

# INTRODUCTION

Mark B. Spencer  
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

The Seventh Native American Symposium proved another unqualified success. The number of papers presented held steady from the previous conference, and our outstanding new Student Union here at Southeastern offered a highly congenial facility for holding the event. The keynote speaker was the distinguished Native American legal scholar Rennard Strickland, and other special guests included the composer Jerod Tate, filmmaker Steven Heape, and poet Ron Wallace. The papers presented here are intended as a representative sample of those read at the conference, and they cover a wide variety of topics. Particularly noteworthy is the growing international participation in the symposium, represented by papers in this volume from France, India, and Russia. It is surprising and highly gratifying to learn that Native American Studies are actively pursued in so many places around the world. As with previous issues, complimentary copies of this publication will be sent to colleges and universities with Native American Studies programs, and the papers will also be posted on our symposium website, where they will be readily available to anyone who might be interested. The address of this website has recently been changed, and it can now be found at <http://www.se.edu/nas/>.

The opening papers address Native political and legal issues. **Timothy Baylor** examines the radical political activism of the American Indian Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, assessing the effectiveness of the strategic choices it made, above all the move beyond “normal politics” and the rejection of the principle of nonviolence as adopted by other protest groups of the period such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference under Martin Luther King. **Marine Le Puloch** from the University of Paris 7-Diderot, on the other hand, reviews the actions taken by the Lubicon Nation of northern Alberta to pursue their aboriginal rights in the Canadian courts. She traces the tortuous progress of their original suit and its subsequent appeals over the course of some fifteen years, illuminating the problems and frustrations in seeking legal recourse for Native peoples.

The next two papers focus on educational issues. **Lisette Rice** details the history of the Cherokee Female Seminary in an effort to understand the underlying ideas that shaped both female and Native education in the nineteenth century, paying special attention to the curriculum of instruction at these institutions. Pressing issues in Native American education today are the focus of **John B. Love** and **Michael Kallam**. They first provide copious data assessing the academic performance of Native American students relative to other ethnic groups, and then they attempt to elucidate the various factors at work behind the data, such as cultural issues, learning styles, and questions of choice and participation in educational opportunities.

## 8 Introduction

**Shirley Frey** introduces two papers of predominantly historical interest. Her essay reviews the two-year ethnological expedition of Prince Maximilian of Wied, whose fame has been rather overshadowed by that of his accompanying artist Karl Bodmer. The work of both men was crucial to preserving all that is left of the Mandan people and their culture today. The familiar story of the assassination of Major Ridge in the tragic quarrels between the various factions of the Cherokee Nation following their removal to Oklahoma receives a new personal context in the paper by **Patrick Pynes**. He traces the participation of his own blood relations in the affair, along with their subsequent move to East Texas, where they established the Mount Tabor Indian Community of Rusk County.

Native American literature is always a popular topic at the symposium, with numerous sessions each year. **Debashree Dattaray** of India, who was in the United States last year on a Fulbright grant, explores the problems that arise when attempting to approach Beatrice Culleton's *Spirit of the White Bison* from currently established theoretical contexts, while N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain* is examined by **Stacy Pratt** from the critical standpoints of autobiography and American Indian Literary Nationalism. **Joseph M. Faulds** invokes the Native American mythopoetic spiral journey of the hero as a model for interpreting Charles Eastman's memoir *From Deep Woods to Civilization*, which recounts his own unique path from a Dakota boyhood to Dartmouth and Boston Universities, followed by a distinguished career as a doctor, writer, educator, and advocate for Native people and culture during the second half of the 19th century.

Issues of Native American identity form the focus of the last two papers. **Richard Moon** explores what it means to be a "mixedblood" in the work of Louis Owens, and Native American stereotypes as seen from a Russian perspective are discussed by **Oksana Danchevskaya**.

Once again, I would like to thank these contributors and all the participants in the Seventh Native American Symposium for making it such a success. The call for papers will be sent out early this spring for the Eighth Native American Symposium in November 2009. I invite all who might be interested in participating to send me a proposal or inquiry. As always, 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 also be posted on our website.