

Introduction

Mark B. Spencer
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

The theme of the Tenth Native American Symposium focused on preserving Native heritage in all its manifold aspects. The keynote speaker was Dr. Brad R. Lieb, who is a Cultural Resources Specialist with the Chickasaw Nation Division of Historic Preservation. His presentation highlighted archaeological research at several Chickasaw village sites and artifact collections in the pre-Removal Chickasaw homelands of north-eastern Mississippi. Also at the keynote event, several Southeastern students put on a performance of *To Us It Wasn't Code*, a short play about the Choctaw Code Talkers of World War I, directed by Kathleen Hardgrove and written by Randy Prus, both Southeastern faculty members. The Billy Family of Broken Bow, Oklahoma then led a round of Choctaw Social Dancing, with Southeastern students and audience members participating. It was a memorable evening for all. ~~~~~As usual, the main symposium included a full day of conference papers and presentations on a wide variety of Native topics. A sampling of those are presented here, featuring the work of established academics, aspiring graduate students, and independent scholars. Complimentary copies of the proceedings will be provided to most colleges and universities with Native American Studies programs, and the entire contents will also be available online at our symposium website (<http://www.se.edu/nas/>).

The first two papers discuss the preservation and presentation of Native heritage in the institutional settings of museums, cultural centers, and casinos. **John Bodinger de Uriarte** and **Melissa Biggs** look a number of these venues in Connecticut, Minnesota, and California, while **Caroline Laurent** takes us on a brief tour of the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, which was a collaborative effort on the part of Minnesota Historical Society and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Post-secondary education is another important institutional resource for the preservation and dissemination of Native history and traditions. **Claudia Little Axe**, **Rachel Lloyd**, and **Linda Sue Warner** briefly review recent federal legislation addressing tribal colleges and Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) as an introduction to describing how Native ways of knowing have been integrated into the curriculum of Northeastern Oklahoma A & M College, a two-year school in Miami, Oklahoma. Educating the public also takes place outside of formal institutions, and **Rick Lybeck** analyzes the how the effort to commemorate the 2012 sesquicentennial of the U.S.-Dakota War in southern Minnesota raises and illuminates the thorny problems of public pedagogy and dominant discourse that surface with such sensitive issues.

6 Introduction

The next group of papers also addresses historical themes. The changing historical, literary, and anthropological views of the Natchez people of Mississippi are explored by **Noel Edward Smyth**, and **Neal M. Hampton** reviews the Congresses of 1934 between Native leaders in Oklahoma and representatives of the federal government over problems in that newly created state. The use of oral history in reclaiming a Native perspective on the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians in North Carolina is examined by **Mattea V. Sanders**, while **Stanley Rice** offers a personal reflection on the life of Nanyehi, a Cherokee woman who was his sixth great grandmother. Finally, **Gretchen Eick** discusses the work of three Native writers in the opening decades of the 20th century, Charles Eastman, Luther Standing Bear, and Zitkala Sa, who published autobiographical reflections on their own lives, and especially their traumatic childhoods, that vividly illustrate the struggle of Native people caught between the ways of their ancestors and the dominant white society that had supplanted them

A philosophical approach can be found in the next two papers. **Jennifer L. McMahon** uses the work of Martin Heidegger and contemporary social psychology to illuminate the preoccupation with mortality in five full-length feature films written and directed by Native Americans from 1998 to 2009, while **B. Steve Csaki** traces some similarities between Native thought and both Western philosophy in the form of early American Pragmatism and the Eastern tradition of Zen Buddhism.

Last but certainly not least, Native literature has always formed a popular topic in our symposia. In this issue **Yonka Krasteva** focuses on Linda Hogan's *People of the Whale*, and **Debashree Dattary** engages in a comparative study of Indigenous women's narratives from a feminist perspective.

In closing, I would like to thank again these contributors and all the participants in the Tenth Native American Symposium for making it such a success. Notices for the Eleventh Native American Symposium in November 2015 will be sent out by late spring of that year. I invite anyone who might be interested in presenting to submit a proposal. All topics relevant to Native American studies are welcome. My regular and email addresses can be found on the copyright page of this volume above, and the call for papers will be posted on our website.