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F O R E W O R D

WE HAVE TOO much information today. We are saturated by isolated facts for which we have great difficulty finding any familiar context. Indeed, "publication" no longer means acceptance by a prestigious journal. It can often mean simply posting an item on the Internet or talking with a reporter. We have come to believe that what is new is true, and so almost anyone can represent anything by merely appearing as a public figure in a discussion. How then can we make sense of what we think we know? One pseudo-fact can become the pivotal point in a controversy no one understands. Nowhere is this condition more endemic than the social sciences, but geology and archaeology contribute more than their share of confusion.

The social sciences badly need to take a break, collect their thoughts, begin to produce reliable histories of their respective disciplines, and clearly articulate their fundamental doctrines so that we can see the various trees of thought that represent the forests in which we labor. At present only people trained in the various social sciences have any idea where they began, where they have traveled, and where they are now. Lay people have not the slightest notion where social science doctrines and ideas originate. Nor do they know what are "acceptable" beliefs to which a majority of any discipline

would subscribe. Scholars working in other disciplines rarely get a glimpse into the inner working of neighboring sciences, so they accept much of the core scientific doctrine in the belief that others have been as rigorous, informed, and sincere as themselves.

The Law provides a sensible and useful model for the social sciences to consider. Recognizing that doctrines change with the passage of time, the development of new theories, and the admissibility of new kinds of evidence, the legal profession has a practice of appointing a prestigious committee of experienced scholars and practicing lawyers to review the various fields of law and issue what are called "Restatements." These documents summarize the current state of such topics as contracts, torts, procedure, and so forth. Judges, justices, practicing attorneys, legal aids, and interested lay people can turn to the Restatements and find an authoritative interpretation of the state of law without engaging in endless searches or being drawn into interminable battles about the primacy of any particular doctrine.

Such a practice might be immensely useful to the rest of the academic disciplines in ensuring that they remain credible sources of reliable information. The American Anthropological Association sent a statement to the Bureau of the Census in 1998 stating that race could not be determined scientifically. At the same time several prominent scholars were in federal court claiming that they had an overwhelming need to do tests on a skeleton found on the banks of the Columbia River, and many archaeologists encouraged the media to believe that they could determine the race of the remains. How can we have such conflicting views? What is the orthodox and proven here and what is speculation?

Fortunately, we have before us now a major effort to provide an honest history of American archaeology, at least as it has touched human beings—a topic that has hitherto been avoided or summarized in exotic technical articles inaccessible to most interested people. It is, frankly, refreshing and liberating to read *Skull Wars*, since some of the recommended readings I have encountered have been more in the nature of theological apologetics than starkly honest. Here we have a book that serves as a brilliant companion to Stephen Jay Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man* in educating us about the troubles and triumphs of establishing a body of knowledge about our ancestors. *Skull Wars*, consequently, will draw a certain amount of fire from the profession for its frankness and its invitation to the public to learn more about archaeology—more, perhaps, than "the profession" would like us to know.

When I read the manuscript, my rage was almost incandescent, and brushfires of emotion still break out when I think back to the senseless and

racist attitudes that have been acceptable to many archaeologists and anthropologists. Unfortunately, some of these ideas are still promoted by segments of the discipline. It is a sordid history and one that was probably kept from the public for many years. Would prestigious scholars have admitted to the world the robbing of Indian graves for the skulls only hours after an interment ceremony? Upon more reflection, however, I began to realize that part of my anger was at my own appalling ignorance of how archaeology developed in the first place.

Why didn't I know these things? How could I not have been skeptical of apparent truths so easily voiced by archaeologists when it seems plainly evident that many of their cherished doctrines are simply speculations that have become doctrine only because senior professors prefer to believe them? How could Junius Bird go to Monte Verde knowing little about the site's stratigraphy, spend forty-five minutes examining the artifacts, and reject the findings? How could thousands of trees have died to provide reams of paper for speculations on "Clovis Man" when the amount of worthwhile evidence can be mailed with a single postage stamp?

Each page here is a revelation, if you are as uninformed as I was, and teaches the reader to look critically at the current headlines instead of cheering science and moving to the sports section. Do we have Australian Aborigines as first settlers in the Western Hemisphere, exterminated by Mongol hordes who swept over the Bering Strait and immediately headed toward South America? Did Europeans march across some 1,400 miles of ice pack from France to Newfoundland to beat out Indians coming from the west? Did Africans colonize Central America in order to carve massive Olmec heads and bury them in the jungles? Can you compare some verb tenses and a few nouns in some Indian languages with some obscure Chinese dialect and announce that "waves" of Indians came across the Bering Strait? Can we pretend that the Vikings, the premier sailors and explorers of the Christian era, were content to set up a small winter village on the continent and explore no further? Is archaeology now more puffery than science?

Why are all of these speculations now demanding our attention? Well, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), passed some years ago with the consent and cooperation of archaeologists, is now experiencing its first major challenge. Congress, in passing the legislation, accepted without comment the popular interpretation of North American prehistory: Indians came first via the Bering Strait—a myth with little to recommend it. NAGPRA then stated that Indians needed only to prove their "cultural affiliation" to demand that bones be returned to them for reburial.

What is cultural affiliation? If you would take the traditional economic areas sketched out by anthropologists—hunters, fishermen, farmers, eastern woodlands, etc.—it would seem to me that about all a tribe would have to prove is that they occupied an area prior to Columbus. The scales were thus tilted far to the side that favored Indians—for a change. But this interpretation was also unfavorable to Indians, as people would be expected to enter every controversy involving ancient bones within a reasonable distance of their traditional occupancy area—whether they wanted to be involved or not. This is why, in some of the most controversial problems today, scholars have shifted their attack to demanding *genetic* proof of tribal affiliation—again, not difficult, but more complicated for many tribes.

Nevertheless, in most areas, scholars and Indians have worked together to discover as much as possible about newly discovered remains. When scholars have gone directly to the tribes involved, much progress has been made. But archaeology has always been dominated by those who waved "science" in front of us like an inexhaustible credit card, and we have deferred to them—believing that they represent the discipline in an objective and unbiased manner. Yet the discovery of a skeleton in the Columbia River with an arrowhead in his bones led to an excessively confused lawsuit over the treatment of the skeleton and a spate of claims by scholars that this skeleton could rewrite the history of the Western Hemisphere.

It has been an amazing experience to watch this discipline throw all caution to the winds and announce wild speculations as proven advances in science. Can a few archaeologists be so concerned with NAGPRA that they are willing to destroy the intellectual base of their own profession to negate it? Apparently so. The erosion will gnaw at the image of archaeology like a cancer. How, the layperson will ask, does archaeological speculation differ from Erich von Daniken's citation of the Nazca lines as evidence of early spacemen? David Hurst Thomas now marches into the swamp with the news, honestly stated but hardly welcome to his profession, that we should wash our dirty laundry now before things get completely out of hand, that we should carefully evaluate the present state of the discipline, and that we should build on the positive things now happening and work toward a more cooperative and productive future. Wise thoughts from a courageous thinker. Now, will we heed them?

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PROLOGUE: A HISTORY WRITTEN IN BONE

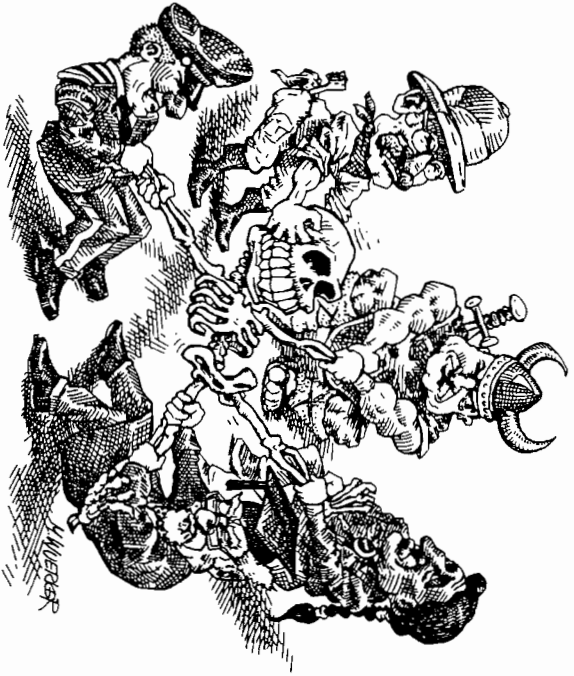
I like the way a man from 9,000 years ago could screw up Jim Chatters' life. He makes a scientific pronouncement like he's done thousands of times before and, in this case, he's opened up a hornet's nest.

—John Hamrah (1998), writer for *People* magazine

IN LATE JULY 1996, the coroner of Benton County, Washington, showed James Chatters a skull that had washed out from a Columbia River cutbank in the town of Kennewick. Chatters runs an archaeological consulting firm that, among things, helps the local coroner's office identify the human skeletons and assorted body parts that occasionally turn up. "Bones are my thing," says Chatters. "I just love puzzles."

Chatters has been doing archaeology in the area for three decades, and he's seen plenty of skulls like this one—long with narrow cheekbones and a protruding upper jaw—a typical middle-aged Caucasoid male, he thought. He accompanied the coroner to where the skull had been found by a couple of college students watching a hydroplane race. Sure enough, more bones were lying about the riverbank, and Chatters collected them all.

Laying out the nearly complete skeleton on a lab table, he took a series of measurements on the skull and long bones, then framed his preliminary



The Kennewick Fracas

forensic conclusion: male, Caucasoid, 40–55 years old at death, height about five feet nine inches. The fellow had lived a rough life. His skull had been fractured, chest crushed, and a chipped elbow reduced the use of his left arm. Some sort of large projectile—maybe a bullet or piece of shrapnel—had penetrated well into the right side of his hip. The man had survived this injury, and the bone had healed over, sealing the object deep inside.

Chatters tried x-raying the pelvis, but nothing showed up—the projectile wasn't metal. A CAT scan showed that it was a stone spear point with a distinctive leaf-shape. Deep inside this man's hip was a "Cascade point" like those used by hunters of the Columbia Plateau between 4,500 and 9,000 years ago. "I've got a white guy with a stone point in him," Chatters later told *The New York Times*. "That's pretty exciting. I thought we had a pioneer."

But Chatters had some doubts: How could a white settler get speared by a stone point perhaps thousands of years old? The badly worn teeth suggested a high-grit diet more typical of ancient Indian populations than Euroamerican pioneers, and the lack of cavities also suggested Native American

origins. And the skull just looked, well, old. Dogged by the inconsistencies, Chatters sent a scrap of hand bone to Evr Taylor, whose radiocarbon laboratory at the University of California (Riverside) is one of the world's best.

The lab called back three weeks later with news that would change Chatters' life: the bone sample was 9,200–9,500 years old. That made it one of the half-dozen oldest skeletons in the Americas—perhaps the most complete—and he knew that these results spelled big trouble. Shaken by the implications, Chatters e-mailed several archaeologists across the country asking for advice: "Subject: Need Help ASAP." As he said months later, "I knew then it would get very hot and heavy, which it did within 10 minutes."

So began the furious controversy over Kennewick Man, as Chatters called his find. In an interview with *The New Yorker*, published just months after the Kennewick discovery, Chatters said that he'd been "looking around for someone who matches this Kennewick gentleman, looking for weeks and weeks at people on the street, thinking, 'this one's got a little bit here, that one a little bit there.' And then, one evening, I turned on the TV, and there was Patrick Stewart . . . and I said, 'My God, there he is! Kennewick Man!'"

Patrick Stewart is, of course, the actor best known for his role as the suave Capt. Jean-Luc Picard on the television show *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Chatters added that "On the physical characteristics alone, [Kennewick Man] could fit on the streets of Stockholm without causing any kind of notice. Or on the streets of Jerusalem or New Delhi, for that matter."

The cover of *The New Yorker* asked, "Was someone here before the Native Americans?" The tabloid-style headline in *Discover* magazine trumpeted "Europeans Invade America: 20,000 BC." A cover story in *U. S. News and World Report* featured Kennewick Man as evidence for an "America Before the Indians." An article in *The Santa Fe New Mexican* began this way: "When Columbus came to the New World in 1492 and set in motion the chain of events that led to the decimation of Native Americans, was he unknowingly getting revenge for what was done to his ancestors thousands of years before?"

Based on the sketchiest of evidence, archaeologists and journalists alike began framing fresh theories. Maybe the earliest Americans crossed the land bridge from Asia to America in distinct waves—white-skinned Caucasoids first, followed by the dusky-skinned Mongoloids of northern Asia. What happened when they met up? Was there an ancient American race war? Did the tawny Mongoloids attack Kennewick Man with a stone-tipped spear? Or are modern American Indians descended from a blend of both races—the multicultural product of an original American melting pot? The issue of In-

dian arrival is critical to Indian people as well, as Vine Deloria, Jr., pointed out. If Indians had "barely unpacked before Columbus came knocking on the door," won't people question Indian claims to the land and its resources?

"It's been like a gold discovery," said Chatters, "where normal people all of a sudden go goofy." But his problems had barely begun.

As theories began to proliferate, archaeologists seemed to agree on just one thing: Kennewick is a monumental find that must be studied extensively by specialists. The bones must be analyzed in great detail, additional radiocarbon tests should be run, and ancient DNA extracted from the bones. To ensure accuracy and eliminate bias, this testing must be conducted in several independent laboratories, supervised by the country's best research scientists. In a 1997 court decision, the judge compared Kennewick Man to "a book that they can read, a history written in bone instead of on paper, just as the history of a region may be 'read' by observing layers of rock or ice, or the rings of a tree."

As the scientific teams geared up, the already dramatic story of Kennewick Man took an extraordinary turn. Five days after the startling results of the radiocarbon tests were made public, the Army Corps of Engineers announced its intent to repatriate the remains to an alliance of five Northwest tribes: Umatilla, Yakima, Nez Perce, Wanapum, and Colville. The Umatilla tribe of northeastern Oregon took the lead, demanding that Chatters immediately—and without further study—surrender the bones. Armand Minthorn, a Umatilla leader, said simply: "Our oral history goes back 10,000 years. We know how time began and how Indian people were created. They can say whatever they want, the scientists. They are being disrespectful." The Umatilla explained that the scientific probing and destruction of human bones was offensive, sacrilegious, and illegal. Citing a 1990 federal law designed to protect Indian graves, the Umatilla demanded that the skeleton be returned for immediate reburial.

Scientists across the country screamed foul. This is one of the oldest, most complete skeletons in the Americas. If this Kennewick Man indeed has many Caucasian traits, how can an Indian tribe claim his remains? Considerably more study is required before tribal affinity, if any, can be established. No matter how the study comes out, the scientists argued, because the bones are so ancient they rightfully belong to the American public rather than any special-interest group.

The dilemma landed in the lap of the Army Corps of Engineers, the governmental agency with immediate jurisdiction over the area where the bones were found. According to a report in *The Washington Post*, the White House

sided with the Indians and secretly pressured the Corps to lock up the bones and prohibit further scientific study. In September 1996, the Corps confiscated the bones and announced plans to turn them over to the Umatilla within 30 days. Although Washington's congressional delegation urged that qualified scientists be allowed to examine the bones, the Corps refused.

In *Bornichsen et al. v. United States of America*, eight prominent scientists have sued to obtain access to the Kennewick bones: Robson Bornichsen (archaeologist, Oregon State University), C. Loring Brace (physical anthropologist, University of Michigan), Dennis J. Stanford (archaeologist, Smithsonian Institution), Richard Jantz (physical anthropologist, University of Tennessee), Douglas Owsley (physical anthropologist, Smithsonian Institution), George Gill (physical anthropologist, University of Wyoming), C. Vance Haynes, Jr. (geoarchaeologist, University of Arizona), and D. Gentry Steele (physical anthropologist, Texas A & M University). The lawsuit questions whether the 1990 federal legislation that protects Indian graves is appropriate to 9,400-year-old remains. Citing a lack of due process, the scientists accused the Army Corps of arbitrary decision-making and raised First Amendment concerns. Not only does the U. S. Constitution protect freedom of expression, the scientists argued, it safeguards the right to gather and receive information. If the Kennewick skeleton is locked away or reburied, the American public is deprived of potentially irreplaceable information about its own past.

The lawsuit also reflects the belief that the Corps had violated the Civil Rights Act of 1866. This law, originally written to guarantee nonwhites the same legal protection as whites, has recently been read as offering reciprocal protection to whites: If scientists were denied access because of race or ethnicity, then their civil rights were being violated.

The Army Corps refused to allow scientific study because the Umatilla said that such analysis would violate their religious beliefs about the dead. Chatters and the other scientists countered that Kennewick Man could not be adequately affiliated with any living tribe and, most likely, not with Indian people at all. To permit one tribe—or perhaps a single faction within a tribe—to veto scientific study, they claimed, would violate the rights of all other Americans. These Indians "proceed from the assumption that anyone who died in this country prior to 1492 is native American," complained Alan Schneider, attorney for the anthropologists, "and of course that's not necessarily true. What about the Viking explorations of the New World?"

In the matter of *Bornichsen et al. v. United States of America*, two trials took place—one in a Portland courtroom and the other in the court of public opinion. Editorials across the country took various positions, but many news-

papers weighed in on the side of science. “The information from ancient Kennewick Man,” wrote *The Oregonian*, “is simply too important to all peoples to be buried by one people.” On a 60 *Minutes* television segment, correspondent Leslie Stahl quoted Chatters as believing that “the tribe’s fight against further testing of Kennewick Man is based largely on fear, fear that if someone was here before they were, their status as sovereign nations, and all that goes with it—treaty rights, and lucrative casinos . . . could be at risk.”

The Kennewick story took yet another bizarre turn when the Asatru Folk Assembly filed its own lawsuit. The Asatruans, who take their name from an Icelandic term meaning “those true to the Gods,” are a northern California-based religious group who trace their pre-Christian ancestry to Scandinavian and Germanic tribes of northern Europe. The Asatruans sued to stop the United States government from repatriating the bones to the Indian claimants. In their publication *The Runestone* they wrote, “Kennewick Man is our kin . . . Native American groups have strongly contested this idea, perceiving that they have much to lose if their status as the ‘First Americans’ is overturned. We will not let our heritage be hidden by those who seek to obscure it.” Asatruans demanded that the bones be turned over to *them* for reburial.

For the next several years, the Army Corps kept the bones of Kennewick Man locked up as accusations flew. The Corps said Chatters had stolen bones before surrendering the skeleton, but this charge has been effectively refuted. The Asatruans accused the Corps of allowing Indians illegal access to the bones and handing some over for secret reburial. During one court-ordered inventory, the Corps claimed that Kennewick Man had an extra pelvis—suggesting that somebody had smuggled bones into the high security vault—but a later inventory showed the identification was incorrect. Judge Jelderks accused the government of stalling and ordered them to wrap up the inquiry.

Although allowing a preliminary geological study of the Kennewick site, the Corps soon announced plans to bury it to halt further erosion (which geologists argued was not a problem). Both houses of Congress quickly passed legislation explicitly ordering the Corps to keep its hands off the Kennewick site. But the Army Corps of Engineers defied the will of Congress and on April 6, 1998, covered the Kennewick Man site with 600 tons of boulders, gravel, logs, and backdirt, planting thousands of closely spaced cottonwood, dogwood, and willow trees on top of the fill. In this \$160,000 cover-up, the Army Corps had not only made the site inaccessible to scientists and tourists, they had destroyed any undiscovered evidence beyond recovery. To date, the Corps of Engineers has been ineffective in explaining its motives or the results of this “stabilization” effort.

After working for three months with sculptor Tom McClelland, Chatters released a controversial clay reconstruction of Kennewick Man’s head. In a presentation to the Society for American Archaeology, Chatters described how he produced the facial reconstruction—“averaging tissue thicknesses for northern hemisphere populations, using the most typical forms of eye fold and lip thickness, making the eyes of clay in a non-eye color and leaving off hair, all to avoid making *a priori* assumptions about relationship to some modern group.” The results are striking—a bald, middle-aged man with a big nose and a drawn look of chronic pain. “When his eyes meet mine, it gives me the willies,” Chatters commented. “He looks like he’s about to speak. And he has an awful lot to tell us.”

But deciphering this message has proved troublesome. Popular publications like the *New York Post* remembered Chatters’ earlier comments in *The New Yorker*, and compared the Kennewick Man reconstruction to actor Patrick



The *New York Post* compared James Chatters’ reconstruction of Kennewick Man (upper right) to actor Patrick Stewart (above). But Vin DeLoria, Jr. thinks he looks more like a defiant Chief Black Hawk (right) and his son, as painted by John Jarvis in 1833, when they came East as prisoners of war.



Stewart—implying an early Caucasoid presence in ancient America. But to Deloria, Kennewick Man looked more like Chief Black Hawk, as painted in 1833 when he came East as a prisoner of war. Jim Thorpe—the legendary Olympian and first president of the National Football League—was a direct descendant of Chief Black Hawk, raising the question of whether Kennewick Man might be an ancestor of modern Indian people after all.

WE HAVE NOT heard the final word on Kennewick Man, but one thing is clear: this middle-aged man, who limped badly from a partly healed spear wound, was a lightening bolt exposing deep divisions in our views of ancient America.

Archaeology draws upon a long-standing, implicit social policy emphasizing a common human heritage. As Douglas Owsley, a physical anthropologist at the Smithsonian Institution (with experience on the Jeffrey Dahmer and Branch Davidian cases under his belt) sees it, "People are free to believe what they want to believe, but I think we're resisting the right for them to force that on others. . . . This is information that the American public has a right to know."

Most Indian people feel otherwise. Marla Big Boy, Oglala Lakota Attorney General for the Colville Confederated Tribes of eastern Washington, puts it this way: "The ever changing scientific theories disturb the Colville Tribe because science is not always benign. . . . The type of scientific and professional arrogance of the *Bornichsen et al.* plaintiffs is also present throughout history. . . . What is happening today is similar to the scientific purposes of yesterday."

The multicultural tug-of-war over Kennewick Man raises deep questions about how we can make the past serve the diverse purposes of the present, Indian as well as white. It also challenges us to define when ancient bones stop being tribal and become simply human.

WHOSE MEMORIES BECOME HISTORY?

What is it about the Kennewick fracas that has kept it front-page news for more than three years? Why are Indians and archaeologists still at odds, fighting skull wars begun centuries earlier?

The Kennewick conflict has been portrayed as yet another face-off between science and religion, a reprise of the famous Scopes trial of the 1920s—except that Red Creationists have now assumed the role of Christian fundamentalists. I believe that this reading is incomplete, if not largely incorrect.

The central thesis of *Skull Wars* can be stated rather simply: although limbed parallels do exist between the fight over the Kennewick bones and the evolutionist-creationist struggle, the pivotal issue at Kennewick is not about religion or science. It is about politics. The dispute is about control and power, not philosophy. Who gets to control ancient American history—governmental agencies, the academic community, or modern Indian people?

To expose the deeply political nature of the Kennewick conflict, this book explores the long-term interactions between Euroamerican and Indian populations. Over more than five centuries, several distinct American Indian histories have developed, of which three are especially critical: a larger national narrative that glorifies assimilation into the Great American Melting Pot; an academic discourse written by anthropologists and historians who view Indians as subjects of scholarly inquiry; and an indigenous "insiders" perspective long maintained in the oral traditions of Indian people themselves. Although sometimes overlapping, these distinct histories often paint quite different visions of America, past and present. Proponents of each strongly believe that "their" history is the correct one, the version that should be published in textbooks, protected by law, and defended in the courtroom.

In a nutshell, then, *Skull Wars* explores the curious and often stormy relations between American Indians and the non-Indians bent on studying them.

THE FIRST PART, "Names and Images," shows how early European explorers invented the American Indian and how American colonists incorporated this Indian imagery into mainstream history as part of the nation-building process. The resulting narrative lionizes national heroes and emphasizes the most dramatic events in the exploration, settlement, and development of new territory. Histories that minority people tell about themselves—Irish history, black history, Armenian history, and Indian tribal histories—become invisible and irrelevant to this national American epic. Minority histories are typically reduced to stereotypes and cultural clichés.

The great American narrative began with the first encounter between Christopher Columbus and the native people living on a small Caribbean is-

land they called *Guanahani*. Columbus took possession of the land and its people for the Spanish Crown, renaming the island "San Salvador" and the natives "*los Indios*" (the Indians). This formalized naming ritual was a prerequisite to ensure that the conquest would be played by European rules.

Columbus encountered two kinds of people on Guanahani: the real human beings who lived there and the imaginary Indians who existed only in the explorer's mind. The living people of Guanahani—Columbus' so-called peaceful Arawaks—all perished within a decade of this first encounter, victims of invisible microbes and Spanish cruelty. But the stereotypes that Columbus invented on "San Salvador" would define the flow of Euroamerican history for centuries to come.

Building upon what Columbus believed he saw in the Caribbean, the eighteenth-century French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau later described the Native Americans as "the real Youth of the World." As elaborated through the centuries, this imagery associated the Noble Redman with an independent and unembellished innocence reflecting a pure state of nature. These people were seen as repositories of a lost virtue, an uncorrupted human wholesomeness that existed before the rise of civilization: humanity at its happiest, reflecting a natural simplicity and virtue. Native Americans lived in perpetual peace and harmony; war was irrelevant because power was shared among all nations. The image of the Noble Redman was featured in an endless parade of American stamps and coins, romantic writings by James Fenimore Cooper and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and more recently in movies like *Little Big Man* and *Dances With Wolves*. Most Americans still get their impressions of Indians not by first-hand interactions but from television, movies, and the occasional potboiler novel. Media imagery today represents *los Indios* as the first ecologists and idealizes Indian people as somehow spiritually superior to everyone else.

Late in 1492, the Arawak of Hispanola (modern Haiti and the Dominican Republic) told Columbus of a second kind of native people—their violent Carib neighbors who lived for war and committed unspeakable horrors. Columbus soon translated Arawak oral tradition into a second kind of imaginary Indian—the Bloodthirsty Redskin, the very antithesis of a civilized European. Firmly in the clutches of Satan, they committed appalling acts because God sent periodic scourges to punish and instruct Christians. According to the imagery, these often-naked wildmen commonly had multiple mates and led lives of lewdness, eroticism, and narcissism. A callous killer, the Bloodthirsty Savage showed an extraordinary vindictiveness toward his enemies. Cannibalism and human sacrifice were commonplace. They roamed the

land without any concept of property ownership, excelling only in thievery and treachery. Victims of superstition, they were controlled by conjurers and medicine men. The Bloodthirsty Savage was wholly incapable of advancing to civilization, Columbus believed, because his innate Indian culture was almost subhuman and without meaningful history. This Good Indian/Bad Indian imagery would inform the relationship between the Euroamerican and Native American cultures for centuries to come.

Yet another Indian image arose during the American Revolution when the Sons of Liberty dressed up like Mohawks and dumped bales of English tea into Boston harbor. Although Europeans of the day believed that Indians lived outside the bounds of civilization, Samuel Adams and the other American patriots increasingly gravitated toward Indian symbolism in their rejection of English-style civilization. The Indian-as-American icon played directly into the new national narrative, reinforcing the morality and integrity of the New World and demonstrating that the New Republic possessed a distinctive history—a spirit that defined America as unique and divinely favored.

As Euroamericans established themselves in their new homeland, they wrote stirring histories cementing themselves to the land. Rather than accept Indian people as having a long-term and culturally significant history of their own, white America conjured up Lost Tribes, mythical Welsh sailors, and ancient (non-Indian) Moundbuilders as the real First Americans. These white-skinned American ancestors, the argument went, must have been annihilated by Indian interlopers.

When America annexed the trans-Mississippian West, mainstream historians groped for ways to incorporate the new territory, with its distinctive landscape, natural resources, and aboriginal inhabitants, into the American mindset. Nineteenth-century urban America had come to see Indians as a national mascot. But on the frontier, where Indians still raised real problems with the mainstream vision, Victorian America made some different choices: civilization is better than savagery, cities are better than wilderness, and science is better than superstition. According to the prevailing nineteenth-century stereotypes, the Indian must live a life of independence and freedom, or he would die. Native Americans, seen as fragile and unable to coexist with civilization, became a heroic yet sadly vanishing species, victims of their incompatibility with an advancing, superior form of humanity.

So arose the image of the Vanishing American, celebrated in picture and verse, always with the same bittersweet refrain: the Indian race will soon vanish "as the snow melts before the sunbeam." The myth of the disappearing

American Indian conditioned two centuries of federal Indian policy and helped create a new scientific discipline to record in detail the lives and customs of the Vanishing American.

PART II DOCUMENTS how American anthropology arose when eighteenth- and nineteenth-century intellectual America decided it was important to gather facts and artifacts before Indians vanished completely. Anthropologists tried to transcend narrative history and Indian imagery, emphasizing instead what mainstream historians have commonly regarded as trivial and inconsequential—family structure, economics, technology, religions, political organization, and ideology. Thomas Jefferson, America's first scientific archaeologist, argued that Indians could—and really should—be studied as part of the rest of nature. Jefferson defined American Indians as specimens, like mammoth bones and the fruit trees in his own garden, to be empirically investigated and objectively understood.

Nineteenth-century anthropology, grounded as it was in mainstream American values and imagery, promoted a doctrine of racial determinism. By assuming direct correlation between heredity and behavior, early anthropologists attributed cultural differences to deep-seated inherited drives. Asked why Plains Indians so readily fit European horses into their lifestyle, the nineteenth-century scientific racist might have responded that horsemanship was “in their blood.” This was hardly the figurative expression it is today, before anything was known of Mendelian genetics or DNA, blood was literally thought to be the medium through which traits were passed from generation to generation. Theories of racial determinism—what anthropologist Marvin Harris terms a “biologization” of human history—dominated nineteenth-century anthropological thinking. To the physical anthropologist, human skulls provided a means to scientifically define the races, and by conflating cultural differences with disparities in human intelligence, scientific racism created a global cultural hierarchy.

From its inception, American anthropology had a practical side, as pre-Civil War studies of human racial variability provided the scientific evidence necessary to document the inequality of the races. The proto-anthropology of Samuel Morton in the 1830s and of Louis Agassiz two decades later generated the scientific biological facts that were used to justify slavery. Scientifically sanctioned racism also informed federal Indian policies that enabled Euroamericans to seize Indian lands and justified the disgraceful Indian

Wars. At a time when the American melting pot seemed unworkable and the eventual “civilization” of Indians unlikely, these theories of race suggested that an innate cultural inferiority of the Native Americans doomed them to extinction.

With the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, American science decided that human institutions must likewise be viewed through a lens of evolution, as developing according to unscen natural laws. Regardless of whether Indians were measured according to their racial or cultural destiny, this new evolutionary yardstick confirmed the conventional frontier wisdom: noble he might be, the American Indian was properly grouped with the inferior races—all afflicted with darker skins, flawed behavior, and second-rate biology.

Like Jefferson, nineteenth-century anthropologists viewed Indians as specimens deserving close scientific study. This is why Indian graves were systematically dug up and Indian corpses beheaded on the battlefield to feed the demand for skulls for America's new natural history museums. This is why live Indians were so popular in “ethnographic zoos” at several World Fairs. And this is why Indians became “living fossils” tucked away in the museums of America. In fact, when Indians died, their bodies were sometimes not buried at all but rendered into bones, numbered and stored away as part of America's greater heritage.

Because Indians belonged to a primal stage in the development of modern civilization, the evolutionary process doomed them to extinction, victims of Victorian progress and Manifest Destiny. In the scientific perspective of the day, Indians represented not a just a separate racial type but a distinctive level of social development—a holdover from an earlier, inferior stage of human evolution. Anthropologists became intensely interested in Indians as living exemplars of a previous stage of humanity, what the world was like before Western civilization came to be. As anthropologists arrayed human societies along a social continuum from most primitive to most civilized, American Indians fell somewhere between savagery and barbarism. Once caught in the web of international geopolitics, they would be hapless victims at the mercy of others. White brutality or largess would decide who survived and who did not; Indian courage and enterprise were irrelevant. The immutable laws of nature held that the Indian must vanish.

The Vanishing American theme dominated museum displays and World Fair exhibitions at the dawn of the twentieth century, and this imagery also informed a federal policy designed to nudge the Indian toward his inevitable

extinction. As anthropologists rushed to salvage ethnographic tidbits from the last living members of some tribes, mainstream American historians defined Indians as basically invisible once they ceased to be a military menace.

Nineteenth-century anthropologists were not heartless scientists content to watch passively as Indian culture slipped into oblivion. Far from it. As individuals, most anthropologists cared deeply about Indian people, and many served as cultural mediators, helping "their tribe" deal with Euroamerica. American anthropologists tried desperately to harness cutting-edge social theory to help Indian people. Please, the anthropologists argued, leave your outmoded tribalism behind so that you may evolve toward civilization. But these efforts ultimately backfired, creating in Indian Country a lasting legacy of mistrust toward anthropologists and other white do-gooders who ventured their way.

The racial theories of nineteenth-century skull science are, of course, specious. In the 1910s, anthropologist Franz Boas demonstrated the utter inadequacy of scientific racism. Anthropologists belatedly recognized that a Sioux Indian raised in Beijing could learn to speak flawless Mandarin and that an African American attending a conservatory could write symphonies in the classical European tradition. Boas figured out and clearly demonstrated that skull shape was heavily influenced by environmental factors and could change markedly from one generation to the next: skull measurements thus did not necessarily reflect enduring racial affinities.

But the victory over racial determinism was never complete. Although most modern anthropologists view race as a scientifically flawed way of thinking about biological variability, some diehards still cling to racial typologies and stereotypes. Disagreements over racial categories sparked the ugliest controversies in the Kennewick Man affair. As the late Eric Wolf wrote, "race remains a major source of demonology in this country and in the world and anthropology has a major obligation to speak reason to unreason."

By 1900, American Indians seemed to be vanishing as surely as the American bison and so too were the archaeological vestiges of Indian history. As museum anthropologists hurried to document and collect the last of Indian culture, pothunters plundered one archaeological site after another. Many Americans worried that foreigners, caught up in their own European-style Noble Redskin imagery, were exporting the best of America's ancient past. Congress responded to this threat by passing the Antiquities Act of

1906, legislation crafted to preserve America's remote past and to ensure its continued study by a rapidly growing scientific community. The new law made looting of Indian sites on federal land a crime, empowered the President to designate key archaeological sites as national monuments, and established a regulatory framework to restrict research permits to professionally trained archaeologists. Congress asked the Smithsonian Institution to identify America's most important archaeological sites and to issue permits to professional archaeologists properly qualified to work on them.

By criminalizing the unauthorized removal of antiquities from federal lands, the 1906 law effectively quashed amateur access, Indian and non-Indian alike, to much of the remote American past. The archaeological record was seen as a critical part of America's national identity because it documented its progression from savagery to the most civilized place on earth, and in 1906 this heritage was formally entrusted to science.

Part III of this book, "Deep American History," traces the development of scientific thinking about American Indian origins and the rise of academically trained archaeologists as the curators of this national narrative. In consigning the American Indian past to the greater public trust, the Antiquities Act never acknowledged that Indian people might have their own religious, spiritual, or historical connections to it. The conflicting imagery of Indians-as-Vanishing-Americans and Indians-as-untutored-amateurs helped exclude American Indians from the Antiquities Act. Indians were seen as representing an earlier, archaic stratum of ancient America, destined to pass gracefully into oblivion. Whatever Indians had to say about their past was irrelevant to the American narrative.

AMERICAN INDIANS, of course, refused to vanish. Their numbers bottomed out in the 1890s and have dramatically increased ever since. Part IV looks at the twentieth-century Indian people who survived their predicted extinction and began exploring non-Indian America on their own, applying their "ancient ways" to fresh pursuits, including art, politics, medicine and the law, sports, and even anthropology. Indians began creating their own reality, defining pathways distinct from those that had nearly destroyed them.

With the rise of the American civil rights movement, the protests against the Vietnam War, the successes of the United Farm Workers, and the growth of feminism, history became a weapon for redressing the imbalances inherent in the top-dog perspective. Academics in the humanities, arts, and social sci-

ences began including gender, race, ethnicity, and class as justifiable arenas of inquiry. Red Power activism is one facet of this movement. The echoes of underdog history carried far beyond the ivory towers, permeating popular culture and, in the process, threatening archaeology's foothold in mainstream American history. Particularly since the 1960s, Indian people stepped up their fight to reclaim and reinforce their treaty-guaranteed sovereignty, borrowing strategies and guidelines from the world of international law. American Indian activists joined up with the so-called Fourth World—the descendants of a nation's original inhabitants who find themselves marginalized and deprived of their traditional territory and its riches.

The roots of such nativist thinking run deep in Indian America, reflecting the belief that native people and whites have separate histories and that the two peoples were created separately and can never live together. As Gregory Dowd points out in *A Spiritual Existence*, Indians of the late eighteenth century saw the "Anglo-American East rise as a spiritual as well as a physical menace to the Indian West." Across the eastern woodlands, prophets and culture heroes expressed the conviction that they could retain an essential Indian power through ritual and concerted resistance to encroaching white ways.

These native beliefs had their richest expression in the early nineteenth-century speeches of the Shawnee orator and warrior Tecumseh, who attempted to unite and reinvigorate the demoralized native people. Tecumseh gained his power by promoting pan-tribal alliances based on an unequivocally political message: American lands belonged to all Indian people, and no single tribe, village, or leader has a right to cede these homelands without the approval of all tribes. Rejecting Jefferson's message of peaceful assimilation, Tecumseh and his supporters shared a vision of a pan-Indian confederacy. Indian independence and freedom would be preserved through common ritual and the explicit rejection of the ways of outsiders. Tecumseh dramatized his convictions by wearing only skins and feathers into battle, disavowing all European-type clothing. Although he was killed at the Battle of the Thames in 1813, Tecumseh's message has been repeated through the years and resonates today among modern indigenous groups around the world who place a priority on establishing the legal status of traditional knowledge.

Courts had long given preference to the testimony of non-Indian historians and anthropologists over the authority of tribal elders. Legal authorities have long discounted tribal perspectives; yet they commonly accept at face value the first-hand written observations of European colonists. Mainstream historical perspectives put the onus on indigenous societies to justify their aboriginal claims according to colonial rules. "If aboriginal practices were not

recognized as 'rights' by the Europeans and somehow incorporated into common law," observed the political scientist Fae Korsmo, "they could not survive as aboriginal rights today."

Indian people have long been required to furnish western-style historical proof of their origins and historical continuity on the land: "Did you resist us? Did you keep your culture intact? Did we recognize your power? Did we keep records of your whereabouts and your battles with neighboring tribes? In other words," writes Korsmo, "did your forms of resistance resemble ours? Were you sufficiently like us to gain our recognition, yet different enough to be kept separate?"

Tribal leaders and Indian scholars, attacking what they see as myths maintained by historians and politicians, have attempted to revitalize their indigenous identities demolished by war and trampled by dominant culture politics. Seeking to salvage an Indian past from the distortions of non-Indian historians and anthropologists, Haunani-Kay Trask, a leader in the fight for Hawaiian sovereignty, puts it this way:

Burdened by a linear, progressive conception of history and by an assumption that Euroamerican culture flourishes at the upper end of that progression, Westerners have told the history of Hawaii as an inevitable if occasionally bittersweet triumph of Western ways over 'primitive' Hawaiian ways.... To know my history, I had to put away my books and return to the land.... I had to feel again the spirits of nature and take gifts of plants and fish to the ancient altars. I had to begin to speak my language with our elders and leave long silences for wisdom to grow. But before anything else, I had to learn the language like a lover so that I could rock with her and lie at night in her dreaming arms.

Such indigenous ideologies assert an essential native subjectivity, promoting themes of self-worth and cultural preservation and suggesting that Indian culture could help correct some problems of the modern mainstream. At the same time, these once powerless groups were defining ways to navigate a cultural tide that had long run against them. Since the 1960s, the emerging Indian identity—what Deloria calls a "retribalization"—has severely threatened the long-standing balance between mainstream and underdog histories. "Until the majority of Americans have concurred, both formally and informally, that American Indians are equal and autonomous entities, entitled to every freedom and course of redress that pertains to its Christian majority," argues Scott Vickers, "then that majority will have failed itself, its own religion, and its historical trajectory toward 'freedom for all'."

Achieving power over their own history has tangible payoffs in the

everyday life of Indian people, which is still subject to long-conflicted federal policies. Neither fully sovereign nor wards of the state, Indian tribes remain subject to federal policy and public perception. Their real-world problems include epidemic levels of poverty, suicide, despair, AIDS, and rampant alcoholism. Nearly 20 percent of Indian deaths today may be alcohol-related, against a national American average of 4.7 percent. Indian people are still trying to tackle these challenges as tribal and community issues, trying to rid themselves of dependence on outsiders. But economic development in Indian Country remains integrally connected to politics—intertwined with issues of sovereignty, tribal identity, access to resources, cultural issues, and ideology. By emphasizing histories absent from white-dominated curricula, native people are attempting to build institutional mechanisms to help their communities and reassert their rights. By taking hold of the imagery that still frames negotiations with state and federal governments, they seek to translate historical and cultural identities into tangible political power.

The bottom line is defining which history gets taught and who gets to teach it. In seeking identities independent of non-Indian historians and anthropologists, many Native Americans have come to resent the appropriation of their ancient artifacts and ancestral bones by "experts" claiming an authority denied to the Indians themselves. As native people across the land try to recapture their own language, culture, and history, they are increasingly concerned with recovering and taking control of tribal heirlooms and human remains. Troy Johnson spoke for many when he suggested that "perhaps no more insulting and insensitive scene can be imagined than the desecration of Native American burial sites by researchers or grave robbers who disregard the law and cultural sensitivities of the Native American Indian people." In 1975, the widely distributed Indian newspaper *Wassaja* defined anthropology as a "vulture culture."

Congress responded to these sensitivities in 1990 by passing the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA for short). NAGPRA protects newly discovered Indian graves, but it also mandates that America's universities and museums audit their Indian collections and return certain cultural items to tribal representatives. This legislation marked a significant shift in the federal stance toward the rights of Indian people and a sea change in the perception and practice of American archaeology. As in 1906, the federal government asserted its right to legislate access to the American past. But the 1990 law explicitly acknowledged that Indian pasts are relevant to the American present. This public and visible benchmark legislation re-

flected a deep-seated shift in thinking, emphasizing America's self-perception as a multifaceted, pluralistic society. The American Creed shifted away from the time-honored melting pot to newer perspectives recognizing the merits of a multicultural society.

Such an interpretation of the American character was unimaginable in 1906. The Antiquities Act of 1906, which legally transferred the Indian past to the American public domain, was crafted without Indian involvement and with no suggestion that Indian people might have legitimate affiliations with that past. In 1990, for the first time, native people were empowered to question mainstream American ownership of the Indian past, both literally and metaphorically. No longer were Indian bones found on public lands automatically defined as natural resources, as federal property to be safeguarded in scientific custody. No longer did science have a monopoly on defining the meaning of archaeology; instead, native groups were invited to assign their own spiritual and historical meanings to archaeological sites and their contents.

The NAGPRA legislation also underscored the increasing difficulty of defining just which American public was being served by archaeology. Is it the job of science to preserve and study the material remains of the world's diverse human populations, present and past? Is the archaeological record a nonrenewable resource to be held in trust for future generations? Or does each of the world's cultures and its descendants own the material remains of their own pasts and the exclusive rights to their interpretation? As anthropologist Robert McLaughlin asks, does archaeology serve "the" public—or just "a" public?

These questions remain largely unresolved. Whatever decisions are made in the early twenty-first century will doubtless be scrutinized by generations to come. Tribal voices have hardly displaced the authority of state and science, but those voices are now distinctly audible in the contest over who gets to dig up and possess the Indian past.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, some Americans are alarmed by Indian "retribalization" and the recognition by Congress of indigenous ideologies. Census Bureau numbers suggest a skyrocketing American Indian population, and some question the authenticity of these self-proclaimed Indians. Many mainstream Americans still believe that "real, authentic" Indians did indeed vanish a century ago. Some accuse Indians of learning their "traditions" from old anthro-

poloogy books, and others see twenty-first-century "Indianness" as just another New Age fad. One critic coined the term "Machdianism" to describe a marketing of Indian heritage and manipulation of historical evidence. Skeptics suggest that NACPPRA and related legislation smacks of public relations exploiting the Noble Redman imagery at the expense of historical accuracy. Some anthropologists accuse Indians of inventing instant traditions for current political purposes. Some professional historians see a self-serving, second-rate scholarship making shoddy use of historical and ethnographic documents. More than one academic has privately scoffed that modern Indians have all become cowboys—it's only the anthropologists, in the end, who understand what "real" Indian culture is all about.

It is hard to overlook the sense of loss among mainstream scientists and historians who see their power and authority eroding as late twentieth-century America experiments with multicultural alternatives to the traditional melting pot imagery. In *The Closing of the American Mind*, Allan Bloom complains of "hearing the Founders charged with being racists, murderers of Indians, representatives of class interests" and condemns the debunkers as "weakening our convictions of the truth or superiority of American principles and our heroes." Those concerned over revisionist myth-making and a lack of objectivity have accused both Indians and Congress of pandering to a political correctness of the moment.

In *The Disuniting of America*, the historian Arthur Schlesinger writes of a "tribalization of American life [that] . . . reverses the historic theory of America as one people—the theory that has thus far managed to keep American society whole." From Yugoslavia to Canada, from the former Soviet Union to much of Africa, post-Cold War Balkanization has torn apart one nation after another. Is America in danger of being torn apart into ethnic and racial tribes? Is Schlesinger correct in saying that tribal identity has become "the AIDS of international politics—lying dormant for years, then flaring up to destroy countries"? With the metaphor of the Great American Melting Pot under attack, Schlesinger sees an America "giving ground to the celebration of ethnicity. . . . The multiethnic dogma abandons historic purposes, replacing assimilation by fragmentation, integration by separatism. It belittles *unum* and glorifies *pluribus*."

Some go even further, asserting that American values simply cannot be negotiated and remade at will. For them, the American family—a natural institution blessed by God—carries with it critical core values and social attitudes that have raised America above other countries. President Ronald Reagan spoke for many when he wondered aloud if "we made a mistake in

trying to maintain Indian cultures. Maybe we should not have humored them in wanting to stay in that kind of primitive lifestyle."

THE FINAL SECTION of this book, "Bridging the Chasm," examines the impact of these conflicting histories on contemporary America and explores some ways of mediating the conflict. Melding these disparate points of view will never be easy—these conflicts have developed over centuries, and their implications reach far beyond some old bones from the State of Washington.

Having examined the three main species of American Indian history—mainstream narratives, academic theories, and indigenous ideologies—I return to the central conflict this book seeks to explore: the long-standing and deep-seated tensions between Indian people and the scientists who wish to study them. Why are Indians still fighting with anthropologists and archaeologists over issues like the Kennewick skeleton? Why can't they just get along?

Half a millennium of white-Indian interactions suggests several answers:

- THE POWER OF INDIAN IMAGERY: *Romantic stereotypes have defined and directed mainstream American attitudes toward Indian people. Because anthropologists and historians have always been, by and large, middle class whites, these same stereotypes underlie their supposedly objective academic studies of Indian people.*
- THE POWER OF INDIAN ORIGINS: *The Bureau of Indian Affairs stands as the indelible bureaucratic reminder that Indians are somehow an American minority different. As the historian Patricia Limerick has pointed out, there is today no Bureau of Italian-American Affairs, no Bureau of Hispanic-American Affairs, no Bureau of African-American Affairs. "A minority by conquest is not the same as a minority by immigration," notes Limerick, "and four centuries of history have not blurred the difference." This finding keeps premise has positioned American Indians as somehow spiritually superior to America's "immigrant" minorities.*
- THE POWER OF "PHYSICS ENVY" IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY ANTHROPOLOGY: *When early twentieth-century anthropologists abandoned their humanistic roots in the search for an objective "science of mankind," they effectively declared American Indians to be irrelevant to their own history.*

● THE ENDURING POWER OF AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY'S NINETEENTH-CENTURY RACIST HERITAGE: The Kennewick controversy vividly demonstrates how anthropology's lingering hangover from nineteenth-century skull science can still create instant headlines whenever anthropologists are naive enough to make racial statements—even seemingly innocuous ones—in public. Some have even seen Kennewick Man as the “Great White Hope,” the last best chance to establish Caucasians as the original landlords of America.

● THE POWER OF THE MEDIA TO REFOCUS THE RESULTS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH. For the past decade or so, American archaeologists have undertaken a deliberate campaign of “taking their science to the public.” But few scientists are adept at dealing with journalists, who often spice up their stories with attention-grabbers to “give the piece a news-worthy focus.” As the Kennewick case illustrates, the story conveyed to the American public can be quite different from that intended by the research scientists.

Each of these components has contributed to the undercurrents of frustration played out in the Kennewick controversy.

But the single most enduring theme throughout the centuries of Indian-Euroamerican interaction involves the power to name, which ultimately reflects the power to conquer and control. The skull wars began when Columbus renamed the islands and the people of the “New World” in which he had landed. As he invoked his power to name and conquer, Columbus reenacted a well-known Biblical scenario—the very first act of the very first human, Adam, as recounted in Genesis:

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field....

More than any other single factor, the power to name, define, and conquer has fueled the skull wars. Naming is central to the writing of history, and history is a primary way we define ourselves. The power to name becomes the power to define one's identity and very existence.

The assigning of names is the beginning of nation building. During the five centuries following the Columbian encounter, as wars were fought and new governments born, the New World would be carved up into dozens of

new republics, some of which became world powers. This was a logical consequence of the political power struggles that began in 1492. As David Goldberg says in *Racial Subjects*, minorities throughout the world are now learning “to pry loose the hold over naming. This is the first step toward self-determination, for it enables one to assert power over self-definition.”

When a nearly complete 9,400 year-old skeleton washed out of a Washington riverbank near the town of Kennewick, Jim Chatters named him “Kennewick Man.” Although scientific protocol says the bones were Chatters’ to name, something of a local skirmish broke out when civic boosters of two other nearby cities proposed, apparently with straight faces, that the skeleton be renamed “Kennewick-Pasco-Richland Man.” It is hardly surprising that the Umatilla tribe, claiming the skeleton as their own, rejected the scientist's name, preferring to call it “Oy̓t̓pa.ma.na.tit̓it̓i” or “The Ancient One.” From the Umatilla perspective, the bones were theirs to name.

Time and time again, we will see the power of names reflected in the disparities between histories. In a real sense, it is the power to name that created the skull wars and their modern-day legacy in the Kennewick controversy.

THE BATTLE OVER the Kennewick bones is about control and power over America's ancient past. If Indian people lose the fight to retain and rebury their ancestor's bones, will they also lose other treaty-guaranteed rights that define their unique, sovereign status under United States law? If archaeologists surrender the right to study ancient human bones and artifacts, will the scientific community have to fear continual censure by the religious beliefs of a few? Should this happen, then mainstream archaeology's views on American origins will no longer carry the clout of authority.

From whatever perspective, Kennewick has become a very public fight that no side feels it can afford to lose. This is the five-hundred-year story of its roots.

Thomas, David Hurst. 2000. "The Great American Skull Wars." in his book *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity*. New York: Basic Books/Perseus. ISBN: 0-465-09225-X. Total pages in book: 326. Chapter: pp 52-63.

THE GREAT AMERICAN SKULL WARS



The dead have no rights.

—Thomas Jefferson

By 1864, the tensions between the white settlers flooding into Colorado and the Cheyenne Indians, whose land it was, had spilled over into the Denver newspapers. A front-page editorial urged "extermination of the red devils" and encouraged the local citizenry to "take a few months off and dedicate the time to wiping out the Indians." Disparaging the ongoing treaty negotiations with the Cheyenne, Major John Chivington, Methodist minister and Civil War hero, proposed to his church deacons that "the Cheyennes will have to be roundly whipped—or completely wiped out—before they will be quiet. If any of them are caught in your vicinity kill them.... It is simply not possible for Indians to obey or even understand any treaty. I am fully satisfied, gentlemen, that to kill them is the only way we will ever have peace and quiet in Colorado."

On an icy November morning, Chivington led a regiment of Colorado Volunteers against the unsuspecting Cheyenne villages of Black Kettle and White Antelope at Sand Creek. "Scalps are what we are after," he exhorted

his men. "I long to be wading in gore!" Ignoring the American flag flapping over Black Kettle's lodge—an acknowledged sign of truce for all—Chivington's troops slaughtered hundreds of Cheyenne villagers, mostly women and children. As the wounded moaned unattended, drunken soldiers moved from body to body, scalping, mutilating, and collecting sordid souvenirs. Fleeing children became moving targets for marksmen, and several still-living Cheyennes were scalped. One woman's heart was ripped out and impaled on a stick. Several soldiers galloped around the battleground, sporting bloody vaginas as handbands.

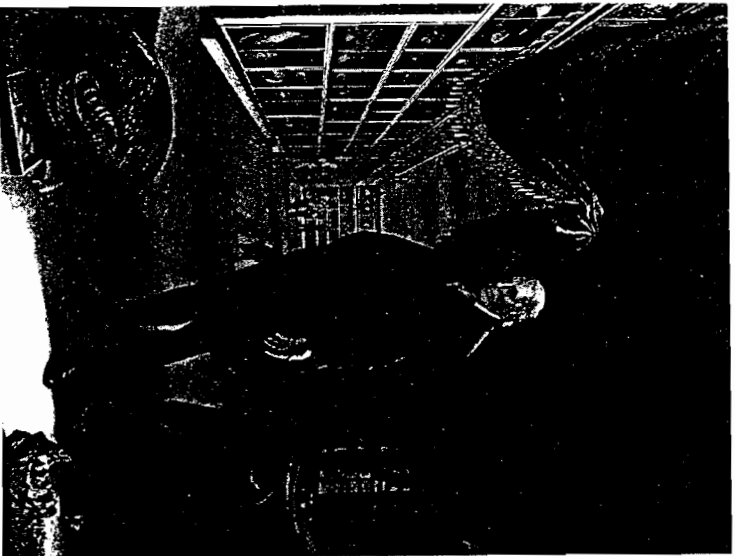
One trooper cut off White Antelope's testicles, bragging that he needed a new tobacco pouch. Later, nobody could remember whether White Antelope was still wearing the peace medal given to him by President Lincoln. Returning to Denver, the Sand Creek heroes paraded through the streets, to the cheers of throngs. Theatergoers applauded an intermission display of Cheyenne scalps and women's pubic hair, strung triumphantly across the stage.

Several of the Cheyenne dead received special treatment. After the corpses were beheaded, the skulls and bones were defleshed and carefully created for shipment eastward to the new Army Medical Museum in the nation's capital.

THE GILDED AGE OF NATURAL HISTORY

It is impossible to comprehend the events at Sand Creek without understanding the power and popularity of scientific racism in mid-nineteenth-century American society.

When Louis Agassiz, famed Swiss naturalist, first visited the United States in the 1840s, he was shocked at the public apathy toward the study of natural history. Like most natural historians of his era, Agassiz believed that the most important scientific task at hand was to collect, describe, and classify the species of the natural world—including man. The small size and poor quality of the natural history collections in the United States appalled him. Although a number of Americans, including Thomas Jefferson, had expressed an interest in classifying the various forms of plants, animals, and minerals, they had either to make their own personal collections or travel to Europe to study the requisite specimens. The few amateur natural history societies that sprang up lacked any public support and members had to store their collections in homes or barns, where they were vulnerable to theft and fire. On ac-



Self-portrait of Charles Willson Peale (1822), opening the curtain to his newly incorporated Museum in Philadelphia, the first natural history museum open to the American public.

cepting a professorship at Harvard in 1847, Agassiz lobbied his adopted country to establish some world class institutions to curate and analyze systematic natural history collections.

Agassiz's extraordinary personality and enthusiasm for science attracted a number of wealthy patrons anxious to see America take its rightful place in the global community. After raising sufficient funds to establish Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology in 1856, Agassiz set about building a collection of classifiable specimens for his students. But his was a "teaching" museum, not a museum for the general public. Agassiz also urged the creation of large public museums, along the lines of the fabled British Museum and the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. The United States government had already in 1840 received a half-million dollar gift (in gold) from an Englishman who never set foot on New World soil. James Smithson's wishes were simple enough—to establish an institution "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." But the bequest touched off a torrid debate

over how best to spend the money. After wrestling with several alternatives, including a library, observatory, agricultural experimental station, and university, Congress finally established, in 1846, a new National Museum to be called the Smithsonian Institution. Building the Smithsonian collection began in earnest when zoologist Spencer Baird joined the staff as Assistant Secretary in 1850, and brought his personal collection, part of which had been given to him by John Audubon, with him. Two years after the 1876 Centennial, Baird became Secretary, and the Smithsonian Institution's collecting binge intensified.

Post-Civil War America emerged as the world's first industrial superstate. The transcontinental railroad, the coal and steel complex, and the sophisticated financial markets in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco all came to symbolize America's wealth and power. The new riches generated a wave of homegrown philanthropy and Agassiz's crusade to establish natural history museums soon sparked a response in a culture-hungry America ready to step onto the world stage.

Fearing that the Smithsonian might grab up all the best collections, wealthy private donors founded rival institutions. George Peabody donated part of his huge personal fortune to Yale and Harvard Universities so that each could establish a "Peabody Museum" devoted to the study of natural history, including archaeology and ethnology. He also funded the Peabody Academy of Science in Salem, Massachusetts. Albert Bickmore, an Agassiz student at Harvard, sold his idea of a New York-based natural history museum to that city's social and economic elite, which included J. Pierpont Morgan, Joseph Choate, and Theodore Roosevelt, Sr. The considerable political clout of then-State Senator (later Mayor) William "Boss" Tweed helped establish the American Museum of Natural History in 1869. Located adjacent to Frederick Law Olmsted's Central Park (begun in 1857) and soon joined by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (founded in 1874), the American Museum helped create an urban oasis of culture, education, and amusement. In Philadelphia, the long-standing Academy of Natural Sciences (established in 1812) was joined by the University Museum of Archaeology and Paleontology, established at the University of Pennsylvania in 1887. Chicago's Field Museum was incorporated in 1893, and the Museum of Anthropology at the University of California was founded in 1899. Beyond these major players in the museum world, hundreds of smaller, local museums and historical societies sprang up across America.

Each of these museums began buying up existing natural history collections. The American Museum purchased a huge trove collected by the late

German naturalist Prince Maximilian—more than 4,000 mounted birds, 600 mounted mammals, and 2,000 fish and reptiles preserved in alcohol. In 1874, the same trustees bought, for \$64,000, a collection of tens of thousands of fossils representing more than 7,000 species. Agassiz himself had bid unsuccessfully for it arguing that “whoever gets this collection gets the geological museum of America.”

But such expensive, ready-made collections severely stretched the museums’ limited budgets. The trustees of America’s natural history museums were mostly businessmen, and the high cost of purchasing collections went against their best business sense. Wouldn’t it be more cost-effective, some asked, if we eliminated the middleman and made our own collections?

Museum curators enthusiastically agreed. As practicing natural scientists, they jumped at the chance to launch their own collecting expeditions; scientifically collected specimens could form the basis of understanding the origin of life and our place in it. Not insignificantly, sensational collecting expeditions could bring prestige and celebrity to the scientists, museums, and benefactors who showed the foresight to grab the lead in America’s Golden Age of Natural History.

“LET ME HAVE THE BODIES OF SOME INDIANS”

Skull collecting—long an avocation of the elite natural historian—became in the words of one critic “a cottage industry on the frontier.” Collecting human skulls was more dangerous than netting butterflies or digging up dinosaur fossils. One nineteenth-century collector wrote that whereas Indians expressed no particular concern over skulls taken from ancient mounds, they did seem disturbed by the plundering of more recent graves. Another complained, “It is rather a perilous business to procure Indians’ skulls in this country—The Natives are so jealous of you that they watch you very closely while you are wandering near their mauseleums & instant & sanguinary vengeance would fall upon the luckless—who would presume to interfere with the sacred relics.... There is an epidemic raging among them which carries them off so fast that the cemeteries will soon lack watchers—I don’t rejoice in the prospects of death of the poor creatures certainly, but then you know it will be very convenient for my purposes.” Reliable documentation, including the individual’s tribe or band, cause of death, level of intelligence, and personality traits, could inflate a skull’s market value, sometimes dramati-

cally, because these data helped skull scientists correlate personality and intelligence with cranial attributes.

Faced with the difficulties of financing his new museum at Harvard, Agassiz came up with a novel way to enlarge America’s growing natural history collections. In 1865 he wrote to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton with a simple request: “Let me have the bodies of some Indians. All that would be necessary . . . would be to forward the body express in a box. . . . In case the weather was not very cold . . . direct the surgeon in charge to inject through the carotids a solution of arsenate of soda. I should like one or two handsome fellows entire and the heads of two or three more.” Soliciting the government for skulls to stock the research collections, Agassiz furthered the trend begun by Thomas Jefferson, who declared Indian skulls and bones to be fair game for scientific inquiry.

U. S. Surgeon General William A. Hammond played along, issuing orders to all medical officers “diligently to collect, and to forward to the office of the Surgeon General, all specimens of morbid anatomy, surgical or medical, which may be regarded as valuable. . . . These objects should be accompanied by short explanatory notes. . . . Each specimen in the collection will have appended the name of the medical officer by whom it was prepared.” Hammond’s policy succeeded as hoped. As Indian tribes were being confined to reservations or hunted down, the bones of their dead were systematically gathered up and shipped to the newly founded Army Medical Museum. The skulls and skeletons from the Sand Creek Massacre became one of the earliest accessions, and similar specimens were gathered from other western battle-grounds, reservation cemeteries, and deep inside ancient mounds. U.S. Army hospitals became laboratories for processing Indian bones.

Upon the death of a young Yankton Sioux woman—a “squaw having remarkable beauty”—a post surgeon in the Dakotas dug up her grave, severed her head, and dispatched it to Washington as “a fine specimen.” Ten days later, the same medical officer dispatched the head of an old man who had “died at this post on the seventh day of Jan. 1869 and was buried in his blankets and furs in the ground about a half mile from the Fort, within a few rods of the tippees [sic] occupied by his friends. I secured the head in the night of the day he was buried. From the fact he was buried near these lodges, I did not know but what I was suspected in this business, and that it was their intention to keep watch over the body. Believing that they would hardly think I would steal his head before he was cold in the grave, I early in the evening with two of my hospital attendants secured this specimen.”

Eleven days later in Ellsworth County, Kansas, United States soldiers and

local citizens attacked and slaughtered a trading party of Pawnee men as they were peacefully visiting a white farm on Mulberry Creek. Although accounts vary over what started the skirmish, everyone agrees that when the smoke cleared, the post surgeon from Fort Harker, B. E. Fryer, dispatched a civilian to the massacre site to collect the skulls of the dead Pawnee. After he had found and decapitated one corpse, a blizzard set in, and the Pawnee survivors stopped him from collecting the other's skulls. But two weeks later, the weather moderated and Fryer resumed his search, ultimately recovering five additional crania from the Mulberry Creek Massacre. The Pawnee skulls became part of a shipment of 26 sent to Washington, including skulls from the Cheyenne, Caddo, Wichita, and Osage tribes. Fryer was particularly proud of his Pawnee specimens, four of which were recovered in prime condition, but two others, unfortunately, "were injured a good deal by the soldiers, who shot into the bodies and heads several times in the fight in which these Indians were killed."

Between 1868 and 1872, Fryer shipped at least forty-two Indian skeletons to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel George A. Otis, a curator at the Army Medical Museum. By this time, Otis had measured more than eight hundred Indian skulls in his growing collection, concluding that "the American Indians must be assigned a lower position on the human scale than has been believed heretofore."

"IT IS MOST UNPLEASANT WORK TO STEAL BONES . . ."

Into this bizarre world stepped a thirty-year-old German-born geographer named Franz Boas. Historians of science would one day praise Boas as "the Father of American anthropology," but at the time, he was just another expatriate intellectual coming to 1880s America in search of a good job and a new life.

As a child in Minden, Germany, Boas had learned about the plants found in the woods and the animals of the sea. Over the years, he studied zoology, botany, mathematics, physics, geography, and physiology, and became particularly expert at mapping plant distributions. His doctoral research on the color of seawater reflected Boas' scientific bent toward explicit observation, description, comparison, and classification. He came to America intent upon introducing new canons of empirical research in anthropology, with a distinct emphasis on first-hand fieldwork.

In May 1888, the young Dr. Boas left his editorial assistant's job at *Science* magazine to accept a contract funded by the British Association for the Advancement of Science and the Canadian government. He agreed to undertake a general survey of tribes in British Columbia, concentrating on collecting linguistic and physical anthropological data—mostly measuring skulls of living Indians (many of them locked up in jail). He was also to bring home a collection of Indian skulls and skeletal parts. Discouraged at his inability to become associated with any of the established natural history museums, Boas also used the trip to build up a personal Northwest Coast Indian skull collection as a speculative business venture. He described himself as "just like a merchant," who was hoping that a carefully documented collection, at the going rate of \$5 for a skull and \$20 for a complete skeleton, might return "a tidy profit"—as well as finally open the door to a permanent curatorship.

While digging in a burial ground near Victoria, British Columbia, Boas used a photographer to distract the Indians while he was doing his grave robbing. On June 6, 1888, he wrote in frustration that "someone had stolen all the skulls, but we found a complete skeleton without head. I hope to get another one either today or tomorrow. . . . It is most unpleasant work to steal bones from a grave, but what is the use, someone has to do it. . . ."

After turning up only a dozen or so skulls on his own, Boas heard of another collection of some 75 skulls in Cowichan, amassed by William and James Sutton for sale on the American phenological market. Boas spent a day measuring the skulls and, sensing that a market indeed existed for them, he bought the whole collection. He also retained the services of the Suttons to collect still more, promising to buy whatever they could dig up.

Before long, the Suttons complained to Boas that securing the dozens of additional specimens required "a great deal more trouble & expense" than anticipated because the bones were available only from caves and "other out of the way places." Because the Suttons occasionally retained Indian guides to show them to graveyards, word of the skull collecting expedition leaked out and "some half breeds at Fort Rupert started quite a disturbance and tried to incite the Indians to shoot them." Concerned about a possible investigation, Sutton confided to Boas that "I would like to get [the skulls] off my hands as soon as possible."

The situation heated up still further when the Cowichan Indians discovered that their tribal graves had been desecrated. Obtaining a warrant to search the Sutton sawmill, the Indians discovered no bones, but they retained counsel to prosecute the case. Meanwhile, Boas arranged to ship the illicit

materials to New York under falsified invoices. Despite some shortages in the Sutton materials—"owing to the rumpus with the Indians"—Boas was looking around for somebody to buy the skeletons. At this point, his collection numbered about two hundred crania, half of which were accompanied by complete skeletons.

The American Museum of Natural History agreed to store his skull collection temporarily, but they ultimately declined purchase, and in 1889 Boas moved the bones to Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he also signed on as a docent in the Department of Psychology. While there, Boas supervised A. F. Chamberlain, this country's first Ph.D. in Anthropology. Boas added another hundred or so skulls to his collection during this period, but he still had trouble selling the specimens (part of which ultimately went to Berlin's Museum für Völkerkunde, and the rest he sold years later to Chicago's new Field Columbian Museum).

Boas then accepted a short-term assignment to help plan the anthropological exhibits at the upcoming 1893 Chicago World's Fair. His job was to pull together an exhibit on physical anthropology and to create a special exhibit of Northwest Coast materials. He was disappointed that his display of skulls from Vancouver Island, systematically arranged in glass cases, was shoved into a poorly visited building along the southeastern corner of the Fair "likely to be overlooked by nine out of every ten visitors."

More popular in Chicago was the exhibit of living Indians. Boas personally arranged for a dozen Kwakwaka'wakh (Kwakwuit) Indians to live at the fair, housed in the livestock pavilion until they could move into a traditional beam and plank longhouse. In the fair's "ethnological zoo," the Kwakwaka'wakh (Kwakwuit) rubbed elbows with Apache and Navajo families, Iroquois living in bark longhouses, even Arawaks from South America. Down the Midway were Egyptians and Sudanese, Javanese, Chinese, Japanese, Eskimos from Labrador, and bare-breasted Dahomians from West Africa. When the fair finally closed in October 1893, the Kwakwaka'wakh returned home via the Canadian Pacific Railway. Boas' boss, Frederick Ward Putnam, resented having to pay their passage and heatedly insisted to railroad officials that the Kwakwaka'wakh should be granted free passage "just like other exhibits, as they were exhibits in every sense of the term." Boas was happy to see them leave, vowing "never again to play circus impresario."

The question naturally arose about what to do with the huge anthropological collection amassed in Chicago. Some of it went to California's Midwinter Exposition, and Washington State took parts for the state museum in Seattle. Boas and others pressed for a new natural history museum in



Franz Boas (above) demonstrating a pose of the Kwakwaka'wakh (Kwakwuit) bamatsa dancer for model makers at the U.S. National Museum (February 1895). The Hamatsa life-group (below) as displayed in the Smithsonian exhibit (ca. 1896).



Chicago, and after considerable prodding the department store magnate Marshall Field—by far the richest man in Chicago—stepped forward with a check for a million dollars. The new Field Columbian Museum opened to the public in June 1894, with Boas appointed as temporary curator. Although

fully expecting to be retained as permanent curator, Boas was passed over in favor of William Henry Holmes, who stayed until 1896, to be succeeded by George A. Dorsey.

Having resigned from Clark University in a faculty revolt, an embittered Boas was reduced once again to piecework, acquiring and selling more Indian skulls. At this point, several of the country's new museums—especially Harvard, the Field Museum, the Smithsonian Institution, and the American Museum of Natural History—were vying for control of American archaeology, and Boas landed temporary assignments with the latter two.

The American Museum of Natural History finally hired Boas as a curator in late 1895. Still seething over the "unsurpassed insult" delivered in Chicago, Boas harbored a festering grudge against the upstart Field Museum and its curators—especially Holmes and Dorsey. In a letter written on December 25, 1895, Boas growled that "I'll show Chicago I can go them one better." The intense rivalry that arose between the two institutions reflected not only the personal animosity between ambitious curators (who truly detested each other), but also a deep-seated competition between their host cities. As a railway hub for the north and west, Chicago aspired to national and international status, hoping to equal or even overtake New York.

These "dear enemies" fought for years in a furious and well-financed rivalry over American Indian collectibles. Dorsey's first expedition for the Field Museum, in 1897, was a four-month blitz throughout western North America. His first stop was Browning, Montana, where just seven years earlier nearly a quarter of the local Blackfeet population had starved on Ghost Ridge. Dorsey dug into the shallow graves and shipped three dozen whole skeletons back to Chicago. Flushed with this early success, he moved to the Pacific Northwest, searching out the rich graves, coffins, and caves known to exist there. After exhuming sixteen skeletons and "many objects of ethnological interest" at Skungo Cave, he zipped northward into Tlingit territory in Alaska, where skeletal remains were particularly hard to find because the Tlingit cremated almost everyone except shamans.

In August 1897, while waiting for a steamer at Namu, Boas ran into Dorsey and his guide, Jimmy Deans. Boas wrote his wife that night that "I am mad at myself because there is an element of envy in me which I despise but which I cannot suppress altogether. It does not help that one behaves decently when inside oneself one is as shabby as the next fellow. What makes me so furious is the fact that these Chicago people simply adopt my plans and then try to beat me to it. Well, little Dorsey won't have achieved much with the help of that old ass, Deans. . . . In any event I don't think that Dorsey acted honorably."

At the time, local missionaries were complaining that skull and artifact collectors had destroyed almost every grave in the Virago Sound and North Island area. They were shocked by the men "who however laudable their object, could so mercilessly ride roughshod over the susceptibilities of the Indians." Dorsey was briefly arrested on the Columbia River, but was then released when he promised to return the materials he had taken. Elated at this development, Boas boasted that he had "never come into conflict with the feelings of Indians," conveniently glossing over the hundreds of similar grave-robbing forays he and his agents had conducted through the years. Given the bitter rivalry, it is hardly surprising that ethics and honesty became conditional, at times giving way to deception and theft.

Boas and Dorsey were hardly the first to dig graves in the Pacific Northwest. In his book *The Naturalist in Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, published in 1866, John Keats Lord, recounted his earlier experience at Fort Rupert (British Columbia), where he was told of a Koskimo man, reportedly shot and decapitated in a recent enemy raid. This unfortunate had a distinctive "sugar-loaf-shaped" skull, intentionally deformed shortly after birth. The trophy had been hung by a rope from a pole, "fresh, bloody, and ghastly," but Lord was "determined at any risk to have the skull." Under the cover of darkness, he overturned the pole, "bagged the skull," and smuggled it out in a pork barrel. Lord later presented his treasure to the British Museum.

Adrian Jacobson, a private artifact and skull collector who worked for several prominent museums, had a similar experience in 1882. He knew that the deformed Koskimo "longhead" skulls were especially valuable, and secured several more. But the supply soon dried up. At Comox, he tried without success to climb up to tree-hung burial boxes, but he did better in nighttime raids on the local cemetery. Knowing that the local Indians were reluctant to sell skeletons or grave carvings, Jacobson decided that "the rule here is: Help yourself."

Thomas, David Hurst. 2000. "Collecting Your Fossils Alive," in his book *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity*. New York: Basic Books/Perseus. ISBN: 0-465-09225-X. Total pages in book: 326. Chapter: pp 77-90.



COLLECTING YOUR FOSSILS ALIVE

ON A WINTERY evening in 1898, a curious group huddled against the wind in a garden just off New York's Central Park: The American Museum's renowned curator of anthropology, Dr. Franz Boas, several scientists, some museum employees, and a sad-eyed eight-year-old Polar Eskimo, the newly orphaned Minik. They were gathered to bury young Minik's father, Qisuk, who had died of tuberculosis. Following Eskimo custom, the men carefully mounded stones over the grave. Below lay the lifeless body, shrouded in cloth, with a mask over its face. Minik placed some of his father's favorite possessions near the gravestones. He also made his mark along the north side of the grave, a sign to ward off the spirit of the dead man.

But Boas knew what the boy did not: Qisuk's body was not beneath the stones. Museum workmen had created an imitation corpse from a man-sized log. Qisuk's body had been taken directly to Bellevue Hospital's College of Physicians and Surgeons, where an autopsy was performed. After removing the brain for study, technicians cut up and macerated the body, delivering the

bright white bones to the American Museum of Natural History. Qisuk's skull and skeleton, each bone individually numbered, lay in a wooden museum tray among thousands of other anthropological specimens.

" I B E G T O S U G G E S T T H A T Y O U
B R I N G B A C K A M I D D L E - A G E D
E S K I M O "

Beginning in the 1870s, archaeologists like Charles Abbott and Boyd Dawkins argued that Eskimo people (today often called *Inuit*) descended directly from ancient hunters of the European Ice Age who had migrated to the Arctic in pursuit of deer and musk ox as the glaciers melted. In Morgan's social evolution, nineteenth-century Eskimos represented "living fossils," physically and culturally frozen in time, forever trapped in a higher status of savagery.

Having spent fifteen months during the years 1883 and 1894 doing ethnographic fieldwork in the Arctic, Boas did not see Eskimos as "arrested" in an early evolutionary stage. He distrusted Morgan's universal stages and the snobbish definition of progress they implied. Boas instead saw Eskimo customs, traditions, and migrations as adaptations to Arctic life. He emphasized the importance of studying individual Eskimo groups separately and looked for ways to get detailed ethnographic information on isolated and relatively unacculturated groups such as the Polar Eskimo.

Boas had previously arranged for a number of Labrador Eskimos to join the living exhibits at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, and shortly after joining the curatorial staff of New York's American Museum of Natural History in 1895, he wrote the famed Arctic explorer Robert Peary with a similar arrangement in mind: "I beg to suggest to you that if you are certain of revisiting North Greenland next summer, it would be of the very greatest value if you should be able to bring a middle-aged Eskimo to stay there over winter. This would enable us to obtain leisurely certain information which will be of the greatest scientific importance."

Peary had enjoyed considerable support from Morris Jesup, the Museum's president. Earlier, responding to a plea from Peary's wife, Jesup had helped finance an expedition to rescue Peary when he was stranded in Greenland. Jesup subsequently struck a deal with Peary: he would fund the explorer's future explorations if Peary would help build the Museum's Arctic collections. When Boas wrote his letter, Peary was finalizing his fourth voy-

age to the Arctic, an expedition to secure a colossal meteorite for the museum's collection.

But Peary never wrote back to Boas.

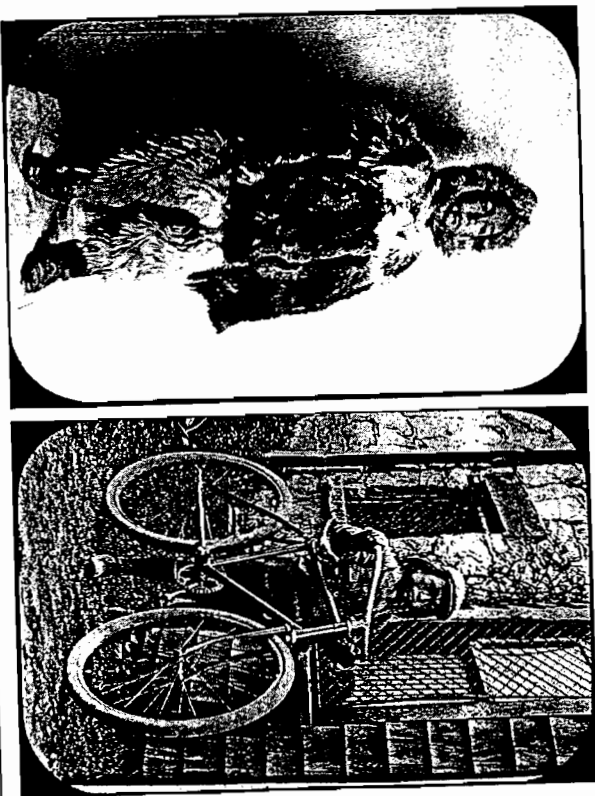
" S O O N E D A Y W E A L L S A I L E D A W A Y "

In September 1897, a triumphant Peary sailed his ship *Hope* into the Brooklyn shipyard with 100 tons of meteorites on board, including the monster known as Alinghito. As the largest meteorite ever recovered, it was destined to join the rapidly growing collection of the American Museum of Natural History. Also on board—to the surprise of Dr. Boas and everyone else—were six Polar Eskimos from Smith Sound, Greenland. Peary had complied with Boas' request and then some.

The Peary Eskimos, as they were sometimes called, became instant celebrities. During their first two days in town, some 30,000 New Yorkers paid twenty-five cents each to view them aboard the *Hope*. Qisuk, the group's leader, had worked intermittently for Peary since 1891, and when asked how they got to New York, the Eskimo explained that "Peary asked if some of us wouldn't like to go back with him . . . so one day we all sailed away." Qisuk even brought his six-year old son Minik along for the ride.

Boas arranged for the newcomers to live at the museum. At first the Eskimos lived in makeshift basement accommodations, but they soon moved into a sixth-floor apartment suite, which they shared with the museum's superintendent, William Wallace. Boas stressed that the Eskimos were visiting New York strictly for scientific purposes—not to be exhibited. It was prohibitively expensive, Boas pointed out, to launch an anthropological expedition to the Arctic; but with the Eskimos at hand the necessary ethnographic and linguistic studies could be made quickly and cheaply. They would return home the next summer. When a reporter asked what the Eskimos did all day, Boas replied, "Oh, we try to give them little things to keep them busy. Their work doesn't amount to much, but they have made some carvings, and occupied themselves either indoors or around the place with any employment that suggested itself to them. They do not seem discontented."

FRANZ BOAS WAS a busy man in the late 1890s. When Peary and the Eskimos arrived unannounced in New York harbor, Boas was finalizing his plan for the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, the most ambitious anthropolog-



Minik, the New York Eskimo, dressed in his Polar Eskimo clothing (shortly after his arrival in New York in 1898), and with his bicycle in Lawyersville, New York.

ical expedition ever undertaken. Under Boas' guidance, the Jesup Expedition set out to "investigate and establish the ethnological relations between the races of America and Asia. . . . There are few problems," he argued, "of greater importance to the early history of the American race than its relations to the races of the Old World." Over the next six years, Boas sent teams of anthropologists around the northern Pacific Rim, collecting artifacts, recording customs, and digging archaeological sites from Oregon to Siberia. The Jesup Expedition was a staggering undertaking, resulting in seventeen massive volumes.

Between organizing this expedition and conducting his own ethnographic fieldwork in British Columbia, Boas found little time to work directly with his resident Eskimos. Once he was sure that Qisuk and the others were secure in their museum quarters, Boas delegated the primary ethnographic responsibility for the New York Eskimos to a bright new student named Alfred Kroeber.

Kroeber had been an English instructor at nearby Columbia University in 1897 when, on a lark, he enrolled in a Boas' graduate course on American

Indian linguistics. Boas held the seminar around the dinner table in his 82nd Street home, just up the street from the museum. "We spent about two months each on Chinook, Eskimo, Klamath, and Salish," Kroeber later recalled. "I was enormously stimulated. Grammatical structure was interesting as presented, but to *discover* it was fascinating. Boas' method was very similar to that of the zoologist who starts a student with an etherized frog or worm and a dissecting table."

At one point, Boas introduced his class to Esther, "a Labrador half-bred Eskimo woman" and wife of a mechanic who worked at the museum. As Esther slowly spoke in her native Eskimo dialect, Boas taught Kroeber to record the words phonetically. The process and the professor captivated the young English teacher. Kroeber later described Boas as "strong physically and psychically, dominant, daemonic, a proper culture hero who passed along to his students the peculiarly slanted romantic humanistic-scientific vision which continues . . . to inspire New World anthropologists." Kroeber immediately signed up for a second American Indian Language seminar and also took Boas' seminar in physical anthropology, a course taught in the Museum's laboratory where Boas showed students how to take anthropometric measurements on the extensive skull collection housed there.

Although still teaching English courses at Columbia, the twenty-one-year-old Kroeber took over the primary responsibility for the ethnographic and linguistic research on the "Peary" Eskimos from Smith Sound.

MINIK "VISITS THE (SUPPOSED) GRAVE OF HIS FATHER"

Not long after their celebrated arrival in New York, all six Eskimos contracted pneumonia. Too ill to live at the Museum, they moved between Bellevue Hospital and Museum superintendent Wallace's upstate dairy farm at Lawyersville. They also spent time at Museum President Jesup's house in High Bridge, New York. A *New York Tribune* reporter asked Boas, "When you found they were sick so much, didn't you think of sending them North again?" Boas responded "Yes, but there was no opportunity to send them. There were ships going north as far as Newfoundland and Labrador, but that would not have been anywhere near their home, and we could not land them in a strange country. When Lieutenant Peary starts on his trip this summer he will take them back with him. They are all fond of him, and were delighted at

the prospect of coming here last summer." But Peary did not return northward that summer.

Only eight months after their triumphant arrival, four of the New York Eskimos were dead of tuberculosis. One did make it back to Greenland, and the sixth, the orphaned Minik, remained under Wallace's care. As the tragic affair unfolded, Kroeber doggedly pursued his ethnographic inquiries into Eskimo social organization, religion, and cosmology. Most of Kroeber's ethnographic work used Esther as an interpreter, asking the Eskimos to remember and describe what took place in Greenland. But when it came to mourning customs, Kroeber could make observations first-hand. He later commented that his mortuary accounts "are exceptionally full, though perhaps the customs are somewhat modified by the unusual surroundings."

When Minik's father died, the surviving Eskimos offered to kill the orphaned boy (infanticide being a common practice back home in Greenland). Although the life of young Minik was spared, an Eskimo elder "insisted that the boy visit the (supposed) grave of his father, and instructed him how to act," Kroeber later reported. "He told [Minik] what to say at the grave, and gave him some of the deceased's property to lay on the pile of stones." Minik did as he was told and he continued to live with Wallace.

Years later, the 15-year-old Minik read in a New York newspaper the ghastly news that his father's remains were not resting in a grave at all: Qisuk's bones had been accessioned into the Museum's collection of Indian bones. The New York press had a field day with the story of pitiful Minik seeking the return of his father's remains. One lurid account claimed that "An upstairs room—at the museum—is his father's last resting place. His coffin is a show-case, his shroud a piece of plate glass. No quiet of the graveyard is there; the noise of shuffling feet and the tap, tap of hammers as the workmen fix up other skeletons, is ever present. And when the sunlight fades they turn on the electrical lights so that Minik's father may not have even the pall of darkness to hide his naked bones." Pressed for a reaction, Minik reportedly said, "I felt as though I must die then and there. I . . . prayed and wept. I went straight to the director and implored him to let me bury my father. He would not. I swore that I would never rest until I had given my father burial." Minik apparently asked for the return of his father's bones over the years, without success.

When confronted by reporters, Boas and Wallace eventually admitted that they had indeed staged a mock funeral for Qisuk. Boas defended their actions, suggesting that the fake burial was conducted "to appease the boy, and keep him from discovering that his father's body had been chopped up

and the bones placed in the collection of the institution." Boas saw "nothing particularly deserving severe criticism. The other Eskimos who were still alive were not very well, and then there was Minik, and of course it was only reasonable to spare them any shock or uneasiness. The burial accomplished that purpose I suppose." Pressed as to why the museum could claim Qisuk's body when relatives were still alive, Boas replied, "Oh, that was perfectly legitimate. There was no one to bury the body, and the museum had as good a right to it as any other institution authorized to claim bodies." When an *Evening Mail* reporter wondered if the body didn't actually "belong" to Minik, Boas bristled "Well, Minik was just a little boy, and he did not ask for the body. If he had, he might have got it."

Boas' students and colleagues published a flurry of very high-quality technical papers and scientific monographs on Qisuk and his band. The bulk of the work fell to young Kroeber. Boas hardly participated in the write-up, but he believed that his Eskimo experiment had paid off handsomely. "Many things heretofore unknown have been learned regarding their language, their traditions and their personal characteristics," he later reflected, adding, "casts of their heads have been made for the museum."

Kroeber produced three scientific publications—"The Eskimo of Smith Sound," "Animal Tales of the Eskimo," and "Tales of the Smith Sound Eskimo"—each published in 1899, only a year after Qisuk's death. Reading these reports a century later, one is amazed at the quality of Kroeber's ethnographic reportage, particularly given his age and lack of anthropological experience. Aleš Hrdlička published two accounts on the biology of the Eskimos, including an illustrated article on Qisuk's brain. But except for comments that appeared in newspaper interviews, Boas never published a word on the Peary Eskimos.

Writing in 1997, the anthropologist Edmund Carpenter provided a very positive assessment of the Eskimo experiment: "Boas and Hrdlička rejected the theory, beloved by racists, that various tribal peoples were arrested at different evolutionary stages. Knowledge gained from these six Polar Eskimos challenged that belief. None lived to know the importance of their contribution, but we do and it should not be forgotten."

LAST OF A VANISHING SPECIES

The Peary Eskimos had inadvertently introduced Alfred Kroeber to his life's work. In 1901, Kroeber received the first Ph.D. degree in anthropology

ever given by Columbia University, and became one of the twentieth-century's most influential anthropologists. He served as Curator at the California Academy of Sciences, then became the first anthropologist to teach at the University of California. When Phoebe Apperson Hearst (mother of famed publisher William Randolph Hearst) agreed to finance a new Museum of Anthropology in San Francisco, the Regents and University President appointed Kroeber as its first curator.

Like all American anthropologists of the day, Kroeber saw the American Indian as doomed, and he scrambled to record the ancient customs and lifeways before they disappeared. He scoured California for Indians who remembered the old tribal ways and spoke the ancient tongues. Hoping that his new museum would become a Smithsonian-on-the-Bay, Kroeber established an aggressive program of salvage ethnography among California's Indian population. Above all else, he sought the "uncontaminated" Indian, free of Euroamerican influences.

In 1800, perhaps 300,000 Indians had been living in California, but a century later, only 20,000 California Indians survived. Although many Indians lived on rancherias or reservations within their traditional territories, none of them lived the free life of their ancestors. Kroeber had heard rumors about a handful of still-wild Indians near Oroville, a mining town on the Feather River in northern California. But like most Californians, he was skeptical about the possibility.

"THE MOST UNCIVILIZED,
UNCONTAMINATED MAN IN
THE WORLD TODAY"

Myth came to life on August 9, 1911.

As dogs snarled, a slight brown man, confused and starving, crouched in a slaughterhouse corral near Oroville. The Indian's hair was hacked off and singed, his tribe's sign of mourning. He wore a wooden plug in his nose, and deer sinew hung from holes in his earlobes. A tattered piece of canvas, scavenged from a covered wagon, hid his nakedness. His family had been murdered, or maybe they had starved. Everyone and everything he knew was gone. Although convinced that nobody in the world still spoke his language, he wanted desperately to live. He must have thought that his only chance was to make contact with other human beings, no matter how different they were.

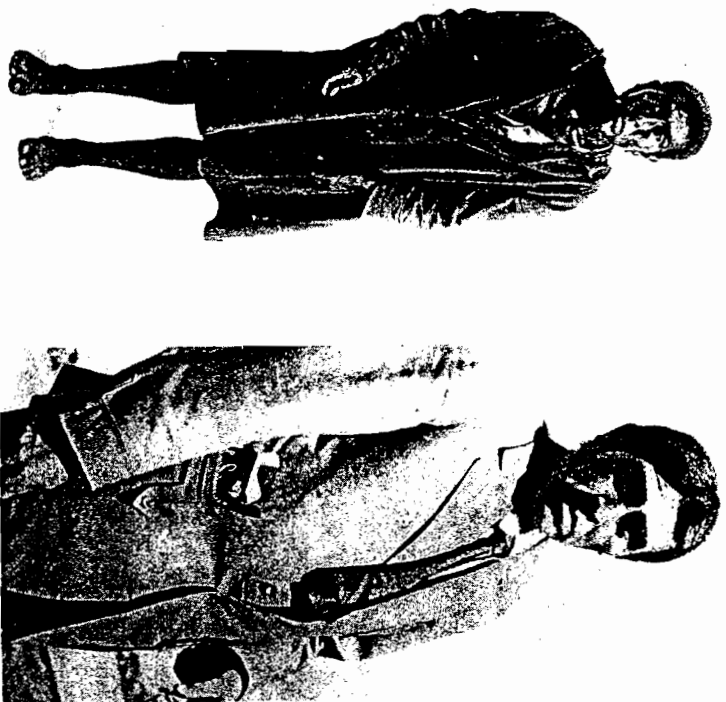
The local sheriff locked the man in a jail cell reserved for the insane, since "wild" Indians could not be allowed to roam about freely. The sheriff soon received a telegram offering to put his prisoner into a carnival. Another telegram, from a woman in St. Louis, contained a marriage proposal, but he believed that "the truth of the matter was she just wanted to put him on exhibition." Several assimilated Indians and even Chinese-speakers were brought in, but none could communicate with the prisoner.

Kroeber, having read newspaper accounts of the event, sent his young colleague Thomas Waterman to Oroville, equipped with lists of local Indian vocabularies. After considerable trial-and-error, Waterman was able to make himself understood. The wild man of Oroville was apparently the last member of a previously unknown northern California tribe. The Noble Savage had come back to life.

The man was transported to Kroeber's new museum in San Francisco. Kroeber decided that he must belong to a previously unknown group of Yana Indians. Since the Yana had already been divided into Northern, Central, and Southern divisions, Kroeber selected the name "Yahi" to label the newly discovered culture. During those first few days, Kroeber also named the man "Ishi," the Yana word for "man" or "one of the people." Newspapers could now write about the wild man by name. More importantly, Ishi was spared the embarrassment of telling his actual private name to a stranger, since many California Indians considered the use of personal names taboo.

At a press conference, Kroeber pronounced Ishi the "most uncivilized, uncontaminated man in the world today." Like the New York Eskimos, the strange man became a celebrity. The local newspapers touted him as "California's Last Wild Indian," an accurate assessment, as far as it went. The lifeway he gave up in 1911 was close to his ancient ways. For years, he had deliberately shied away from white contacts, tools or foods, and had little first-hand knowledge of the newcomers' customs. Kroeber secured quarters for Ishi in the university museum, surrounded by the artifacts and bones of Indians who had died out. "Ishi received all the attention," notes the historian Brian Dippe, that "would be lavished on a dinosaur that happened to stumble into a paleontologists' convention."

A MONTH AFTER Ishi's arrival, Kroeber opened his new Museum of Anthropology to the San Francisco public and it was a great triumph. Kroeber's was the sole museum west of the Mississippi devoted to the study of man, and the only one anywhere with a wildly popular living exhibit. Crowds flocked



Ishi in Two Worlds. The first photograph of Ishi (left), taken on August 29, 1911, wearing a tattered piece of canvas given him to cover his nakedness, and Ishi two months later at the University of California, San Francisco.

to see Ishi, who volunteered to give demonstrations each Sunday afternoon. Although he came down with pneumonia soon after the museum opened, Ishi insisted on appearing in public anyway, taking great pleasure in making fire with wooden drills, staging archery demonstrations, and chipping arrowheads by the thousands, which he gave away as souvenirs.

Kroeber and Ishi saw each other frequently. Ishi gradually learned enough English to complement Kroeber's limited Yahi. Ishi also became friendly with Waterman's family, and often visited them for dinner. Over the next five years, as Kroeber and his staff taught the Indian the ways of "civilization," Ishi revealed some of his secrets of survival in backcountry California. He patiently tutored linguists in his difficult language and eventually led

Kroeber back to his rocky Mill Creek homeland to show him where his people had spent their last pathetic days.

Newspapers sometimes criticized Kroeber for keeping Ishi in a museum. Although other Indian informants had stayed in the museum for brief periods, this Ishi business was somehow different. A representative of the Bureau of Indian Affairs came to San Francisco to check on conditions and offered Ishi a chance to live on a midwestern Indian reservation. He politely refused. He preferred to stay among the anthropologists, and wished to grow old and die in his new museum home.

Like the Peary Eskimos, Ishi developed a tubercular cough. Dr. Saxton Pope, a physician working at the nearby University of California medical school, treated him daily. Over the years, Pope and Ishi found considerable common ground. Taking Ishi on his hospital rounds, Pope saw in the "wild Indian" an extraordinary compassion for the ill. Ishi would quietly hold a patient's hand during treatment, sometimes softly adding a healing prayer in his native Yahi tongue.

Pope also came to share Ishi's love of archery. They made an odd combination indeed—Pope, the urbane physician paired with the Yahi Indian, shooting arrows in the parks of downtown San Francisco. Pope was a good student, and his association with Ishi led to a lifelong interest in the almost-lost art of archery. Pope studied bows and arrows preserved in museum collections and often test-shot the ancient specimens. In 1923, he published *Hunting With the Bow and Arrow*, describing his experiments in archery. The book not only provided baseline information for interpreting ancient finds but also became the bible of the bow-hunting fraternity.

Had Ishi read an anthropology textbook, he would have learned that early twentieth-century anthropology had soundly rejected the idea of biologically based hierarchies. Kroeber believed that Ishi was the intellectual and physical equal of any white American and that all that separated him from mainstream America were the innumerable generations of education that Ishi had missed. "Ishi himself is no nearer the 'missing link' or any other antecedent form of human life than we are," Kroeber argued. "But in what his environment, his associates, and his puny native civilization have made him he represents a stage through which our ancestors passed thousands of years ago."

"SAY FOR ME THAT SCIENCE
CAN GO TO HELL"

Kroeber took a one-year sabbatical in 1915 and 1916, setting up headquarters in New York, and traveling throughout Europe, where he became acquainted with Freud's school of psychoanalysis in Vienna. Ishi moved in with the Waterman family, where Edward Sapir, one of America's most distinguished linguists, worked with him. Ishi supplied Sapir with a torrent of Yahi language, day after day pouring out his native stories and songs. Perhaps Ishi suspected that he was dying and decided to leave as much of his culture as possible behind so that his people would not be forgotten. As Ishi's tuberculosis worsened, Waterman wrote to Kroeber "the poor old Indian is dying. The work last summer was too much for him. He was the best friend I had in the world and I killed him by letting Sapir ride him too hard, and by letting him sneak out for lunches."

Kroeber directed that Yahi burial customs should be followed as closely as possible after Ishi died. The body should be touched and handled as little as possible, then cremated on an out-of-doors funeral pyre. The ashes were to be buried in a funerary urn, the closest available equivalent to the burial basket and rock cairn used in Yahi burial rites.

Kroeber was still in New York City when Ishi died, on March 25, 1916. No doubt recalling the bizarre faux funeral for the Peary Eskimos, he was worried by what might be done in his absence. From a borrowed office in the American Museum of Natural History, Kroeber instructed his California colleagues to adhere to earlier burial plans: "[I] insist on it as my personal wish." While he would permit the casting of a plaster death mask, he strongly objected to an autopsy, for fear that it "would resolve itself into a general dissection. Please shut it down." In uncharacteristically strong language, Kroeber wrote, "As to disposal of the body, I must ask you as my personal representative to yield nothing at all under any circumstances. If there is any talk about the interests of science, say for me that science can go to hell!"

"We propose to stand by our friends," Kroeber continued. "Besides, I cannot believe that any scientific value is materially involved. We have hundreds of Indian skeletons that nobody ever comes near to study."

By return mail, Kroeber learned from a California colleague that his letter had arrived too late: "The only departures from your request were that a simple autopsy was performed and that the brain was preserved. The matter was not entirely in my hands—in short what happened amounts to a compromise between science and sentiment with myself on the side of sentiment."

Ishi's body was taken to a funeral parlor, where it was embalmed, but no funeral services were held. Waterman, Pope, and a few anthropologists visited Ishi's coffin, placing in it his bow and quiver filled with arrows, several pieces of dentalia (shell money), some dried venison and acorn meal, fire-making equipment, and a small quantity of tobacco. They accompanied the body to Laurel Hill cemetery, near San Francisco, where everything was cremated and the ashes placed in a Santa Clara Pueblo pottery jar, with the inscription: "Ishi, the last Yahi Indian, died March 25, 1916."

Ishi's death sent Kroeber into an emotional tailspin. Decades later, he would reflect that the two years following Ishi's death were the worst of his life. Not only had his wife Henrietta just died (also of tuberculosis), but Kroeber had developed a chronic ear infection causing disorientation and permanent hearing loss in one ear. Wracked with pain and guilt, Kroeber second-guessed everything. Had he inadvertently exposed Ishi to tuberculosis by introducing him to Henrietta? Or did Ishi contract the disease while making hospital rounds with Pope? Had he brought Sapir to Berkeley earlier, when Ishi was healthier, how much more information could have been recorded? Had Kroeber sacrificed Ishi's health for the sake of science?

Anthropologists of Kroeber's day rarely developed close ties with their Indian informants because most of them were elderly and would soon die. Kroeber and his coworkers were accustomed to visiting rural reservations, interviewing the key elders for a couple of hours or days, then returning to their university or museum headquarters to write out a description of the culture. Usually, there was little emotional investment since the informants rarely left their home and in most cases the anthropologist never saw them again.

But Kroeber slipped into a paralyzing depression and came to question his career choice. After arranging a one-year job swap with Robert Lowie (another Boas student who was then Curator of Ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History), Kroeber settled in New York City in the fall of 1917—ostensibly to work at the American Museum, but more important, to begin psychoanalysis with a New York-based analyst trained by Anna Freud.

Back in Berkeley a year later, he was somewhat refreshed but still suffering from regrets over Ishi's death that would never leave him. He returned to part-time anthropological teaching and began his own psychoanalytic practice. Although Kroeber published extensively, for the rest of his life he refused to write about his experiences with Ishi and he also denied access to anybody seeking to use Sapir's notebooks, which recorded Ishi's language (they surfaced in the 1980s; Kroeber's heirs donated the Ishi documents to

the University of California's Bancroft library). To Kroeber, the loss of Ishi created long-lasting anxieties about the propriety and ethics of anthropological research.

For the nation, Ishi's death meant that the last "free" Indian had died. Despite everything mainstream America had done to hasten that demise, there was a certain sadness when the inevitable finally happened.

Thomas, David Hurst. 2000. "The Red Power of Vine Deloria, Jr.," in his book *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity*. New York: Basic Books/Persus. ISBN: 0-465-09225-X. Total pages in book: 326. Chapter: pp 198-208.



THE RED POWER OF
VINE DELORIA, JR.

Had the tribes been given the choice of fighting the cavalry or the anthropologists, there is little doubt as to whom they would have chosen A warrior killed in battle could always go to the Happy Hunting Grounds. Where does an Indian laid low by an anthro go? To the library?

—Vine Deloria, Jr. (1988)

THE 1971 DIG in Welch, Minnesota, was going pretty much like all others, mostly dust and discouragement, but the students still felt lucky to be there. They slaved for weeks, learning to move dirt scientifically. They dug in square pits, wrote detailed fieldnotes, and took routine photographs. They screened everything, picking out even the tiniest bones and artifacts. They catalogued and classified, looking for clues to what life had been like in the ancient Indian village that once stood here.

Then the Indians showed up. Representing a new protest group called "AIM"—the American Indian Movement—they confiscated excavation equipment, burned the fieldnotes, and backfilled the excavation trenches. Clyde Bellecourt, their leader, announced that the Indians of Minnesota were deeply offended because archaeologists were disturbing graves of their ancestors. No more digging would be permitted.

Then, like the dress-up Mohawks at the Boston Tea Party, the Indians from AIM offered to pay for any damage caused by their protest.

The archaeologists, shocked and irritated, complained about "five weeks of work down the drain." Tears welled up in one student's eyes as she explained how careful they had been. Another excavator, preparing for a career in archaeology, said that the activists had made her lose respect for all Indian people and that these citified Indians were simply ignorant about their own past. A third said that the Indians just did not understand—archaeologists are "trying to preserve Indian culture, not destroy it." The AIM radicals did not care what the archaeologists said. They couldn't see how archaeologists were showing respect to Indian people by digging up their dead ancestors.

Russell Means, the self-described "most controversial Indian leader of our time," remembers his first glimpse of AIM Indians. "I couldn't help notice the way they were dressed and their haircuts—parted on one side and combed into waves falling across the other side, the way Indian boarding-school students had once been forced to wear their hair. They wore beaded belts, sashes, chokers, moccasins, headbands, and lots of Indian jewelry. I thought, what are they trying to prove? Those guys looked ridiculous, all dressed up like Indians. I asked somebody, 'Who are those guys?' They're from the American Indian Movement in Minneapolis," he answered."

Unlike the Boston Tea Party, the Minnesota protest was staged by real Indians—dressed up like real Indians. Their mostly peaceful acts of civil disobedience illustrated a deep dissatisfaction with the Federal government and their own lack of representation. In the 1971 Minnesota confrontation, the Indians of AIM were reestablishing claims on their own heritage, showing the world that Indians were very much alive.

D I D C U S T E R D I E F O R Y O U R S I N S ?

Any of the Minnesota students with a current issue of *Playboy* slashed under the mattress could have spotted the next incoming round. Those who were mystified that protest against white domination targeted an innocent archaeological dig would soon have the mystery cleared up. Vine Deloria, Jr., a Standing Rock Sioux law student had just published an extract from his soon-to-be-released blockbuster, provocatively entitled *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. Deloria's book exploded on the scene in 1969—trashing academics, missionaries, Congress, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and most other non-Indians who frequented Indian Country.

Particularly stinging was Deloria's Chapter 4—"Anthropologists and Other Friends"—a humorous, take-no-prisoners indictment of anthropological research in Indian country. In Deloria's hands, the term "anthro" became a clever slur, soon to be picked up by angry young Indians across the land (some of whom had never actually encountered an anthro first-hand). To Deloria, the Anthro-American was a meddlesome academic who "infects the land of the free, and in the summer time, the homes of the braves."

"Indians," Deloria teased, "are . . . certain that Columbus brought anthropologists on his ships when he came to the New World. How else could he have made so many wrong decisions about where he was?" He also suggested that, like religious missionaries, anthros were "tolerably certain that they represent ultimate truth" when they set themselves up as the authoritative sources on tribal cultures. He questioned how they had become the custodians of the Indian past.

Deep down, said Deloria, anthros are motivated mostly to climb the academic totem pole. "Reduction of people to ciphers for purposes of observation apparently appears to be inconsequential to the anthropologist compared with the immediate benefits he can derive, the production of further prestige, and the chance to appear as the high priest of American society, orienting and manipulating to his heart's desire." Archaeologists carted off Indian bones and artifacts to faraway museums and wrote complex ethnographies and site reports that were intrusive, irrelevant, and insulting to Indian people. All "amateur" inquiry—research that did not fit this absurd world and therefore was not sanctioned by the academy—was frowned upon and derided.

Furthermore, Deloria argued, anthropology's commitment to "pure research" had forced Indian tribes into unfair competition with academics for funding from private foundations and federal agencies. Anthropological research was especially wasteful, he said, because the "scholarly productions are so useless and irrelevant to real life." Deloria's anthros dwelt only on the past, seeking "authenticity" and ignoring the interests of modern Indian people. Archaeologists in particular were perpetuating myths and images that had structured white perceptions of Indian people for centuries. For them, the only good Indians were the dead ones. He challenged anthropologists to "get down from their thrones of authority and PURE research and begin helping Indian tribes instead of preying on them."

Deloria was infuriated at the anthropologists' silence during those critical days in 1954, when Congress was terminating federal services to Indians. Why, he asked, should Indians maintain an ethnographic zoo for the professional pleasure of academics that had so miserably failed to support tribal in-

terests? After decades of "pure research" on the reservations, why couldn't the anthros have said *something* in support of Indian rights?

Deloria clearly expressed his view that the so-called "alliance" between anthropologists and Indians had long been imbalanced and contradictory. He brought up anthropology's long-term colonial associations and scoffed at the anthropologists' claim of scientific objectivity. Deloria branded archaeologists as exploiters of Indian people, accused them of perpetuating long-standing Indian stereotypes, and asked them to stop digging up his ancestors.

RED POWER ON ALCATRAZ

Custer Died For Your Sins and the American Indian Movement were hardly the first time Indians had spoken out on their own behalf. While the bloody military campaigns involving freedom-fighters like Sitting Bull and Geronimo remain the best-known Indian response to the white invasion, native people of the nineteenth century resisted mainstream domination in multiple ways. Sequoyah developed his own syllabary to publish a newspaper and books in Cherokee; Paviotso Paiute Sarah Winnemucca spoke on the East Coast lecture circuit to promote the well-being of her people; Wanapum medicine man Smohalla and Paiute prophet Wovoka promoted their visionary message of salvation in the famous Ghost Dances of 1870 and 1890, and Arthur Parker had helped establish the Society of American Indians in 1911. Each one in his or her own way promoted pan-tribal resistance to exploitation by outsiders.

The termination debacle of the 1950s had brought a new unity of Indian purpose, sparking a number of Indian protests and conferences that emphasized the need to protect the tribal land base and promote cultural pluralism in the United States. By the 1960s, Indian activists had a track record of successful social protest. The Indian fish-ins of the Pacific Northwest and the focus on measured, obtainable goals with clear-cut solutions. When Vine Deloria Jr. was selected as executive director of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in 1964, he called for qualified Indians with the necessary skills to assure the success of federal social and economic programs in bringing prosperity to Indian Country.

The skyrocketing urban Indian population, fostered in large measure as a byproduct of termination, brought large numbers of native people in contact with the militant wing of the 1960s civil rights movement. The American In-

dian Movement was formed initially in response to police brutality in urban Minneapolis. AIM members patrolled the streets in a media-based counterattack, documenting with cameras episodes of police brutality against Indians. These emergent Red Power advocates joined forces with broader civil rights concerns. The largely reservation-based constituency of the NCAI, on the other hand, had problems with the urban activists and their confrontation politics, and a split of sorts developed between the two perspectives. Deloria warned in *Custer* against merging Indian concerns with the broader civil rights movements, but the off-reservation factions continued to build ties with black militant groups.

The 1968 Poor People's March on Washington drove a wedge between moderate and militant Indians. In November 1969, a group calling themselves "Indians of All Nations" began a 19-month occupation of Alcatraz Island, in the middle of San Francisco Bay. Millions of Bay Area residents saw "The Rock" daily, and headlines across the nation made Alcatraz ground zero for the growing Red Power movement.

Four months after the Alcatraz takeover, Deloria told a reporter that while he was not against militancy, he was against stupidity. He considered the occupation to be entirely irrelevant because the Alcatraz activists lacked any meaningful backup in Washington to effect real change. "You can sit on the rock for the next 100 years," Deloria warned, "but if you have nobody carrying that paper through the government agencies, then how do you expect to get title to it, see?" As the Alcatraz occupation dragged on, Deloria received a memorable call from the Nixon White House, ordering him to "get those Indians out of that prison or we'll throw them in jail!" As Indians observed at the time, without decent housing, water, or employment opportunities, Alcatraz looked more like an Indian reservation than the federal prisons then in service.

For Deloria, the Alcatraz takeover became "an Indian version of the Poor People's March," a symbolic protest with ill-defined goals and without specific solutions. The newspapers said that the Indians occupied Alcatraz because they were entitled to the island as a federal surplus property provision of the 1868 treaty of Fort Laramie. Calling this interpretation "a myth," Deloria said that the Alcatraz sit-in, "in legal terms . . . meant nothing." The NCAI had refused to endorse the Poor People's March because, in Deloria's words, its leaders were "unable to articulate specific solutions and see them through to completion."

According to historian Troy Johnson, AIM leadership entered the national scene only after visiting the Indian occupation of Alcatraz. They saw

the power of the press, and how Indian imagery could be used to manipulate it. They also realized the reluctance of federal bureaucrats to punish Indians engaged in civil disobedience. As "Indians of All Tribes, Inc." focused on the Alcatraz occupation, "AIM seized the historical moment and became the premier national Indian activist group," Johnson wrote, "sponsoring a series of protests that would continue throughout the decade and encourage others to speak up for themselves and for their rights."

AIM had reversed the agenda of Parker's Society of American Indians. Although both movements promoted Indian goals and identity at a national level, the emphasis on tribal sovereignty, retention of treaty rights, and self-determination for reservations had replaced the previous calls for assimilation and abolition of reservations. An emphasis on traditional tribal values replaced Parker's reliance on racial determinism. "Going 'back to the blanket' carried positive rather than negative connotations," writes the anthropologist Jeffrey Hanson, "and the outer, visible Indian replaced the inner Indian of the SAI."

The occupation of Alcatraz from 1969 to 1971 was followed by the 1973 takeover of Wounded Knee on the Oglala Lakota (Sioux) Reservation, where Dennis Banks, Russell Means, and 250 AIM supporters faced off against federal marshals. The flashy imagery of Alcatraz and Wounded Knee played well in the world of urban Indians. According to Means, "about every admirable quality that remains in today's Indian people is the result of the American Indian Movement's flint striking the white man's steel. In the 1970s and 1980s, we lit a fire across Indian country. . . . Thanks to AIM, for the first time in this century, Indian people stand at the threshold of freedom and responsibility." Richard West and Kevin Gover take exception to Means, suggesting that while AIM "probably never had the influence in the Indian community that the American media believed it had, it did reflect accurately the frustration and anger felt by all Indians, at least to some degree."

DO THE WASHINGTON REDSKINS HONOR INDIAN PEOPLE?

Beginning in the 1960s, the Red Power movement confronted the power of names head-on. Deloria joined several other Indians leaders in calling attention to the demeaning stereotypes and misleading Indian imagery assigned by the non-Indian mainstream, focusing in particular on the American sports and advertising industries. In 1968, the National Congress of American Indians launched a campaign to address stereotypes found in print and

other media, urging America's high schools, colleges, universities, and professional sports franchises to "do the right thing" by taking a hard look at the racist implications of appropriating Indian names and images. The next year, Dartmouth College changed its mascot from the "Indians" to the "Big Green"; in 1971, Marquette University abandoned its "Willie Wampum" mascot; in 1972, Stanford University teams stopped being the "Indians," Dickinson State switched from the "Savages" to the "Blue Hawks," the University of North Dakota stopped being the "Fighting Sioux," and the University of Oklahoma retired its "Little Red" mascot. In 1996, Miami University of Ohio quit being "Redskins" and, in March 1999, the Crayola Company announced that it was dropping the color "Indian red" from its 64-crayon box. Emphasizing that the name was based on a reddish-brown pigment commonly found in India, a Crayola spokesman maintained that the "Indian red" crayon had nothing to do with American Indians, but "if it confuses children, it's something that should be reevaluated."

Not all Americans were willing to give up their Indian imagery without a fight. There is today no single word more offensive to Indian people than the term "redskins," a racial epithet that conjures up the American legacy of bounty hunters bringing in wagon loads of Indian skulls and corpses, literally—the bloody dead bodies were known as "redskins"—to collect their payment. For years, Deloria and others have emphasized that such racial slurs would never be permitted for other ethnic groups in America. When they asked the National Football League to change the Washington team's name to something less offensive, they were told that the term is only meant to "honor" native people—the equivalent to using the n-word to name a sports team, then claiming it was done to "honor African-Americans."

In *Red Earth, White Lies*, Deloria recounts the curious tale of Marge Shott, former owner of the Cincinnati Reds baseball team. When Shott made some derogatory remarks about African Americans and Jews in a *private* conversation, she was suspended for a year from baseball. When Jimmy the Greek, a popular sports telecaster, suggested on a national broadcast that African Americans had longer muscles extending up their backs because slave owners bred them that way, he was summarily fired. Thousands of Indians were outraged when actress Jane Fonda was shown on national television supporting her husband Ted Turner's Atlanta Braves with an enthusiastic rendition of the "Tomahawk Chop."

"We have been lectured by every redneck peckerwood who can man a typewriter about how harmless these names and symbols are," complains Deloria. Where are all the protests of racism when Indian people are the sub-

jects? Although this cavalier attitude stems from stereotypes through which America has long defined Indians, Deloria notes that the problem has been exaggerated by scientists who "may not have intended to portray Indians as animals rather than humans, but their insistence that Indians are outside the mainstream of human experience produces precisely these reactions in the public mind. . . . The constant drumbeat of scientific personalities manipulating the public's image of Indians by describing archaeological horizons, instead of societies, speaking of hunter-gatherers instead of communities, and attacking Indian knowledge of the past as fictional mythology, has created a situation in which the average citizen is greatly surprised to learn that Indians are offended by racial slurs and insults."

In 1992, Deloria joined Suzan Shown Harjo and six other Indian leaders to press the mascot issue by suing the Washington Redskins football team. "This is one of the last vestiges of overt racism right out in public in America, and it happens on a weekly basis during sports season," said Harjo. "This is the worst name you can call Native Americans in the English language." In *Harjo et al. v. Pro Football, Inc.* the co-petitioners asked the federal government to cancel trademark protection for the team's name, on the grounds that federal law was not designed to protect those making money from using offensive language. Framing the context as "protection against racism" vs. "profit from racism," Harjo, Deloria, and the others pressed their case for seven years until a federal panel ruled in their favor in April 1999. The ruling meant that marketing and merchandising of the Washington Redskins logo would no longer receive trademark protection (it is now pending appeal).

Several newspapers, including the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *Seattle Times*, and *Portland Oregonian*, recognizing the racial overtones involved, refuse to print the term "Redskin" in reporting the results of sporting events. U.S. Senator Paul Simon asks, "Can you imagine tolerating a halftime dance at a football game of a Catholic priest or Jewish rabbi with vestments on, holding a chair or Torah? It is a small thing but small things are important."

These battles over mascots and Indian imagery underscore the power of naming in mainstream America, and Indians across the country are trying to reclaim that power. In the early 1980s, Papago leaders informed the Bureau of Indian Affairs that they wished to have their tribal name changed to Tohono O'Odham in subsequent official correspondence because the former "Papago" did not like being called "bean-eaters." The tribe's name was officially changed to Tohono O'Odham soon thereafter. A decade later, several members of the Navajo Nation made a similar request, asking to be known by the traditional name, Diné, which means simply "people;" but so far, the tribe

name remains "Navajo." Some Sioux Indians prefer to be known as Dakota or Lakota because "Sioux" is a French adaptation of an Ojibwe or Chippewa word meaning "enemy."

A similar problem has cropped up with the term "Anasazi," used for more than 60 years by archaeologists to denote the Indian people living at Chaco Canyon and elsewhere in the Four Corners between about AD 200 and 1600. The Anasazi people are considered by most archaeologists to be ancestors of the modern Pueblo groups in New Mexico and the Hopi people of northwestern Arizona. In the last few years, a number of Pueblo people have expressed concern over the term "Anasazi." Why, they ask, should their ancestors be known by a Navajo term meaning "ancient enemy"? Although a number of substitute terms have been suggested, many archaeologists today use the term "ancestral Pueblo" instead of "Anasazi."

Indian people also sometimes object when the term "prehistoric" is used to characterize their ancient past. In a European framework, "history" means written records, and for most of the Americas, such documentation did not begin until the arrival of Columbus. But most tribes maintain rich oral traditions, which describe in detail their remote past, and today, some scholars substitute the terms "precolonial" or "precontact" for the era formerly called "prehistoric." This is why, except for direct quotes from historical sources, you'll not find the word "prehistoric" anywhere in this book.

REFUSING TO WALK THE BERING STRAIT AND NARROW

There's a real feeling that we've been here forever. The Bering Strait theory makes logical sense, but it doesn't override the traditional belief at all. That comes first.

—Larry Benally (1996),
Archaeologist and member of the Navajo Nation

In the very first sentence of *Red Earth, White Lies*, Deloria says, "Like almost everyone else in America, I grew up believing the myth of the objective scientist." He then goes on to compare the codification and repetition of scientific "truths" to the myths that have emerged from the Judeo-Christian tradition. The more he read, Deloria says, the more he became convinced that scientific arguments are largely based on authority rather than fact, and on manipulation rather than objective reading of the data. He defines science as that "collection of beliefs—some with considerable evidence, some lacking

proof at all—which reflects data gathered by a small group of people over the past five hundred years with the simple belief that phenomena have been objectively observed and properly described because they have sworn themselves to sincerity."

In recent years, Deloria has attacked several popular scientific theories, striking particularly hard at the proposition that the populating of America occurred across the Bering Straits, which he considers a farcical "smear tactic" against Native Americans. "The Bering Strait theory is tenaciously held by white scholars against the varied migration traditions of the natives and is an example of the triumph of doctrine over facts," Deloria argues. "If the universities were controlled by the Indians, we would have an entirely different explanation of the peopling of the New World and it would be just as respectable for the scholarly establishment to support it."

Deloria uses the Bering Strait theory to illuminate the smoldering resentment felt by many Indians against science. He says that the recent Kennewick and Monte Verde discoveries only highlight how little science really knows about Indian origins. Archaeologists, he argues, have yet to find either the African Eve's cradle or to locate the frozen superhighway that delivered the first Americans across the Bering Strait from Asia. "Excavating ancient fireplaces and campsites may be exciting," Deloria suggests, "but there are no well-worn paths which clearly show migratory patterns from Asia to North America, and if there were such paths, there would be no indication anywhere which way the footprints were heading."

According to many Indian creation accounts, native people have lived in the Americas since emerging onto Earth's surface from a spiritual underworld. Deloria suggests that many have a cultural memory of traumatic continental and planetary catastrophes, keeping this information alive in tales deliberately constructed to preserve and to entertain. Calling science "the dominant religion," Deloria goes well beyond promoting the truth-value of oral tradition. He launches a full-scale attack on western science: "Like any other group of priests and politicians . . . scientists lie and fudge their conclusions as much as the most distrusted professions in our society—lawyers and car dealers." Here are some alternatives proposed by Deloria as antidotes to the standard teachings of natural history and conventional science:

"Humans and some creatures we have classified as dinosaurs were contemporaries."

Oral traditions from the Pacific Northwest discuss oversized animals in their lakes and rivers. Deloria concludes that because current research suggests that some

dinosaurs were warm blooded with instincts not unlike modern mammals, "there is no reason to hesitate suggesting that some of these creatures, described as animals or large fish by observers, were surviving individuals of some presently classified dinosaur species."

"There were mammoths or mastodons still living in the eastern United States at the time the Pilgrims landed."

Deloria believes that mammoth bones found on the surface must date to the historic period because "they could not have lain on the ground for thousands of years without suffering complete decay or dissolution." He takes Thomas Jefferson at his word on the matter and cites a British Columbian Indian story to the effect that they built lakehouses on stilts to protect themselves from mammoths.

"Radiocarbon Dating is a Sham"

Deloria believes that radiocarbon dating is "grossly inaccurate" and that scientists routinely instruct radiocarbon lab personnel in preferred results. He claims that radioactive materials washing downstream from the Hanford Atomic Energy Plant have hopelessly contaminated the Kennewick bones, "making a test of anything there absurd."

Scientists in Deloria's view are "incredibly timid people" crippled by an excessive reverence for authority and orthodoxy. "Many subjects, no matter how interesting, are simply prohibited because they call into question long-standing beliefs." Prestigious people are permitted to dominate entire fields of inquiry, which are "populated by little people trying to protect their status [and] some areas of 'science' have not progressed in decades." He singles out—correctly, in my view—the historian Samuel Eliot Morrison and the physical anthropologist Aleš Hrdlička as heavy-handed zealots who dominated conventional academic inquiry in their day, defending the intellectual status quo at all cost and quashing research proposals designed to explore alternative possibilities.

Ideas like these are increasingly being endorsed by large numbers of fundamentalist Christians and liberal activists. This broad constituency joins Deloria in rejecting current theories of human evolution as unfounded dogma, at least in part because the archaeological finds contradict traditional beliefs—Biblical or otherwise. These are strange bedfellows: Native American communities, right-wing Christian groups, and left-wingers. It is just this curious coalition that was instrumental in the passage of reburial legislation by the U. S. Congress.

Thomas, David Hurst. 2000. "Legislating the Skull Wars." in his book *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity*. New York: Basic Books/Perseus. ISBN: 0-465-09225-X. Total pages in book: 326. Chapter: pp 209-221.

LEGISLATING THE SKULL WARS



In the larger scope of history this is a small thing. In the smaller scope of conscience, it may be the biggest thing we have ever done.

—Congressman Morris Udall (1990), sponsor of the NAGPRA legislation

THE 1971 CONFRONTATION in Minnesota triggered a nationwide dialogue over whether archaeologists should dig up dead Indians. At the time, many tribes seemed lukewarm about the issue unless it affected them directly. A number of tribes, including Zuni, Navajo, Makah, and Pequot, operated their own archaeological research programs, and they were accustomed to making sure that archaeologists serve the tribal interest.

In the late eighteenth century, Thomas Jefferson wrote that "the dead have no rights" and two centuries later, some anthropologists are reiterating the same message: "I explicitly assume that no living culture, religion, interest groups, or biological population has any moral or legal right to the exclusive use or regulation of ancient human skeletons since all humans are members of a single species," writes Douglas Ubelaker, a bioarchaeologist with the Smithsonian Institution. "Ancient skeletons are the remnants of

unduplicable evolutionary events which all living and future peoples have the right to know about and understand. In other words, ancient human skeletons belong to everyone."

As the reburial issue heated up throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Indian attitude toward archaeologists hardened. Archaeologist Larry Zimmerman tells a story about excavations on the Crow Creek Sioux reservation, in South Dakota. When some local tribal members asked him what he was doing, Zimmerman replied that looters had vandalized the site, and that he was digging to protect the past. The Indians said that they did not understand the difference between looters and archaeologists. "What is the difference if you dig burials with a trowel or a bulldozer?" asked Chick Hale, a Prairie Potawatomi spokesman. "Is it any better to go into a bank and steal the money all at once, or is it better to steal it a penny at a time?" Over time Zimmerman came to see the importance and sincerity of other perspectives, and became one of the very first archaeologists to advocate a more sensitive approach to Native American remains.

Indian leaders began to complain that whereas non-Indian graves are protected from desecration, grave robbing, and mutilation by criminal statutes in all fifty states, these same protections were not extended to the Indian dead. Instead, Indian graves were defined as "nonrenewable archaeological resources" to be treated like dinosaurs or snails, 'federal property' to be used as chattel in the academic marketplace, 'pathological specimens' to be studied by those interested in racial biology, or 'trophies or booty' to enrich private collectors," write Walter R. Echo-Hawk and Roger C. Echo-Hawk, (Pawnee attorney and historian, respectively). As Echo-Hawk saw it, "If you desecrate a white grave, you wind up sitting in prison. But desecrate an Indian grave, you get a Ph.D. The time has come for people to decide: Are we Indians part of this country's living culture or are we just here to supply museums with dead bodies?" Indians declared that Native American concern for the dead must override scientific objectives.

Archaeologists were particularly sensitive to such criticisms. Some defended their profession by citing well-documented cases of red-on-red violence and of Indians desecrating the bones of other tribes. Historian Francis Parkman, for example, recorded a Crow war party's treatment of five Sioux corpses that had been ritually buried in trees. After dislodging the grave bundles and kicking them apart, the Crows held rifles against the skulls and blew them to pieces. Is this behavior acceptable, archaeologists asked, just because the ghoulies happened to be Indians?

What about Arthur Parker, a Seneca Indian? In his role as New York State

archaeologist, Parker personally excavated hundreds of Iroquois Indian burials. Why, archaeologists asked, should modern Indians be so appalled at archaeologists disturbing the old graves when their ancestors had done so all along? Several museum-based anthropologists pointed out the number of Indians who had willingly sold sacred and ceremonial artifacts to museums. As their traditional world fell apart in the late nineteenth century, many Indian people made the difficult choice to entrust their heritage to museums for long-term safekeeping.

Many archaeologists dismissed 1960s Indians as unauthentic, believing that American anthropology was being unjustly vilified by a cadre of "Professional Indians," career-building activists whose biology was their sole credential. Professional Indians seemed to be opportunists who advocated Indian perspectives on controversial topics more for their own personal advancement than from any deep-felt commitment to the issues. But the profession of archaeology almost uniformly misread the depth of belief among many elders and spiritual leaders who were deeply concerned about their dead. Many archaeologists believed that Indians had no real knowledge of their own history, and were just lashing out in resentment at the highly trained non-Indians who knew more than they did. Many agreed with archaeologist Clement Meighan who warned, "if archaeology is not done the ancient people remain without a history and without a record of their existence." Archaeologists argued vigorously during the 1980s against any potential legislation that would protect the "religious beliefs" of Indian people when no other religious group in America was granted such protection. According to archaeologist G. A. Clark "It is simply a fact that most of the pre-contact aboriginal cultures of the New World would have vanished without a trace were it not for archaeology (and the occasional presence of a western observer to record observations about them)." As for the Professional Indians who made their living touting a contrived connection with past religions and traditional spirituality, most archaeologists saw them as phony. Few Indian people, they argued, any longer held these beliefs. In fact, most Indian knowledge of these traditions, they said, is derived from archaeological collections and anthropological scholarship—the very body of scholarly knowledge that the Professional Indians were now attempting to destroy.

This is why many archaeologists felt that the "Deloria problem" was basically educational. If they could just enlighten the Indians about what they were doing, then the Indians would recognize how important science really was—and stop complaining about archaeologists conducting legitimate science. When confronted by Deloria and the AIM activists, most archaeolo-

gists believed—and many still do—that if the Indians would just listen to archaeologists, they could learn a great deal about their own past.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, archaeology's response to *Custer Died for Your Sins* was mostly a knee-jerk defense of the status quo. Even in the face of increasingly strident criticism, as someone said, anthropologists continued with "business as usual, only more so." As one archaeologist put it, the Red Power protests and the calls for repatriating artifacts and reburying bones have a bright side—after all, "it's good that Native Americans are finally starting to care about their pasts."

"I AM A FUTURE ADULT MEMBER OF THE OMAHA TRIBE . . ."

Most bills presented before the United States Congress die a slow and painful death, victims of political compromise and bureaucratic red tape. In the late 1980s, however, it had become increasingly clear that the repatriation and repatriation issues were not going to disappear, thanks in large part to the impact of the American civil rights movement, the increasingly effective lobbying efforts from Indian Country, and the alliance of Native Americans with mainstream religious organizations. Red Power groups correctly sensed that this was a battle they could win, and faced with the almost certain passage of federal legislation, several museums began internal audits of their collections to locate materials that seemed to be "culturally inappropriate" and to seek out ways to return those remains "proactively," before the law required them to do so.

In 1988, a delegation of Omaha leaders approached the anthropologists at Harvard. They knew that Alice Fletcher had been convinced that the Omaha tribe would soon vanish into the Great American melting pot, and the influential La Flesche family as well as many other Omahas had agreed with her. All of them were wrong because the Omaha did not vanish. Exactly a century after Yellow Smoke turned over the Sacred Pole of the Omahas to Fletcher and La Flesche, his descendants stood in a small courtyard outside the Peabody Museum, and the Omaha people respectfully asked that their consecrated religious artifacts be returned to them.

As with many nineteenth-century museum acquisitions, there are some lingering questions about how the Sacred Pole actually came to the Peabody Museum. In *The Omaha Tribe*, Fletcher and La Flesche explain that "influences were brought to bear" by Iron Eye La Flesche to prevent the sacred items' bur-

ial. Even today, considerable oral tradition survives among the Omaha about what these "influences" might have been. Some believe the transfer was not entirely voluntary, that perhaps La Flesche took the pole without Yellow Smoke's consent.

While the Peabody staff debated the merits of the Omaha repatriation request, Ian W. Brown, curator in charge of the artifacts, received a number of letters from Omaha school children, pleading with him to return their Sacred Pole. Brown was particularly moved by the letter from Cary Alice Wolf that began "I am a future adult member of the Omaha tribe. . . ." Cary's letter went on to say that her grandmother "wrote two books on the Omaha language and I am learning the old ways of my fathers and my people. Our young generation of Omahas do cherish the sacred ways. We will take care of and keep the Sacred Pole for our future children. Just as our elders have kept and are teaching us the ways now, we will teach the future Omahas."

After some months of deliberation, the Peabody Museum decided that, although not legally required to do so, they would return the Omaha Sacred Pole. In an emotional presentation at the annual Omaha Powwow in Macy, Nebraska, the Peabody Museum formally returned the Sacred Pole and 280 other sacred artifacts to Doran Morris, Tribal Chairman of the Omaha and Yellow Smoke's great-great-grandson.

The Sacred Pole comes from another era. Yellow Smoke and the other keepers perished more than a century ago. The last renewal ceremony for the Sacred Pole took place in 1873, and the last buffalo hunt a year later. The modern Omaha scored a victory in getting their most sacred artifact returned, but there is some doubt about how to treat the Venerable Man. To them, he remains alive with meaning, and modern Omaha leaders still debate the necessary protocols and rituals required of them. The Omaha people still remember the death of Iron Eye La Flesche shortly after his son Francis, the anthropologist, recorded the legend of the Sacred Pole. Although some still fear the Venerable Man, most apparently believe that if he is treated like a respected elder, his power will help the tribe to continue their spiritual renewal.

The Omaha were long considered one of America's vanishing Indian tribes. After spending her "infuriating and depressing" summer with the Omaha in 1930, Margaret Mead called them a "broken culture." But the Omaha still live in Nebraska, and they retain the traditions of prayer and ceremony, the belief in the power of dance and song, and the stories of their tribal past. They have survived as a people and as a sovereign nation. Today, the Venerable Man resides at the Center for Great Plains Studies in Lincoln, awaiting a move to an Omaha cultural center to be built on the reservation.

THE PASSAGE OF NACPRA

In 1990, Congress passed and President George Bush signed into law landmark legislation called the *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (NACPRA). A significant triumph for Indian people, NACPRA permits living Indians to exercise their traditional responsibilities toward the dead. The late Northern Cheyenne Elder William Tallbull put it this way: "How would you feel if your grandmother's grave were opened and the contents were shipped back east to be boxed and warehoused with 31,000 others and itinerant pothunters were allowed to ransack her house in search of 'artifacts' with the blessing of the U.S. government? It is sick behavior. It is un-Christian. It is [now] punishable by law." As Judge Sherry Hurt pointed out in congressional testimony, rather than extending special rights to Native Americans (which would violate the 14th Amendment), NACPRA awards an equal protection of property rights already extended to other Americans. She calls NACPRA "one of the most significant pieces of human rights legislation since the Bill of Rights."

NACPRA covers several basic areas of concern. First, it recognizes the importance of tribal consent when dealing with Indian graves on tribal lands and requires "consultation" with tribes over remains found on federal lands. NACPRA mandates that, by November 16, 1993, all museums and universities receiving federal funds (personal collections are not included) send a summary of Native American sacred and ceremonial objects and unassociated funerary items to Indian tribes potentially affiliated with those artifacts. Two years later, on November 16, 1995, these same institutions were required to file an inventory of Native American human remains and associated grave goods with culturally affiliated tribes. Indian tribes shown to be culturally affiliated with these artifacts and remains could then request their return. The National Park Service provided museums a listing of 771 tribes, bands, and nations to which the appropriate inventories should be sent. Only federally recognized native groups appear on the list; tribes recognized only by state-level governments and those whose federal standing is pending are not covered by the legislation.

The bill also mandates an intensive and continuing interaction between archaeologists and tribal representatives. At first, these interactions were tinged with mistrust and apprehension. For decades, many Native American people felt uncomfortable visiting public museums where their cultural heritage was on display. Some Indian people saw NACPRA as placing them on equal footing with museum and university officials. Other Native American

representatives believed that NACPRA unfairly favored the museum community, hindering native people in gaining control over materials that rightfully belonged to them (and which in their view should never have left Indian land in the first place).

The bill made its heaviest impact on archaeologists working on federal or tribal lands, but even those working on private land became involved, because most archaeologists were wary of dissolving collections long held in the public trust, such behavior is contrary to every museum charter. Many collections contain pieces specifically commissioned for exhibit and study. Museums argued that, far from robbing Native people of their heritage, ethnographers and archaeologists have attempted to preserve this heritage for the common good. Still, museums across the country are complying with the new law of the land.

THE BONES GO HOME

Suzan Shown Harjo, then executive director of the National Congress of Americans Indians, had protested in the late 1980s to the *Los Angeles Times* that the Smithsonian was holding the skulls of her Cheyenne relatives hostage. "It wasn't enough that these unnamed Cheyenne people were mowed down by the Cavalry at the infamous Sand Creek massacre; many were decapitated and their heads shipped to Washington as freight." Harjo tried to imagine the reactions of her ancestors when they returned home, "finding their loved ones disinterred and headless."

More than 125 years after they were first shipped east, the Smithsonian Institution returned the remains of the Sand Creek massacre victims to their Cheyenne descendants. Tribal members packed cedar chips around the bones and reburied the blanket-wrapped remains in a cemetery in Concho, Oklahoma. For the Cheyenne, the return was a formal admission by the federal government that the skulls and skeletons should never have been seized from the battlefield in the first place. It fell to the living to make it right with the dead.

In another noteworthy case of cooperation, Smithsonian scientists and a delegation of Blackfeet representatives together resolved the problems raised by fifteen skulls sent from the Blackfeet reservation to the Army Medical College in 1892. The Blackfeet were concerned because their ancestors had been at war with neighboring Indian groups in the late nineteenth century. What enemy skulls had been misidentified as Blackfeet?

To avoid an unacceptable mixing of spirits, they asked for assurances that only legitimate Blackfeet remains were being returned for reburial. Accordingly, bioarchaeologists at the Smithsonian conducted a battery of tests on the remains, returning only those thought conclusively to be Blackfeet. These remains were subsequently reinterred in Montana, where a monument was erected on the Blackfeet reservation.

Some tribes chose not to deal directly with human remains at all. The Eastern Shoshone people on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming did not wish their ancestral remains repatriated because they questioned the accuracy of museum records. The Zuni people asked that the skeletons removed from tribal lands remain under museum curation.

Phillip Walker, a physical anthropologist, has worked with the Chumash Indians of southern California for a quarter century. The Chumash have long designated an individual as *liwimphiti*, a tribal member intimately familiar with the human skeleton. "These medical practitioners not only could set bones, but they could also arrange all the bones of a human skeleton properly, and determine whether those ancestral bones had once belonged with a man or a woman." These traditional practices opened up some common ground between Walker and the Chumash, serving as a basis to insure that bioarchaeological research could be conducted within an environment showing proper respect for the dead. Together, they established a specially designed subterranean ossuary at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where tribal remains are stored and protected—and available for bioarchaeological research under the supervision of their Chumash descendants.

Many Chumash say that they can gain a deeper understanding of tribal history from these collections. The thought of losing that, when so much has already been lost is not appealing. "The basis of the arrangement we have with the tribe," writes Walker, "is the mutual trust and respect we have built over the years through working together to prevent the destruction of archaeological sites and grave robbing."

THE PUEBLOS RETURN TO PECOS

On May 22, 1999 in the largest repatriation and reburial of the twentieth century, the Pecos and Jemez Pueblo people welcomed home the remains of nearly 2,000 of their ancestors. One thousand Pueblo people and well-wishers walked alongside the 53-foot-long eighteen-wheeler carrying the remains for the final mile of a 2,200 mile-trip that had started out in Massachusetts, where

the bones had been stored and studied for more than seven decades. Three days earlier, an honor guard of two hundred had left on foot from Jemez Pueblo, seventy miles west of Pecos. Working their way eastward—through the chilly Jemez Mountains, across the Rio Grande, and into the Sangre de Cristo Range—they were backtracking the path of their ancestors who in 1838 had abandoned Pecos to join relatives at Jemez. As they walked, five and six abreast on the two-lane road, War Chief Pete Toya said simply, "We are real grateful, happy and proud that our ancestors are on their way home."

Their destination was a long rocky ridge where for eight centuries the powerful Pecos Pueblo had stood. There was no dispute over cultural affiliation: the Jemez and Pecos people had long been linked by biology, language, and spiritual beliefs. Disease and warfare during the Spanish colonial period reduced the population at Pecos until, in 1838, the handful of survivors relocated to Jemez. In 1936, the United States Congress formally recognized that the two tribes had merged. Although the Pecos descendants retained a certain autonomy, the Pueblo of Jemez was named as their legal, cultural, and administrative representative. Thanks to actress Greer Garson, whose Forked Lightning Ranch abutted Pecos Pueblo, the site became a National Monument in 1965.

When NACPPRA was signed into law, the people of Jemez Pueblo began discussing how to bring the remains of their ancestors back to Pecos. About the same time, as prescribed by the new law, James Bradley, Director of the Robert S. Peabody Museum in Andover, contacted Jemez representatives, saying simply "We have a lot of your stuff." The Jemez replied in equally simple language: "We know, let's talk."

Walking alongside the truck carrying the bones was Ruben Sando, the Governor of Pecos Pueblo. He carried with him the ceremonial cane of authority presented to the Pueblos by Spanish King Philip III in 1620—the same year the Pilgrims splashed ashore at Plymouth Rock. Raymond Cachuipin, now the Governor of Jemez Pueblo compared the gathering to a celebration, like a "whole family getting together at Christmas, a reunion. You feel fulfilled." Not far away, 87-year-old Juan Ray Tafoya quietly wept, his grandson Bryan whispering softly to him in their native Towa language, the traditional tongue of the Jemez people. "He wants to walk the last mile," explained Bryan, "It's spiritual to him." And so he did.

The Pecos repatriation was difficult for archaeologists: The collections had been stored at Harvard University in Cambridge and the Phillips Academy in Andover since the 1920s. The esteemed archaeologist A. V. Kidder had dug them up in then-revolutionary excavations, and some say Kidder's

work at Pecos provided a "Rosetta stone" for understanding the basics of Southwestern archaeology. These were the same skeletons that Earnest Hooton had studied, and many physical anthropologists had worked on the bones since. The Pecos collection had long been the largest available skeletal population from a single Indian community. Although the Pecos skeletons are well studied, the prospect of what might have been done with newer technology, newer theories, and newer science will always bother museum scientists, whose job descriptions call for preserving museum specimens, not disposing of them. No matter how culturally, social, or politically appropriate, the Pecos repatriation entails a loss to science. But a number of scientists believe that the sacrifice is warranted given the human component involved in archaeology. After all, archaeology and paleontology have rather different ethical mandates.

The two thousand skeletons were buried in an unmarked area in the National Park at Pecos.

THE NEW YORK ESKIMOS RETURN TO GREENLAND

Rather different emotions greeted the bones of the six Greenland Eskimos, Mink among them, who in 1897 had sailed into New York harbor aboard Robert Peary's ship *Hopø*, and lived at the American Museum of Natural History while working with Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber. Canadian author Kenn Harper heard their story while traveling in Greenland in 1977. A decade later, his book, *Give Me My Father's Body*, called the story to the attention of the American press once again. Although NACPPRA does not apply to international repatriations, the American Museum of Natural History decided, in 1992, to explore the possibilities of returning the Eskimo skeletons to Greenland for (re)burial.

Acting on behalf of the museum, Edmund Carpenter, an anthropologist specializing in Eskimo studies, and Jørgen Meldgaard, an archaeologist with the Danish National Museum, met with town officials at Qaanaq, the Greenland village presently occupied by descendants of the six New York Eskimos. Their plan for reburying the remains was met with unexpected silence. Although the Qaanaq Eskimos expressed an interest in continued anthropological research, none seemed particularly interested in discussing a return of the bones. Finally, after a delay of nine months, Pastor Hans Johan Lennert of

Qaanaq's Lutheran Church agreed to conduct the reinterment, but apparently only after a Danish bishop pressured him.

The Royal Danish Air Force flew the four tiny coffins containing the skeletons to Thule, and Carpenter accompanied them to Qaanaq in August 1993. After a service in the modern glass-fronted church, a pickup truck took the remains of Qisuk, Nuktaq, Atangana, and Aviaq to the Lutheran cemetery where they were buried beneath a cross and a bronze plaque that begins, "They Have Returned." After the service, everyone shook hands.

Ted Carpenter and his wife, Adelaide, asked the community about their reaction to the service, one resident said simply, "Embarrassment." Carpenter believes that "The whole service was really for us," that the Eskimo were only participating in the reburial ceremony as a courtesy to their American and Danish guests. The people of Qaanaq knew that Qisuk and the others had left Greenland because they wanted to; they liked Admiral Peary, and he had treated them well in the past. Once in New York, Peary disappeared, and the four had died. When the strangers arrived for a church service so many years later, the Eskimos at Qaanaq went along because they did not want to upset anyone.

"How do you feel" the Carpenters asked Qaquutsiaq, Mink's last surviving relative, "about the return of the bones?"

"If that's what [the museum people] wanted," replied Qaquutsiaq, "it's all right. If [the bones] had stayed where they were [in New York], that would have been alright, too."

"May I record you saying that?"

"No, I'll soon be dead," replied the 94-year-old, "and I don't want my voice left behind. And no photographs. I want nothing left."

Qisuk, Nuktaq, Atangana, and Aviaq were not Christians, but many of their modern descendants in Qaanaq are, and so, they believed, were the strangers who brought the bones from New York. They knew that the Christian religion places great emphasis on respecting and burying the bodies of the dead.

But the Polar Eskimos' religion—the tradition in which Qisuk and the others were raised—attributed only evil properties to the dead. This is why, in 1897, they told Alfred Kroeber that the bodies and personal effects of the deceased must quickly be discarded and not discussed again. Although the modern people of Qaanaq were too polite to say so, many felt that Qisuk would not have wanted his bones brought back home. Polar Eskimos of his day tried to avoid the remains of their dead.

W H O ' S G O T I S H I ' S B R A I N ?

Yet another reburial story was played out in the strange saga of Ishi's brain.

Since his death in 1916, the poignant story of the last "wild man" in America had faded from the public eye. Then came an Ishi revival of sorts, sparked by the 1961 publication of *Ishi in Two Worlds* by Theodora Kroeber (Alfred's second wife and companion for four decades). The book, which tells Ishi's story without melodrama or romanticism, was an instant hit. *Ishi in Two Worlds* still enjoys brisk sales, making it the University of California Press' all-time top seller.

In his mid-eighties when Theodora wrote the book, Alfred Kroeber agreed to share his memories of Ishi but refused to participate directly in the writing. "This was, to be sure, the teacher keeping his finger out of the student's pie," Theodora Kroeber wrote later, but it "was more than that: the old sense of pain and hurt returned with these recollections as readily as the indubitably happy and comic and fulfilling memories. I knew then that Kroeber would never have written Ishi's biography. He had lived too much of it, and too much of it was the stuff of human agony from whose immediacy he could not sufficiently distance himself."

During the 1990s, two documentaries and a made-for-television movie brought the Ishi story to an entirely new American audience. In *The Last of His Tribe*, Native American actor Graham Greene starred as Ishi, and Jon Voight played a melancholy young Kroeber. Ishi's burial urn, placed in a cemetery near San Francisco, became something of a tourist attraction.

In May 1997, as part of the NACPPRA review of human remains, Arthur Angle of the Butte County Native American Cultural Committee announced plans to rebury Ishi's remains in his tribal homeland near Mt. Lassen. Citing Ishi's belief that the body must be whole for the spirit to reach the land of the dead, however, the committee refused to proceed without the brain, which had been removed at the 1916 autopsy. Angle wrote to California Governor Pete Wilson, stating his intentions and soliciting help in locating the long-missing brain, which they believed was preserved somewhere in the University of California system.

The staff of the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, appropriately located in Kroeber Hall on the Berkeley Campus, launched a detailed investigation into the whereabouts of Ishi's brain. The staff reported that all the existing records suggested that Kroeber and his colleagues had firmly opposed

treating Ishi as a specimen. They could find no record that Ishi's brain was anywhere at Berkeley and suggested it had been cremated with the rest of the body. However, it might have been transferred the University of California Medical School in San Francisco.

At this point, administrators at the University of California asked Nancy Rockafellar, research historian in the History of Health Science Department, to investigate. Rockafellar got in touch with Orin Starn, a Duke University anthropologist who was researching a book about Ishi. Starn found a long-ignored file at Berkeley indicating that when Kroeber arrived back in California, Ishi's brain was waiting for him. Seven months after Ishi's death, Kroeber wrote to Aleš Hrdlička at the Smithsonian Institution: "I find that at Ishi's death last spring his brain was removed and preserved. There is no one here who can put it to scientific use. If you wish it, I shall be glad to deposit it in the National Museum Collection." Hrdlička quickly replied that he would "be very glad" to add Ishi's brain to his collection, which already contained more than two hundred human brains (including that of John Wesley Powell). Ishi's brain was shipped to the Smithsonian Institution on January 5, 1917.

In January 1999, the curatorial staff of the National Museum of Natural History confirmed that Ishi's brain was indeed stored at the Smithsonian's off-site curation facility in Silver Springs, Maryland. Smithsonian officials had not known that anybody was looking for it. Four months later, the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History offered to return Ishi's brain to the Redding Rancheria and Pitts River Tribes of northern California under the conditions of federal repatriation legislation.

Ishi's death had deeply affected Kroeber. There can be no doubt about that. But sometime between forbidding the autopsy and his October letter offering Hrdlička the brain, Kroeber changed his mind. Did he come to see some scientific merit in preserving the brain, or was he simply looking to cement his personal and professional relationship to Hrdlička, the most important physical anthropologist of the day? Whatever the answer, Kroeber's curious behavior reflects the classic Jeffersonian paradox: his unfeigned devotion to Ishi his friend, weighed against his scientific perception of Ishi as a priceless scientific specimen.