INTRODUCTION

"Times Are Altered with Us Indians"

A Creek chief died. When the chief was dead, he appeared before Gohantone, who said to him, "This land belongs to you and your children forever. This land will be yours forever, but these whites who have just come will overwhelm you and inherit your land. They will increase and the Indian will decrease and at last die out. Then only white people will remain. But there will be terrible times."

—Yuchi legend, paraphrased from George E. Lankford, *Native American Legends*[1]

The times are exceedingly altered, yea the times are turned upside down; or rather we have changed the good times, chiefly by the help of the white people.

—Mohegan Indians to the Connecticut Assembly, 1789

A WORLD OF CHANGES

For thousands of years before Europeans set foot in North America, Indian peoples pioneered, settled, and shaped the land. Societies and traditions evolved and changed; civilizations rose and fell. By the time Europeans arrived and believed they had "discovered" America, the original inhabitants had developed long histories, a wealth of stories and legends, diverse political systems and social structures, hundreds of different languages, complex religions and elaborate rituals, beautiful art forms, practical styles of architecture, and far-reaching networks of trade and communication.

They developed effective hunting, fishing, and farming techniques; they cultivated new crops and integrated new foods into their diets; in some areas of the country they built irrigation networks to enable them to grow crops in desert terrain. In many societies, hunters observed rituals that helped them maintain respectful relationships with the animals they hunted. Warfare and diplomacy also followed prescribed protocols.

Communities changed size and shifted location in response to military, political, economic, and ecological pressures. Indian cities like Cahokia, at the junction of major trade routes near what is today East St. Louis, had reached their zenith and were already in decline by the time Europe emerged from its "Middle Ages."

When Europeans penetrated the continent they encountered a wide variety of Indian peoples—Abenakis and Wampanoags in New England, Iroquois in New York, Delawares in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Shawnees in Kentucky and Ohio, Cherokees in Tennessee and the Carolinas, Creeks in Georgia and Alabama, Choctaws and Chickasaws in Mississippi—and called them all "tribes" as if they were static units. But many of these societies were in flux, and all were descendants of ancient peoples, living on the foundations of civilizations that stretched back to time immemorial. Change was nothing new in North America.

Nevertheless, the changes that followed the European invasion of North America dwarfed what had gone before. As historian James Merrell has described, the invaders created a "new world" for Native Americans, one that demanded continual adaptation and adjustment.[2] The Indian people whose words appear on these pages were living in a world that was literally changing before their eyes. Contact with Europeans did not monopolize their lives and thoughts, but their comments in speaking to Europeans reveal their concerns about the transformations they witnessed and their opinions about Europeans as the primary agents of change.

The most devastating agents of change, however, were invisible to the Indians. Europeans and Africans brought germs and viruses of lethal diseases that were common in the Old World but unknown in America before 1492. Smallpox, plague, measles, yellow fever, pneumonia, tuberculosis, diptheria, influenza, and a host of other diseases spread like wildfire among Indian populations who had little or no immunity to the new killers. Scholars disagree in their estimates of the population of North America in 1492, although many accept a figure of somewhere between five and ten million as a reasonable guess.

The impact of the new diseases on this population constituted one of the greatest biological catastrophes in human history. Whole tribes were wiped out. Others lost 50, 75, 90 percent of their population. Indians from the Hudson River told the Dutch explorer Adriaen Van der Donck in 1656 "that before the smallpox broke out amongst them, they were ten times as numerous as they are now, and that their population had been melted down by this disease."[3] Diseases raced along well-traveled trails and trade routes, killing thousands of Indian people who had not yet laid eyes on a European.

The Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth in the 1620s, in the wake of a

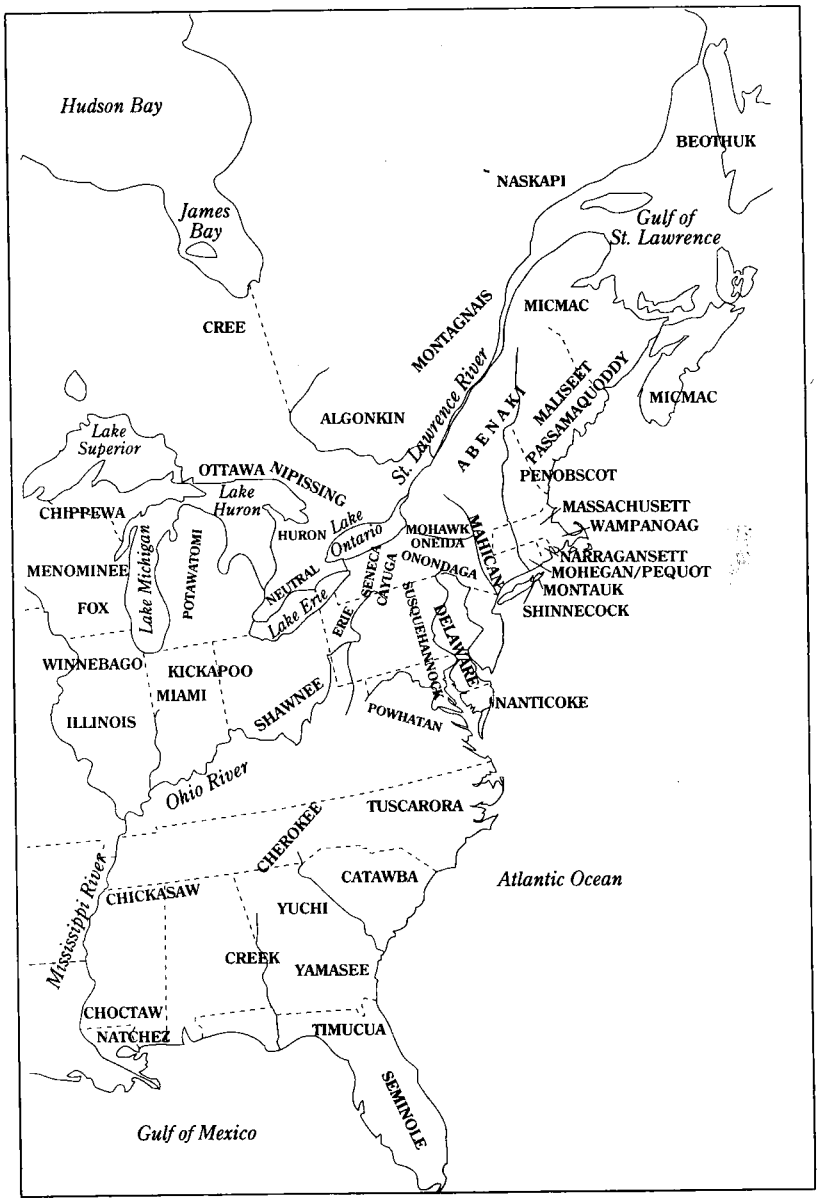

Figure 1. Indian Peoples of the Eastern Woodlands
The map shows the location of selected tribes at the time they first met Europeans. (The Seminoles migrated south to Florida, separating from the Creek Confederacy in the eighteenth century.)

massive epidemic in New England between 1616 and 1619, found the area virtually empty of Indian people. The Pilgrims attributed this circumstance, like most others, to divine providence: God had cleared the land of the "heathen" to make way for His chosen people. Later generations better understood the workings of disease: In the 1760s the British at Fort Pitt gave blankets from the smallpox hospital to Delaware Indians as a form of germ warfare. Europeans who traveled into Indian country frequently saw abandoned villages; the people they met were usually survivors of one or more epidemics. From the fifteenth century to the twentieth century, diseases introduced by Europeans constituted the number one killer of American Indian people. While Indian populations plummeted, the colonial population doubled every twenty-five years in the eighteenth century. By 1790, the year of the first United States census, the original inhabitants of the eastern woodlands had become engulfed in a sea of peoples from Europe and Africa.

Disease disrupted all aspects of Indian life. Normal hunting and planting activities were interrupted, producing hunger and famine, which in turn rendered populations more vulnerable to disease.

The social fabric of Indian society was torn apart as elders, providers, storytellers, clan relatives, healers, and counselors perished. These people were also grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, cousins and children. After an epidemic of smallpox swept through the Wampanoag Indians on Martha's Vineyard in 1645, a Wampanoag sachem named Tawanquatuck described the plight of communities bereft of their elders: "A long time ago they had wise men, which in a grave manner taught the people knowledge, but they are dead, and their wisdome is buried with them, and now men live a giddy life, in ignorance, till they are white headed, and though ripe in years, yet they go without wisdome to their graves."[4] At the very time when Indian societies needed all their resources to deal with the new and growing threat of European invaders, their capacities for resistance were being steadily eroded by recurrent outbreaks of disease. Some communities went under; others merged with neighboring villages as a way of surviving. Epidemics left survivors bewildered and heartbroken.

One reason diseases spread so rapidly was that Indian peoples, who traded extensively among themselves, were eager to trade with Europeans. European traders offered Indians guns, metal goods, woolen clothing, alcohol, and a wide variety of other items in exchange for beaver belts and deerskins. In some of the southern colonies, the English traded for Indian slaves, encouraging tribes to raid their enemies for captives.

Native Americans saw the benefits that the new goods could offer, but they also realized the cost. Traditionally, Indian trading involved exchanging gifts as a way of making and maintaining alliances and friendships. Europeans traded for profit. Many Indian hunters now catered to European market demands rather than the needs of their community and depleted animal populations. They became increasingly dependent on the Europeans for manufactured goods and frequently bought goods on credit, falling into debt to European traders.

Alcohol, bought from traders, caused social chaos, and alcoholism was added to the list of killer diseases imported from Europe. Competition for hunting territories and trade increased intertribal warfare. New weapons of destruction sparked arms races that upset existing balances of power and could be paid for only with beaver pelts and deerskins.

Most Indian peoples in the eastern woodlands were farmers as well as hunters. Corn was the staff of life throughout much of the region, but Indian peoples pursued diversified economies that, prior to their disruption, provided for human needs while imposing minimal demands on the ecosystem. In general, men hunted, fished, and cleared the fields; women did the planting and harvesting. There were times of hunger as well as times of plenty but, compared with European colonists—or even modern-day Americans—Indian peoples in the eastern woodlands seem to have been able to satisfy the necessities of life with relatively light expenditures of time and labor. Indeed, Indians have been called the original "affluent Americans."

Europeans, however, dismissed the Indian way of life as "nomadic," "barbaric," and wasteful, and settlers from England, France, and Holland, where land was in short supply, coveted Indian land. English Puritans invoked the Bible as justification for taking over land and making it productive. Settlers encroached on Indian lands until tensions exploded in bloody wars; when the Indians were defeated, they were forced to give up land as the price of peace. Imperial and colonial governments, land companies and speculators, and individual settlers employed wars and treaties, bribery and coercion, alcohol and corruption to systematically transfer the rich lands of eastern North America from Indian to European hands. Even when land transfers occurred without hostility, Indians realized they were getting the short end of the deal. "The Lands we gave you will last long," Cherokee chief Oconastota told southern Indian superintendent John Stuart in 1767, "but the Cloath & other necessaries with which you Supply us, soon wear out."[5]

In many eastern woodland societies the people held tribal lands in common, although individuals had personal property and sometimes kin groups had stronger claims to certain lands than did other members of the tribe. Europeans, however, insisted on owning the land. Land was now a commodity that could be transferred and property from which others could be excluded. Colonists cut down trees, erected fences, built roads and bridges,

and constructed mills and dams, changing the physical appearance of the landscape and rendering impossible the kind of life Indian people had once lived.

Domesticated livestock ate Indian corn and drove away much of the wildlife that survived the ravages of the fur and deerskin trade. Indians in Maryland complained to the colonial assembly in the mid-seventeenth century that "Your hogs & Cattle injure Us[.] You come too near Us to live & drive Us from place to place."[6] Native American affluence gave way to widespread poverty and starvation as the subsistence patterns that had sustained people for centuries now functioned only in truncated form.

Europeans attempted to change the Indians' spiritual world as well as their physical world. Missionaries labored to convert Indian people to Christianity and convince them to abandon beliefs and rituals that had served them well for centuries. Indian reactions sometimes were violent. As early as 1597 Guale Indians on the Atlantic coast of northern Florida killed five Franciscan missionaries; in 1647 Christian Apalachees near modern Tallahassee rebelled and killed three friars.

But with much of their world crumbling around them, some Indian people sought solace in the new religions Europeans offered them. Some became active converts to Christianity, even working as missionaries among their own people. Others, however, did not go that far. Those who did accept elements of Christian teaching and practice did not necessarily cast aside traditional religions. Why could not the Christians' God coexist with their own? Fearing that unconverted Indians would "contaminate" the converts and cause them to revert to "heathen" ways, some missionaries placed their Indian converts in separate communities, isolated from the rest of the tribe. Deep divisions developed in Indian communities between Christians and traditionalists and even between converts to different Christian denominations. Some Indians exploited Christianity as a way to reinforce their own challenges to leaders whose influence rested on traditional spiritual bases.

Christianity was not the only source of political upheaval. Europeans frequently interfered in Indian politics, undermining the authority of established leaders and promoting "client" chiefs who they hoped would do their bidding. Escalating warfare gave greater influence to young war chiefs, who formerly had exercised only limited and temporary authority. Older civil or peace chiefs found it increasingly difficult to control their young men. "Times are altered with us Indians. Formerly the warriors were governed by the wisdom of their uncles the Sachems but now they take their own way," explained an Onondaga sachem during the American Revolution.[7] Europeans complicated the process by funneling guns and gifts into Indian societies through the hands of the chosen chiefs. Client chiefs wore scarlet

or blue uniforms, with medals around their necks, as evidence of their allegiance to a European monarch. They fulfilled one of a chief's primary functions—that of generosity—by handing out muskets, blankets, and knives to their followers. They drew additional prestige from their connections to governments in Charleston or Quebec, or even in London and Paris.

In return, the client chiefs had to call their men to war. Indian peoples found themselves caught up in more than one hundred years of international wars fought in North America, as first Britain, France, and Spain and then Britain and the United States competed for dominance. U.S. Indian agent George Morgan said at the beginning of the American Revolution that Indians "have been long taught by contending Nations to be bought & sold."[8] Indian warriors served alongside European and colonial armies in campaigns against other European powers. Indian auxiliaries fought other Indians in wars that were not of their making and not in their interest but impossible to escape. The campaigns took Indians away from their villages, their families, and their economic and political responsibilities. Many Indians did not return.

War also hit Indian people hard on their home front. Colonial armies burned Indian crops and villages, spreading hunger and starvation. War shattered individual lives and disrupted community life. Before Europeans arrived, Indian warfare had tended to be small scale, waged seasonally, and marked as much by ritual as by bloodshed. Now generations of Indians grew up thinking that war was a way of life. The image of Indians as "warlike" became fixed in the minds of Europeans, further justifying their destruction and dispossession of native peoples.

War, like disease, destroyed some Indian communities and altered others. Indian people who fled from the fighting took refuge with other Indian communities in safer locations, entered mission villages, or huddled around colonial forts where the garrison provided meager food and shelter. In the mid-seventeenth century, war parties from the Iroquois Confederacy in New York smashed the confederacy of their Huron trade rivals in Ontario and pushed into the territory of other tribes. The survivors scattered throughout the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley, and many villages became virtual refugee camps. In the eighteenth century, as European pressures increased, tribes and communities splintered over issues of war and peace, resistance and relocation. Warriors who fought together often formed new communities. Shawnees lived with Creeks, Cherokees with Shawnees. Some Shawnees migrated across the Mississippi while others remained in Ohio. Many Abenakis from northern New England migrated to Canada; some drifted west to the Ohio Valley and beyond; others clung to their traditional lands. Delawares or Lenni Lenapes from New Jersey kept moving west away from

European settlement. Iroquois villages in New York gave shelter to peoples displaced from homelands farther east; meanwhile other Iroquois migrated west to Ohio and became known as Mingoes.

The European invasion of North America unleashed forces that shattered the world built by Native Americans over thousands of years. At a time when European colonists were establishing new societies in North America, Indian peoples were struggling to survive in a dangerous new world and trying to rebuild amid the ruins of their old worlds. They naturally viewed the history of their relations with Europeans with bitterness, but, contrary to Hollywood stereotypes, they did not suffer in silence. Nor did they succumb without a struggle. Indians who had been defeated militarily often resorted to quieter methods of cultural resistance that exasperated their conquerors. Indian leaders advocated varying strategies to ensure the survival of their people and to keep intact as much of their land base and culture as possible. Different Indian peoples had different experiences and different ways of dealing with European invasion. There was no single Indian response just as there was and is no single Indian voice. The selections in this book reveal some common themes but they also show that Indian peoples responded in various ways and played various roles in America's early history.

INDIANS IN COLONIAL AMERICA

At the end of King Philip's War (1675–76), when the English defeated and scattered the tribes of southern and central New England, Abenaki sachems from the north warned the English in Boston that they still could drive the settlers out of the country since it was "wide and full of Indians."[9]

At this distance, it is hard for us to imagine eastern America as a world in which, despite devastation from war and disease, Indians still were numerous and controlled large areas. Not only do we have to think across the gulfs of time and culture, but our vision is clouded by generations of historians who have written Indians out of our past and by the apparent silence of Indian people in the records customarily consulted by historians.

The roles traditionally assigned to Indian people in our history books involve helping the early settlers celebrate Thanksgiving and then resisting European and American expansion in a series of bloody frontier wars. After the Cherokee and other southern Indians are moved west in the 1830s along the "Trail of Tears," the "Indian" component of our history shifts beyond the Mississippi. There, the Plains Indians act out their prescribed roles of resistance and disappearance as the narrative of nation building gathers pace.

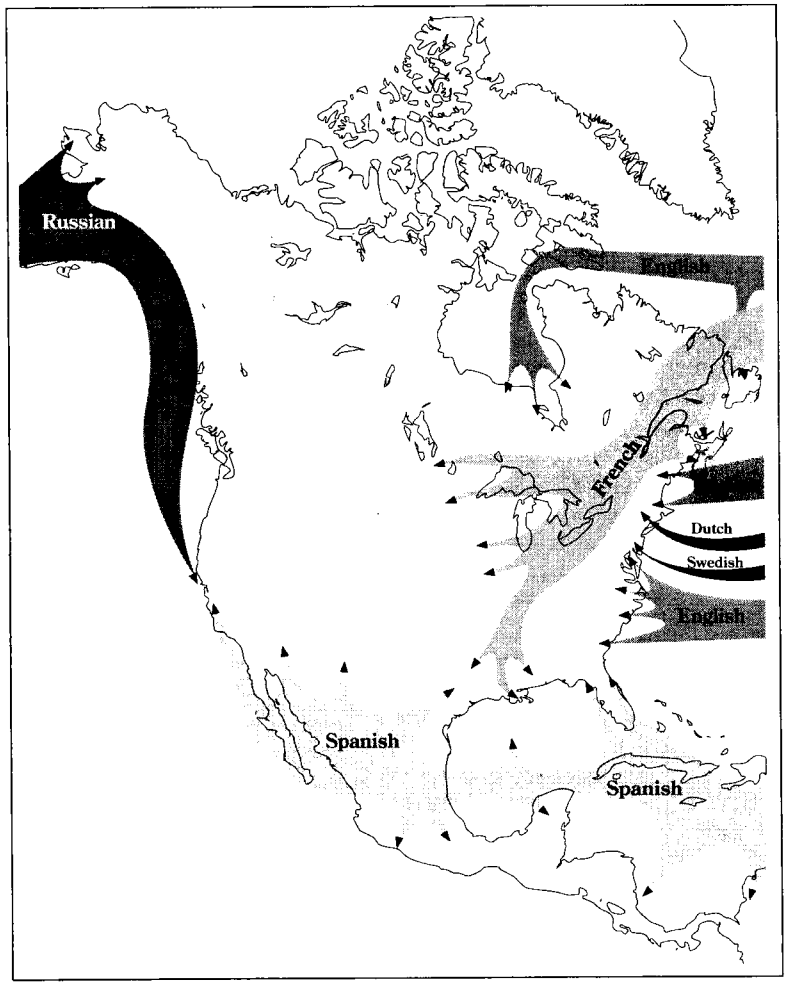

Figure 2. The Multiple European Invasions of Indian North America

Reality was much more complex. Indian peoples did not always fight and they did not disappear. They adapted and survived long after the "Indian wars" and most of our history books had passed them by. Indians remained part of the mosaic of early America, just as they remain part of the mosaic of modern America.

Throughout the colonial era, "Indian country" in eastern North America dwarfed the areas settled by Europeans, and Indian power shaped the continent's history. Europeans relied on Indian allies to help advance their imperial ambitions; colonial armies depended on Indian warriors to bolster their ranks and educate them in forest warfare. Indian protocol governed forest diplomacy and frontier trade. Indian ways figured both prominently and subtly in colonial lifestyles, playing their part in the transformation of Europeans into Americans. European colonists who entered Indian country to trade, hunt, negotiate, or escape the confines of their own society adhered to the customs of the country if they hoped to be successful.

As the world that Indians had made diminished, the boundaries between the Indian and European worlds became increasingly porous. Europeans frequently entered the Indians' world—as captives, traders, missionaries—and some liked it and stayed. But Indians also entered the Europeans' world and participated in the new, emerging societies.

Though our history books do not usually reflect it, Indian people were virtually everywhere in colonial America. They met Europeans when they first set foot on the North American continent at the end of the fifteenth century and served as mapmakers, guides, interpreters, and informants in the European rediscovery of America. They worked as hunters and traders in the commercial networks that linked Indian country to the markets of Europeans. They were allies and enemies in Europeans' wars, and statesmen—and stateswomen—in the diplomacy whose goal was to prevent and end wars. They were converts to and critics of Christianity. They were students, graduates, and dropouts from colonial colleges. They were sailors, whalers, basketmakers, seamstresses, peddlers, trappers, laborers, blacksmiths, carpenters, servants, slaves, prostitutes, teachers, and healers. Indian people walked the streets of colonial towns and villages, and they even visited European capitals as kidnap victims, delegates, and ambassadors. As a result, Indians appear in colonial writings, and their voices echo down to us across the ages.

Many of their roles and experiences receive only the briefest mention in the historical records, however. Mundane, nonviolent, everyday relationships never attract as much attention as do murder and mayhem. Many things simply went unrecorded because they were so much a part of daily life. Inevitably, when Indians and Europeans got together to talk things over, the discussions centered on the areas of friction between them, even when dressed in the rhetoric of friendship. In the late eighteenth century, Moravian missionary John Heckewelder said that the Delawares and other Indians of his acquaintance "loved" to complain of European ingratitude and injustice and did so at such length, in such detail, and with such eloquence that he often felt ashamed to be a white man. Indian speakers before and since have regularly reviewed their experiences since the arrival of Europeans.[10]

SOURCES OF INDIAN HISTORY: WEIGHING THE EVIDENCE

In reading any record, the historian must ask: Who wrote this? Why? For what audience was it intended? What was it meant to achieve? Can I trust it? Is it contradicted or confirmed by other sources, and are those other sources any more reliable? The need for such scrutiny is even greater in dealing with records about or attributed to American Indians, not because Indian people were any less reliable as a source of information but because so much of what they said survives through the filter of European writings. We need to know how long or how well the writer knew the Indians, whether he (or, in very rare instances, she) was sympathetic or hostile to them, and whether he was a reliable observer and an accurate recorder.

Even when Indian speeches were recorded accurately, we cannot accept them as automatically representing a true Indian voice, no matter how impressive those speeches appear. Did the Indian speaker's words reflect the sentiments of other Indian people who were not present at the meeting? Or was the speech intended primarily for a non-Indian audience, phrased to suit European cultural expectations and perhaps even telling the Europeans what they wanted to hear? Interpreters of Indian speeches complicated the problem. Sometimes, depending on the abilities of the interpreters present, a speech would have to be translated into another Indian language first and then into one or more European languages to produce the final version. Even when interpreters at a meeting were competent, sober, and honest (and there were plenty of instances where interpreters were not), how could they put into English or French many Indian idioms and concepts that did not translate across the cultural divide? To do their job effectively, interpreters not only had to know the words, they also had to appreciate different ways of looking at the world. Cadwallader Colden, governor of New York in the early eighteenth century, acknowledged that the English interpreters often did not do justice to Native American eloquence because Indian speakers employed many metaphors "which interpreted by an hesitating Tongue, may appear mean, and strike our Imagination faintly."[11]

Even in translations that rob them of nuances and fluency, Indian speeches display oratorical power and testify to the richness and importance of the spoken word in Native American cultures. Their metaphors and symbolism offer insights into how the speakers conceived of their universe

and their place in it. M. Scott Momaday, a Pulitzer Prize–winning Kiowa author and master of the written word, recently had this to say about the oral culture of his ancestors:

> Language was their element. Words, spoken words, were the manifestations of their deepest belief, of their deepest feelings, of their deepest life. When Europeans first came to America, having had writing for hundreds of years and lately the printing press, they could not conceive of the spoken word as sacred, could not understand the American Indian's profound belief in the efficacy of language.[12]

Until lately, Hollywood movies have created an impression that Indians spoke in monosyllabic utterances, breaking away from "how" and "um" only to deliver stock phrases like "white man speak with forked tongue." In reality, Indian orators spoke well and at length. Englishman John Josselyn, who traveled the coast of Maine in the seventeenth century, described the Indian speakers he heard as "poets" who delivered "formal speeches, sometimes an hour long."[13] Samuel Kirkland, a Presbyterian missionary among the Oneida Indians at the time of the American Revolution, attended a council at which the Oneida chief Good Peter "spoke for an hour like an Apollo & with the energy of a son of Thunder."[14] John Norton, an adopted Mohawk of Scots-Cherokee parentage who traveled extensively among the Indian nations early in the nineteenth century, said the Shawnees were "great talkers," had "natural eloquence," and spoke a language that was strong and melodious.[15]

Indian speakers employed rich images and powerful metaphors in their talks, but they also used humor, irony, sarcasm, anger, body language, and dramatic silences. Public speaking was an important part of Indian life, and oratorical prowess a common, respected, and often necessary skill. Indian leaders did not give orders to their people—many North American Indian languages contain no imperative voice—they enlisted their support through persuasion and influence. Many communities reached decisions by consensus, and effective leaders were those who were able to sway opinions by the power of their words. New York Governor Cadwallader Colden said that the Iroquois were "much given to speech making, ever the natural consequence of a perfect republican government; where no single person has a power to compel[,] the arts of persuasion alone must prevail."[16] Henry Timberlake, a young Virginian officer who accompanied a Cherokee delegation to England in 1762, said that the Cherokees were "fond of speaking well, as that paves the way to power in their councils."[17]

One of the most important arenas for discussions between Indians and

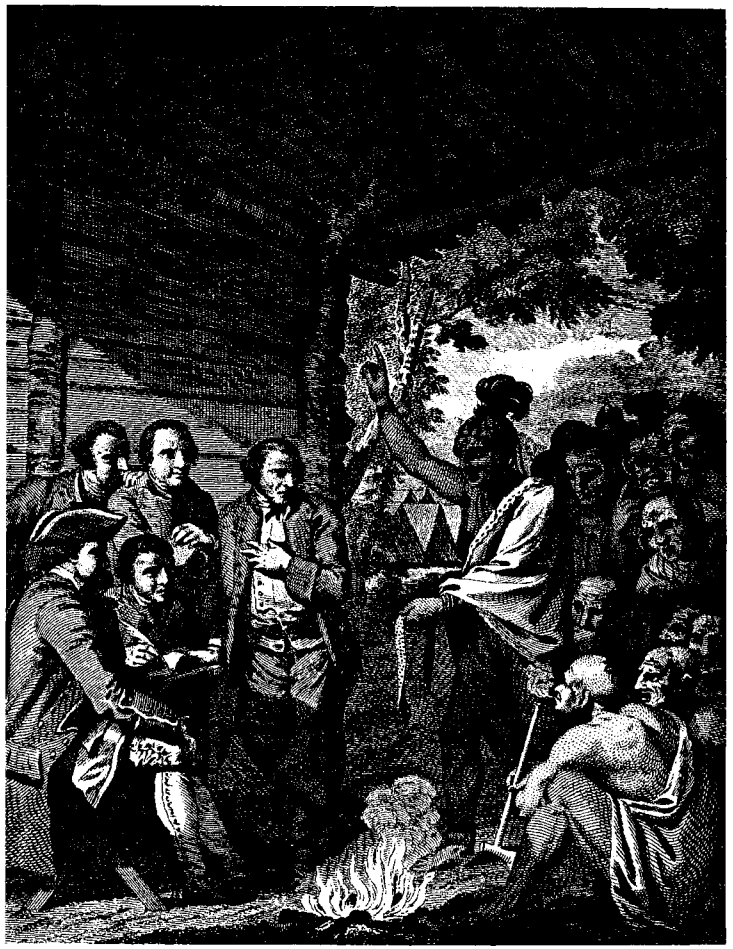

Figure 3. An Indian Orator Addresses the British, Speaking on a Wampum Belt
In this Benjamin West engraving of the peace talks in 1764 following Pontiac's War, an Indian orator speaks to Colonel Henry Bouquet and other British officers.

Europeans was treaty negotiations about land and trade, war and peace. Indians normally attached far greater significance to the words spoken than to the treaties written as a result of those talks. Indian speakers began negotiations by recapitulating what had been agreed upon at earlier meetings and even what the previous speaker had said, as a way of imprinting the spoken words on the minds and memories of the audience. "I cannot write as you do," a Cherokee headman told the governor of South Carolina in 1751. "My Toungue is my Pen and my Mouth my Paper. When I look upon Writing I am as if I were blind and in the Dark."[18] Indian delegates to councils ritually prepared the way for good talks by smoking the calumet, or peace pipe, and offering words of welcome and condolence. They punctuated their speeches by presenting strings and belts of wampum, the shells or beads that acted as a record of proceedings and without which nothing that was said could be considered binding. Treaty councils frequently lasted for days, sometimes weeks.

Europeans, as members of a culture that valued the written word, attached primary importance to the final treaty document rather than to the discussions that preceded it. In order to have a complete record of negotiations, however, they recorded Indian speeches frequently and at length. Indian speeches, translated by European interpreters and written down by European scribes, became part of the formal record of proceedings. Indian words also come down to us from more casual contacts. Traders, travelers, Indian agents, soldiers, missionaries, and others noted conversations they had with Indian people and sometimes quoted the views that Indians expressed in the course of these conversations.

White men did not always speak with "forked tongues," but they sometimes wrote with "forked pens." Indian speakers sometimes pointed nervously or angrily to the men who sat scribbling down their words in treaty councils, knowing from past experience that written words sometimes took on a life of their own. Mohawk Indians complained to Lieutenant Governor James DeLancey of New York in 1754 that even though they could find no one who had sold the land, "we find we are very poor: we thought we had yet land round about us, but it is said there are writings for it all."[19] Other Iroquois told British Indian superintendent Sir William Johnson in 1769: "We have often seen (and you know it to be true) that the White people by the help of their paper (which we dont understand) claim Lands from us very unjustly and carry them off."[20] Indians who later saw records of treaty proceedings sometimes objected strenuously to the written account of events and the statements attributed to them by the Europeans. Many more written accounts of treaty proceedings went unchecked: The Indians knew what they had said and had little inclination or opportunity to see if the Europeans had got the story straight. In some cases, the deeds and treaty documents that Europeans recorded or concocted were no more than legal instruments to dispossess Indian people of their land. They are not always an accurate record of what was said and done in meetings with Indian people, and even less often do they convey a sense of how Native Americans perceived and understood the proceedings.

Sometimes, reported Indian words owed more to imagination than to memory. Recorded conversations and casual talks between Indians and Europeans may accurately reflect the sentiments expressed in those exchanges, but they rarely constitute a verbatim record of what was said. In these cases, the Indians' words usually were put to paper some time after the conversations. Writers who reconstructed such talks from memory often embellished them by inserting words, phrases, or whole pieces of dialogue. One of the most famous Indian speeches from colonial times was that in which a Mingo chief known as Logan eloquently explained his reasons for going to war against Virginia after frontiersman Michael Cresap murdered his family in 1774. The speech so impressed Thomas Jefferson that he recorded a version of it in his Memorandum Book. Another version appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* in 1775. Jefferson embellished it further in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* in 1782. The final version reads as follows:

> I appeal to any white man to say, if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and he clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites, that my countrymen pointed as they passed, and said, "Logan is the friend of white men." I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Col. Cresap, the last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not sparing even my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it: I have killed many: I have fully glutted my vengeance. For my country, I rejoice at the beams of peace. But do not harbour a thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan?—Not one.[21]

The sentiments convey Logan's tragedy and the breakdown of relations on the Ohio frontier that led to Lord Dunmore's War with the Mingoes and Shawnees in 1774, but the language, style, and obvious biblical parallels suggest that Logan's original words were modified to suit the conventions of non-Indian readers.

In addition, authors commonly employed Indians as a literary convention. Authors would express their views—on society, the church, crime and

punishment, contemporary morals—by putting their own words in the mouth of an Indian speaker, who might be real or fictitious. Such speeches often *seem* expressive of Indian views as they contain pointed criticisms of Europeans and their world, but they are accurate only as a record of what a particular European thought Indians *should* think.

Indians who had not learned to write themselves frequently engaged the services of people who could, so that they were able to send letters and what they called "talks." Other Indians, however, did not require the services of translator or scribe. Indian diplomats sometimes spoke to Europeans in the new languages those Europeans had brought to America. Throughout the colonial era, European missionaries and teachers sought out promising Indian youths whom they could educate in their schools, in an effort to instill European skills, European values, and European religion. Indian pupils did not always accept the new teachings, but many did become literate in European languages. Some even learned to read and write in Latin and Greek. Many Indians living in the mission communities or "praying towns" established by Puritan missionaries in seventeenth-century New England could read, and some kept written records of land transfers, births, marriages, deaths, and wills. In the eighteenth century, the Mohegan Indian Samson Occom and other graduates of Eleazar Wheelock's Indian Charity School in Lebanon, Connecticut (which moved to Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1769 and became Dartmouth College), wrote letters, diaries, and even sermons. One student who attended the school was Joseph Brant, a Mohawk Indian who later attained prominence as a war chief during the American Revolution. Brant was able to read and write in both Mohawk and English, and he employed his talent to write letters, petitions, and complaints to colonial governments on behalf of himself and his people. The letters of Occom, Brant, and other literate Indians also give us an opportunity to read words written in private, rather than prepared speeches delivered in public at treaty councils.

Something written, or even published, by an Indian, however, does not necessarily represent a more authentic voice than the words attributed to an Indian by a European writer. The writer may have been Indian, but the reading audience generally was not. The written words might reflect the tastes of the audience rather than the writer's real beliefs and feelings. To our twentieth-century ears, *all* letters written in the seventeenth and eighteenth century can sound stiff and formal, and Indian students at colonial colleges were trained in the conventions of the time. In addition, Indian students often wrote letters with their teachers or missionaries literally or figuratively looking over their shoulders. The letters were often circulated or

sent to the college's benefactors to publicize the "progress" of Indian students at the school and to demonstrate the need for continued funding. Native American students and converts who put pen to paper to acknowledge that they had "seen the light" or to confess spiritual or moral "backsliding" may well have done so to impress European readers rather than to inspire or warn fellow Indians.

Indian peoples had their own ways of keeping records, keeping memory alive, and passing on knowledge and wisdom from one generation to the next by oral tradition. They did not use the written word in North America until Europeans introduced them to the power of print. After centuries of contact during which the pen had proven a powerful instrument of conquest and dispossession, Native Americans remained suspicious of the written word and respectful of memory and the spoken word. Four Guns, an Oglala Sioux Indian visiting Washington at the end of the nineteenth century, articulated these feelings: "Whenever white people come together, there is writing. When we go to buy some sugar or tea, we see the white trader busy writing in a book. Even the white doctor, as he sits beside his patient, writes on a piece of paper." The white people, he said, wrote so much that they "must think paper has some mysterious power to help them on in the world." Indians, in contrast, were

> puzzled as to what useful service all this writing serves. . . . The Indian needs no writing. Words that are true sink deep into his heart where they remain. He never forgets them. On the other hand, if the white man loses his paper, he is helpless.[22]

Historians customarily have rejected native oral traditions and stories as "mythology" and have given them little credit as a reliable record of events and experiences. In the last twenty years or so, however, scholars have taken new approaches to broaden our understanding of the Native American past. Ethnohistorians, combining the study of history and anthropology, now try to understand history in the terms of the people who lived through it. They recognize oral traditions as a valuable source, though one that, like the written documents, needs to be used with care: Human memory is fallible, and human beings are prone to remember things differently in the light of experience. This collection includes a few examples of what might be called "mythology" as a way of incorporating Native American traditions and tribal memories of first encounters with Europeans. Unlike the other documents in this collection, these folk traditions often were not written down until several generations after the event they recall. They sometimes reflect a general remembered impression rather than a precise historical occurrence.

Given the tenacity of memory handed down through the years in oral cultures, however, it is likely that they reflect well how Indian people felt about the bearded strangers they met.

In summary, colonial sources are rich in Indian voices. They need to be scrutinized for authenticity and accuracy. Sometimes Indians function as mouthpieces for European words rather than giving full expression to their own thoughts and feelings. Nevertheless, used critically and carefully, these sources offer us an opportunity to look back at early American history and see some occurrences through the words of native people rather than through the rhetoric so often employed by invading Europeans. The Indian voices that have survived from that time, even in muted and distorted form, allow us to question the assumptions of Europeans whose writings for so long monopolized our view of America's early history. They help us to remember that one people's nation building often means another's conquest, that "civilization" is in the eye of the beholder, and that America's colonial and national roots were planted in ground that Indian people had cultivated for thousands of years. Indian voices, however few and however faintly heard across the gulf of time and culture, also offer us something on which to build a fuller appreciation of what life was like in early America. It was a world inhabited not just by European men who had most of the power and did most of the writing, but also by Native Americans, African Americans, women, and children. Only when we include the experiences of all the peoples of early America can we begin to understand our past.

NOTES

[1]George E. Lankford, *Native American Legends* (Little Rock: Harvest House, 1987), 137; reprinted in Barbara Carpenter, ed., *Ethnic Heritage in Mississippi* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 42.

[2]James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

[3]Adriaen Van der Donck, "A Description of the New Netherlands," quoted in Dean R. Snow and Kim M. Lamphear, "European Contact and Indian Depopulation: The Timing of the First Epidemics," *Ethnohistory* 35 (1988): 27.

[4]Henry Whitfield, *The Light appearing more and more towards the perfect Day, or, A farther Discovery of the present state of the Indians in New-England, Concerning the Progresse of the Gospel amongst them* (London, 1651), in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society,* 3rd series, vol. 4 (1834): 112.

[5]Thomas Gage Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, vol. 137, item 6.

[6]*Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1884), 2:15.

[7]Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 163.

[8]Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh; George Morgan Letterbook, 2:2.

[9]Kenneth M. Morrison, *The Embattled Northeast* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 111.

[10]Rev. John Heckewelder, *History, Manners and Customs of the Indian Nations who once inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1876), 76.

[11]Cadwallader Colden, *History of the Five Indian Nations,* pt. 1 (London, 1727), xi.

[12]M. Scott Momaday, "The Becoming of the Native: Man in America before Columbus," in Alvin M. Josephy, ed., *America in 1492: The World of the Indian Peoples Before the Arrival of Columbus* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 18.

[13]Paul J. Lindholdt, ed., *Colonial Traveler: A Critical Edition of Two Voyages to New-England by John Josselyn* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1988), 97.

[14]W. Pilkington, ed., *The Journals of Samuel Kirkland* (Clinton, N.Y.: Hamilton College, 1980), 130.

[15]Carl F. Klinck and James J. Talman, eds., *The Journal of Major John Norton, 1816* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1970), 189.

[16]Colden, *History of the Five Indian Nations,* xx.

[17]Samuel Cole Williams, ed., *Lieutenant Henry Timberlake's Memoirs* (Johnson City, Tenn.: Watauga Press, 1927), 80.

[18]William L. McDowell, ed., *Colonial Records of South Carolina: Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1750–1754* (Columbia: South Carolina State Archives, 1958), 180.

[19]Annette Rosentiel, *Red and White: Indian Views of the White Man, 1492–1982* (New York: Universe Books, 1983), 86.

[20]James Sullivan et al., eds. *The Papers of Sir William Johnson,* 14 vols. (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1921–1965), 7:324.

[21]James H. O'Donnell III, "Logan's Oration: A Case Study in Ethnographic Authentication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65 (1979): 150–56.

[22]Quoted in Jerry D. Blanche, ed., *Native American Reader: Stories, Speeches and Poems* (Juneau, Alaska: Denali Press, 1991), 84–85.