**Today’s Protests and America’s Racial History: Listening to Indigenous Peoples**

Steve Amerman

Professor of History

Southern Connecticut State University

June 18, 2020

[amermans1@southernct.edu](mailto:amermans1@southernct.edu)

A PARTIAL, BEGINNING LIST OF WAYS TO LISTEN MORE AND LEARN MORE

(with a special emphasis on Indigenous Nations in the New England region)

MUSEUMS

Strive to visit museums created by Indigenous Nations or where Indigenous peoples have significant control over their representation. This is, again, just a partial list and focuses on the New England region.

• TRIBAL MUSEUMS

• Mashpee Wampanoag Museum: <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/museum>

• Pequot Museum: <http://www.pequotmuseum.org/default.aspx>

• Tantaquidgeon Museum (Mohegan): <https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/heritage/important-sites/tantaquidgeon-museum>

• MUSEUMS WHERE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SEEM TO HAVE SIGNIFCANT CONROL

• Abbe Museum (Bar Harbor, Maine): <https://www.abbemuseum.org/>

• Wampanoag Homesite at Plimoth Plantation: <https://www.plimoth.org/explore/historic-patuxet>

GATHERINGS

• Schemitzun (Pequot): annually, late August: <https://schemitzun.mptn-nsn.gov/gcphome.aspx>

• Wigwam Festival (Mohegan): annually, late August:

<https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/heritage/wigwam-festival>

FILMS

Again, as with everything, we have to be careful and discerning. We should strive to especially find films that have been created by Native people, with Native screenwriters, Native directors, and Native actors. Many films and tv shows past and present have featured Native characters and Native topics, but when a white person is in charge of the story, obviously the presentation of Native life can get quite problematic. At best, they might still generally be relegated to marginal, secondary roles to make way for the central white characters, or even a “white savior” character.

• Dawnland (2018): <https://upstanderproject.org/dawnland>

Documentary. Tells the story of the removal of Native children from their families in Maine by child welfare authorities in the 20th and 21st centuries.

• We Shall Remain (2009): <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/weshallremain/>

Documentary. PBS. Features five episodes, one of them on Wampanoag history with the Pilgrims from the Mayflower to King Philip’s War in the 17th century. (The other episodes are on Tecumseh, the Cherokee Trail of Tears, Geronimo, and the 1973 stand-off at Wounded Knee South Dakota between Lakotas—with American Indian Movement allies—and the U.S. government.)

INDIGENOUS WEBSITES

• Most tribal nations have their own websites. See, e.g., the Mohegan and Pequot Tribal websites.

• Mohegan: <https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/>

• Pequot: <https://www.mptn-nsn.gov/default.aspx>

• You can also check out, for starters:

• Akomawt Educational Initiative: <https://www.akomawt.org/>

• Dawnland Voices: associated with the book mentioned below, and in my lecture

<https://dawnlandvoices.org/>

• Wampanoag Language Reclamation Project: <http://www.wlrp.org/>

• And, for some general Native news sites, try:

• Indian Country Today: <https://indiancountrytoday.com/>

• Native News Online: <https://nativenewsonline.net/>

• See also the websites associated with the museums, gatherings, and films above.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

• The Mohegan tribe, for example, has a Facebook page.

• Also consider “liking” the “Social Distance Powwow” Facebook page, created in 2020 during the

pandemic.

• I am old and not very “into” social media activity, so I imagine that there are certainly many, many more

opportunities in this regard.

• Of course, be careful to try to determine the more “authentic” Indigenous sites from the less authentic

ones. And, if you are non-Indigenous, it may be generally best just to read and look, rather than posting things yourself. If you do so, it would be advisable to practice the utmost humility and respect.

BOOKS (with, again, an emphasis on Indigenous authors: tribal affiliations listen in parentheses after their names)

NEW ENGLAND FOCUSED

Apess, William. (Pequot.) On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a

Pequot, ed. Barry O’Connell. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992.

Blee, Lisa, and Jean M. O’Brien (White Earth Ojibwe). Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work

of Massasoit. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019.

Brooks, Lisa. (Abenaki.) Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip’s War. New Haven:

Yale University Press, 2018.

Bruchac, Joseph. (Abenaki.) Bowman’s Store: A Journey to Myself. 1997; Reprint, Lee & Low

Books, 2001.

Bruchac, Margaret M. (Abenaki.) Savage Kin: Indigenous Informants and American

Anthropologists. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018.

Fawcett, Melissa Jayne. (Mohegan.) The Lasting of the Mohegans: The Story of the Wolf

People. Uncasville, CT: The Mohegan Tribe, 1995. (Her current name is Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel, and she is currently the Medicine Woman and Tribal Historian for the Mohegan Nation.)

Fawcett, Melissa Jayne. (Mohegan.) Medicine Trail: The Life and Lessons of Gladys

Tantaquidgeon. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000.

O’Brien, Jean M. (White Earth Ojibwe.) Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence

in New England. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Occom, Samson. The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan. Joanna Brooks, ed. New

York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Savageau, Cheryl. (Abenaki.) Mother/Land. 2006. Book of poetry.

Savageau, Cheryl. (Abenaki.) Out of the Crazywoods. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press,

2020.

Senier, Siobhan et al, eds. Dawnland Voices: An Anthology of Indigenous Writing from New

England. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014.

• You can also find a text of Wamsutta’s speech online. See, e.g.,

<http://www.uaine.org/suppressed_speech.htm>

Silverman, David J. This Land is Their Land: The Wampanoag Indians, Plymouth Colony, and the

Troubled History of Thanksgiving. Bloomsbury, 2019. Silverman is not Native, and I have not had a chance to read this book yet, but it has thus-far received some positive reviews and certainly seems very relevant to Wamsutta’s speech.

Tantaquidgeon Zobel, Melissa. Wabanaki Blues. Scottsdale, AZ: The Poisoned Pencil, 2015.

(Earlier known as Melissa Jayne Fawcett: see above.) This is a work of fiction featuring

Mohegan and Abenaki characters and setttings, taking place in contemporary times.

MORE GENERAL (and with some special attention to the Indigenous activism of the 1960s and 1970s)

Blansett, Kent. (Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Shawnee, and Potawatomi.) A Journey to Freedom:

Richard Oakes, Alcatraz, and the Red Power Movement. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.

Deloria, Vine,Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux.) Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto. New

York: Macmillan, 1969.

Mankiller, Wilma. (Cherokee.) Every Day is a Good Day: Reflections by Contemporary

Indigenous Women. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2004.

Sleeper-Smith, Susan, Julianna Barr, Jean M. O’Brien (White Earth Ojibwe), Nancy Shoemaker,

and Scott Manning Stevens, eds. Why You Can’t Teach United States History Without American Indians. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Smith, Paul Chaat. (Comanche.) Everything You Know about Indians is Wrong. Minneapolis:

University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

Smith, Paul Chaat (Comanche), and Robert Allen Warrior (Osage). Like a Hurricane: The Indian

Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee. New York: The New Press, 1996.