

Introduction

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Budget constraints in the state of Oklahoma limited the Twelfth Native American Symposium to just one day, but we hope to expand again in the future. There was no keynote banquet, but the academic conference was held as usual, and our featured speaker at lunch was Dr. Amanda Cobb-Greetham, currently Chair of the Native American Studies Department and Director of the Native Nations Center at the University of Oklahoma. Some 25 other presentations were given on all aspects of Native American studies, including history, politics, religion, drama, art, philosophy, literature, film, and education. The papers presented here are intended as a sampling of those delivered at the conference, and they include the work of established academics, aspiring students, and independent scholars. Complimentary copies of the proceedings will be provided to selected libraries and universities with Native American Studies programs, and the entire contents will also be available both online at our symposium website (<http://www.se.edu/nas/>), and through links in the catalog entry of *WorldCat*.

The first two papers focus on historical topics. **David Michael Smith** employs a wide variety of sources to estimate the total numbers of indigenous peoples in the Western hemisphere who perished over five centuries as part of the “demographic collapse” that followed in the wake of Columbus. The devious and often extra-legal ways that American settlers cheated the Kickapoo Indians of their rightfully allotted lands in Kansas is explored by **Stephen Egbert** and **Paula I. Smith**.

History-in-the making could be seen in the lengthy 2016-17 protest by Native peoples against the proposed oil pipeline near the Standing Rock Reservation in North and South Dakota. Based on their own personal experience of the event, **Michael W. Taylor** looks at the various educational opportunities it provided on a host of issues, while **Peter A. Huff** considers the surprising religious aspects.

The arts figured prominently in this year’s symposium. A number of Southeastern drama students participated in a one-act multi-media presentation and play *Telling Our Stories*, that was written, directed and produced by Southeastern professor **Kathleen Hardgrove**. The paintings of Summer Zah, a contemporary artist of Navajo, Jicarilla Apache and Choctaw heritage, are discussed and analyzed by **Jennifer L. McMahon**, while **Kameron Dunn** uses Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* to highlight various aspects of Native identity, and Sidney Lewis looks at the recent film **The Revenant** as providing a more nuanced representation of Native Americans than many Hollywood films of the past.

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Finally, questions of selfhood are explored in two papers. **Steve B. Csaki** attempts to lay the preliminary foundations for a discussion of the “Native self” in opposition to traditional Western notions of autonomous being and the “soul,” while Tara **Hembrough** addresses the interaction of Native American stereotypes and Native identity in Sherman Alexie’s short story “What You Have Pawned I Will Redeem,” as part of a Composition I course specially geared toward returning veterans here at Southeastern. **Noah Patton** then concludes the volume by providing a brief resume of famous Oklahoma war heroes that she researched as background and context for Professor Hembrough.

In closing, I would like to thank again these contributors and all the participants in the Twelfth Native American Symposium for making it a success. Special thanks are also due to the other members of the Native American Symposium Committee, especially Lauren Rowland, the current Director of our Native American Institute, and her staff members Jennifer Kemp and Brandy Cardinelle. I will be retiring at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, but I am sure that Lauren and her staff, along with some new faculty recruits, will not only continue the event, but also take it in new and exciting directions. Notices and a call for papers for the Thirteenth Native American Symposium in November 2019 will be sent out next spring. I invite anyone who might be interested in participating to submit a proposal or inquiry. All topics relevant to Native American studies are welcome. My contact information inside the cover page will be good for another year, if anyone is seeking additional information.