner's brilliant essay on the new view of Reconstruction; and
- Richard N. Current's trenchant reassessment of the carpetbaggers of the Reconstruction era.

The Seventh Edition retains the best and most popular selections of the previous editions. I hope that *Portrait of America* remains as balanced as ever, for it offers samplings of virtually every kind of history—men's and women's, black and white, social and cultural, political and military, urban and economic, national and local—so that students can appreciate the rich diversity of the American experience.

Portrait of America contains several important features that help students learn from its contents. Each selection is preceded by a glossary that identifies important individuals, events, and concepts that appear in the reading. Introductions set the selections in proper context and suggest ways to approach studying them. They also tie all the selections together so that they can be read more or less as connected episodes. Study questions following the selections raise significant issues and encourage students to make comparisons and contrasts between the selections. The questions also help students review the readings and suggest points for class discussion.

The anthology is intended for use largely in college survey courses. It could be utilized as a supplement to a textbook or to a list of paperback readings. Or it could serve as the basic text. The book is organized into fifteen parts according to periods or themes; each part contains two related selections. This organization allows readers to make comparisons and contrasts between different events or viewpoints.

The Seventh Edition could not have been assembled without the help of others. My talented assistant, Karl Anderson, not only helped me choose the new selections, but helped me write the glossaries and the study questions for the new pieces and the synopses of the selections for the Table of Contents. Since he is an undergraduate history major, he proved to be invaluable in assessing whether a potential selection was suitable for students in college survey courses. My former assistants, Anne-Marie Taylor and Dr. Karen Smith, and Professor Betty L. Mitchell of the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, wrote the study questions for the other selections. I want to thank the following professors for reviewing one or both volumes.

John Duke, Alvin Community College  
 Brian Lister, University of Maine at Farmington  
 Geoffrey Plank, University of Cincinnati

S. B. O.

# CONTENTS

## PREFACE

xiii

## I. THE EUROPEAN DISCOVERY 1

### 1. **Oliver La Farge, *Myths That Hide the American Indian*** 2

One of the all-time great historians of the Indians describes the myths invented by the Europeans that hid the true nature of the American Indian from them. La Farge goes on to offer a lucid and insightful survey of the Native American tribes and cultures that thrived in North America before the European invasion. The author describes what that invasion did to the Native Americans, especially the Cherokees and the other eastern tribes and nations, and points out how the Spaniards' introduction of the horse made possible the legendary horseback, buffalo-hunting Indians of the Great Plains.

### 2. **Page Smith, *From These Beginnings*** 18

With a vivid pen and an eye for telling details, Smith recounts the story of the remarkable hodgepodge of humanity that migrated to the English colonies from more than a dozen European countries. Not all of the settlers were upstanding citizens in search of a better life or freedom from religious persecution; many migrants were considered "rogues and vagabonds": beggars, prostitutes, drunks, actors, gamblers, fortunetellers, and charlatans.

## II. THE FIRST CENTURY 31

### 3. **Gary B. Nash, *Black People in a White People's Country*** 32

A leading colonial historian offers an accessible discussion of the origins of slavery, which he considers one of the most important events in the history of the modern world. Included is a riveting account of the slave trade and the "middle passage" to colonial America.

### 4. **John Demos, *The Deerfield Massacre*** 47

In this mesmerizing narrative, told in the present tense, Demos describes the destruction of a Massachusetts settlement one terrible night in 1704 by a force of French soldiers and their Indian allies. Many settlers were slaughtered; others were taken captive and later given the choice of remaining with their Indian captors or returning to Deerfield. Among those who elected to stay with the Indians was the daughter of the town's minister. The Deerfield massacre was symbolic of the larger struggle between France and England for supremacy in North America.

III.	TRANSFORMATIONS	55
5.	<b>Gary B. Nash, <i>The Transformation of European Society</i></b>	<b>56</b>
	An example of the new social history, this selection describes the two different forms of agricultural society that emerged in the North and South, respectively, thus setting the stage for the abolition of slavery in the North. Nash also discusses the changing values and social structure of colonial America, the influence of vast amounts of free land, and the Great Awakening.	
6.	<b>Richard B. Morris, <i>Meet Dr. Franklin</i></b>	<b>70</b>
	Morris's lively portrait presents a complex and contradictory Franklin, a man who went through an identity crisis, indulged in literary pranks, and had ambivalent attitudes about women. He also abhorred violence, rebelled against authority, championed abolition, became a major spokesman for an emerging American nationality, and regarded himself as a citizen of the world.	
IV.	"WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS"	89
7.	<b>Alexander Winston, <i>Sam Adams, Firebrand of the Revolution</i></b>	<b>90</b>
	Winston tells the story of the coming of the Revolution through the life and deeds of the leader of Boston's hot-headed radicals and one of the foremost opponents to perceived British tyranny in all the colonies. This biographical approach personalizes events; it elicits from cold fact the warmth of a living man of action who was in the thick of colonial resistance to the hated Stamp Act, the Townshend Acts, and the Five Intolerable Acts and who led his "boys" in the celebrated Boston Tea Party. When the break for independence came, no one had worked harder for it than Sam Adams, whom a Virginia leader called "The Father of the Revolution."	
8.	<b>Douglas L. Wilson, <i>Thomas Jefferson and the Meanings of Liberty</i></b>	<b>101</b>
	This superior essay discusses Jefferson's many contradictions, including his slaveowning and the Sally Hemings controversy, in the context of Jefferson's own time. Wilson warns us against the perils of "presentism"—of intruding today's values and attitudes upon the past—and asks a crucial question: whether we should remember the leading figures of history by their greatest achievements or by their personal failures and peccadilloes.	
V.	BIRTH OF THE REPUBLIC	115
9.	<b>Brian McGinty, <i>Sunrise at Philadelphia</i></b>	<b>116</b>
	This fascinating narrative recounts the workings of the Great Convention of 1787, showing how a complex mix of personalities	

shaped a Constitution that has stood for more than two hundred years.

**10. Edmund S. Morgan, *George Washington and the Use of Power* 131**

While acknowledging that Washington, an aloof man obscured by the myth, “was a hard man to know,” Morgan draws a vivid profile of the first president. In his understanding of the use of power, Morgan contends, Washington was first among his contemporaries.

**VI. PATTERNS OF SOCIETY 143**

**11. Jack Larkin, *The Personal Side of a Developing People* 144**

Larkin brilliantly recreates the everyday life of early Americans, portraying them as a vibrant, busy, contentious people who spat tobacco, wore dour expressions, slept in bug-ridden beds, dumped their sewage in the streets, pursued the pleasures of the flesh, and drank too much liquor.

**12. Elaine Kendall, *Beyond Mother’s Knee: The Struggle to Educate Women* 163**

In this informative and gracefully written piece, Kendall recounts the development of women’s education from the colonial period to the early nineteenth century and the implacable wall of male opposition against any instruction of women beyond their mother’s knees. Kendall describes how Emma Willard founded the first female academy in Troy, New York, in 1821, and how other redoubtable female educators worked around and within the hostile male attitude in order to advance the cause of women’s education—the first feminist victory.

**VII. THE NATION TAKES SHAPE 175**

**13. Walter LaFeber, *The Louisiana Purchase: A Dangerous Precedent* 176**

An eminent diplomatic historian discusses the domestic and international ramifications of the Louisiana Purchase, which brought out the pragmatic side of Thomas Jefferson. In LaFeber’s judgment, the Louisiana Purchase set “a dangerous precedent” for imperial expansion.

**14. Brian McGinty, *The Great Chief Justice* 188**

A warm portrait of Chief Justice John Marshall, who transformed a maligned branch of the federal government into a truly Supreme Court. McGinty not only discusses Marshall’s most important decisions but offers an intimate description of a man who bought his own groceries and enjoyed good wine.



VIII. WOE IF IT COMES WITH STORM AND BLOOD  
AND FIRE

199

15. **Stephen B. Oates, *The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion*** 200

It happened with shattering suddenness, an explosion of black rage that struck an obscure Virginia county like a tornado roaring out of the southern night. In August 1831, a mystical slave preacher named Nat Turner led a column of ax-wielding blacks on a bloody rampage through the Virginia forests, leaving behind ghastly scenes of hacked-up bodies. The insurrection plunged southeastern Virginia into convulsions of racial violence that rocked the entire South to its foundations, exacerbated sectional tensions, and pointed the way to the Civil War thirty years later.

16. **Ralph Korngold, *William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolitionist Crusade*** 217

Southern whites blamed Nat Turner's insurrection on the balding, bespectacled Garrison, Boston editor of the *Liberator*, thereby giving him a national reputation. In the early 1830's, Garrison was one of the most visible spokesmen of the nascent abolitionist movement, thundering against slavery and slaveowners in a stunning display of moral outrage and seeking to win converts through moral pressure. Korngold not only brings Garrison brilliantly alive in the context of his time, but also introduces other important figures in the abolitionist crusade.

IX. FREEDOM'S FERMENT: THE AGE OF JACKSON

235

17. **Robert V. Remini, *The Jacksonian Revolution*** 236

A top Jacksonian scholar disputes recent interpretations of Andrew Jackson as a fraud who masqueraded as the people's hero, and restores Old Hickory to a prominent place in history. Remini argues that Jackson launched a revolt against aristocratic rule and moved America toward a more democratic system.

18. **Stephen B. Oates, *Henry Clay, the American System, and the Sectional Controversy*** 249

Jackson's arch foe is just a name in most American history textbooks. This portrait resurrects Clay's fascinating personality and recounts his remarkable career as one of the great political figures of the first four decades of the nineteenth century. Speaker of the House, senator, compromiser, Jackson hater, perennial presidential contender, and an antislavery slaveowner, Clay championed Jefferson's scheme of gradual emancipation and colonization and stood as the foremost spokesman of the "American System," which became a casualty of the sectional controversy.

X.	THE GROWTH OF TECHNOLOGY	265
	19. Maury Klein, <i>The Lords and the Mill Girls</i> 266	
	The first planned industrial community in America, Lowell, Massachusetts, became a model of the "paternalistic factory system," employing farm girls in a relatively clean and uncrowded working environment that contrasted starkly with the wretched working conditions in Europe. Klein stresses the tension between democratic ideals and the profit motive in the Lowell mills, and he describes the paternalism that, ironically, sowed early seeds of feminism.	
	20. Page Smith, "Hell in Harness": <i>The Iron Horse and the Go-Ahead Age</i> 279	
	Smith's rollicking narrative describes the advent of the steam-powered locomotive and the railroad age in Jacksonian America, a time when go-ahead Americans devised engines and laid track across the country. The railroads, which accelerated the westward movement and generated an often blind American passion for progress, were America's principal form of transportation until they were replaced by the interstate highway system of the twentieth century.	
XI.	BEYOND THE MISSISSIPPI	291
	21. Dee Brown, <i>The Trail of Tears</i> 292	
	A prolific western historian describes one of the most disgraceful chapters in American history: the theft of Cherokee land in Georgia and the brutal resettlement of the Cherokees in the Indian Territory, along a "trail of tears" where one out of four died. Brown shows how a political split within the Cherokee nation and the duplicity of one faction contributed to the Cherokees' misfortune.	
	22. Johnny Faragher and Christine Stansell, <i>Women and Their Families on the Overland Trails</i> 303	
	Drawing on contemporary diaries and letters, the authors reconstruct the conditions of life for women and their families heading west on the Oregon and California Trails. They raise provocative questions about the differences between men's and women's attitudes and experiences and about how the overland migration altered eastern conventions about family structure and "proper" women's roles.	
XII.	"TO MAKE THEM STAND IN FEAR": THE SLAVEOWNING SOUTH	317
	23. John W. Blassingame, <i>Life in a Totalitarian System</i> 318	
	A prominent African American historian describes in rich illustrative detail what it was like to be a slave, a black driver, a black mammy, a	

slaveholder, and an overseer on a slaveowning plantation. The Old South was a cruel system that sought to strip black people of all human rights, reducing them to the status of cattle, swine, wagons, and other “property.” Yet the slaves found ways to retain their humanity and created survival mechanisms—their families, religion, and songs—that helped them endure the unendurable.

**24. Benjamin Quarles, *Let My People Go: Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad* 332**

A distinguished historian of the black experience in America offers a warm and sympathetic portrait of the most famous conductor on the fabled Underground Railroad. During the 1850s she invaded the South at least fifteen times and escorted some two hundred slaves, including her own aging parents, to the North and freedom. Quarles explains how Tubman achieved “near mythic status” in her time and reminds us that she is a powerful symbol for the black struggle today.

**XIII. THE DEATH OF SLAVERY 343**

**25. David Herbert Donald, *Why the War Came: The Sectional Struggle over Slavery in the Territories* 344**

A Pulitzer Prize-winning historian discusses how the issue of slavery in the territories, revived by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, eroded “the traditional bonds of the Union,” intensified sectional hostilities, and hurtled the country toward civil war. Donald stresses how people’s perception of events dictated the course of the North and South over the territorial issue.

**26. Stephen B. Oates, *Lincoln’s Journey to Emancipation* 359**

A Lincoln biographer profiles America’s greatest president, pulling back the myths and legends to reveal the man who really lived. Here is both the eloquent public figure who damned slavery as “a vast moral evil” and the troubled private man who was plagued by romantic difficulties and obsessed with death. Oates also traces the evolution of Lincoln’s emancipation policy, one of the least understood facets of his presidency.

**XIV. THE WAR THAT MADE A NATION 379**

**27. James M. McPherson, *Why the Union Won* 380**

The book from which this excerpt was taken won a Pulitzer Prize and was acclaimed as the best modern treatment of the Civil War yet written. Here McPherson puts forth a cogent and convincing argument for why the Union defeated the Confederacy, stressing the overriding importance of military operations. Ultimately, he maintains, the war was won or lost on the battlefield.

**28. Bruce Catton, Hayfoot, Strawfoot! The Civil War Soldier  
Marched to His Own Individual Cadence 391**

One of the greatest Civil War historians of all time takes you on a lively tour of the rival armies, pointing out that the war's volunteer soldiers were chiefly "civilians in arms." He will tell you what they ate, how they trained, how their armies were made up, and how their ranks were decimated by killer diseases that the primitive medicines and medical practices of the day could do little to stop. He also explains how outmoded battle tactics, combined with murderous new weapons, turned Civil War battlefields into slaughter pens.

**XV. RECONSTRUCTION: "A SPLENDID FAILURE" 403**

**29. Eric Foner, The New View of Reconstruction 404**

The traditional view of Reconstruction, popularized in *Gone with the Wind* and *The Birth of a Nation*, portrayed the period as a "blackout of honest" government in which treacherous Radicals tried to put black people on top in Dixie and turned the region over to hordes of carpetbaggers, scalawags, and "ignorant" Negroes who "stole the South blind." The foremost Reconstruction scholar of our time describes how the new view of Reconstruction, which emerged full force in the 1960s, exposed the racist assumptions of the old interpretation and made President Andrew Johnson and unrepentant southern whites the real villains. Instead of being a misguided experiment in extremism, Reconstruction accomplished many positive things, but ultimately failed because it was not radical enough.

**30. Richard N. Current, A New Look at the Carpetbaggers 418**

An eminent and prolific historian of the Civil War and Reconstruction era challenges the traditional view of the carpetbaggers as a bunch of Yankee rogues who came South to form coalitions with the Negroes and scalawags (southern Republicans) in order to make money from political corruption. Current argues that the most numerous and most significant carpetbaggers were ambitious, energetic men who "brought their savings or their borrowings to invest, who eventually got into politics for idealistic as well as selfish reasons, and who in office behaved no better and no worse than most of their contemporaries."

I

# THE EUROPEAN DISCOVERY



## *Myths That Hide the American Indian*

OLIVER LA FARGE

*For many people, American history began in 1492 when Columbus “discovered” the New World. Every Columbus Day we commemorate the myth of the bold, visionary hero who defied superstition, plunged across a storm-tossed Atlantic against all odds, landed in America, and made the United States possible. In reality, of course, Columbus did not “discover” America; prehistoric people from Asia, the ancestors of the Native Americans, or Indians, had done that about 14,000 years earlier when they began migrating from Siberia to Alaska across the land bridge of the Bering Strait. Over the centuries, the first Americans fanned out across North and South America and the islands of the Caribbean until by Columbus’s time they numbered approximately 40 million. These “pre-European” inhabitants spoke hundreds of different languages and created remarkably diverse cultures — there were 2 million people and a thousand different tribes in North America alone, ranging from nomadic bands on the Plains to collectivist, corn-growing pueblos in New Mexico and highly developed agricultural towns in the Southeast.*

*Who knows what this thriving, complex population of indigenous Americans might have become had Columbus not stumbled onto America in his search for the fabled Orient. What we do know is that the European arrival in the “New World” had profound consequences for the Western Hemisphere, Europe, and Africa. On his second voyage, Columbus established the first outpost of European civilization in the New World and inaugurated “the Columbian Exchange” — described by authors Lewis Lord and Sarah Burke — “a global swap of animals, plants, people, ailments and ideas” that altered the course of human history. Among other things, this exchange sent American corn to Africa and American tobacco, potatoes, beans, squash,*

tomatoes, and peanuts to Europe, and brought horses, cows, chickens, pigs, honeybees, coffee, wheat, and rice to the Americas.

For the first Americans, to whom Columbus gave the name *Indios*, the introduction of European animals and plants was salutary. The horse, for example, spread rapidly among the buffalo-hunting tribes of the Plains, increasing their speed and range of locomotion and becoming their chief symbol of wealth. But in almost every other respect, the European invasion of the Indian world was a catastrophe. Columbus himself set the example for subsequent Europeans, initiating a policy of enslavement and killing that was to contribute to the near extermination of the first Americans. Even Columbus's otherwise sympathetic biographer, Samuel Eliot Morison, acknowledged that the "cruel policy" begun by Columbus and pursued by his successors amounted to genocide. To make matters worse, the Indians were not immune to the communicable diseases the Europeans carried to the New World. Epidemics of measles, typhoid, smallpox, and tuberculosis, not to mention dysentery and alcoholism, were to sweep through the original Americans, killing them by the countless thousands. By 1890, after four centuries of white conquest, only about 250,000 Indians remained in all of North America.

In the following selection, Oliver La Farge, anthropologist, novelist, and one of the all-time great historians of the Native Americans, goes behind the convenient myths the Europeans invented about the Indians and shows us the rich and complex indigenous cultures that thrived in North America before and after the Europeans made first contact. La Farge will introduce you to the mound builders, whose corn-growing civilization flourished in the southeastern woodlands before A.D. 1500. In the words of W. Michael Gear and Kathleen Gear, "This civilization embraced not only the most complex religious ceremonialism, social organization, and economic sophistication ever seen in prehistoric North America, but also the most expansive political influence heretofore known," with trade routes that extended across the entire continent. The Mississippians, as they are called, built towns of earthen mounds that could reach heights of a hundred feet, and they had sufficient grasp of astronomy and math to "align each of their mounds according to the exact position of the sun when it rose and set on the equinox and solstice." As he does with the other Indian cultures he discusses, La Farge does not hesitate to point out negative aspects of the mound builders, who were exceedingly warlike and perfectly willing to torture captives. When the Europeans came, however, this once powerful civilization had disappeared, having been overrun by marauders from the north and plagued by drought and famine. Their temple mound towns were completely empty now, leaving European immigrants to contemplate their mysteries.

La Farge's essay will also introduce you to the "Five Civilized Tribes" of the Southeast — the powerful Iroquois of the Northeast; the Pueblos, Navahos, and Apaches of the Southwest; the totemic, potlatch culture of the Indians of the Northwest coast; and the great horse-riding buffalo hunters of the Great Plains, whose war bonnets, war

*dances, and tepees — prominently featured in the white man's Wild West shows — made them in white eyes the stereotype of the Native American. That stereotype contained the incongruous European myths of the noble red man and the ruthless savage that hid the American Indian for three hundred years.*

## GLOSSARY

APACHES See Athabascans.

ATHABASCANS Invaders from Canada who spoke languages of the Athabaskan stock and filtered into the American Southwest. They became the Navahos and the Apaches, who raided the Pueblo Indians and stole, traded, and learned from them. In time the Navahos became excellent weavers but continued to raid their Pueblo neighbors. The Apaches and Navahos did not glorify warfare but fought for profit.

DAKOTA SIOUX Driven by the musket-carrying Chippewas out of wooded Minnesota into the Plains, they encountered horses in 1782 as they spread north, first eating and then riding them. This began the great horseback buffalo-hunting Sioux culture of the Plains.

FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES The Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole tribes of the Southeast and the Mississippi Valley, which were ancestral to the great mound-building culture of earlier times.

HIAWATHA Founder of the League of the Five Nations.

IROQUOIS A confederation of closely knit, highly organized tribes of the Northeast that lived in "long houses" covered in bark and allowed women considerable power.

LEAGUE OF THE FIVE NATIONS Formed in the sixteenth century by five Iroquois tribes: the Senecas, Onondagas, Mohawks, Cayugas, and Oneidas (the Tuscaroras joined later). The league

was so successful a union that it was studied by the framers of the United States Constitution.

MOUND BUILDERS Highly developed agricultural civilization of the Southeast woodlands. The mound builders lived in towns with thatched-roof houses and produced "really impressive art, especially in carving and modeling."

NATCHEZ Highly developed Indian nation of Mississippi ruled by a sun king and divided into two classes: the aristocracy and the common people, called Stinkers. The Natchez were warlike and perfectly willing to torture captives to death. Other captives they adopted so as to replenish the supply of Stinkers.

NAVAHO See Athabascans.

NOBLE RED MAN OR CHILD OF NATURE First myth the Europeans invented about the Native American; it credited the Indian with either a penchant for flowery but dull oratory or an inability to communicate beyond "Ugh" and grunts.

NORTHWEST COAST INDIANS Highly developed fishing, hunting, and gathering tribes on the Pacific coast who, because of the abundance of trees, made wooden houses, wooden armor, wooden ships, and wooden totem poles. Divided into chiefs, commoners, and slaves, they excelled at carving and woodworking and gained respectability by giving through the famous potlatch.

POTLATCH Practice of the Northwest coastal tribes in which a chief, to demonstrate his lavishness and respectability, would give away generous piles of possessions to a rival chief and other guests; the



chief might also burn some possessions and even slay a few slaves with a club called the "slave-killer." If the rival chief did not respond with an even more lavish potlatch, he would cease to be a chief.

**PUEBLOS** Highly developed farming people of the Southwest who raised corn, lived in defensible villages consisting of interconnected adobe houses, and stressed the solidarity of the community at the expense of individuality. Their government was a theocracy in which priests ruled by the consent of the governed.

**RUTHLESS SAVAGE** Second myth the Europeans invented about the Native American; later, when the "savages" were conquered, the myth was changed to "drunken, lazy good-for-nothings."

**SIOUX, BLACKFEET, CHEYENNES, KIWAS, COMANCHES, PIEGANS, ARAPHOS, CROWS** Nomadic buffalo-hunting tribes of the Great Plains whose culture was made possible by the Spaniards' introduction of the horse. These great horseback tribes depended on the buffalo for their food supply, using the hides to fashion winter robes and the skins to make their tepees. These Indians wore war bonnets, did war dances, and raided rival tribes for horses, their prize possessions.

Ever since the white men first fell upon them the Indians of what is now the United States have been hidden from white men's view by a number of conflicting myths. The oldest of these is the myth of the Noble Red Man or the Child of Nature, who is credited either with the habit of flowery oratory of implacable dullness or else with an imbecilic inability to converse in anything more than grunts and monosyllables.

That first myth was inconvenient. White men soon found their purposes better served by the myth of ruthless, faithless savages, and later, when the "savages" had been broken, of drunken, lazy good-for-nothings. All three myths coexist today, sometimes curiously blended in a schizophrenic confusion such as one often sees in the moving pictures. Through the centuries the mythical figure has been variously equipped; today he wears a feather head-dress, is clothed in beaded buckskin, dwells in a tepee, and all but lives on horseback.

It was in the earliest period of the Noble Red Man concept that the Indians probably exerted their most important influence upon Western civilization. The theory has been best formulated by the late Felix S. Cohen, who, as a profound student of law concerning Indians, delved into early white-Indian relations, Indian political economy, and the white men's view of it. According to this theory, with which the present writer agrees, the French and the English of the early seventeenth century encountered, along the East Coast of North America from Virginia southward, fairly advanced tribes whose semi-hereditary rulers depended upon the acquiescence of their people for the continuance of their rule. The explorers and first settlers interpreted these ruler as kings, their people as subjects. They found that even the commonest subjects were endowed with many rights and freedoms, that the nobility was

---

Oliver La Farge, "Myths That Hide the American Indian," *American Heritage*, vol. 7, no. 6 (October 1955), pp. 4-9, 103-107.