FIFTH EDITION

FIRST PEOPLES

A Documentary Survey of American Indian History

COLIN G. CALLOWAY

HOW TO ANALYZE PRIMARY SOURCES

In their search for an improved understanding of the past, historians look for new evidence — written documents or visual artifacts. When they encounter a written or visual primary source, historians ask certain key questions. You should ask these questions too. Sometimes historians can't be certain about the answer, but they always ask the question.

Analyzing a written document

- Who wrote the document? Is it a specific person or someone whose identity you can merely infer from the context of the document (for example, a parent writing to a child, a traveler writing home)?
- When and where was it written?
- Why was the document written? Is there a clear purpose, or are multiple interpretations possible?
- Who was, or who might have been, its intended audience?
- What point of view does it reflect?
- What can the document tell us about the individual who produced it and the society from which he or she came?

Analyzing a visual source

- Who made the image or artifact, and how was it made?
- When and where was the image or artifact made?
- Who paid for or commissioned it? How can you tell?
- For what audience might it have been intended? Where might it have originally been displayed or used?
- What message or messages is it trying to convey?
- How could it be interpreted differently depending on who viewed or used it?
- What can this visual source tell us about the individual who produced it and the society from which he or she came?

FIRST PEOPLES

A Documentary Survey of American Indian History

Fifth Edition

Colin G. Calloway
Dartmouth College

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For Marcia, Graeme, and Megan, as usual.

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PREFACE

Many people for many years considered Native American history to have little or no relevance to the history of the United States. The first peoples to inhabit this continent were routinely ignored, dismissed, or relegated to the sidelines in history texts. If Native people appeared at all in American history books, it was at first contact with the English (Pocahontas) or during the "Indian Wars" in the West (Sitting Bull and Geronimo). Today, scholars increasingly recognize that one cannot understand the relatively short history of this nation without acknowledging the very long history, cultural diversity, and enduring presence of America's indigenous peoples, who first shaped this continent and then shaped the histories of European colonists and their descendants on this continent. In short, American history must include American Indians.

First Peoples provides both an overview of Native American history and an opportunity for students to tackle historical evidence firsthand. The narrative and the documents together tell a more complete and more richly textured story of Indian peoples and their place in United States history than is usually presented in history books. Consequently, this fifth edition follows the same approach and pursues the same goals as the previous editions. Each chapter includes a narrative section, followed by primary documents and then a picture essay. By combining historical background with textual and visual evidence, the book provides students with enough context to begin asking questions of the documents and pictures. The structure of the book enables instructors to go beyond giving an outline of events, laws, leaders, and battles and provides them with materials for exploring other issues and examining how Indian history has been written and remembered. The documents give students the opportunity to try to reconstruct the past through the words of people — Indians and non-Indians — who lived in a different time, saw the world in different ways, and had their own reasons for acting as they did.

FEATURES OF THIS EDITION

The text for the fifth edition has been thoroughly reviewed and, where necessary, revised or updated to take account of developments in Indian country and recent scholarship in Indian history. Nine new documents are featured, four of them from a Native perspective, and in each chapter documents have been paired to help provide different perspectives on particular events and issues. In Chapter 1, a version of the Iroquois creation story given by an adopted Mohawk complements the account of the creation of the Iroquois League and also offers a comparison

with the Navajo creation story. The extracts from William Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation* in Chapter 2 enable students to compare early English contacts with the Indians with early French contacts with the Indians and also to compare first encounters between Indian peoples and the English in New England with the bloody conflicts of King Philip's War more than fifty years later. Two new documents in Chapter 3 offer students the rare opportunity to read a colonial treaty alongside a critique of that treaty by an Indian who was present at the negotiations but remembered things rather differently than how they were recorded. A third document, extracted from the journal of a Moravian missionary who went as a peace emissary to the Delawares, coupled with an Abenaki chief's defiant speech to the English, conveys the enduring power and influence of Indian peoples during the French and Indian War. In Chapter 4, the declaration of neutrality by Oneida Indians at the start of the American Revolution, like the British account of the Cherokee decision to go to war, documents the divisive and destructive repercussions of the Revolution in Indian country. In Chapter 5, I have followed a recommendation made to me by students that including a petition against Indian Removal submitted to Congress by white women from Steubenville in Ohio would nicely complement the anti-Removal petitions of Cherokee women. And finally, with the long debate over Indian mascots still going on, Chapter 10 now includes opposing viewpoints on the controversial case of the Washington Redskins.

As with the previous editions, the book is generously illustrated to provide copious visual evidence and add another dimension to the narrative. Over 140 images appear throughout the text, 20 percent of them new to this edition. The picture essays in Chapters 9 and 10 include new images as well. Bedford/St. Martin's has made all of the images and the text's map program available for download, in full color where available, from the online catalog at **macmillanhighered .com/calloway/catalog**.

In addition to the timelines that appear at the beginning of each chapter for students' quick reference, this edition continues to feature Focus Questions to encourage active reading and critical analysis. The discussion-provoking Questions for Consideration appear at the end of each set of documents and follow each picture essay. The Suggested Readings at the end of each chapter have been updated to include the latest scholarly works.

New to the fifth edition, students have the option to purchase a low-cost PDF e-book of *First Peoples*. For a list of our publishing partners' sites, see **macmillanhighered.com/ebookpartners**. As with previous editions, instructors can choose to package *First Peoples* with titles from the Bedford Series in History and Culture and with trade books from other Macmillan imprints. For a complete list of titles, visit **bedfordstmartins.com/history/series** and **macmillanhighered.com/tradeup**. Instructors looking for digital packaging options can package *First Peoples* with the Bedford Digital Collections for Native American History, a source collection that provides a flexible and affordable online repository of discovery-oriented primary-source projects that you can easily customize and link to from your course management system or Web site. Native American history projects include "Pontiac's War" by Eric Hinderaker,

"Building a Creek Nation: Reading the Letters of Alexander McGillivray" by Kathleen DuVal, "Debating Federal Indian Removal Policy in the 1830s" by John P. Bowes, "Sand Creek: Battle or Massacre?" by Elliott West, and "The Laguna Pueblo Baseball Game Controversy of the 1920s" by Flannery Burke. For more information, visit **macmillanhighered.com/bdcnativeamerican/catalog**.

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The staff at Bedford/St. Martin's maintained their usual exemplary standards with this publication. The efforts of Michael Rosenberg, publisher; William Lombardo, senior executive editor; Jane Knetzger, director of development; Jen Jovin, developmental editor; Annette Pagliaro Sweeney and Louis Bruno, production editors; and Dawn Adams, copyeditor, were integral to the completion of this edition, and Naomi Kornhauser's and Robin Fadool's visual research yielded excellent new images.

I am grateful to all of the above for their help with this new and expanded edition of *First Peoples*. There have been many changes over five editions, but the dedication never changes: to Marcia, Graeme, and Meg, with love and thanks.

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Introduction: American Indians in American History

PERSPECTIVES ON THE PAST

IN 1870 CHARLES WINDOLPH emigrated from Prussia to the United States to avoid being drafted into the Franco-Prussian War. But for Windolph America did not live up to its promise as a land of opportunity. Unable to find work in New York, Windolph joined the army — the very fate he had left home to avoid. Six years later, on the night of June 25, 1876, he found himself pinned down with other survivors of Major Marcus Reno's battalion of the Seventh Cavalry, on a hill overlooking the Little Bighorn River. That day, Windolph and his comrades had attacked the south end of the great Lakota (western Sioux) and Cheyenne village that had assembled in the valley of the Little Bighorn under the leadership of Sitting Bull. Rallying to defend their homes and families, Indian warriors had swept out of the village, routed Reno's command, and sent the survivors scrambling back up the ridge where they dug in for a siege. Only the assault by George Armstrong Custer at the other end of the village saved Windolph and his comrades from being overwhelmed; most of the Indian warriors had hurried off to the north to attack Custer.

That night, as Charles Windolph looked down into the valley, his mind plagued with terrible scenes from the day's disaster and agonizing questions about what had happened to Custer's men, he heard the Indians drumming and singing in what he imagined were "wild victory dances." "We felt terribly alone on that dangerous hilltop," Windolph recalled later. "We were a million miles from nowhere. And death was all around us." He expected to be killed come morning.

But Windolph's peril was more imagined than real. The "wild victory dances" he thought he was hearing were in fact the mourning songs of Lakota and Cheyenne women who had lost husbands, brothers, and sons in the fighting. A Cheyenne warrior named Wooden Leg also recalled that night in his later years. "There was no dancing or celebrating in any of the camps," he said. "Too many people were in mourning. Too many Cheyenne and Sioux women had gashed their arms and legs to show their grief."

Late the next day, the Indians dismantled their lodges and moved off toward the Big Horn Mountains. On the morning of the 27th, an army relief column arrived. Charles Windolph did not die on Reno Hill. He died in 1950, at the age of ninety-eight, the last American soldier to survive the Battle of the Little Bighorn.[1]

Windolph's experience vividly illustrates some important points about living through and reconstructing historical events, and about the need to use a variety of sources in retelling the past. Windolph's understanding of what was going on down in the Indian village was dead wrong, and any historian who repeated it without question would be equally wrong. Only the Indian people in the village knew what was really happening there and only by hearing from them can we know whether Windolph was really in any danger. But Windolph's terror was also real, and we need his testimony to help us appreciate the depth of his feelings and to remind us that fear, prejudice, and ignorance often shape one group's perceptions of another. Windolph and Wooden Leg remember the same night, and the same events, very differently. Each one gives a vivid account of his own experience, but we need them both to get the full story. In short, Indian sources are vital to understanding Indian history, but they can also foster a fuller understanding of non-Indians' history; non-Indian sources, used carefully, can be important for understanding Native American relations with non-Indians and throw light on Indian experiences.

AMERICA'S MASTER NARRATIVE

History is not, as someone once said, "just one damn thing after another." Unless it is badly taught or written, it is not a dry record of events; it is about how people experience, study, and interpret the past. Each generation reviews and rewrites history in the light of its own experiences and understandings, aspirations, and anxieties. Different societies, different groups within society, and even different individuals will often disagree about the meaning of events, the ways in which events happened, and even, sometimes, whether events happened at all. There is no single history that tells the whole story; there can be many different *histories,* telling many different stories, and many different ways of remembering, recording, and recounting the past.[2]

American history, however, was for a long time written and taught as a single story, a narrative of nation building and unending progress that united the diverse participants in the country's past in a single American "experience." It was a national success story, celebrating the human triumphs made possible in a society based on the principles of liberty and equality. American historians tended to ignore or dismiss people whose experiences and interpretations of the past did not conform to the master narrative. The experiences of American Indians during the years of nation building seemed to tell a story of decline and suffering rather than of "progress" and "the pursuit of happiness." As a result, notes historian Frederick E. Hoxie, the authors of United States history textbooks had "great difficulty shaping the Native American experience to fit the upbeat format of their books."[3] The Indians' story was not the American story; best to leave it out.

When the Indians' story was told at all, it was usually portrayed as one of futile resistance to the march of civilization. As in the movies, "Indian history" was little more than a chronicle of hostility to Euro-American settlers. The image of savage warriors attacking hardy pioneers became firmly fixed in popular conceptions of the past: in the *New York Times Magazine* as recently as 1996, journalist Melissa Bloch said that when she learned she was about to lose a breast to cancer, "The first thing I thought of was ambushed wagon trains, debreasted pioneer women lying in their dying campfires."[4] When Indians were not killing settlers, their "history" was usually a narrative of the federal government's efforts to solve the "Indian problem." In many classrooms and in most history books, Indian people were either conspicuous by their absence or treated in such stereotypical and distorted terms so as to rob them of their humanity.

Times change and history — the stories we tell about the past and how we understand them — changes too. Fifty years ago, few colleges or universities offered courses in American Indian history or Native American studies. But in the late 1960s and early 1970s, unrest at home and anxiety about America's war in Vietnam caused many people to question long-accepted views about American society and its relation to Native peoples. Political pressure from students and community activists resulted in new college courses, and scholars began to reexamine the Native American past. For a long time, books about Native American history dealt mainly with "Indian wars," and Indian people figured variously as savage, heroic, or tragic enemies. Even when scholars began to look in more depth at American Indian history, they tended to focus on "Indian policies" adopted by colonial governments and the United States. Indian history was written from non-Indian sources and perspectives. Although such studies of military encounters and government policies contained important information and often provided a foundation for future studies, they did not include Indian people as full participants in their own histories, or accord them much of a role in shaping the history of America. Eventually scholars, both Native and non-Native, began to write histories that tried to do both. It was not easy, and historians who had been trained to rely on written documentation found they had to consider other sources of information and other ways of understanding the past. These *ethnohistorians* endeavored to combine historical research with an understanding of anthropological principles, asking new questions of their sources and incorporating oral history into their research to gain a better sense of how Indian people perceived, experienced, and shaped their own histories. In doing so, they began to change how historians looked at American history.

History books, films, and television today are likely to portray Indians in a much more positive and romantic light: they might depict Indian people living in harmony with nature and with each other before Europeans arrive, and then fighting courageously to defend their lands and way of life against racist and aggressive invaders. No longer seen as savage foes of civilization, Indians are often portrayed as tragic victims of Euro-American expansion. Unfortunately, their basic role in American history has changed little. They continue to be depicted in one-dimensional terms and enter the mainstream narrative of American history only to fight and be defeated.

INDIAN HISTORY: A SHARED PAST

Renditions of United States history that portray Indian people only as warriors or victims may serve to justify past actions or present agendas, but they do not tell a story that includes all participants as real people with human qualities and failings. They either assign blame for or excuse the past, allowing us to feel good or guilty about what happened, but they do little to help us understand *how* it happened. Understanding the past involves looking at history from the viewpoints of the many people who made it over several centuries rather than from a single modern stance seeking to celebrate or condemn the actions of people who lived in very different times. Indians must be included as a central strand in the history of the United States — after all, the nation was built on Indian land — and their historical experiences require looking beyond stereotypes, old and new, and rethinking some basic assumptions.

The history of the millions of Indian people who have inhabited North America, and of the several million who still do, is important in itself, but it also provides alternative perspectives on the history of the United States. It reminds us that America has an ancient history that stretches back millennia before the United States was born; that one people's triumph often means another's tragedy; that building a new nation often entails destruction or displacement of other, older nations; and that the expansion of one civilization often brings chaos and suffering to another. It demands that we recognize invasion, racism, and acts of genocide, along with pioneering, liberty, and equality, as part of America's history, and that Native struggles to protect their resources and rights continue today. It is a story of conquest and colonization, but it is also a story of resilience, innovation, and survival.

Native American history is more than a mirror image of United States history; it is also part of a shared past. Including Indian people as participants in that history requires us to acknowledge that American history began long *before* Columbus reached the continent in 1492 and that Indian history did not end when Indians stopped fighting. Instead of viewing American history as the story of a westward-moving frontier — a line with Indians on one side, Europeans or Americans on the other — it might be more appropriate to think of it as a kaleidoscope, in which numerous Europeans, Africans, and Indians were continually shifting positions. European invasions changed forever the world Indian peoples inhabited (Map I.1). The biological disasters that befell Indian America after 1492 had tremendous repercussions in Indian communities, as well as creating the notion that America was vacant land awaiting European settlement. The policies of European powers and the United States affected Indian lives and limited Indian options. But Indian people also made their own histories and helped shape the story of this country. They responded to invasion in a variety of ways and coexisted with the newcomers as often as they fought against them. They fought to survive as Indians long after the so-called Indian wars were over and continue to exert influence on the legal, political, economic, cultural, and spiritual climate of the United States. They also — from first contact to the present — married Europeans and later Africans, producing families and populations of mixed ancestry and multiple heritages.

◆ **Map I.1 Approximate Tribal Locations at First Sustained Contact with Europeans**
Many maps that purport to show America in 1492 place Indian tribes in their modern locations, conveying the impression that these communities have remained unchanged in composition and place. In reality, groups formed, separated, amalgamated, and moved throughout history. Many so-called tribes did not exist in 1492; others were evolving, and many communities that did exist subsequently disappeared as their members died or joined other groups. By the time they came into contact with Europeans, many tribes had incorporated other peoples, and Indian villages commonly included visitors, traders, spouses, refugees, and others from different tribes. European contact produced additional disruption, dislocation, and social reorganization.

WORKING WITH SOURCES

The shared past is a complicated place. Whether we study American history, Native American history, or any other area or era, we need to draw on multiple perspectives and listen to many voices to get a well-rounded and richly textured picture. I grew up hearing about the Second World War. My parents met while serving in the British Royal Air Force, aunts and uncles served in various capacities across the globe, and everyone remembered the impact of the war on their lives. There were many stories, and I learned things I never could have read in books. But only when I began to read written accounts and histories of the war did I get a sense of the conflict as a whole, and its different meanings for the different countries involved, even as I read things that were contradicted by what I had heard as a child. My understanding of that enormous event was enriched by both sets of sources; it would have been incomplete without either of them.

Scholars working to reconstruct American Indian history cannot just rely on "American" sources. Information on Indian peoples in colonial America is often found in Dutch, French, and Spanish, as well as English, records. In addition, students of Indian history must also consider sources other than the written word, sources they are not accustomed to "reading," and which they are often ill equipped to understand. Native American pictographs, winter counts or calendars recorded on buffalo robes, events depicted on pages torn from account books and known as ledger art, and oral traditions that rely on stories recounted to an audience may strike us as strange, lacking in "hard evidence," or "inaccessible." As with any other historical sources, including written documents, we need to learn how to "read" these texts, to understand their purposes and conventions, and to interpret them. Archaeologists working in the Southwest have found that Native teachings and oral traditions can help them to understand the hard physical evidence they recover from the earth, and that so-called myth and science can be complementary rather than competing sources of knowledge.[5] Likewise, we as historians must become "literate" in reading these sources so that we can better appreciate them as repositories of knowledge and history and begin to incorporate them into a more fully grounded reconstruction of the past.

Most historians are trained to trust the printed word and many distrust oral sources of history as "unreliable." Samuel Purchas, writing in the early seventeenth century, said that literacy made history possible. "By speech we utter our minds once, at the present, to the present, as present occasions move . . . us: but by writing Man seems immortall." French commandant Nicolas Perrot spent much of his life among the Indians of the Great Lakes, but his faith in the authority of the printed word prevented him from appreciating Native ways of recounting and of preserving their histories. "Among them there is no knowledge of letters or the art of writing," he wrote, "and all their history of ancient times proves to be only confused and fabulous notions, which are so simple, so gross, and so ridiculous, that they only deserve to be brought to light in order to show the ignorance and rudeness of these people."[6] Even Lewis and Clark, who depended on Indian information for guidance and survival during their epic journey to the Pacific and back

in 1804–6, shared similar prejudices. In October 1804, William Clark noted in his journal that an Indian chief on the upper Missouri told him "a number of their Traditions about Turtles, Snakes, &c and the power of a perticular rock or Cave on the next river which informs of everr[y] thing," but Clark paid little attention: "none of those I think worth while mentioning," he wrote.[7]

Indians in colonial America were not so slow to recognize the power of European ways of recording the past, especially the printed words employed in treaties. Nevertheless, Native peoples continued to attribute great power to spoken words. Living in an oral tradition, they stood in what Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday describes as "a different relation to language." Momaday, himself a master of the written as well as the spoken word, suspects that writing, because it allows us to store vast quantities of words indefinitely, "encourages us to take words for granted." But in an oral tradition, words "are rare and therefore dear. They are jealously preserved in the ear and in the mind. . . . They matter, and they must not be taken for granted; they must be taken seriously and they must be remembered." In Native cultures, ritually uttered words possessed magical powers. "By means of words can one quiet the raging weather, bring forth the harvest, ward off evil, rid the body of sickness and pain, subdue an enemy, capture the heart of a lover, live in the proper way, and venture beyond death." For Momaday there is "nothing more powerful" than words, but he has "come to know that much of the power and magic and beauty of words consist not in meaning but in sound," an element that is preserved in an oral tradition and deemphasized in a written one.[8] Other Indian writers echo his sentiments. "Where I come from," says Laguna writer Leslie Marmon Silko, "the words most highly valued are those spoken from the heart, unpremeditated and unrehearsed. Among the Pueblo people, a written speech or statement is highly suspect because the true feelings of the speaker remain hidden as she reads words that are detached from the occasion and the audience."[9]

Writing can be as fallible as oral history as a way of remembering the past. Written documents are valuable but they are not always to be trusted. They do not convey the "truth" of what happened; they convey only what their authors thought, wanted to think, or wanted others to think happened. The repercussions of colonialism were felt far beyond zones of direct contact, with the result that by the time Europeans turned up and wrote "firsthand" accounts of Native people, they often described societies that had already experienced change and disruption. Like the oral traditions of Native peoples, their accounts were created by individuals and influenced by the times and culture that produced them. The documents that historians use may be simply the ones that survived by chance: how many hundreds more, telling perhaps a different story, have been destroyed by fire, flood, malice, or mice?

Daniel Richter, who spent years working in colonial records to reconstruct a history of the Iroquois, acknowledges and explains the limitations and frustrations of trying to recapture the lives of people long since dead:

> As a Euro-American of the late twentieth century, I do not pretend to have plumbed the mind of seventeenth-century native Americans, for most

> of the mental world of the men and women who populate these pages is irrevocably lost. Neither historians who study documents produced by the colonizers, nor anthropologists who make inferences from their knowledge of later culture patterns, nor contemporary Iroquois who are heirs to a rich oral tradition but who live in profoundly changed material circumstances can do more than partially recover it. . . . In more ways than one, we must all remain outsiders to a long-gone Iroquois world because of the inadequacies of the source material available.[10]

As Richter recognizes, the views of a seventeenth-century Jesuit priest about Iroquoian people were shaped by his own experiences, values, and prejudices as a Frenchman in a world that was alien to him. The views of a twentieth-century Iroquois about seventeenth-century missionaries and Indians must surely be shaped by his or her sense of history, views of Native and non-Native society, and experiences in the modern world. But the views of both — the seventeenth-century priest and the contemporary Iroquois — are valuable, even essential, in attempting to reconstruct as complete a picture as possible of the Native American past.

The distinctions between oral and written cultures can be exaggerated. One of the obstacles faced by historians of Native America is dispelling the myth that Indians were "people without history" because they produced no written records or histories of their own. Of course, Indian people have as much history as anyone else. They had their own ways of recording it, and oral cultures typically preserve memories of the past in traditions, songs, and stories passed from generation to generation instead of in newspapers, letters, and journals. Nevertheless, a dearth of documents written by Native people does constitute one of the challenges in doing Indian history. Some Indians did read and write, though, and literacy assumed a significant if limited role in Native societies alongside other European imports. Indians who were educated at colonial colleges or American boarding schools wrote, sometimes well, and some wrote often. For example, Mohegan preacher Samson Occom (see "Atlantic Travelers: Indians in Eighteenth-Century London," pages 188–93) studied Hebrew, Greek, and Latin as well as English and wrote what is generally believed to be the first autobiography by a Native American. He also wrote diaries, letters, ethnographies, sermons and hymns, and petitions to colonial assemblies. "Mastering the dominant voice," notes Bernd Peyer, "enabled him to defend himself against colonial repression."[11] Indians often used literacy as a means of resistance. As with all historical documents, one must consider the circumstances, motivations, and restrictions of the writer. Some letters conceal more than they reveal; for example, Indian students were expected to adopt a subordinate tone in their writing and to express appropriate gratitude for their education, and they often shielded their individual humanity and their quiet resistance behind the veil of their writing. Dakota physician and author Ohiyesa, better known as Charles Eastman, was often extremely deferential to his white teachers and benefactors; nonetheless, like Luther Standing Bear (see "What a School Could Have Been Established," pages 424–8), Eastman used his pen to defend Indian rights and values and to critique the non-Indian society that presumed

to call Native people savage (see also "The Two Worlds of Ohiyesa and Charles Eastman," pages 400–2).

Not all educated Indians attained the degree of literacy shown by Occom, Eastman, and Standing Bear, but many acquired an appreciation of the "power of print" and understood that literacy could serve Indian people as a weapon in the war for cultural and political survival. After the Cherokees acquired a written language in the 1820s, written Cherokee spread quickly; according to a census in 1835, 18 percent of Cherokees could read English and 43 percent could read Cherokee. As assaults on their land and sovereignty increased, the Cherokees used writing, printed documents, and their newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*, in a campaign to publicize their civilization, rights, and sufferings, and Cherokee women resorted to written petitions to register their opposition to removal (see "Cherokee and White Women Oppose Removal," pages 286–91). Pequot writer William Apess (see pages 279–81), Paiute activist Sarah Winnemucca (see pages 383–84), Yavapai Apache physician Carlos Montezuma ("What Indians Must Do," pages 420–22), and others were not afraid to use their pens to "talk back" to colonizers, oppressors, and bureaucrats who stifled Indian life.[12]

Contrary to commonly held opinion, Indian people are not mute in the written records of the past. They spoke often and at length in meetings with Europeans, and Europeans recorded their words. But the fact that Indian words made it into print should not give those words instant authority or authenticity, any more than the writings of European people should enjoy such status without question. The Iroquois were master diplomats in colonial America, and the treaty councils in which they spoke are rich and essential sources for understanding Iroquois history and colonial Indian relations. Those speeches also have serious limitations: "all were recorded by Europeans rather than Iroquois," notes Richter; "all were translated by amateur linguists who lost volumes of the meaning conveyed in the original, a few were deliberately altered to further colonizers' designs, and none preserves the body language and social context that were central to the native orators' messages." Indian speeches that made it into Europeans' records were often imperfectly translated, hurriedly transcribed, and then rewritten, edited, and editorialized.[13] At the same time, many European records of Indian speeches are fairly accurate — after all, as historian Nancy Shoemaker reminds us, they contain some pretty forthright denunciations of European behavior: "assuming the unauthenticity of Indian speeches simply because they appear in European records relegates to the shadows the grievances that Indian speakers so persistently tried to bring to light."[14]

Just as some historians insist that Native oral traditions are unreliable, so some Native Americans insist that only Indian people grounded in their tribal culture and oral traditions can understand or attempt to tell Indian history. They argue that historical records are inevitably biased and inaccurate and that Western concepts of history and time are irrelevant to understanding Native American experiences and worldviews. Certainly many non-Indian observers, like Charles Windolph on his hill, totally misunderstood what they saw, and non-Indian writers have often misrepresented Native American life. But although the documents