



THIS LAND WAS THEIRS

A Study of Native Americans

SIXTH EDITION

Wendell H. Oswalt
Charlotte Neely



THIS LAND WAS THEIRS

A Study of
Native Americans

SIXTH EDITION

Wendell H. Oswalt
University of California, Los Angeles

Sharlotte Neely
Northern Kentucky University



Mayfield Publishing Company
Mountain View, California
London • Toronto

Copyright © 1999, 1996, 1988 by Mayfield Publishing Company

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Oswalt, Wendell H.

This land was theirs : a study of Native Americans / Wendell H. Oswalt,
Sharlotte Neely. — 6th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 0-7674-0504-8

1. Indians of North America. I. Neely, Sharlotte.

II. Title.

E77.08 1998

970'.00497—dc21

98-25731

CIP

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Mayfield Publishing Company

1280 Villa Street

Mountain View, California 94041

Sponsoring editor, Janet M. Beatty; production editor, Linda Ward; manuscript editor, Elaine Kehoe; design and art manager, Susan Breitbard; cover designer, Cynthia Bassett; manufacturing manager, Randy Hurst. The text was set in 10/12 ITC Garamond Light by G&S Typesetters, Inc. and printed on 45# Highland Plus by Malloy Lithographing, Inc.

Cover: Photo of Crow woman on horseback (upper right) courtesy of the Field Museum, Chicago, neg. no. 2784. Photo of Yupik children (middle right) © Elizabeth Wolf/Alaska Stock. Photo of Navajo family (bottom) courtesy of Museum of Northern Arizona Photo Archives, Earl Forrest Collection, neg. no. MS-143-11-1-2953. All other photos courtesy of Wendell H. Oswalt.



This book is printed on acid-free, recycled paper.

. . . so long as the waters shall flow
and the sun shall shine . . .

Also by Wendell H. Oswalt:

Mission of Change in Alaska

Napaskiak: An Alaskan Eskimo Community

Alaskan Eskimos

Understanding Our Culture

Other Peoples, Other Customs

Habitat and Technology

An Anthropological Analysis of Food-Getting Technology

Eskimos and Explorers

Kolmakovskiy Redoubt

Life Cycles and Lifeways: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

Bashful No Longer: An Alaskan Eskimo Ethnohistory, 1788–1988

Also by Charlotte Neely:

Snowbird Cherokees: People of Persistence

In memory of
Edward H. Spicer
and
John J. Honigmann

| Preface

When the first edition of *This Land Was Theirs* appeared in 1966, it introduced a different approach to the study of Native Americans. The emphasis was, and continues to be, on both traditional and modern Indian lifeways. The tribes chosen for chapter-length presentation represent varied geographical areas, ecological adaptations, and degrees of cultural complexity. The selection of tribes depended to a great extent on the scope of the available information. The reader will find that no particular theoretical orientation dominates in this book; ecological, ethnohistorical, functional, and other perspectives are incorporated as appropriate.

The two opening chapters address the most commonly asked questions about Native Americans, including such matters as Indian identity, linguistic ties, treaties, and current issues, including Indian casinos. This background information introduces twelve chapters devoted to specific tribes. Each of these chapters begins with an ethnohistorical sketch followed by old and new reports about tribal life. The final chapter, new to this edition, provides an overview of the Native American past, present, and future.

The sequence of chapters reflects evolutionary differences in socioeconomic life (band, tribe, and chiefdom). In order of presentation, the tribes selected are as follows. The Chipewyan, who live in northwestern Canada, represent subarctic hunters and fishers. The Kuskowagamiut of southwestern Alaska are Eskimos whose lives centered on salmon harvests. The Cahuilla inhabit an arid area of southern California and were primarily gatherers of plant products; a segment of the modern tribe is noteworthy because some of its members are exceedingly wealthy. The Crow of the northern Plains represent foragers who adopted the horse in historic times and emerged as outstanding bison hunters and warriors. The Yurok of northern California and the Tlingit of southeastern Alaska provide a comparative dimension for salmon fishers on the Northwest Coast. The Hopi of the Southwest were arid-area farmers who in many ways typify Pueblo Indian life. The chapter about the Navajo in the Southwest acknowledges their present-day numerical importance and stresses their comparatively recent emergence as a tribe. The Mesquakie (Fox) were farmers and hunters, selected here because they are one of the few tribes to survive into modern times in the eastern sector of the Midwest; unlike most Indians, they purchased the land that they occupy. The Iroquois of the Northeast were farmers who not only reflect an inordinate political complexity but are also important in the development of ethnographic studies, as well as in

colonial American history. The Cherokee of North Carolina were farmers who are included because some of them continue to live in their southeastern homeland and have retained a clear sense of Indian identity. Finally, the Natchez of Mississippi were farmers with one of the most complex ways of life reported among Native Americans north of Mexico; they were among the many tribes destroyed by Western colonialists.

| A Note about *Indian* and Other Usages

The use of certain words in this book requires comment, especially the word *Indian*. The term originated with Christopher Columbus, who though he had reached the East Indies, islands off Asia. He termed the people *los Indios*, and, even after the error was realized, the Spanish continued to use the word *Indios* for all New World peoples; the word became *Indian* in English. Alternatively, the words *savage*, *heathen*, and *barbarian* were popular for identifying Indians and emphasizing their “noncivilized” and “non-Christian” status. By the late eighteenth century, the “noble savage” designation became an increasingly popular way to glorify and romanticize Indian life, especially in art and literature. By the 1970s the word *Indian* was becoming politically incorrect in the United States. In this book, *Indian*, *Native American*, and *American Indian* are all terms used to refer to indigenous peoples in the New World. Significantly, Indians usually call themselves Indian.

When generalizing, the distinctions just cited include Aleuts and Eskimos, as is an accepted convention. The Canadian government distinguishes between Eskimos and Indians in some contexts but applies the term *First Nations* to both. Less significantly, the word *maize* is used far more often than *corn*, and *bison* rather than *buffalo*, to provide a modicum of exactness.

| New to This Edition

The differences between this and previous editions are considerable and deserve comment. Most important, the discussion of Indian life from the 1950s through the 1970s has been abridged so that we could put more emphasis on what has happened between the 1980s and 1997. A major challenge in preparing the sixth edition was obtaining updated information about the extant peoples described in Chapters 3 through 13; for most tribes, published studies dealing with the recent past do not exist. Thus in 1996 and 1997 Oswalt obtained current information during brief visits to the Cahuilla, Chipewyan, Crow, Hopi, Iroquois, Mesquakie, Tlingit, Navajo, and Yurok. (The Yurok chapter has been restored at the fervent request of some users.) Finally, readers of recent editions have complained about the absence of a concluding discussion about American Indians. The last chapter now attempts to examine the current scene in broad context.

This edition also incorporates some new reader aids. In addition to the maps on the inside covers, a glossary of potentially unfamiliar words has been

added, along with a pronunciation guide to a list of words that may be troublesome. An *Instructor's Manual* includes not only possible test questions but also video and film listings (with annotations) and information about where these visual aids may be obtained.

In closing, it is gratifying to note that among non-Indians there is a resurgent interest in Native Americans. Hopefully, this revised edition will further a sympathetic understanding of Indian life both *past* and *present*.

| Acknowledgments

Whereas the previous edition was revised almost entirely by Charlotte Neely, Wendell Oswalt made virtually all of the changes in the present edition. In both editions, reviewers provided invaluable help. We'd especially like to thank the following colleagues for their help with this edition: Richard W. Jefferies, University of Kentucky; Alan Lamb, North Idaho College; Stephen C. Lensink, University of Iowa; and Beverly A. Smith, University of Michigan, Flint.

Individuals who were especially helpful in providing specifics about particular tribes for this edition are as follows:

Chipewyan: Margaret Ann Beaudette, René Fumoleau, K. B. Morrison, Adeline Jonason, and Bill Simpson

Kuskowagamiut: Michael W. Coffing, Ted Horner, A. Oscar Kawagley, and Ann Fienup-Riordan

Cahuilla: Lowell John Bean, Don Magee, Ginger Ridgeway, and Bud Robbins

Crow: Denis L. Adams, Magdalene Medicine Horse-Moccasin, Timothy P. McCleary, and Janine Pease-Pretty on Top

Yurok: Thomas M. Gates

Tlingit: Roger Drapeaux, Steve Henderson, Andy Hope III, Marie Olson, Wallace M. Olson, Thomas F. Thornton, and Liana Wallace

Hopi: Hubert Taylor

Navajo: David Tsinnie

Mesquakie: Gladys Benson and Johnathan Buffalo

Iroquois: Joanna Bedard, Richard Hill, Amos Keye, Angie Monture, and Jake Thomas

Eastern Cherokee: Lou Ellen Jackson and Ned Long, Sr.

Natchez: Jim Barnett and Jean Simonton

Current Realities: James W. VanStone

Janet M. Beatty, Senior Editor, Mayfield Publishing Company, deserves special thanks. Members of the staff at Mayfield Publishing Company who have been especially supportive include Linda Ward, production editor; Susan Breitbard, design and art manager; and Elaine Kehoe, copy editor.

Unattributed photographs in the text were taken by Wendell H. Oswalt.

| Contents

Preface vii

Chapter 1 Questions about Native Americans 1

How Are We Influenced by Native American Cultures? 2
Who Is a Native American? 5
Population Figures 7
Where Did Native Americans Originate? 8
What Later Influences Came across the Seas? 10
Precontact History North of Mexico, An Overview 12
How Have Native American Cultures Been Studied? 16
What Do We Know of Native American Languages? 21
How Can We Group Tribes? 22
Ethnographic Studies, An Overview 24
Additional Sources 24
Selected Bibliography 28

Chapter 2 Indian—Non-Indian Relations 31

Early Contact 32
Subsequent Destruction and Displacement of Peoples 36
U.S. Treaties 38
Administration of U.S. Indian Affairs 41
Canada, The First Nations 41
Greenland, A Brief Summary 43
Landmark U.S. Indian Policies 44
Forces Fostering Native American Identity 47
Other Recent Developments 56
Native Americans and Anthropologists 64
Comparing Cultures 66
Additional Sources 68
Selected Bibliography 68

Chapter 3 The Chipewyan: Subarctic Hunters 71

People, Population, and Language 72
Chipewyan Country 72
First Contact with Fur Traders and Missionaries 74
Aboriginal Life 75
Early Historic Changes 87
Becoming Modern at Snowdrift (Lutselk'e) 90
Contemporary Lutselk'e 99
Additional Sources 104
Selected Bibliography 104

Chapter 4 The Kuskowagamiut: Riverine Eskimos 107

People, Population, and Language 108
Differences among Eskimos 110
Russian Contact 110
Aboriginal Kuskokwim Eskimos 111
The Early Impact of Colonialism 126
Life at Napaskiak 129
Alaska Native Land Claims 137
Additional Recent Changes 139
Additional Sources 142
Selected Bibliography 144

Chapter 5 The Cahuilla: Gatherers in the Desert 145

Population and Language 146
Early Historic Contact with Non-Indians 146
Aboriginal Life 149
Early Historic Changes 165
Palm Springs Cahuilla Land 166
A Note about Clan 172
Additional Sources 173
Selected Bibliography 173

Chapter 6 The Crow: Plains Raiders and Bison Hunters 175

Origin Myth, Population, and Language 176
Life before Historic Contact 177

Early Contact with Non-Indians	178
Early Historic Life	180
Later Historic Changes	199
The Background to Modern Life	202
Additional Sources	211
Selected Bibliography	211

Chapter 7 The Yurok: Salmon Fishers of California 214

People, Population, and Language	215
First Contact with Outsiders	216
Aboriginal Life	217
Early Historic Influences	240
Later Historic Life	241
Modern Developments	243
Additional Sources	247
Selected Bibliography	247

Chapter 8 The Tlingit: Alaskan Salmon Fishers 249

People, Population, and Language	250
Early Contact with Explorers and Fur Traders	250
Aboriginal Life	252
Early Historic Changes	276
Becoming Modern	280
Current Developments and Issues	285
Additional Sources	289
Selected Bibliography	289

Chapter 9 The Hopi: Farmers of the Desert 292

People, Population, Language, and Habitat	293
Early Contact with the Spanish	294
Aboriginal Life	296
More Recent Historic Changes	317
Emergence of the Modern Hopi	321
Contemporary Issues	323
Additional Sources	327
Selected Bibliography	327

Chapter 10 The Navajo: Transformations among a Desert People 329

- The Background 331
- Traditional Life 341
- The Comparatively Recent Past 355
- Present-Day Developments 360
- Additional Sources 364
- Selected Bibliography 364

Chapter 11 The Mesquakie: Warriors and Farmers of the Woodland Fringe 367

- Origin Myth, Population, and Language 368
- Early Conflicts 369
- Early Historic Life 375
- From Iowa and Back 386
- Later Developments 389
- The Recent Past 394
- Additional Sources 402
- Selected Bibliography 402

Chapter 12 The Iroquois: Warriors and Farmers of the Eastern Woodlands 404

- People, Population, and Language 405
- Origin Myth 407
- Early Involvements with Non-Indians 407
- Early Historic Life 411
- Later Historic Changes 429
- The Six Nations Reserve 433
- Recent Developments on the Reserve 436
- Skywalkers 439
- Nationalism and Sovereignty 442
- Additional Sources 444
- Selected Bibliography 444

Chapter 13 The Eastern Cherokee: Farmers of the Southeast 447

- People, Population, and Language 448
- Early Contact and Conflicts with Non-Indians 449
- Early Historic Life 450
- Later Historic Changes 458
- Becoming Modern 464
- The Contemporary Scene 470
- Additional Sources 474
- Selected Bibliography 474

Chapter 14 The Natchez: Sophisticated Farmers of the Deep South 477

- People, Language, and Population 478
- History of Natchez–French Relations 478
- Aboriginal Life 481
- Tattooed Serpent’s Oration 497
- The Demise of the Natchez 497
- Additional Sources 499
- Selected Bibliography 500

Chapter 15 Current Realities, Fears, and Hopes 501

- Current Realities 502
- Fears and Hopes 506

- Glossary 509
- Pronunciation Guide 517
- Name Index 521
- Subject Index 525

1 Questions about Native Americans



*We ask only an even chance
to live as other men live.
We asked to be recognized as men.*

Chief Joseph, Nez Perce Tribe, 1877

THIS ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY begins by focusing on general questions about American Indians living north of Mexico. How have we been influenced by Indians? Who is a Native American? How long have their ancestors been in the New World, and where did they originate? The answers to these questions, and others, are the subject of this chapter. They provide essential background information for the account, in the next chapter, of what happened as Indians became deeply involved with non-Indians.

| How Are We Influenced by Native American Cultures?

Our thoughts about Indian influences on our lives commonly focus on artifacts borrowed from them, such as birch-bark canoes, moccasins, parkas, snowshoes, and toboggans. The shortness of this list reflects the vast technological differences between the life-styles of aboriginal Americans 500 years ago and those of contemporary Americans. Our industrial technology is so foreign to Indian culture that they could not be expected to have contributed a great deal to it. Furthermore, most of us have lost an intimate association with the land, a quality that typified Native American life. Nevertheless, we should neither minimize nor deny the place of Indians in our cultural heritage.

We tend to forget that we are most indebted to American Indians for our country itself, because this land was theirs. Yet, it is doubtful that the thoughts of most non-Indian Americans linger on Indians for very long. We take them for granted, which is a clear indication that they are an intimate part of our lives. We may learn about their ways in grade school and something about their history in high school. At Thanksgiving we feast on foods exploited by Native Americans: beans, cranberries, maize (corn), pumpkin, and turkey. We may visit Indian reservations and read novels about Indians. These are the ways in which Indians often intrude on our thinking. Another dimension of their presence is worthy of attention. Native Americans are a challenge because our responses to them represent a homegrown experiment in tolerance, understanding, and compassion.

In historical perspective, one enormously important borrowing by non-Indian Americans occurred along the eastern seaboard during colonial times. Precariously established early European settlers acquired the knowledge and technology associated with maize from local Indians. They were taught by Indians how to cultivate and store corn and how to prepare it as food. This Indian contribution may not seem significant today, but at the time it was immensely important to non-Indian survival. In addition, maize has emerged as one of the most important food crops in the modern world.

The list of Indian discoveries and inventions in all of the Americas becomes longer with the inclusion of American Indian cultures in Central and South America, which were the most elaborate cultures. To the inventory are added most species of beans, chili peppers, chocolate, peanuts, potatoes,

sweet potatoes, tobacco, and tomatoes, as well as a few material items, such as hammocks, pipes, and the rubber syringe. Important medicines include cocaine, curare, ipecac, and quinine. The list is still not long, but some of the plants and rubber products are of immense economic importance in the modern world.

It may be asked why, from a global perspective, North American Indian culture was comparatively less elaborate than those further south. It was not from any lack of intelligence among Indians but rather because of the nature of their environmental setting and its possibilities for development. The New World was largely devoid of animals with great potential for domestication, such as cows and pigs; nor did there exist such grains as barley and wheat. More important, in the New World the animals and plants that did have potential as domesticates were *not* concentrated in one restricted geographical area. A contrary situation existed in the Old World, where the basis for most of Old World civilization emerged in the Near East about 8000 B.C. New World developments, however, are not to be cast aside as failures. One must recognize that in aboriginal Mexico and Peru, complex societies emerged with large populations and elaborate life-styles; in these regions the environmental potential for indigenous cultural developments was far greater than in settings to the north.

American English words and phrases based on a background of Indian contacts persist. Examples such as *Indian summer*, *happy hunting ground*, *medicine man*, *speaking with forked tongue*, and *burying the hatchet* are known widely. When place-names are added, the list becomes staggering; included are the names of not only lakes and rivers but also states and cities. Indian trails were important not only for their names but also as routes for future highways.

Indians played an important role in shaping the belief system of one of the few large and important religions originating in the United States, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons. *The Book of Mormon* relates that Indians originated from a Jewish population that entered the New World before Christian times. According to Mormon beliefs, Indians descended from the Lamanites; although these were thought to be a degenerate people, the Mormons have been inordinately kind in their dealings with Indians. As noted by A. Irving Hallowell (1958, 461), the inclusion of population theory in a religious dogma "could hardly have occurred anywhere but in early nineteenth-century America."

In early American literature no subject had greater appeal than the Indians, but their literary image has been far from uniform. The Indian entered into American literature through speeches recorded during treaty deliberations. The oratorical skills of Indians were appreciated, and the texts were printed for general circulation in the eighteenth century. Because Indians were close at hand in the eastern states and were an obstruction when whites coveted more land, they soon were viewed as foes. As the frontier expanded westward in the first half of the nineteenth century, the image of the Indian

reverted to that of a nonantagonist, in fact to a romantic figure. Drawing on accounts about Indians, James Fenimore Cooper wrote his great novels and conceived the character of Leatherstocking, a white Indian without literary equal. *The Song of Hiawatha*, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, appeared in 1855 and was a literary marker of this era. One of the most popular nineteenth-century American plays was *Metamora*, and playwrights have continued to build plots around Indians. Included in the first American opera, *Tammany*, performed in 1794, was a Cherokee melody, and the Indian exists in such American folk songs as Charles Cadman's "From the Land of Sky Blue Waters" and "Red Wing" by Thurland Chattaway and Kerry Mills. Other Indian contributions to the arts are now a part of American history; these include Wild West shows, the Indian medicine show, the cigar-store Indian, and the romantic Indian as a subject for painters.

Along the western frontier, Indians came to be regarded as they had been in the East by non-Indian Americans who sought land. According to these settlers, the Indian impeded progress and was a form of vermin to be exterminated. After Indians had been defeated in skirmishes and wars and remnant Indian populations were confined to reservations, these people again could be viewed romantically; even before the West was colonized, the Indian was a figure in nearly half of the 320 dime novels originating in the 1850s. The Indian theme never died but was recast with the introduction of motion pictures and radio. Needless to say, American television owes a great debt to the Indian; nor is the Indian forgotten in contemporary novels.

The contemporary popularity of Indians quite possibly began to spread broadly after the Boy Scouts of America incorporated in 1910. Scouting placed considerable emphasis on Indian crafts, dances, lore, and other customs. In this manner, Indians entered the mainstream of childhood socialization for countless non-Indian males. For females, the programs of the Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Girls likewise stressed Indian culture. These influences appear to have helped give rise to "the hobby," words used to identify non-Indians interested largely in American Indian arts, crafts, dances, and songs. As noted by William K. Powers (1988, 557), the hobbyist movement emerged after World War II. Every major city has or has had such an organization, especially in the Midwest; they sponsor powwows in which Indian costumes and dances represent a focal activity. This development in turn contributed to the expanding popularity of events organized by Indians and others for Indians and non-Indians alike. No one knows for certain how many powwows are held in the United States and Canada each year, but in 1997 the estimate was 2000 such events. A prominent feature usually is Indian dance performances; parades, rodeos, and the sale of craft items are widely included. Among the largest powwows is the one held by the Mashantucket Pequot, the owners of the extremely profitable Foxwoods casino in Connecticut. This four-day gathering is inspired by a traditional corn festival. In 1997 it attracted over 2000 dancers for prize money in excess of \$850,000. For outsiders, powwows provide entertainment above all else; but for the Indians themselves, the purpose may