

**Ohio Valley Native Americans Speak: Indigenous Discourse  
on the  
Continuity of Identity**

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## ABSTRACT

Since the 1960's there has been an increase in the assertion of a Native American identity across North America. This identification has been expressed in the Ohio Valley region (Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky) through performance at powwows, re-enactments and restored ceremonies. For the most part in the United States, acceptance of American Indian identification is founded on government recognition, racial appearance, or language. As no Native American languages are still spoken in the region, the "racial" appearance of Ohio Valley Native people is "mixed" or ambiguous, and government recognition is absent for most groups, the question arises of how an Ohio Valley Native identity has developed and been maintained over time. In pursuit of answers to this question, data were gathered at powwows, historic re-enactments, living history enactments, and other events where Ohio Valley Native people participate. Newsletters of Indian organizations and books influencing the expression of a Native Ohio identity also served as sources of primary data. Ethnohistorical research further illuminated the factors that shaped elements of Native American identity in the Ohio Valley.

The analysis of interviews and the other data demonstrate that the claim to Native American identity in the Ohio Valley is not, as some have suggested, a newly emergent construction. Rather, Native American identity has been maintained performatively in some quarters for many generations while remaining submerged in others. This Native identity continues to be constructed and performed drawing from a combination of Ohio Valley "folk" culture, Appalachian rural culture and "Pan-Indian" powwows. Similarities and connections were also found to exist with other mixed North American peoples, such

as the Métis of Canada and the northern US, and those asserting an Ohio Valley Native identity.

These findings counter widely held conceptions that there are no “real Indians” in the Ohio Valley, call into question the bases on which such claims are made, and provide a basis for new understandings of how claims to identity are negotiated among Indigenous peoples in North America.



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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Native American (1) identity has been very difficult to define because of the shifts from purely indigenous cultural forms to hybrid forms. Despite these shifts, there is a continuing assertion of Native identity that has been increasingly visible over the last 30 years. This research explores new Native identities that are being claimed, maintained and performed away from the usual cultural centers such as reservations and reserves. An ideal place to examine this is in the Ohio Valley, a place where, for almost 200 years, First Nations peoples have been officially nonexistent. My focus, drawing from linguistic anthropology, performance theory and ethnohistory allows for cross disciplinary analysis to examine identity formation.

Several of the people I interviewed took exception to my referring to their assertion of Native identity as “performance”. This is in part due to the lack of acceptance of many Ohio Valley Native people because of stereotyped and legal definitions of what is a “real Indian” (2). By performance I use Erving Goffman’s, broad definition from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959): “A ‘performance’ may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants” (p. 15). This definition implies all assertions of identity are in some way a performance for others as we are social beings. It in no way is meant to imply the people of the Ohio Valley have less of a claim to being Native (Indigenous) North American than any other group.

### **Statement of problem and background to this study**

There is an increasingly open expression of American Indian identity in the Ohio Valley even though there was a documented disappearance of First Nations governments, material culture, and languages from the region in the first half of the 19th century. The research I conducted, over the first few years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is focused on resurgence of an Indigenous “Native Ohio Valley” identity. I focused on the discourse, by those people self-identifying as Ohio Valley Natives, on semiotic and symbolic forms of performance such as style of dress, dance music and First Nation language revival and use. During the field work it became clear that an ethnohistorical contextual approach was needed. This is because the past, even as far back as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was the reference point identified by many Ohio Valley cultural participants, to find “real” Ohio Valley Native identity. There was an emphasis on “bringing back”, copying or reintroducing these past “Indian ways” to the present. This was done with an emphasis on reintroducing the “original” culture of the Ohio Valley as a place with continuity to the past.

In this research, there was a need to understand the relationship between past practices and present day attempts to reintroduce both cultural performance and original languages. In the Ohio Valley there is a connection between how people perform their cultural identity and how they use language in discourse. However, there are rarely clear boundaries between distinctive dialect groups, and I did not find it possible to research an “ideal” linguistic community isolated from other speech communities. Much of what is analyzed here is the discourse of Native participants in events that are specific to this, mostly geographically scattered, community. Those asserting an American Indian

identity, through a variety of events such as the powwows, reenactments and ceremonies described in this study, have come from an integrated mix of communities. This hybrid is clearly not conducive to a descriptive grammar of an ideal speaker - hearer community that sometimes is thought of as the domain of language study with First Nations. The connection between past traditional identities of Native Ohio peoples and contemporary Indigenous identities are based on restored forms of performance such as dance, dress and language. Those gaps between the actual past and present are filled by the current perceptions of writers, media producers and historians.

This issue is compounded by the fact that American Indian identity is now being reasserted through increasing numbers of public and private cultural performances including the Ohio Valley region. This “re-emergent culture” is growing despite the lack of reservations, federally recognized tribes or linguistically distinct communities. For the resident Ohio Valley Natives there is no federal recognition and only in Ohio and Kentucky “semi-formal” state recognition by governmental bodies to a few groups (3). Also, there is often a lack of acceptance of the claim to being “real Indians”. In many cases, federally recognized American Indian people living in the Ohio Valley, who are enrolled in First Nations distant from the Ohio Valley, either originally or since the removals of the early 19th century, are among those who question the claim made by Ohio Valley Natives to being “real”. There is a great need for research from anthropology and other branches of “the academy” to look at this growing community.

Despite the lack of full formal recognition, participants at cultural performances, in discussing their identity, often give a specific label to who they are, including identifying a Native American nation, clan and language to which they are affiliated.

Even in discussing the languages themselves, many are clear that “their language” is no longer spoken or “only by” one or two persons. Despite the lack of Indigenous language use, there are growing numbers of cultural events, with increasing numbers of participants, who perform an identity which is for some “new” and for others a “renewing” of a continuous mostly hidden identity. The focus of my research has shifted to match a pragmatic reality: Native American identity is expressed in English in the Ohio Valley and I am examining its increasing vitality through an analysis of language discourse with reference to other symbolic cultural indexes, such as music and dress, situated in context at cultural performances.

### **The need for this present study**

This study contributes to the knowledge of culture as emergent, not only the forms that are old or “traditional” but those that are newly developing and constructed through discourse. This relates to Raymond Williams’ (1973:11) formulation of “emergent culture” in which, “new meanings, new practices, new significances and experiences are continually being created”. Likewise, Bauman's (1977) concept of emergence is a basic framework of human social life: “for the emergent quality of experience is a vital factor in the generation of emergent culture” (1977:48). Through the performance of new forms of oral and visual arts, new understandings of the relationships between cultural identities and the emergence of new cultural expressions will be found, encouraging us to face forward rather than to the past. For example, the entire context of the powwow, as a genre, is an emergent form that has been expanding and developing over the past hundred years in North America and, in the Ohio Valley region, for the past few decades. The powwow then has smaller genre sets of discourse including prayers,



MC announcements, “trader talk”, “drum talk” (meaning the drummers talking to each other about songs and the pow-wow), and “genealogy talk”. When the powwow is combined with the other emergent contexts stimulating Native discourse, such as historic reenactments, socials and ceremonial gatherings, there develops new ways of expressing the emergent Native identity of the Ohio Valley. All of these combine to give a sense of new growth, vitality, and ongoing hybridization and change.

Second, this study contributes to an understanding of Indigenous identity for social practice and policy planning, especially in my “other field” of social work (4). The lack of significant attention paid by the academy to social work practice with Indian people (Voss 1999) combined with the lack of interest in pragmatic research of anthropology for American Indians, especially in the areas of language and identity (Tamburro 2002) has created a void needing to be filled given the great changes happening in “Indian Country”. Also, research that is relevant for Indigenous scholars versus “Western” scholars and communities has often not been taken seriously by the academy. Charles Briggs (1996) developed a “scholarly analyses of the ‘invention of tradition’” in which he expressed his concern that “Native” critiques seem to have been “marginalized or dismissed” by anthropologists, even in the dialogues that profess to be “progressive and anti-colonialist” (p. 435). He points out that the scholarly voice often describes claims to tradition as being merely present creations and that even those presented as being connected to the past are ‘invented,’ ‘imagined,’ ‘constructed,’ or ‘made’. Briggs points out that this can be examined as “two dialogues” between “white researchers” and “indigenous scholars”.

This research in the Ohio Valley will attempt to add to the ongoing dialog of what defines an “Indigenous” person within a state system, and what constitutes a “legitimate” voice and perspective. It addresses significant issues about the relationship between past and emergent culture in relation to identity which is so important to healthy human and community development. Hopefully this research will contribute to the understanding of what it means to be an American Indian or a Native Canadian today. This research has implications for the recognition of Native Americans in the Ohio Valley region by governments, the academy and from already recognized Indigenous peoples. Toward this end, the ideas and insights of Indigenous scholars such as Vine Deloria Jr., Ward Churchill, Jack Forbes and others are incorporated into this research, privileging “Native” voices both as the researched and the academic.

In recent years, American Indian economic and social development has expanded to a point where identification as an “Indian” or “Native” is not always seen as a disadvantage, socially and economically. There has also been a great increase in cultural renewal. Since at least the 1960’s powwows, as part of a social pan-Indianism, “pro-Native” reenactments of historic events, more community specific “tribal” social gatherings, stomp dances, green corn dances, and ceremonies such as sweat lodge and sundances, have grown substantially in numbers of participants and in numbers of events in the Ohio Valley.

This study takes an integrated approach to the question of culture, history, language and identity. How people develop and maintain an Indigenous identity when a separate, clearly bounded “idealized” cultural or linguistic community is not present. The meaning asserting a Native identity, and the performance of this identity, have to the people

performing it is examined. Since the vast majority of American Indian languages are in some stage of language death or are already extinct and language is tied intimately to ethnic identity, what is the tie between history, culture, language and American Indian identity? This research in the Ohio Valley, where indigenous languages have been absent for many years, may help with the answer. This study will include both language and visual forms of performing identity, and what meaning this has for participants.

This study examines:

1. How do contemporary persons in the Ohio Valley talk about and use language and performance to mark Native Ohio cultural identity?
2. What linguistic and performance strategies or forms are used?
3. What aspects of performance are seen by participants as marking Indigenous identity?
4. What are the meanings that are constructed along with the discourse?
5. What ethnohistorical information supports the continuity cultural identity?

**Methodology used in this study**

Fieldwork is the central method to my research. Included in this were focused interviews, video and tape recordings, questionnaires and participant observations, especially from 2003 to 2005. I also draw from my many years as a participant in the North American Native community.

My academic ancestors include anthropologists with Indigenous ancestry like Frank Speck (5) who was a participant in, as well as observer of, the events he described. My involvement in what may be referred to as participant fieldwork is similar to what William Fenton described: “of all the students of Franz Boas, Speck was the greatest and most persistent fieldworker. From childhood to death he was forever at it” (Fenton 1991: 9). Like Speck I feel that I’m “forever at it” and in my participation, the “field” is closer to a feeling of “home”. Three of the methodological approaches from which I draw are

forces that influenced Speck: the integrated four field tradition of Boas, the intimate lifelong connection with the “remnant” American Indian communities east of the Mississippi, and an interest in the tie between the language and culture of these communities. My methodological theory, however, goes beyond believing that the culture loss described by Speck terminates the Indian identity of a people. During the first half of the 20th century, many anthropologists assumed an uninterrupted, isolated connection to an idealistic past. For example in a 1937 postscript on his work on the Penobscot, Speck describes his own sense of sadness in what he saw as cultural loss:

This span is now about closed. We cannot validly reconstruct the cultural picture of an earlier period. The next study to be made will be one of acculturation...Equipped from the beginning with powers of discovery and an ingenuity to avail themselves of examples set before their eyes in the economical working of nature, they progressed with a genius to invent and to pattern their own society and mental life, then to gratify their own senses of aesthetically through consciousness of unity with nature and its laws, and to improve inventions through imitating the arts and cunning of the beasts as observed in their every day life. Theirs was a cultural destiny thwarted by the interruptions of an alien civilization - the end of a primitive Utopia (Speck [1940] 1970: 311-312).

Today we are encouraged to go beyond the inability to accept Indian people unless in a “primitive condition” expressed in the work of Speck and others of the early Boasian tradition. It is the aim of the research in this study to avoid some of these pitfalls by trying to separate, as much as possible, from a prejudgment of what indigenous American Indian culture should be and rather, try to report from an “insider” perspective how the culture and the accompanying identities are performed.

In the tradition of participant observation, I have attempted to get at an emic rather than etic understanding (Pike 1954) of identity at several levels. It is interesting that the emic and etic concepts were developed for use by Kenneth Pike who, as a structural

linguist, saw a need to develop more rigor in describing differences between cultures. My approach incorporates the insider emic concept but my methodology is not structural. In my ethnological approach I attempt to have the community members define what they see as significant characteristics through the interviews I conducted, including the feedback method described below. Of course, at times I was not a true participant because I was asking questions, interviewing or walking around with a digital camera. At these times I dealt with the same thing reported for non-insiders as occasionally being seen as “snoopy” and perhaps overly inquisitive and “sneaky” while I was with camera. In fact, after several taped sessions I simply stopped using the camera as it seemed both the observer and the observed were anxious and behaved “unnaturally”. (6)

In my writing of this text I draw on the words of the Ohio Valley Native people themselves, from the interviews, to privilege their emic interpretations. In the conclusion, I draw upon Indigenous authors, mentioned before, who utilize cultural meanings in the context of changing times. This adds emic understanding to my observations. Through this perspective, I go beyond description and discuss some “deeper” issues for understanding Native American identity.

Both Linguistic and Cultural Anthropologists emphasize the importance of fieldwork. This is a point made by a number of ethnographers who have used language as a major part of their work such as Keith Basso (Basso 1970:vi). Basso uses his understanding of Apache language to give general categories of language, to a non-Apache audience, aspects of Apache “religion” and “world view”. He writes:

A sizable portion of the knowledge necessary for culturally appropriate behaviors is communicable in speech....This requires that discovering procedures, the most important of which are verbal queries, be culturally relevant themselves. In order to elicit reliable semantic data the ethnographer

[one must develop] procedures for discovering culturally relevant queries and ascertaining the internal structure of folk classifications. (Basso 1969:3)

Basso depended on the linguistic classification system of the Western Apache people themselves. There is an importance to classify from inside the perspective itself: “Hymes’ conception of the field rests on the premise that, in any society, the proper object of inquiry is the full range of communicative functions served by speech, and therefore, that adequate ethnographic interpretation requires close attention to speaking in all its forms” (Basso 1979: xxi). The approach needs to take the speech in “all its form” and place them into manageable categories for analysis. In this Ohio Valley research I have expanded the concept of speech to include the discourse by participants on the subject of Native identity and performance. Topics of the discourse may be described as those that produce meaningful relationships to identity, through a signifying, therefore, semiotic, relationship. As in Umberto Eco’s definition: “Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else” (1976:7). In this sense, my research is also a semiotic study of what participants see as signs of Native identity through art, music, dance and other forms of communication not necessarily considered linguistic. (For more on various views of Semiotics, see Nöth 1990).

This study of the “diversity” of speech types is a direct result of the expansion of the field of linguistic anthropology. The work of Bauman (1974, 1977, 1986) and Hymes (1964, 1966, 1974a, 1974b, 1983) and other “sociolinguists” has expanded the field of language study from description and taxonomy to analysis of speech events. I used the example of Keith Basso to show that socio-cultural anthropologists can apply these methods. Geertz (1973) points to the need for the analysis to be a “thick description” of

general discourse. Researchers continue to stress the importance of studying speech events in context through fieldwork. This is important not only when studying languages not known to the researcher, but also when studying speech events in English (Gumperz 1970, Sankoff 1974[1977], Wolfson 1976, Milroy 1980, 1987). The use of ethnographic methods in linguistic anthropology fills the goal of: "...connecting linguistic forms with linguistic cultural practices" (Duranti 1997:85).

Books, newsletters and websites identified by participants as helping to form Indigenous identity will also be discussed. This "text analysis" acts as a support to the findings from my fieldwork. I include quotes from some of these interspersed with material from my interviews and recordings to highlight points. Many participants in the Ohio Valley identified books and websites as their primary sources for knowing the "Indian way". I only use those sources that have been identified on separate occasions by different people interviewed. Two other forms of information are mentioned also, music tapes and "Indian" videos. These were mentioned as adding to understanding cultural forms for many participants.

My methodology for gaining an understanding of the connection between the present Ohio Valley communities and those of the more distant (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century) past is what William Fenton refers to as "upstreaming" (1952). This is an approach which he described as part of "the Direct Historical" method. Upstreaming is done by "working back from the known to the unknown" (333). Basically, I took information as given by my informants and then used it to help me find past written documentation of the information provided. I utilized the contemporary cultural information to help

understand the connections between the historic culture and the present (see also Fenton 1965 and Fixico 1997).

Participant observation

It is through participant observation that I was able to get an in-depth understanding of the speech community. I used audio tapes and digital video recording of participants in combination with field notes and interviews. Participant observation, of course, involves fieldwork:

Unconcealed participant observation is the role preferred by most observers. Although the fact of observation is obvious, that the research is acting as a participant at some level reduces the obtrusiveness. At the same time, it instructs the researcher as to what it is like to be in the situation. This role allows the researcher access to the important places and people while remaining “in character.” With a high level of participation...it is often done overtly. [Kratwohl 1998:251-252]

A number of advantages and disadvantages of participant observation as a research methodology are outlined in the “Dictionary of Anthropology” (Barfield 1999:348). They include several advantages which apply to research. One is that the researcher is “there” at the events all the while they are occurring. Another is that through immersion there is less of a sense of intrusion and therefore tolerance from the community is increased. Being there, where the speech events are occurring, I more easily separated customary from less familiar forms of communication. I observed first hand rather than relying on second-hand information.

In terms of disadvantages, several were mentioned. One is the large amount of time required. This is one which has been comfortable to me, as I am interested personally in the community. The two disadvantages most clearly affecting me were:

1. Participant observation is sometimes difficult to explain to communities interested in informal consent guidelines.  
[and]



2. It is virtually impossible to...demonstrate...why ones' conclusions should be accepted... (Barfield 1999)

To help counter these disadvantages, I have incorporated both direct interviews and feedback interviewing (Stone and Stone 1981). I also am utilizing material that is being read and disseminated such as newsletters and “historical fiction” that serve as the basis for the intellectual socialization of some participants. Many of these were written by participants and/or were pointed out as those I “should read”. These can be read and Native American events are common enough that any reader of my research conclusions can verify and replicate the general results of my data.

Another disadvantage is that people may resent “snoopy, sneaky anthropologists.” I found that when I tell participants what I am doing in my research that people are generally very interested and willing to discuss their impressions. I did stop video recording after four events, however, as many participants made it clear they were uncomfortable being video taped outside of certain clearly marked performance dancing that is found in many powwows. This is discussed some more below.

As a participant, I find it is easier to explain this research. I continue to participate in the Ohio Valley (Indiana, Ohio & Kentucky) region. Access was available to me as a lifelong Native American participant in powwows and other Indian cultural events. I have been a long term powwow participant and as early as the 1960s was a regular participant as both a dancer and singer in the Northeastern US “powwow circuit”(7) . Also, I was a visitor to various types of reserves and reservations, state recognized, federally recognized and informal communities. Early on I became aware that there was tremendous diversity and complexity of relations and boundaries that one needed to be able to negotiate in order to navigate in the American Indian performance

community successfully. It was a matter of survival as I spent weekends and summers in the powwow circuit away from my immediate family. I paid my way at powwows by selling for traders, singing as a member of several drum groups and as a general “helper” around the grounds. During my recent few years as a participant researcher in the Ohio Valley, I found my previous experience made it possible to be aware of many cultural innovations, language usages, and songs. Also, I have an “at home” feel at powwows and other Native events. Much less familiar to me was reenacting, as done in the Ohio Valley. Some participants I met through my powwow connections integrated me into participation here. Through these introductions I was given some acceptance, as an insider, within this genre of cultural performance. However, the bearded “muzzle-loading”, gun shooting, “mountain man” types, never did seem to take to my lack of leather, inability to grow a “real beard” and poor knowledge of guns and “historically real” Native American weapons.

### **Recording and Interviews:**

#### *Audio-recording and videotaping*

The second aspect I utilized, in addition to the “field” focus of my research, was recorded observations. I used digital-video recordings at powwows, maintained field notes and conducted audio-recorded feedback interviews with participants (Stone and Stone 1981).

My memory of events and my ability “to catch” what I needed, was aided by some recording, despite the limitations mentioned. The recordings have helped maintain a more “objective” review of potential gaps in my observations.

### Feedback Interviews

Participants were taped at four powwows and two reenactments during 2003 and 2004. Several participants were then interviewed through the “feedback interview” technique:

We define the feedback interview as the playback and recall of a completed event in which the researcher and participant attempt to reconstruct the event’s meaning...The feedback interview, though seldom labeled as such, is not a new research strategy (Harris and Voegelin 1953; Hall 1974; Krebs 1975). Ethnomusicologists who play back audiotapes, show photographs, or present musical instruments for participant comments implicitly, at least, use the elements of this technique... Central to our concerns is the use of research media to consult the participants in a music event in order to determine what meanings they construct. We suggest that this orientation offers possibilities for studying process in the making of music, grounding the study in empiric reality, and accounting for meaning from various perspectives. (Stone & Stone, 1981:215).

I used in-depth video feedback interviews with 4 participants who reviewed the video playbacks and reconstructed the events’ meanings as they saw them. I then conducted 20 interviews which surveyed some of the foregrounded issues that emerged from the video based interviews. These interviews were more open ended question and answer, with most of them audio-taped. This allowed participants themselves to discuss and interpret the events in which they are performers. Interviews focused the understandings of the participants themselves. The open-ended questions helped to establish the baseline categories I used to describe types or genre of performance events.

The only events video-taped were powwows and reenactments because there was a great deal of discomfort at meetings which were political in nature (seen as spying) or ceremonial (seen as disrespectful or even harmful) to be recorded by any other method than field notes. In fact, most of the written notes were done shortly after the event ended rather than during it to avoid compromising my position as an “insider”. When I spoke

with people about what I was doing they understood, but it was uncomfortable to have a “note taker” around, and a number of people openly expressed their discomfort. At one public powwow I found myself in an embarrassing position. The emcee had to publicly request that I stop video recording, because a “special” had been requested, after an eagle feather was dropped by a dancer in the dance arena. No recording is allowed during some events defined as spiritual or ceremonial, and the eagle feather’s has ceremonial significance. I would normally have known not to tape but was busily attempting to tape some animated speech events at a trader's booth one floor above the dance arena, while not focused on the more ceremonial happenings. Many gestures were used that finally got my attention and I turned off the recorder.

### Questionnaires

An additional form of data gathering, I included with some informants, was interviewing with a questionnaire. Interviews, in general, are considered common in ethnographic research. There are some differences, however in how interviews are done:

For linguistic anthropologists, the interview might be a time to obtain background cultural information that is crucial for understanding particular speech exchanges they are studying. For some researchers who follow sociolinguistic methods...the interview might be an occasion for getting a linguistic corpus...needed for quantitative analysis...most linguistic anthropologists do not agree with this general principal and believe that, although at times useful, interviews can rarely provide the richness of information needed for a culturally informed linguistic analysis (Duranti 1997:103).

I used the interviews, to help gather some baseline data from the performers. In Appendix I have included a sample questionnaire. Additional, both open-ended and closed interview questions were used. Because the nature of my research is not as interested in quantifying data as might be the case for some sociolinguistic studies, I

depended more on open-ended questions such as some of the following, but these were adapted and changed according to their productivity and reception.

1. A series of warm-up questions such as: How often do you go to powwows or other events? Also background information was gathered.
2. Do you notice a difference in the way you speak (communicate) that sound Indian.
3. Do you know if others are involved in the Indian community by the way they communicate?
4. Do you notice yourself or others using Indian words or language?
5. How would you describe the way participants communicate? Is there anything distinguishing about it?
6. Can you tell where someone is from at Native American events?
7. What Native American words do you know?

Questions similar to these were used to begin discussions regarding Native American events including how Native identity has formed and changed over time. The questionnaire (see appendix) was used to help with some baseline information at only two Native American events, one in Ohio and one in Kentucky. The participants were not randomly selected. The questionnaires did however produce some interesting information, especially in attitudes about Native language use. They gave, for example, a sample of the words actually being incorporated or known by Ohio Valley Native cultural participants. Also, the specific First Nations descent was identified by participants. This data is included in my descriptions that follow.

The debate about which form of research “Qualitative” and “Quantitative” to use, is a constant in the social sciences. I have not used quantitative analysis, but I have not avoided it either, which is why I used the occasional questionnaires. However, as mentioned before, in my research I have attempted to immerse myself enough in the tradition of a more qualitative participant observation to provide a certain “thickness” of

description, for the purpose of taking into account a broad perspective. However, as

Howard Becker points out:

Ethnographers pride themselves on providing dense, detailed descriptions of social life, the kind Geertz (1974) has taught us to recognize as “thick”. Their pride often implies that the fuller the description, the better, with no limit suggested... Ethnographers usually hail “advances” in method which allow the inclusion of greater amounts of detail: photographs, audio recording, and video recording. These advances never move us very far toward the goal of full description; the full reality is still a long way away... A better goal than “thickness”... is “breadth”: trying to find out something about every topic the research touches on, even tangentially. (1996:60-62).

By using the goal of providing “breadth”, I blended and utilized multiple methods which seemed useful as my research progressed. Much of my observation led to the need for feedback and often this resulted in my asking questions, both open ended and focused. As details emerged that I did not understand, such as how so many people could say they were “Cherokee” or “Blackfoot” with no reservation ties, I delved into ethnohistorical research. I found, through this approach, a much broader “literature” and evidence of presence to back up the Native decent claims made by the people of the Ohio Valley than I expected. Much of what I “discovered”, through the breadth of my research methods, surprised me.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE OHIO VALLEY NATIVE COMMUNITY**

The Ohio Valley Native Community, the subject of my research, is situated in a region dominated by the historical events that occurred throughout the Ohio River basin during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. During this time, it was the pivotal location of the conflicts between colonial foreign powers for control of North America. Many events that have shaped North American society today occurred during this time period in the Ohio Valley. For example, there were more American Indian treaties in the Ohio Valley Region than any where else in North America (Prucha 1994). There were also the great Native confederacies that allied themselves for and against France, Britain, and the new American colonies forming the United States 200 years ago. The great leader of the Shawnee, Tecumseh, was born in the Ohio Valley and is considered the major player in stopping the expansion of the United States into Ontario in the War of 1812 (Sugden 1999). Therefore, the existence of both Canadian and United States history is still tied directly to the Ohio Valley. Subsequently, there were numerous Indian removals to the western states. The events of this time period, where both Canada and the United States were forming as Nation States themselves, are still the reference point for both many non-Native reenactors and Ohio Valley Native Americans.

The First Nations that were recorded in European records for the Ohio Valley in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and during the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries included Fox (Mesquaki), Shawnee, Delaware (Lenape), Mohican, Nanticoke, Muncie, Mingo, Seneca, Piankashaw, Wea, Miami, Wyandot (Hunter 1978) and, occasionally, Cherokee (1). Most of these peoples have had a complicated history of migration and removals in response to the Euro-American occupation of the land. Many of these Nations also had complex histories outside of the

Ohio Valley region before moving to it and after leaving (Hunter 1978, Trigger 1978). Many of the people I interviewed trace their ancestry and knowledge of First Nations culture to these historic tribes. They claim that some people stayed behind and still remain in the Ohio Valley since the mass migrations to the west of the Mississippi from 1819, when Chief Anderson and the Lenape left Indiana, to 1842 when the last Wyandotte and Shawnees officially left from Ohio (Callender 1978, Goddard 1978, Tooker 1978). Many Ohio Valley Natives, however, claim some descent from the Cherokee people and an “escape from” the “Trail of Tears”. This may be due to a blurring of single Indian tribal identities in favor of a more generic Native identity labeled “Cherokee”. The memory of, and reference to, the removals was strong in my interviews, and the most familiar Nation associated with this is the Cherokee. Today, over 150 years after these removals, there is an upsurge in the number of people expressing American Indian identity in the Ohio Valley. This now includes a reassertion of a claim, by some, to being descendant from the historic Nations mentioned above, in addition to the more common “Cherokee”, for the purpose of reintroducing language and culture.

#### **Areal range and sites of this study**

In this study, the boundaries of Ohio Valley are primarily confined to three states bordering the Ohio River: Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. This was the location of my observations and interviews. However, at all events I observed, there were participants from other nearby states that might also be included as part of the Ohio Valley region. There is cultural and socio-linguistic sharing and mixture among people from the various



states due to the frequent travel within the region by most participants in order to attend American Indian cultural events.

A journal published by the University of Cincinnati describes the Ohio Valley as “a region that has until now been largely ill defined... Although the Ohio River Valley isn't as readily identifiable as the South or the Midwest, it is a significant territory that holds a crucial place in the nation's history” (Frazier 2001). The area covered in my research, is also similar to that used by the University of Louisville on their website: “the Ohio Valley region, an area covering the entire state of Kentucky and southern Indiana, Ohio and Illinois” (2005).

When I think of the Ohio Valley region I think of the area of woodlands, small streams and rivers. There are also many farms and small towns and where farms have become abandoned, the tree growth has been accelerated. In my travels I have found herds of deer, turkeys, raccoons and many other small animals. This type of environment, with many state and federal parks, has made it possible for a diversity of interests and activities focused on American Indian culture. There is a rich archaeological history, a “frontier” history with restored forts, and many urban centers such as Columbus, Cincinnati, Louisville, Indianapolis, and Dayton. All of these physical locations allow for a diversity of activities focused on American Indian culture, and various ways of performing that identity.

In Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky I directly observed powwows, social events, ceremonial events and reenactments. Included were three powwows in south central Ohio, four powwows in southern Indiana, three in central Indiana and one in northern Kentucky. These were the basis for my powwow recordings. One “Indianist” or

“hobbyist” powwow was visited in Tipton, Indiana, this powwow being one of the best known powwows, of this non-Indian type, in the Mid-west. Reenactments, I observed, included three in Ohio and one in Indiana. A conference hosted by a major mid-western reenactment organization was attended in Ohio. Ceremonies, I participated in, included various events in the all three states, including sweats, dances, and community celebrations.

Sites in which events are held are important to understanding the importance of place. The site or location in which an event occurred in the past was mentioned frequently as an important consideration for powwow location and was a vital consideration for reenactments and ceremonies. The connection to place, for many of those I interviewed, was strong as most had ancestors who lived many generations in the Ohio Valley. The exception to this was American Indians who moved in from reservations or reserves in other parts of North America.

Keith Basso makes the point that anthropologists need to be aware of the important connection between land and culture through place names (1996:43-44). Also, the Americanist anthropological focus on place names goes back to Franz Boas, beginning with his work in the Arctic, in which he also describes the importance of the effect oral histories had on people in the cultural group (Basso 1996:43). Basso points out that the oral histories behind place-names connect the Western Apache, to both their culture and their historical landscape. This link makes an inseparable intertwining of the present, historical events and the place in which the events occurred (Basso 1990, 1993, 1996). Basso described a belief that when Apache people are disconnected from the land many problems develop. In the Ohio Valley, the importance of place is also

acknowledged. It was mentioned to me by several informants, that many places still have names that are of Native origin and have historical events and stories indexed to these places. People growing up in the Ohio Valley have grown up with these stories and some of my informants made a clear connection between their interest in maintaining American Indian identity tied to the “power” that comes from the place names and from being and performing at “old Indian” sites.

Many Ohio Valley events are located intentionally at sites of historic significance. These can be divided into two types. There are the European contact historic sites, which include old forts and Indian village areas that were the scenes of battles and historic treaties. The second type centers on those areas which have archaeological significance. These include mounds, pictographs on rocks, caves and sites where archaeological digs have shown ancient occupation. Examples of the use of historic sites include Flint Ridge and the old Piqua Shawnee Village in Ohio for Native people and Boonesboro in Kentucky for reenactors. Historic locations, many of them now state parks, are the preferred locations for those reenacting Indian identities from the past. Here location is important, as it is “being in the place that something happened” years before. There is a lot of oral history surrounding both archaeological sites, such as the mounds, and the historic sites. Sometimes this involves a Euro-centric view of the importance of the place, because it may be the site of an old battle or fort that has enough documentary information, written in European languages, to know what types of reenacting should be done at the site. Some site choices are influenced by both the historic and archaeological perspectives. For example, for 20 years there was a yearly event held at Mounds Park in Anderson, Indiana that combined both reenactments and powwows, neither of which are

historically connected to the actual mound complex, but the physical presence of mounds acted as a symbol of ancient Indian presence.

Although the tie to place is important to those who connect Native ancestry to the Ohio Valley, historic sites are less important to non-Native Indian hobbyists as their connection to Indian culture is centered more on a more western “Plains” Indian culture not connected to the region. For hobbyists, sites that are important seem to include those that are most accessible to the powwow committee or for people traveling distances. For example, Tipton, Indiana is one of the regular sites that hobbyist powwows are held. There have been powwows going back at least 30 years in Tipton and maintaining a single location has helped keep it a regular event. There has also been a national hobbyist powwow held every two years somewhere in the US for about 40 years. Many times this powwow has been in the Midwestern United States, including Tipton. In 2005 it was held in Danville, Illinois. As with an urban Indian powwow or gathering, the location was chosen for central or easy access and was not publicized as having any specific historical or cultural connection to place. This is different from the events held by most of the Ohio Valley Native or reenacting groups where sites are considered because of the desire for a connection to place to generate meaning.

Another American Indian cultural influence to the Ohio Valley Native people are the urban Indian programs, whose membership is mostly drawn from Indian people who have moved in, or whose recent ancestors have moved in, from outside of the Midwest and the Ohio Valley. Serving primarily members of federally recognized Nations, urban centers have developed because of the relocation of people to urban areas for jobs and the termination of reservation communities in the 1950s and their connected BIA relocations.

The fact that these urban Indian centers exist is frequently invisible to the people from mainstream Euro-centric culture (2). Urban Indian centers act as formal organizations often receiving various combinations of federal, state, municipal and private funds to provide a range of services to urban Indians.

Indigenous people are scattered throughout the United States and Canada with large concentrations in urban centers. In these communities alternate forums for marking cultural identity have become important. These include urban cultural center events such as powwows. Since the 1960's, the powwow, ceremonies such as pipes, sweat lodge and sundances, have grown substantially in numbers of participants and in popularity as part of a social Pan-Indianism. Powwows especially offer the opportunity to use linguistic material and performance to signify identity. In these, the tribal and linguistic background of community participants is mixed and often includes non-indigenous members as well.

### **Demographics - participants, recruitment and modes of engagement**

The most broadly understood definition of an "Indian" is that of a person who is a member of an Indian tribe recognized by the federal government. The U.S. Census Bureau (2000 Census of Population, Public Law 94-171) used a broader definition: "American Indian and Alaska Native [is] A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment." The Ohio Valley Native people, the focus of my research, are mainly people whose ancestors have never had a government to government relationship with United States.

There are no federally recognized Indian reservations in the three state region (500 Nations 2000). There are three state recognized tribes in Ohio: the Allegheny Lenape Indian Tribe in Canton, the Shawnee United Remnant Band in Bellefontaine and the Piqua Sept of Ohio Shawnees. The Piqua Shawnee Tribe also has state recognition by commission through a State Indian Affairs Department in Alabama (AIAC 2005). The two Shawnee state recognized communities have a land base. One is the Remnant Band of Shawnee in Ohio and the other the Piqua Shawnee with land near London, Kentucky. The Shawnee Remnant Band owns Zane Caverns in Bellefontaine Ohio which it has developed into a site to attract tourists. Brochures can be found at the various rest stops along the Ohio state highway system. Also, there are several terminated reservation areas once recognized by the US government. These include the Miami near Peru in north-central Indiana and former Shawnee reservations at several locations in Ohio.

In this study, most of the participants have lived east of the Mississippi their whole lives, and are not connected with federally recognized tribes. However, it is impossible to travel anywhere in the Ohio Valley today and not find some people with ties to federally recognized reservations. Today the majority of Indian people live away from their home communities (Ogunwole 2002). This includes both speakers and non-speakers of Indigenous languages. Also, there are non-Indigenous community members who, through marriage or cultural adoption, were involved in the research as participants at Ohio Valley events.

Despite the mixed nature of the people, I found that participants in the Ohio Valley American Indian cultural community were able to place themselves easily into certain

categories when asked. These categories include: Indian, Métis, reenactor, hobbyist, Boy Scout, activist and historian. By far the largest group was the Indian group which can be divided into several sections itself: government recognized Indians, self identified Indians, Hispanic/Latino Indians, and on a smaller scale those that identify by a race as black or white mixed and Métis Indians. There are also some that would consider the Mason Dixon line as an important juncture, those who were born north of the Ohio River are “northern Indians” and of the south as “southern Indians”. I found that all of these categories were quite permeable depending on whom I spoke with, and some people defined themselves in more than one of the categories.

### **Indians: The official numbers**

The population census of the year 2000 divided the American Indian population between those claiming single or a selection of multiracial categories. In three states in which I did my research, the “American Indian or Alaskan Native alone” population category reported the following:

Ohio 26, 999 - Indiana 17, 168 - Kentucky 9080 persons.

The American Indian population greatly increases when we add those who defined themselves as multiracial. For those defining themselves as,

White and American Indian are:

Ohio 34, 561 - Indiana 18, 053 - Kentucky 12, 842

Black and American Indian are:

Ohio 7673 - Indiana 1883 - Kentucky 1174

White, Black and American Indian are:

Ohio 5778 - Indiana 1659 - Kentucky 831

This adds up to over 75,000 people in Ohio claiming Indian descent. Additional mixtures include other races to add over a thousand more assorted mixtures. As in Ohio, with the increase in mixed race reporting there is also an increase in those reporting American Indian descent: 38,763 for Indiana and 24,000 for the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

There are various other combinations including Asian, and other various selected ethnic groups that also slightly increase these numbers in each state.

In my interviews, there were several mixed race people, both black and white mixtures with American Indian, who told me they identified “only Indian” on the census for the racial category because they thought of themselves as primarily American Indian and not as a mixture. This choice to identify with being American Indian transcends governmental recognition, which is not a category on the census records. It points to the weakness of race by itself as an indicator of American Indian identification. The census records show that there are a significant number of people in the Ohio Valley that identify as American Indian. The total number of people claiming to be of American Indian descent, in these three states, is approximately 138,000 people.

The US Census 2000 also identifies people by the category of: “Reported American Indian or Alaskan Tribes by frequency”. For Ohio, Cherokee tribal affiliation was reported at 6750, in Indiana they were 3268 and in Kentucky, Cherokee were 3095. Census figures are only available for tribes which are considered numerically significant in the United States. I could not find Ohio Valley statistics on Shawnee, Miami, Piankashaw or any of the other smaller Nations originally from the Midwest. However, for the tribes that I could find listed, there was a great diversity of tribes claimed in the Ohio Valley from many other parts of the United States. Only four First Nations came up



with more than 1000 members when I combined all three states. None of the states, by themselves, had more than a thousand of any one particular tribe besides Cherokee.

Those, when combined for the three states, with over 1000 tribal members were:

Latin American Indian - 1572, Sioux - 1440, Chippewa - 1333, Blackfeet - 1214

Four additional tribes were identified as having between 500 and 1000 members:

Iroquois - 975, Apache - 881, Choctaw - 740, Navajo - 611

Many tribes had less than 500 members and many significantly less than a hundred.

Those important to the region are the Potawatomi at 434 the Creek at 822 and the Delaware at 291. These statistics point out that persons reporting Cherokee alone in the tri-state area account for 13,113 people which is over 3000 people more than the 11 other tribes combined at 9743.

These numbers point to a significant number of “Latin American Indians”. I was told by one participant at a powwow that he used the term “Hispanic” rather than “Latino” to make it clear he was Mexican and therefore Indian and not Spanish.

According to the US Census 2000 data, only about 6% of Hispanics reported being mixed race and of these only 6 % reported that the mixture was American Indian. One theory why this percentage is so low, is that the term “Hispanic” may be considered, by many US Hispanics, to be a category that stands by itself for La Raza, a mixed European Indian “singular” identity. Therefore, an additional claim of “American Indian” is redundant.

Nevertheless, at some of the events in the Ohio Valley that I attended, there were people from various Hispanic communities in attendance as participants. Some of these were musicians or vendors but many were local folks who were attracted to the event and chose to join in with dancing or ceremony. When I asked them about their ethnicity it

was describe as either “Indigenista” or “Mestizo”. Both of these self identifications imply American Indian connections and they were quite comfortable attending Ohio Valley American Indian performances such as the powwows. It is also interesting that some scholars apply the terms used by Hispanics to the mixed “marginal” populations in the eastern US also:

The term *mestizo*, widely used for ethnically or biologically intermediate peoples in Latin America and the Philippines, has also been applied to the racially mixed people in the United States. It, too, is offensive to those who are firmly committed to a uniquely Indian identity (Dane and Griessman 1972; Dunlap and Weslager 1947)” (Berry 1978).

In the three states were I conducted my fieldwork, there were Indian organizations serving American Indians. These American Indian organizations generated “official data” in each of the states. Indiana has a number of organizations specific to American Indian community or culture. Some of these represent the non-recognized tribes in Indiana such as the Wea and Miami. Others are pan-Native organizations both Indian and hobbyist. The American Indian Center of Indiana Inc. claims to serve the almost 40,000 American Indians living in Indiana (AICI 2003). Their site lists the primary tribes considered historically resident:

From the Shawnee Indians in the southeast of Indiana, to the Potawatomi in the north, Indiana's Indian nations and tribes of Indiana lived throughout the states' beautiful, rivers, lakes and valleys. Miami Indians occupied the center of the state, and their close relatives, the Weas and Piankashaws continue to live nearby. Delaware, or the Lenni Lenape, moved into Indiana in the 18th century, and there were other settlements of Indians in Indiana who were removed here before the American Revolution (AICI 2003).

They go on to describe that there are “over two hundred tribes” from North America now resident in Indiana and “In Indiana, a state named for our people, there are Lakota, Comanche, Chippewa, Ottawa, Cherokee, Seminole, Hopi, Navajo, and Zuni just to name

of few...” (AICI 2003). In the interviews I conducted, I found similar varieties of tribes listed as reported here and in the earlier census data. The following tribes were named to me for people enrolled in governmentally recognized First Nations: Abenaki, Cherokee, Cree, Choctaw, Creek, Delaware, Inuit, Mohawk, Lakota, Lumbee, Seminole, Seneca, Shawnee, Potawatomi, Micmac, Métis, Mohegan, Navajo, Nez Perce, Ojibwe (Anishnabe), Quechua, Salish, Tarascan and Yaqui. I also had two “non-official” Nations mentioned: Mingo and Métis. My interviews revealed that there was also a great deal of diversity regarding the places where people have lived. For the people I interviewed, their personal experiences ranged from having spent most of their lives in the arctic (north of 60), the west coast (British Columbia and Oregon), on reservations or reserves (numerous all over North America) or Latin American Indigenous Pueblos, to some living their whole lives in the Ohio Valley. I remember being impressed when at one event I interviewed a man born on a reservation in Idaho and one from a reserve in Quebec. Both of these men had strong Kentucky accents. Clearly the “ideal” speech community, that both Habermas and Chomsky would consider a prerequisite for linguistic insights, is not the environment I encountered in the Ohio Valley Native community. Hybrid identities for the speech communities are the “norm”. Hence, the need for approaches that take into account diversity.

In Ohio, there are a number of organizations created for serving mostly federally recognized American Indians living away from reservations. One, the American Indian Education Center (AIEC) in Cleveland, reports that there are so many Indians in Ohio because of the 1950s relocations:

Relocation involves Native Americans and their families being uprooted from their reservations and given one-way tickets to large cities with

promises of good jobs, good housing and prosperity... More than 5,000 American Indians live in Northeast Ohio today. Many often experience problems associated with low incomes in urban areas. We seek to empower our own communities by offering the resources necessary to nurture healthy, productive people in healthy surroundings (AIEC 2006).

This interpretation of the presence of American Indian people is supported by a number of sources. These sources focus on the federally recognized communities. What is interesting is that even Nations who now have headquarters in Oklahoma are now suing for reentry into both Indiana and Ohio. The Eastern Shawnee tribe and several others, for example, have been pursuing land in Ohio for casinos since 2004 (Associated Press and staff reports 2005).

There are also Indians who have settled in the Ohio Valley from other places that have adapted to the local culture. One example is from an interview with an Indian man whose ancestors were Canadians. He now demonstrates flint knapping which is an art form of special interest to the Ohio Valley because of the stone artifacts found there:

Author -- What tribe or nation is your family?

Flint Knapper -- We're Cree, I grew up in Indiana but my grandma was from ... Québec. I always wanted to make a trip there, I would love to but I've never been there. I've got family that is [sic] still there.

I have met many American Indian people, enrolled or enrollable on reserves or reservations similar to the Cree man (above) who have adapted to the Ohio Valley, including use of a strong local accent. Also, most have never visited the reservation or reserve to which they are connected. Other examples are a Nez Percé enrolled on a reservation in Idaho, but dresses in reenactor style 19<sup>th</sup> century Indian clothes (they looked "Apache" to me) and several Cherokees enrolled in Oklahoma but have never been there. From outward appearance, they look racially Indian, but clearly are now Ohio, southern Indiana or Kentucky Indians in their socialization and speech.

**Native and non-Native “Indigenists”, “Activists” and “Adopted Indians”**

At a number of events, I met people who clearly were identifying with First Nations causes through dress, hair style, and discourse that were hard to pin down to a particular cultural group. When I spoke to them I found that some were not worried about having to be affiliated with a certain First Nation through enrollment. However, they usually had a Nation that they felt closest too either politically or through adoption. In some of these cases they identify specifically with an activist organization such as the American Indian Movement (AIM), or with a cultural group such as Cherokee (there are several of these). The more activist people would fit in with what Ward Churchill describes as coming from an “Indigenist” perspective:

VERY OFTEN IN MY WRITINGS AND LECTURES, I HAVE IDENTIFIED MYSELF AS BEING “indigenist” in outlook. By this, I mean that I am one who not only takes the rights of indigenous peoples as the highest priority of my political life, but who draws upon the traditions—the bodies of knowledge and corresponding codes of value—evolved over many thousands of years by native peoples the world over. This is the basis upon which I not only advance critiques of, but conceptualize alternatives to the present social, political, economic, and philosophical status quo. In turn, this gives shape not only to the sorts of goals and objectives I pursue, but the kinds of strategy and tactics I advocate, the variety of struggles I tend to support, the nature of the alliances I’m inclined to enter into, and so on (Churchill 1993: 403). (Capitalization is part of the original).

What is interesting, however, is that some non-Indians also seem to fit this definition and are participants in Native events. One specific example is a person I met in Ohio at a powwow who was wearing a jacket clearly identifying himself as a member of AIM. When I informally interviewed him he made it clear that he was not Indian but a “white person” who was passionate about Indian rights. He also said he was concerned about white people trying to cross and make believe they were Indian so they could collect money or get some other benefits. He saw no contradiction in himself being active as he

was doing his participation as a supporter only. He also mentioned the importance of Lakota spirituality, sundancing and sobriety. He tied together much of his Indian activism into the recovery movement for alcoholics, of which he said he was one. He said there had been powwows in the Ohio Valley that had been specifically recovery focused “but these have been decreasing”:

I've been involved with AIM about 15 years myself. I supported them back in the 1970s. You know, Dennis Banks lived in this area a few years ago and he got me involved in it. One of the things that helped me in my sobriety. I've been sober for 12 years since I got involved with AIM and because of that I've decided to devote the rest of my life with the movement and helping AIM with causes. We do a lot of work with getting school supplies out to Standing Rock Reservation. I also do security for the annual Sundance and pipe ceremony. It's my way of paying them back for helping me get on the Red Road. (Interview at an Ohio powwow in 2004).

There are also Non-Indian people who have become Indian through adoption and identify, to varying degrees, as Indian when you speak to them. One of the best known couples in this are perhaps Reginald and Gladys Laubin. Although they visited the Ohio Valley only occasionally, many people in the Ohio Valley have been influenced by their books either directly or indirectly, especially “The Indian Tipi: Its History, Construction, and Use” (1957) and “Indian Dances of North America” (1989). Their adoption and their being “accepted as Indian by Indians” (Laubin and Laubin 1989: xxxviii) is endorsed by Louis Bruce (Sioux-Mohawk). Then Commissioner of Indian Affairs, he describes them and their performed, on stage, representation of American Indian culture:

Because of their adoption, Indians everywhere have accepted the Laubins as their own. I have known them and of their lifetime dedication to the preservation of Indian dance and culture for a long time, when they first presented their Ancient Indian Dances for the National Congress of American Indians, which now represents 105 tribes with a membership of 350,000. Without question, it was one of the finest programs I have ever witnessed and I have seen many Indian performances. We Indians are very skeptical of non-Indians interpreting our dances, but Reginald and Gladys

are imbued with their true spirit and character, and are the first to present real Indian dancing on the concert stage, either here or abroad.

Chief One Bull and his brother, Chief White Bull, lived in the Laubins' tipi on several occasions ... [they] were so grateful for the Laubins' interest, when not even their own young people showed any, that they requested them to record and preserve the old ways. One Bull said, "You know exactly the real Indian ways. You are more Indian than our own Indian children." Kills Pretty Enemy added, "It is a good thing you are doing, keeping alive the old ways for coming generations, both Indian and white." No wonder our Indian people are warm in their praise of the Laubins (Laubin and Laubin 1989: xi).

What is important about the emergence of culture in the Ohio Valley Native cultural community is that the sources being used as reference points are not necessarily racialized. The focus is for sources of "authentic culture", and this source does not have to be from federally recognized Indian people or tribal communities. In fact, the concept of "indigenist" implies an orientation toward a North American Indigenous perspective that politically rejects a racial or governmentally sanctioned definition of "real Indian" people.

Another example of a non-Indian "by origin" but adopted person is Adolph Hungry Wolf. He was recommended as a source for "returning to traditional Native ways" by several people I spoke with. I met a woman described as a "Delaware Indian elder" at a powwow one evening after the dancing ended. She told the many people present, sitting around the campfire, that Hungry Wolf's books were "one of the best sources if you want to get back to the old ways" (field notes July 2003). Hungry Wolf is Austrian in ancestry, but was married into and adopted into the Blackfoot First Nation in Alberta Canada. He has been publishing books on traditional culture for many years, many of them out of a publishing company in Tennessee, even though he lives in British Columbia.

In addition to those who identify as American Indian by descent or adoption are those who perform or reenact contemporary or past American Indian culture and historic life styles. Also, some reenact the lives of individuals either historically known, such as Simon Girty, an important adopted Indian “intercultural broker” of the old frontier (Calloway 1989), or other partially or completely reconstructed historical individuals. The groups of non-Indian people found at powwows east of the Mississippi are often described under the general title of “hobbyists”. Those who recreate past events are generally known as “reenactors”. These two groups are described in the next two sections.

### **Non- Indian Hobbyists, Boy Scouts and Indianists**

Hobbyists are composed of several groupings of people that fall into different types. For example, many self-described Indian hobbyists deny they are Boy Scouts, although there may be connections. As one hobbyist said to me: “some hobbyists came into the Indian culture from Scouting but many did not. So, a hobbyist may be or have been a Boy Scout, but a Boy Scout is usually not an ‘Indian hobbyist’”.

One of the main differences between Indians and “Indigenists” in comparison to hobbyists is the focus of the latter on Indian dancing and the “traditional” arts, rather than political and everyday life realities of being “Native”. However, an “appreciation” for Native culture is often emphasized. Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines a “hobby” as “a pursuit outside one’s regular occupation engaged in especially for relaxation” (2004). This definition describes the primary intent for some hobbyists. Forty years ago, in a chapter titled “The Hobby”, William Powers describes the Indian Hobbyists and their primary focus of Indian dancing:



While Indians are demonstrating renewed interest in their own culture, more and more non-Indians are taking up the hobby of Indian dancing. For years, many experts have said that Indian dancing is a wonderful form of exercise. But this Indian hobby offers more than just physical fitness. It also teaches you about the culture of another people (Powers 1966:14).

Powers goes on to discuss who is involved in “the hobby”. He mentions the benefits of cultural knowledge that then leads to more in depth interest for many people. In the next quote he talks about how the “hobby” may lead to or become connected with life-long choices for some hobbyists. It is interesting that after this writing he went into anthropology himself and has become one of the well known writers on Oglala Lakota religion and culture:

This knowledge has led many hobbyists to enter related professions and businesses. Among these are anthropology, ethnology, archeology, sociology, museum and library work, teaching, writing, field work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and owning private Indian curio shops and mail order businesses... Several names have been applied to the hobby of studying Indian culture, but Indian buffs disagree on just what to call the hobby. “Indian lore” has sufficed for many, but others feel that the hobby deserves a more sophisticated name. Names such as “Indian hobbyist”, “Indian enthusiast”, and “Indianologist” are used to describe persons with various degrees of interest in the Indian ( Powers 1966:14).

During my field work in the Ohio Valley I met many people with an interest in various of these “related professions and businesses” that may have started as a hobby, but became much more important to the participants over time. Due to this increased interest, some non-Indian participants prefer the term “Indianist”. I was told by one self-described Indianist that the meaning of this term implies participation in Indian culture at a greater level than a hobby describes. In some cases the role of an Indianist, as an advanced Indian hobbyist, can go beyond that of a simple hobby as illustrated by the story of Joe True described by Robert Stahl (1989). This is a case of a non-Indian Texan getting adopted by a Kiowa family in Oklahoma then becoming active in the Kiowa Gourd

Dance Society and other events and taking on many family responsibilities. I have met a number of people similar to “Joe True” in the Mid-West and it is easy to meet adopted non-Indian gourd dancers at powwows such as in Tipton. At this point, a continuum can be seen to be developing from Boy Scout to Hobbyist to Indianist and even then to adopted Indian or Indigenist, the category mentioned in another section of this chapter.

The question of the contribution of both Boy Scouts and hobbyists to maintaining and preserving Indian culture has been countered by criticism of exploitation and inappropriate cultural appropriation by others. Terms like “wanabee”, “outalucks”, “new agers” and others have become common generic labels to describe, often loosely, anyone who cannot prove connection with a federally recognized tribe (Aldred 2005, Churchill 1994, Deloria 1998, Garroue 2003, Lawrence 2004, Strum 2002). The term “wanabee” is specifically directed at hobbyists, other non-Native participants and “mixed-bloods” at some of the Ohio Valley events. Robert Black Bull, a Blackfeet traditionalist from Browning Montana, has had years of experience working with both Indian and non-Indian people in “keeping traditions and culture alive” (3). During a conversation with Black Bull I shared the comments I recorded made by a federally recognized Lakota Indian, now living in Ohio. This Lakota man admitted to having little connection to his own Lakota culture, but used the term “wanabee” for an appropriately dressed but non-Indian “hobbyist” straight dancer at a powwow. Black Bull responded to this term by explaining that:

The 'wanabees' are really 'usta bees', they were all tribal once like us and everyone needs to have an identity, that is what they are looking to find because they lost it years ago. We all need to have compassion and if making us Indians look good helps them find their way, well I can deal with some of that! We can use them for advertisement that we still have a living culture and like mountains will never die. Some of their art work in

imitation of us is the finest quality and they put in a lot of time into it, that is real Indian, many of our Indian people today make garbage, done too quickly and cheap. Just like anybody else, we Native people need to be able to make quality if we want to be proud. But [hobbyists] aren't better than us, but they can help show the world what a beautiful culture we have (field notes March 2004).

This brings in a more positive point of view, than that expressed by some, on the results of “imitation” or “appropriation” of Native culture in performance. It may be that hobbyists, by imitating the culture, buying the “best” craft work, hiring the best singers and creating settings where material cultural expression is encouraged, such as the large hobbyist powwows of the Mid-West, are creating settings for cultural extension from the West. The “ideal” western Indian culture, separate from other cultural communities, may be no more realistic to attempt to isolate than the “ideal speech community” mentioned in chapter one. The ideal cultural community is not something that exists for people today, either Native or non-Native. The construct that “Indians” are the “Real Indians out west” may not be a useful concept in helping to understand the cultural emergence of identity in the Ohio Valley. For non-Indian hobbyists and Indianists, the people “copied” are those “traditionalists” of Oklahoma or South Dakota. But these are known mainly through books, lectures, other hobbyists and occasional visits with the “most traditional families”. but these sources often contain high quality examples. The influence of the hobbyists in bringing “quality constructs” of American Indian culture to the Ohio Valley may serve to increase the standards, rather than being a simple harmful form of exploitation. I saw several examples of porcupine quillwork, bead work, ribbon work and yarn work done by Ohio Valley Natives, who also attended hobbyist powwows, which were of the top quality. The forms, however, were not imitations like the hobbyists did of Western forms, but new hybrid adaptations, using the materials and techniques in ways that are,

perhaps, unique to the Ohio Valley. This desire for perfection and attention to detail which also is a standard for some, but not all of the reenactors, is the subject of the next section.

### **Reenactors, historians, anthropologists and researchers**

For Indian reenactors, who may be either Indian or white, reenacting events as accurately as possible is an important focus. Many times reenactors try to go to the actual location in which an “ancestral event” occurred. What is important here is that people are performing as “Indian” something that is not part of their own socialization. It is the same as what Richard Schechner names “restored behavior” (Schechner 1988). In this case a behavior that recreates an interpretation of a distant past through interactive socialization with other reenactors. This is not with any direct knowledge of the events themselves except as filtered through readings of historical texts and viewing disconnected items in museums.

My first experience with reenactors was visiting a conference in Toledo, Ohio on “the Ohio frontier”. I was new to the Midwest and was excited to see something of the Indian culture of the region. I knew of several Seneca and Abenaki Indian people who were going, so I was excited to make connections. As I drove up to the conference for check in, I saw, standing outside the hotel several men with shaved heads except for a lock of hair, silver earrings and smoking cigars. My thought was: “I didn't know Hare Krishnas smoked cigars!” Later that evening, these men approached me and explained they were from a reenactment group in Kentucky. They were hoping that, since I was Native, I would want to join them in “kicking some serious British butt” a few weeks in the future. From them I received my first description of a reenactment:

We make sure we are real accurate, only 1760s clothes and weapons. It's about a battle over 200 years ago, outside of Louisville that we are reenacting. The British all line up in their uniforms. Some of the British reenactors say they really had ancestors killed in that battle! When we run out, in our paint, war cries, ball headed clubs and tomahawks, some of those boys look real scared! We aren't Indians ourselves but we have become as accurate Indians as we can. We'd be real honored if you would join in with us, but you've got to have the 1760s clothes for this battle (field notes March 2001). (4)

A less serious side of reenacting is caught in the following tongue-in-cheek "personal advertisement" in a reenactment newsletter, "Native American Portrayals":

I am a single man who likes to dress like an Indian and run around in the woods whooping and a hollering and shooting off guns like I don't have a brain in my head. I would like to find a kind sensitive mental health professional to help me figure out why I spend all my free time and money on this hobby. Please no reenactors! (Portrayals 2001:9).

Despite this less serious stereotype of reenacting, it has a strong impact on Native identity. I met a number of serious American Indian reenactors who are Native. One was an Abenaki from Odanak reserve PQ, Canada. He had some fine craftwork based on old designs. He said he went to reenactments because "so much of our history and culture has been lost. At least at these there is an appreciation for high quality work and we can wear it!" Also, there are non-Indians who seem to be very serious about doing things as accurately as possible. It is very important to understand that, in the Ohio Valley, reenacting is a major source of information for many people about what it means to be Indian. This is obviously tied to the past. I have been told by several Indian people in the Ohio Valley that the goal of bringing back our identity and getting recognition as Indian people was to get "closer to the past". At one event in 2005 in Kentucky, a well known Indian leader, who also does reenacting said "we are moving rapidly into the past" as part of his praise for several ceremonies "brought back". This concern with going

back to the past comes across as very sincere and people are willing to go through some hardship to attain it. One man described for me what he tries to do with reenacting. It is “because the white man destroyed so much [of Indian ways, culture and language], I don't know what to believe about what we were, so I try to get as far away, back in the woods with only moccasins and breechcloth, to try and feel what it was like for my ancestors, even if just for a few days” (field notes October 2004).

Many reenactors spend a great deal of time studying and visiting museums, trying to be as accurate as possible to a specific period. I was told at several events, which I thought were powwows but turned out to be gatherings for reenactors, that I could not demonstrate or display my artwork because it was “not the right time period”. At one point, a “Cherokee and Shawnee” male reenactor gave me a piece of leather with the instruction “you need to use this instead of that paper to pound the silver on, paper just doesn't look Indian”. This focus on “accuracy to the past” is explained for reenactors in the Ohio Valley in a newsletter devoted to this performance genre:

The Eastern Frontier was founded to act as a resource and clearinghouse for information on the material culture and lives of Eastern American Indians during the 17th, 18th, & early 19th centuries. To fulfill this goal, we publish a quarterly magazine/newsletter for our membership, Native American Portrayals. (Portrayals 2004).

The Eastern Frontier website contains an article which gives guidance for how to “go about portraying the past in an authentic way” (Gutchess 2004). There are twelve rules listed with many details. The rules are:

- Rule #1: Get the documentation first, buy, commission, or make last.
- Rule #2: Acceptable documentation should be derived solely from primary sources.
- Rule #3: Document for commonality. Dare to be average!
- Rule #4: Document for appropriateness.
- Rule #5: Avoid all “phantom” documentation.

Rule #6: Trust no one born after 1800.

Rule #7: Avoid speculation if you can, and where you must, minimize the effect.

Rule #8: Know the limitations of your own skills and abilities.

Rule #9: Whenever possible, obtain objects produced with period techniques and materials.

Rule #10: Be willing to periodically reevaluate your appearance and make corrections accordingly.

Rule #11: Don't hoard documentation, make it available to others.

Rule #12: Have some serious fun! (Gutchess 2004).

These rules offer an explanation for the emphasis on accuracy to a past, often 200 years old, as the reference point for Native identity in the Ohio Valley. I found this emphasis as a theme of many conversations with Ohio Valley Native people reclaiming their Native identity. This identity with an emphasis on “commonality” and not trusting anything after 1800, outlined in the rules above, leaves little option for Native Ohio people to express themselves culturally in new ways. They either have the choice of copying the standards set by “western Indians” or hobbyists in the powwow circuit, who often do not accept the mixed people of the Ohio Valley as “real Indians”, or they have to go through the approval process of reenactors, both Native and non-Native, for judgments on what is “real”.

The emphasis on historic accuracy leads to the attendance at many Ohio Valley events of people who are both interested in experiencing and learning and people in attending these events “to teach”. I met a number of these people, some paid and some unpaid, who do instruction or demonstration. Several were “historians”; a couple were “educators”, including one with a doctorate in education, and a number of people with various doctorates including anthropology.

At one event, in Ohio, I was told a popular joke after explaining that I was doing anthropological research: “What is a typical Indian household? A mom, a dad, a couple

aunties and uncles, several elders or grandparents, a few cousins, kids, dogs and an anthropologist in the corner taking notes”. I have heard this joke all across the U.S. at powwows and it seems to now be in the Ohio Valley also. Basically, the frequent association of academics at Native events seems to hold true for the 21<sup>st</sup> century Ohio Valley also. Here, the researchers are now often mixed in among the “others” and sometimes are performing as participants. As a group, Ohio Valley participants report a range of backgrounds in formal education. Some participants told me they were “high school dropouts” or “blue collar” but I was also told there is a lot of diversity in this area. At one event in central Kentucky I had it pointed out to me that there were at least 5 people with doctorates present including archaeology, anthropology, history, art and education.

At powwows and reenactment events books are often sold. Some of these books are by anthropologists and other scholars that also continue to be active in the “Indian circuit” at some level. It is important to note this situation, as this connection to books makes these Ohio Valley events much different from those where we assume a discourse separate from the academy. In this research I could not observe some form of uncontaminated “other”. The influence from both written texts and the participation of “academics” makes for an interesting set of feedback loops. This can be seen with reenactors and hobbyists who are highly concerned with accuracy in imitating either past Indians in the former or contemporary Indians in the later. Throw a few credentialed academics into the mix and some dialogs are very interesting. For example: “Boy that ribbon work is great!” which was responded to by: “Yeah, I combined some Osage and Otoe pattern themes I got from research on Oklahoma dress style but then with Howard's



book on Shawnee and its pictures and the study a colleague did, I thought I could adapt it to be a little more Shawnee by changing the cut a little”. Clearly there are several discourses going at the events I attended and the influence of years of published material cannot be ignored. At other events marked as ceremonial or tribal there are also participants who have authored books on history and culture and there are many in leadership positions that have regular newsletters which include cultural and other instructions and information.

### **Ohio Valley Natives in historical perspective, Multiracial and Métis**

One challenging factor to be foregrounded in any attempt to discuss the demographics and identity formation for Indigenous peoples in the Ohio Valley is the obvious lack of federally recognized Native communities. There were a series of federal government removals from the Ohio Valley area that were intended to clear title to all of the land. The Wyandotte and Shawnee were the last two American Indian groups to leave Ohio. It is claimed that Indian people did remain in the east:

At least three types of communities of Indians survived and developed in the eastern United States during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries: reservation communities (in Ohio, two reservations existed until the 1840s; the Wyandot in Upper Sandusky and the Shawnee in Auglaize county), missionary communities (in eastern Ohio, Moravian communities with Christian Delaware or Lenape Indians were developed then moved to Canada after the Gnadenhutten massacre), and Indian folk communities (in Ohio, at least ten Indian folk communities have been documented, generally concentrated in the southern portion of the state (Frazier, 2005)).

The best known removals were Trail of Tears of the Cherokee to the south of the Ohio Valley and the “Trail of Death” of the Potawatomi from northern Indiana.

The Delaware of Anderson, Indiana left in 1819, and the Shawnee and Wyandotte of Ohio 20 years later. The Miami also left during the 1840s but several groups

remained and are still in Indiana although their federal recognition was terminated in the late 1800s (Rafert 1996; Trigger 1978).

It is very difficult to prove claims to Native ancestry. Therefore, where do the participants who claim Native identity come from? One answer that I was given in all three states was the groups of hidden or unrecognized communities and families “stayed behind” to avoid the Indian removals of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This is a frequent informal topic at many events including powwows. At several powwows in Ohio there was a booth for the discussion of genealogy by a person identifying as American Indian (primary identification) but of mixed Indian, African and European background. He sold books, of his own compilation, that contain the stories of many individuals and their ancestry. In fact, the discussion of genealogy and reestablishment of family and hence possible tribal communities has its own discursive format. The format usually begins with an inquiry about ones ancestry in relation to type of Native ancestry such as tribe. This may include comments and questions about tribe or clan. Many times this discourse includes comments on the likelihood of and degree of relationship between the people in the conversation. This discourse relies on a combination of genealogy and recorded histories and local oral tradition within families and localities. One Southern Ohio Native Woman pointed out that “this spontaneous and frequent discussion of genealogy and ancestry” marks a conversation as “Native because you just don’t hear white people talk that way” (field notes August 4 2005). Part of the goal is to establish connection and relationship to each other through connections to tribal homelands (place) and ancestors (the distant tribal past).

Cherokees stand out clearly in terms of numbers. There are a number of historical reasons that might account for the high incidence of Cherokee ancestry being reported. I was told by several participants that they were not sure what tribe their ancestry was but that they “thought it was Cherokee” because that was “the most common tribe” in the area. I found this comment repeated several times and for most people who identified their ancestry as including multiple tribes, Cherokee was often one. Several other participants explained that there were so many Cherokees because of “the Trail of Tears” and the assumption that their ancestors had “hidden out” rather than be removed. Another explanation that I discovered while going through genealogies with people was that some of their ancestors had tried to prove they were Cherokee a hundred years ago. In the late 1800s the United States government was hoping to clear title to the lands taken during the Indian removals of the first half of that century. There were still many people claiming that they had been missed in the removals to the West and were still owed money. In order to clear title, the government offered to compensate anyone who could prove that they were Cherokee on certain old tribal Rolls. Thousands of people with Native ancestry tried to prove their Indian ancestry had a “Cherokee”. In the case files that were submitted to the United States government, the majority were denied:

The Guion Miller Roll is the most important source of Cherokee genealogical research of any of the rolls, because the application required extensive information to be supplied by the applicant. Between 27 Aug 1906 and 18 May 1909 there were 45,940 applications filed from the United States, Canada, Mexico and-- Syria! It listed an estimated 90,000 individual applicants. Each qualifying applicant received a warrant worth \$133.33 for their share of the one-time payment due to them. In order for an application to be accepted on this roll, the applicant had to prove descent from a person who was shown on the 1835 roll of Eastern Cherokees (also known as The Henderson Roll), which listed the citizenship of the tribe at that time (Chasteen 1999).

I requested and studied several of these petitions for recognition as Cherokee and found that applications included several pages of handwritten personal testimony explaining the applicant's Cherokee connection. Each one of the seven that I examined had been stamped "denied". Reasons for denial were short, such as the applicant was determined to be "Negro and therefore not Indian" in other cases it was simply said there was a lack of evidence in being Cherokee. Two examples:

Name: William Hutton, Tenn., Action: Reject, Reason: Applicant was a slave. (BIA Record Group 75, 1910, #14059)

Name: George Walker, Indianapolis, Ind., Action: Reject, Reason: Ancestors did not live in the Cherokee domain. Shows no connection with the Eastern Cherokee. (BIA Record Group 75, 1910, #38491)

The denied applications, mostly from the Midwest and Southeast, numbered about 30,940. Through this roll process, the only way to declare oneself an Indian east of the Mississippi, if not already a registered Indian, was to claim Cherokee. After going through the process of proving you are a Cherokee, it then becomes very difficult to tell your friends and family members that you really are some other tribe such as Piankashaw, Mingo or Shawnee. Several of the people I interviewed told me that while one family member insisted they were Cherokee, other family members might name other tribes such as Shawnee, Mingo or Miami. The main point here is that Ohio Valley Natives had no place to register as a member of a certain tribe. Official Indian communities were disbanded and removed to western states. Therefore, the only option for Native people remaining in the Ohio Valley was to attempt to tie themselves to generic "Indian" categories, in this case, the only one which was offered by the federal government was "Cherokee".

Another ancestral tribal name that was identified by several people I interviewed was “Blackfoot”. Having connections with people on the Blackfeet reservation in Montana, I offered to help people, several times, with making a genealogical connection there. In each case it turned out the person claiming Blackfoot ancestry could not identify any ancestors, in the past 200 years, who had ever lived outside of the Ohio Valley and/or the Appalachian mountains. I became increasingly convinced that, with the high number of “Eastern Blackfeet”, there must be another explanation. I found one researcher, Linda Carter (2002, 2004), who has made a connection between the Saponi and Tutelo “VA/NC Piedmont Siouan” Nations and the tribal name Blackfoot. She also notes the controversy and criticisms of this connection:

There have been objections raised to the theory that the Blackfoot ID in families deriving east of the Mississippi are Eastern Siouan. This objection has an alternate theory that this ID is the result of the popularity of the western, Siksika, Blackfoot performers in the Wild West shows of the 1890s, making their tribal name a household word. So, the theory goes, families who had either Native blood they knew nothing about, but wanted to give a name to, or, families with some degree of African blood they were trying to disavow, borrowed the name Blackfoot. If this were the case, then there would be a geographical source traceable to the 1890s. With these families, however, the geographical sources clearly traces back to Colonial days, with many of these Blackfoot ID'd families migrating to other states as early as the 1740's. ...It's my understanding, however, that The Ohio Saponi feel that the word “Blackfoot” refers to the entire confederation of Saponi - that the word “Saponi” itself is a corruption of words for “Blackfoot” (Carter 2002).

What is clear is that there are people in the Ohio Valley that use either the term Blackfoot or Cherokee to describe who they are, but are not able to demonstrate a connection to the federally recognized communities generally thought of as the only source for these names. In order to understand how this could have happened,

we need to consider the social location, over time, of Native people in the Ohio Valley.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century and much of 20<sup>th</sup> century Ohio Valley was a very unfriendly place for any people openly declaring themselves to be American Indian in any degree of mixture. The Ku Klux Klan was active in Indiana as well as Kentucky and Ohio during the late 1800s and the first half of the 20th century. In fact, the 1925 membership records indicate nationwide membership was 8,902,487, about 8% of the US population which was then around 115 million people (Asante and Mattson 2003, Price 2005). Indiana holds the distinction of passing the first eugenics laws (Bogart 1910, Hall 1993, Sakolsky and Koehnline 1993). Part of the case for the need for Eugenics was the publication of information about the nomadic mixed racial groups wandering throughout Indiana (Estabrook 1923). One of these was labeled “Ishmaelites” after the “The Ben Ishmael Tribe” of Indiana (Leaming 1993):

The Tribe of Ishmael, or Ishmaelites, was a tightly knit nomadic community of African, Native American, and “poor white” descent, estimated to number about 10,000. Fugitives from the South, they arrived in the central part of the Old Northwest at the beginning of the nineteenth century, preceding the other pioneers. After a century of fierce culture conflict with the majority society, the tribe was forcibly dispersed (p.19).

The large number of people mentioned that constitute this “tribe” is interesting when one considers the state of Native American people, in general, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Removals and diasporas were a characteristic of what was taking place all across the eastern areas of North America. It is also during this same time period the “historic Métis of the Red River” area between the United States and Canada was developing as a “distinctive culture at this same time. Many efforts were made in Canada to discourage the “wandering lifestyle” of these “half breeds” also. Today the Native identity and status as

Aboriginal people of Canada is entrenched in the Canadian constitution. No such recognition exists for the mixed blood populations of the United States. The characteristic nomadic lifestyle of “The Ben Ishmael Tribe” is described in the following:

The earlier migrations of the tribe had been involuntary, but they now pursued a nomadic way of life as a central feature of their distinctive culture. Their annual migratory route was northwest from Indianapolis to the Kankakee River south of Lake Michigan, from there south through eastern Illinois to the vicinity of Champaign-Urbana and Decatur, and finally due east, back to Indianapolis. This triangular route is about 350 miles as the crow flies. Every spring many hundreds of small carts set off, filled with children and the elderly, drawn by donkeys or horses (usually scrawny in latter years), the Ishmaelite men and women walking alongside. In the late spring (until “Indian Removal” in the north in the 1830s) there was joyful reunion with the Native Americans of the Kankakee. During the summer the tribe moved south, and when fall came they turned again to winter quarters. The migration was repeated every year for nearly a century (Leaming 1993:21).

This nomadic lifestyle with their “small carts” and connections with American Indian communities before “Indian Removal” is further evidence of their identity as a historically mixed Native community similar to what we see as described for the Canadian Métis. One interesting cultural symbol of the Canadian Métis is the “Red River cart” which remains an icon of the Métis Nation today in Canada referencing their nomadic past. The emphasis on being from a racially pure group rather than “Mixed” in the Ohio Valley region may be one of the reasons that Ohio Valley Natives find such a negative response in their attempts to assert an identity. The message is clear that being “mixed” is not good still today and it is much better to attempt to be “pure something” such as a pure “full-blood” Cherokee or Lakota. Status in the Native American circuit of the Ohio Valley today is still marked by heavily racial criteria.

All of the Native descent people I interviewed mentioned fear of attack or discrimination as a concern for their families in the past, and often continuing into the

present. The following interview conducted at a 2004 powwow in Southern Indiana discusses this:

White Haired Woman - My family moved here to southern Indiana, but it was dangerous here because when my grandparents were born in 1865, after they were married they came here and acquired the land, but you didn't say anything because at that time you could be shipped off.... My ancestors were Cherokee and didn't go on the Trail of Tears...

Author -- So why Indiana?

WHW -- Well, if they knew some people and it was a place they could get a little land, subsistence farmers.... (Said they lived near the Ohio River).

A -- How did you learn about your Indian identity?

WHW -- I've known it. We were always warned "you don't say anything about it, keep quiet" as I said, my great-grandparents were born in 1865, if you looked enough white to blend in you kept your mouth shut.

What then were the sources that could be utilized to establish identity? The only way to participate in Indian events would be to do so in a more stereotyped manner that was also open to non-Indian people. Over the past 180 years or so, Native people wishing to connect to this identity began to choose public events, often stereotyped, but most connections remained private only within family discussions. Public events have included Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, associating with fraternal groups such as the "Order of the Redmen" or Boy Scouting, and, over the past 30 years, at inter-tribal powwows and reenactments of historical events. Many of the people that I interviewed had family members in the past that were associated with some of these community organizations. More recently, the Ohio Valley has been a central focus of historic reenactments such as the Lewis and Clark journey. I spoke with several Indian people and reenactors who were actively involved in preparing clothing and other cultural items to portray characters involved with the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Race, based on a few physical characteristics, especially skin color, is considered obvious to most people socialized in North America. This history of the Ohio Valley



Native community which has involved at least 300 years of contact with European and African descent people, with at least 200 years of this on an intimate level, has changed the physical makeup of the people. Combine this with the long series of wars and then the subsequent Indian removals in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the only Indian population left in the Ohio Valley would be those who could either hide or in some way blend into the surrounding non-Native communities. This leaves little room for us to expect large numbers of people who “look Indian” based on the “usual” stereotyped criteria in America for Indians. On the west coast this situation of mixing is moderated by significant numbers of Asian and Mexican people intermarrying with Indians, which may change the culture and socialization away from Native American, but allows for an appearance of “Indian”. In the Ohio Valley however, many people that I met labeled others as either “White” or “Black” Indians. However, when I interviewed members of either group that might have “Caucasian” or “African” stereotyped characteristics they defined themselves by tribe, and sometimes clan, rather than by race.

The historic communities that have been recorded in the literature were covered by the term “triracial (Indian-White-Black) isolates” in the eastern United States during the most of the twentieth century. These groups are described in Brewton Berry's *Almost White*, Macmillan, 1963 and several issues of the *American Anthropologist* in the 1970s. Beale (1972) pointed out that many of the “isolate” groups have started to disappear because of less separation and rural populations decreasing in size. They had only appeared, he felt, after the Revolutionary war and were then discriminated against and segregated and thought of as inbred, drunk and violent. In conversation with people in the Ohio Valley some referred to themselves as having Melungeon, a “triracial

Appalachian isolate,” background with a variety of mixtures, but all emphasized in my research, their American Indian connections. As John S. Kessler and Donald B. Ball (2001) point out the one race stereotype of the white, “one hundred percent American” sometimes referred to as a “hillbilly” is far from reality in “the mountains of eastern Kentucky” and “the hills of southern Ohio”. The authors describe the development of mixed racial multiethnic communities throughout the Ohio Valley region. Frazier (2001), citing Kessler and Ball, gives a description of the variety of communities in Ohio:

Indian folk communities in the southern Ohio area (moving from west to east); Darke County Mestizos ... in Darke County, Ohio, and adjacent Randolph County, Indiana; the Occaneechi of Greene County; the Carmel Indians in Highland County; the Vinton County Indians in the county of the same name; the Saponi Nation of Ohio in Gallia County; and a number of relocated West Virginia Guineas heavily concentrated in Muskingum, Morgan, Washington, and Athens counties in the southeastern part of the state. The Remnant Shawnee are distributed throughout the state. North of Cincinnati in Harveysburg, Warren County, in 1831, Quakers started a school for a mixed community of Native, African and European Americans. ... Indian folk communities consisted of migrants from the hill country of Kentucky and West Virginia, including a group in Highland County called the “Carmel Indians” who were named after the town, Carmel, Ohio. They were the earliest settlers in that region ... in the 1790s (Frazier 2001:pdf).

One group of mixed people had connections with people between Magoffin County, Kentucky and Highland County, Ohio from the 1700s and are still present but mostly invisible to the dominant society. This group had been given specific names such as “Carmel Melungeons”, “Carmel Indians” or “Carmelites” and often live in rural poverty.

There are several interpretations of the “tribal” origins of these people:

The Wyandotte, Miami, Mingo, Delaware, and Shawnee Indians built shelters along the streams... Those who came were mostly tired of conflict, willing to hunt and fish and live at peace with the early settlers, most of whom arrived after the Revolution to take advantage of their war land grants... in the foothills of four hills nearby southwest of Carmel, the people you inquired about live in almost primitive style. They began to build their cabin homes in the hill country in the early 1800s. They are known here as

Carmelites or “Hill People”... In 1842 most of the Indians were relocated to Kansas and Oklahoma but a number remained...The Carmelites claim they are descendants of the Shawnee Indians who remained (Ayres, 2005).

Other authors have discussed communities such as Darke County, Ohio and Jefferson County, in southern Indiana. Darke County was noted by Frank Speck and other authors in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1950s Edward Price (1950, 1951, 1953) wrote several articles that focused on these communities. For Ohio he writes:

Ohio has a second small group living in the rich Corn Belt land of Darke County. Admittedly part Negro, members of this group are descended from ancestors who began settlement there by 1822. A number of families, all of whom came from the southeast, apparently found here an escape from the anomalous position of the free Negro in the slave states (Price 1953).

It is interesting that some parts of the Ohio Valley region are identified by separate authors as having Indigenous communities. Another author, emphasizing the continuing importance of acknowledging the existence of these communities, also gives a historic sketch of the mixed race community in Darke County, Ohio in an educational “study guide” written for the education department in Cincinnati:

This Ohio settlement had been founded by free people of Indian, white and black forebears from North Carolina... Although this community had been a station on the Under-ground Railroad, its members did not carry any escaped black slaves. In the 1930s, all sixty families owned land, lived in comfortable rural homes and valued education and religion. Some members were known to have passed into the “white world” and others became distinguished Black leaders in the community (Frazier, 2001).

These groups of people maintained themselves throughout the south because of discrimination. The “one drop rule” which required the separation of the races if any amount of African blood was known to exist in a family left many people separated even if they appeared to be white. Some of the families I spoke with made it clear that many families were called “hillbillies” because they chose to live separate and did see

themselves as different but that those that use this term saw themselves as “White”. I was told by a few people, that had Native background, that they were one of only a very few families that were mixed “Indian” and that this set them apart. One man specifically talked about the need to fight as a kid. The Indian identity was maintained, in this case in rural Kentucky, through a large extended family, which seemed to feel and act on closeness to each other, not like the surrounding “White” community:

The Kentucky Mountains has a small mixed-blood population considered to be of Indian mixture ... have all been associated with Melungeons in the records, though some of the early Magoffin County mixed-bloods were themselves born in Virginia and North Carolina. A colony of the Magoffin County group planted itself near Carmel, Ohio, about the time of the Civil War. At the very edge of the Appalachians, they built their shacks in the hills where they obtained shelter, wood, game, and ginseng, providing farm labor at times on the more fertile plains (Price 1953).

The main point of these references is to illustrate that the new identifications of the mixed race peoples of the Ohio Valley are supported through 3<sup>rd</sup> party historical documentation. How this identity is performed in today’s world is discussed in the following chapters.

Many of those with a primarily European and Indian mixture have an additional option historically - that of the Métis. The Métis are officially included as one of the Aboriginal groups of Canada in the Canadian constitution, but are mainly unknown in the US. At one 2004 powwow in Southern Indiana I got this explanation of how the Ohio Valley is also “Métis country”:

Métis man - Métis is starting to grow down here people are coming back. The Métis people have been here, especially here in Indiana, we had actually been among the seven tribes that signed the treaties in Indiana, so the Métis have been always been here. So, we got quite a few here.

Author -- Are you connected with the Ontario Métis? In Canada they are defining Métis in a limited way to the Red River and prairies.

MM -- Well there are two groups of Métis, there the Ontario Métis Nation is part of the National Métis Nation. There are a couple of different groups.

A - Could you tell me about the Métis community here?

MM [laughing with several others] - That's a loaded question! The Métis in the US is quite a bit different than the Métis in Canada. In Canada the Métis are recognized, not the same as Indian status but they have rights such as hunting and fishing. Métis in the US do not have recognition. We only have recognition through the Jay treaty when we are part of a Métis organization out of Canada. A big part of it is that the Métis are a part of this US land.

The information given above is corroborated by a number of sources. Richard Kees (1993) describes the collective cultural identity of the Métis as developing historically in both Canada and the United States from the 17<sup>th</sup> century forward. The Métis, were established in the 1700s "throughout the *Pays d'en Haut*, a region consisting of all Native held lands to the west and southwest" of the Saint Lawrence River. This area included the Ohio River Valley (pp. 284-5). The importance of the Métis to the Miami people of the Ohio Valley has been noted (Rafert 1996). Despite this long history, the people in the Ohio Valley are slow to accept the Métis identity. Many would rather identify with a more recognizable Indian Nation as the rest of my interview pointed out:

A -- Well, how is it being received? How do you find people? To actually say yes I'm Métis.

MM -- It's a mixture of reactions. A lot of it is an uneducated situation. A lot of the tribes down here are having the same reaction as the tribes up north had in the 60s and 70s when the Métis were starting to grow up in Canada. Mainly down here we were called the "Free French" or "half breeds" but the tribes down here are starting to acknowledge that we have always been here. Many people are starting to understand that because of the blood quotient problem in the states that you can't get your card even if you have blood. I have three kids who can't get their card and all three are three-quarter blood but the reason is they come from five different reserves so it isn't enough. Down here the Métis are the Non-status Indians.

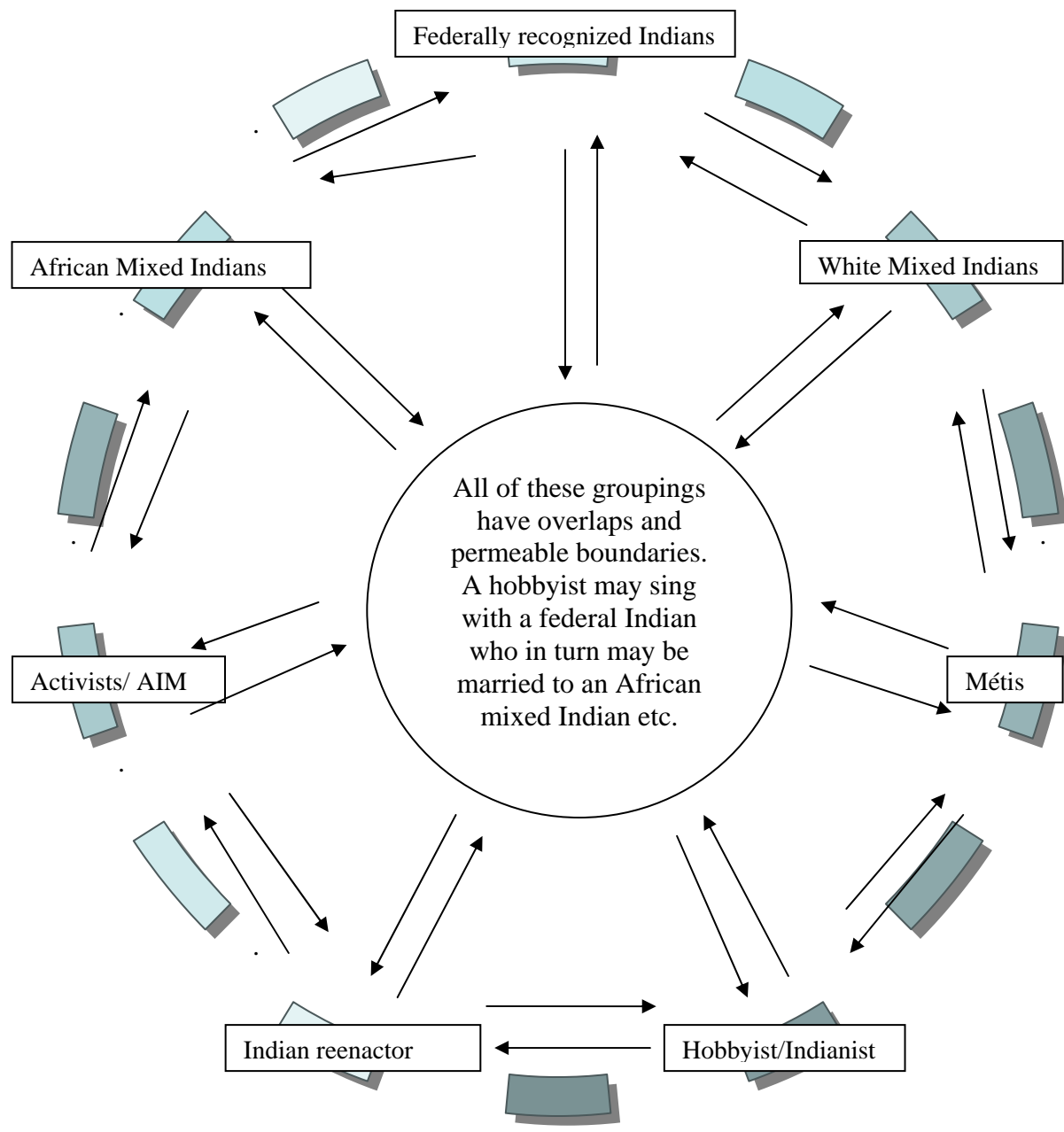
A -- What about this Saponi and others that have state recognition, but not federal, would you put them into the Métis definition?

MM -- Some of them are and some of them aren't. Some have chosen to be, the main difference is that the people who do this gathering, are not looking for federal recognition. We are looking for [being]... acknowledged that we are here and leave us alone to let us practice our beliefs in ceremonies. We don't need the government to tell us who we are and who is or who isn't

a Métis. We also don't need them to tell us what is or isn't appropriate in our ceremonies. Our ceremonies belong to us. (Interview Indiana 2004).

From the conversation above it is also clear that there are a number of ways of being Indian in the Ohio Valley. What it means to call oneself “Native” will depend on the connection the person feels with the place they live. For those moved to the region working and living in the Midwest, Indianness will be tied to a home reserve or reservation elsewhere. For those who have lived many generations in the Ohio Valley, identity is more location focused. Local Native identification is tied directly to where they are from, based on their family oral tradition, and therefore they feel have the option to do Indian cultural activities if they want to. Given the demographics of well over 100,000 people reporting being Indian in the Ohio Valley region, it quickly becomes clear that even with all the cultural events that are occurring, only a small percentage of American Indian identified people are participants at cultural events. But for those that do choose to be active participants, powwows and “ceremonies” are important.

All the groups of people that are described in Chapter 2 interact. There are no “natural” separations or boundaries. This interaction is demonstrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. The Ohio Valley Native identity is interactive in potential. How this plays out in actual discourse is described in other chapters.**

### **CHAPTER 3: PERFORMANCE OF INDIGENOUS IDENTITY**

In this chapter I will discuss the two general types of performance of Native identity in the Ohio Valley. One is for the general public the other is private and used in a way to help the participants perform for themselves, relatives and friends. In the first group are the public powwows and reenactments. The second is divided into ceremonial, healing and social events. However, I did encounter powwows and reenactments that were solely for the participants. Also, included in these more private events I have included language learning. The purpose of all of these is to perform ethnic identity, but the audience, purpose and focus vary. There is also often a blurring and overlapping of these events. For example at one public powwow in Bedford, Indiana I observed the usual sets of dancing and singing that would be found at any powwow I have visited in North America, which is a public display of contemporary culture. But there were also flintknappers demonstrating “pre-contact” technology to foreground the past indigenous connection and a demonstration by one trader of tomahawk throwing of the frontier. Later I found that short lessons in the Anishnabe language for people who identified as Métis were available. Here also I was able to get information and invitations to more private social and cultural events not advertised to the public. The descriptions that follow are to provide a general framing of types, but it is important to keep in mind that, for the Ohio Valley, the boundaries between these “types” are both permeable and fluctuating.

#### **Powwows as Public performance:**

Over the past forty years there have been a growing number of publications on powwows showing an increase in both popular and academic interest (Ancona 1993;



Axtmann 1999; Braine 1995; Browner 2002; Compisi 1995; Contreras and Bernstein 1996; Corrigan 1970; Cronk et al. 1987; Dyck 1979, 1983; Gilbert 1991; Horse Capture 1989; Kracht 1994; Krouse 1991; Laudin 1973; MacDowell 1997; Moore 1993; Neel 1996, 1997; Rynkiewich 1980; Sanchez 1995; Toelken 1991; Whitehorse 1988; Young 1981). There are different origin stories to explain where powwows began. The most likely scenario I have been able to put together is a combination of several war dance societies in the Northern and Southern Plains and the Great Lakes area who started performing at July 4th and other times in the reservation period around 1900. Abe Conklin, a well known Ponca “Straight” dancer told me in 1973 that then powwows “started in White Horse Oklahoma and were called picnics, we then started up the war dance society at them” (see also: Conklin 1994). I followed this version until I heard and read about many more. It is likely that the powwow followed the spread of the “big drum” tradition which began as a medicine society in the Great Lakes area and then spread to the plains people, also around the beginning of the 20th century (Vennum 1982). There is also a clear connection between the performances of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Shows and the development of powwow dancing, especially as a semi-secular event where the public is welcome. In chapter one I made the point that for some Indian descent families living in the Ohio Valley during this time period the shows gave an opportunity for a rekindling of interest in being Indian. I contacted the Buffalo Bill Wild West museum archives in Cody Wyoming. They sent me a list showing that the performances traveled on a regular schedule, town to town, each summer for many years. This included large encampments of Sioux and other western Indian performers which

and these provided access to Ohio Valley Natives who then could also work in these shows.

I have been going to powwows since the early 1960s and have been amazed at how invisible, to many in the Euro-centric community, this social and cultural event is. It is a very “normal” part of American Indian community life. Tara Browner, a Native academic who recently wrote a book on powwows, *Heartbeat of the People* describes her requirement for students:

I always start the unit on intertribal pow-wows by having the students memorize the following phrase: “A pow-wow is an event where American Indians of all nations come together to celebrate their culture through the medium of music and dance.” In every mid-term examination that same definition echoes back at me in scores of essays. An annual on-campus pow-wow provides an easy field trip for my class, complete with live music, dance, high-calorie food, and shopping opportunities. As an added bonus, students can take photographs, purchase recordings, and talk to dancers, musicians, vendors, and other spectators (Browner 2002:1).

Many colleges and universities in the region, like Ohio State and Indiana University, now have annual or even more frequent powwows. I have observed many students at these “doing research” and they are common enough that students are becoming part of the performance. Other powwows in the Ohio Valley are especially common in the summer months. For example, on any given weekend I needed to choose which of 2 to 6 powwows I might attend. Often distance was a factor, but many powwow participants travel in a circuit that involves hours or days of travel. It seems that traveling in a circuit, like that mentioned for the “Tribe of Ben Ishmael”, in chapter 2, continues in powwows today. Browner goes on to describe generally true characteristics of powwows:

Intertribal pow-wows are the most widespread venues for traditional Indian music and dance in North America. They are held each weekend within a reasonable driving distance (approximately three hours) of every populated area in the United States and Canada. The events can draw dancers and

Drum groups from hundreds of miles away, as well as numerous Indian and non-Indian traders and spectators. For many urban Native families, they provide a community gathering place where friends and relatives come together on weekends for those rare occasions when other Indians constitute a majority and are able to interact in a culturally safe space (2002:2).

There are several versions of the history and purpose of powwows in the Ohio Valley that I discovered during my field work. One was that the urban centers serving American Indians needed an environment to make people feel at home and gather together as Indian people. In addition to a chance to display culture, there are social purposes and healing purposes for some participants. An example of this is some participants emphasize personal healing and health at a “sobriety powwow”, and the importance of a regular schedule of powwows can be heard in the following discussion I had at a rare winter powwow (2004) in Ohio:

Author -- Out west there a lot of sobriety powwows.

AIM Man -- We used to have one out here for New Year's Eve, but this year we lost a lot of our funding so this year we didn't. [This is] The first time in 10 years we didn't have a sobriety powwow, that's why everybody came to this, because it's a big dry spell between the fall powwows and the spring powwows. And it was always the sobriety powwows that everybody went to. This one here, everybody said “all right we got a powwow!” That's why we got a good crowd here today.

A -- I'd like to see a lot of powwows.

AM -- There are a lot every June, Miami Valley and the Blue Jacket theater is one of the best, very good powwows in the Ohio area. It draws a lot from at least five states around here. A lot of good dancers, a lot of good drums. They also have a spring one in Columbus and the fall Labor Day and Memorial Day weekends. And we have a lot of the small powwows around. The main ones are put on by the larger groups, Miami Valley and out of Columbus.

One hobbyist said he knew that both Boy Scouts and hobbyists had been active in the Ohio Valley for “at least forty years” and he thought “probably much longer”. He pointed out that there were no active Indian powwows “years ago” as most of the Indians that are now in the Ohio Valley are “either ones who moved in” or just started to openly

identify as American Indian. He made it clear that having “some Indian ancestor does not mean you know anything about powwows or Indian culture, just look at how some of the ‘new found’ Indians dress at powwows!” This point reinforces the literature that the powwow identity has been building in the Ohio Valley for about 50 years, but this has been a mix of hobbyist and urban Indian versions removed and peripheral to the reservation centers of powwow development. The idea of “new found” Indians is not accurate, many people have known of their Native ancestral connections but have not expressed them in a way that many scholars, working with western “real Indian” and their powwows, have been able to recognize as “real Indian”. The western powwow, as it now exists, has a development tied to federal Indian reservations and the restrictions placed on them by the federal government, in the first part of the reservation period, to not display Native dances unless they were connected to patriotic American celebrations such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Also, missionaries and organized Christian churches wanted to be sure there were restrictions on expression that was “too Indian” and a more secular type of powwow expression developed. Since there were no federal agents or missionaries to the “non existent” Indians of the Ohio Valley, there is an entirely different set of cultural identifications and assumptions about what is Native in the Ohio Valley.

The performance and educative aspects of some powwows can be seen in the literature distributed. This is based on the norms of powwow performance from western parts of the US, but they have, through hobbyists and other cultural brokers in the Midwest, been made available as the standard for powwow performance east of the Mississippi. For example, “powwow etiquette” is described in detail at public powwows such as the Andersontown Indiana Powwow (Official Program 2004). In this same

powwow flyer there is a description of the purpose of the events. It has a clear “show like” feel to the wording and this powwow was one geared to a general public audience:

It is with great pride that we welcome you to the inaugural Andersontown Powwow and Indian Market ... “The powerful rhythmic beat of Indian drums will be echo throughout Athletic Park on the banks of the White River, near the original settlement of Chief Anderson. The Powwow will feature activities for families to enjoy together and experience first-hand Naive American culture. Five of Chief Anderson’s descendants are scheduled to be on hand for storytelling, culture presentations and dance exhibitions. Visitors will have the chance to share and experience Native American art, culture, dancing, music and storytelling. The Indian Market will feature the sale of authentic, handmade Native American Art including jewelry, pottery, sculptures, paintings, baskets, textiles and more. Committee volunteers have been working for more than a year in planning the event with many local businesses providing support. ...” (Official Program 2004).

Other powwows, including both some American Indian run and most hobbyist powwows are for the participants themselves rather than an outside audience. The 1960s did have active hobbyist powwows in Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. I remember attending one of these in Peoria, Illinois in 1975 and it was clear that there were many Midwestern hobbyist organizations that had been having powwows nearby for many years. The historical impact of non-Native hobbyists in bringing western style powwows east of the Mississippi needs to be examined. As Powers pointed out, the power of the powwow performance knows no racial boundaries:

Once the hobbyist attends a powwow, hears the Indian drum, and sees the rest of the people dancing, chances are - whether he is a professor of anthropology or a Cub Scout - that he'll have a hard time sitting on the sidelines. Sooner or later, he'll be in the dance arena stomping it up with the rest (Powers 1966).

Some authors have described Indian hobbyists in such a way that they come across as mere imitators of, especially, Plains Indian culture, and often poor ones at that. It does seem that hobbyists have played a role in disseminating Western Indian culture to

Indigenous people east of the Mississippi. It is clear, according to Powers again, that hobbyist powwows included Indians:

The hard core of the hobby is “the group,” sometimes called a dance club or dance team. These groups are scattered across the country, but usually band together under such unusual names as Eastern States Powwow Association, The Monroe Pow-wow Committee, or the New Jersey Homecoming Powwow Association, for the purpose of putting on Indian-style powwows to which all groups in the region are invited. At these powwows, hundreds of non-Indians (although nowadays many Indians also attend) pack their cars and trailers with camping gear and costumes and spend a weekend dancing Indian. Most of the powwow associations hire Indians to provide the singing (Powers 1966:15).

Alternately, some people I interviewed said that it was Indian people “from the Northern reservations” that brought powwows to the Ohio Valley. If this is true, there is a separation between Indian powwows in the Ohio Valley existing solely with influence from the Great Lakes communities. Another author described the beginning of powwows being the Indian center in Columbus Ohio in 1990 (Sanchez 1995). This clearly points to an urban Indian center perspective, which represents the perspective of the federal Indians that have moved to Ohio from reservation communities as described in Chapter 2. There were, according to some of my elder informants, powwows in Ohio long before the 1980s. One Ohio Valley Shawnee elder told me the following:

Author -- You mentioned that you knew of powwows a long time ago. When was it?

Shawnee Elder -- I come up here in '69. I was born in West Virginia... and then we come into Ohio, where I lived as a kid and then back up here, with relatives and I ended up working up here... The only powwow going on then, locally, was one called Cedars. And that would be Dick Berry, ran that powwow, and he was a part-blood. And people from out west come out, the Sauk & Fox, and all the western folks come back, and a lot of Shawnee people come back, because this was home and... They'd make an excuse to come back every year, to the powwow and ...they'd visit all their relatives.

A -- So what's the earliest powwow you remember here in Ohio going to?

SE -- Oh well when I came [in 1969]. And Dick had been 25 years before that puttin' one on. So he'd been puttin' em ...on a long time (Interview August 2005)

It seems clear that there were powwows going on for at least 50 years based on the memories of elders in the Ohio Valley. So why is there a perception among some that it is a more recent phenomenon? The elder goes on with what might be part of the answer:

The Indian centers, they come late after we have already done all this stuff. They were belligerent; they weren't very nice to us, really. They say, "All my relation" but your not necessarily their relation. And I don't say this on the bad side, because they were good to me, and they still are and [names of several prominent families] are friends of mine ... And we have Indian centers all over all over the state. But we were here before they were. And we kinda let them know that and they were really upset about it. They said "there's no Indians in Ohio". Well I have news for them, there was Indians in Ohio (Interview in field notes August 2005).

Powwows, therefore, have lately become associated with "western" and "federally recognized" Indian people. This has become more and more a characteristic of participation over time, due to restrictions put on performance and attendance through the enforcement of laws such as the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-644) which require membership in a state or federally recognized tribe in order to represent what a person makes as either Native American or American Indian. (1) The impact of these changes on the emerging Native culture of Ohio Valley Natives, most of whom are not "recognized" federally, will be pointed out in the next sections and chapters. A main feature of the impact is related to recruitment. Reenacting is friendlier to Ohio Valley Native people, who are not "card carrying" members of recognized tribes, than are powwows today at which there are many reminders of not being as "real Indian" as federally recognized participants. Reenacting is, therefore, performance at a place that they can feel they are a full participant, with equal rights to other Natives and welcome.

### **Recruitment into powwows:**

Powwows attract and recruit a variety of people. I noticed at several powwows the presence of Boy Scouts, in uniform, serving as volunteers conducting traffic or providing other services. I was told by several participants including both non-Indian hobbyists and self identified Indians that their original introduction to powwows was through scouting. Other participants came in because they saw flyers advertising the powwow and wanted to learn more. Others came to powwows through word of mouth or invitations from friends and relatives.

One group that seems to be especially “recruited” to attend Ohio Valley powwows are those that have connections to federally recognized tribes. In some cases both urban Indian centers or University Native American programs sponsor powwows and encourage the membership to attend and are invited to be active in any way possible. The powwow in Anderson, Indiana specifically imported Delaware tribal members from Oklahoma to help commemorate the founding of the city by Delaware Chief Anderson. The Delaware were removed to Oklahoma in 1819 where some of Chief Anderson's decedents live today. Those visiting at this powwow are direct descendents of this Chief Anderson (Official Program 2004).

Several people I interviewed represent a group of people that travel the powwow circuit full time. They are retired or semi-retired. I met this one woman at an outdoor powwow in Indiana in 2004:

Elder woman -- When I worked I just kept quiet about being Indian, it wasn't popular around here.

Author -- But you do a lot of powwows now?



EW -- Yes, we do almost 21 a season. Now that we're retired this is a full-time living for us. I was glad to leave work and go into the powwows. We sell internet mail order also.

I found this theme repeated a number of times. I met younger traders too, but most of them had full-time jobs and only follow the circuit on specific weekends and need to stay closer to home base. I did meet a Micmac friend at a powwow in Kentucky that I have known for twenty years who is not retirement age. He says he has been a full-time trader based in New Hampshire but needs to travel to some of the big southern and Midwest powwows "to make it". He was heading to a "big one" in Nashville, Tennessee. He also had an internet site. Another example of a weekend trader adds the importance of freedom to see family as motivation for attending regular powwows:

Woman Vendor -- I'm not making much money at powwows here. Well they certainly don't publicize very well.

Customer -- I used to go to your shop, that's how I got to know you. Now you only sells at powwows?

WV -- We closed the shop to do the powwow shows and spend more time with the grandkids. (Note- combo of family and 'show' with business themes. In this booth were lots of dream catchers and a few books)

Man Vendor -- Yeah, we had to shut the shop down it was 12 hour day seven days a week, this is just weekends. This is the first powwow starting the year and we go to a lot.

I found several versions of the importance and meaning of powwows for participants in my interviews. As shown in the following discourse, the powwow has a complex mix of economic and social roles. It is also an important place for maintaining identity and recruiting people to a Native, in this case a combination of Métis and Indian, identity:

Author: [To a powwow vender "trader" with a sign "Métis Nation" on his booth] Are you Métis?

Métis Trader: Yeah we have a Métis sign out front.

A -- what do you sell?

MT -- Different people sell different things for different reasons... from as far away as Georgia. The powwows have a history that is over 70 years old. It's a way for us to get together and carry out our traditions and teach our

children, to show our regalia and tell our stories. It's also to let people know that we are still here. We are still here and we're not going away.

A -- so did you grow up with the powwows yourself?

MT -- Yes, I grew up on reserve [Wisconsin] until I was 18. Since I left the reserve, powwow has been a way to get back to my people. When I retire, I'll go to the reserve, but now, it is a way to be with the people.

The importance of powwows for networking, in order to learn about Western Indian culture was described to me by an Ohio Valley Native elder. This, he pointed out has been going on for many years and helped with his sense of Indian identity. Also, it was the main place for him to perform culturally as an Indian through singing and dance:

Elder man: When I come [many years ago] ...at the powwow, I met all these Indians from out west, and I tol' them my story and they just said, "Come on in". And I went with them and they started teaching me the Indian ways. And then I went with the Lakota, here, who took me under their wing and taught me all I know, including sweat lodges, pipes and all Lakota ways.

An important point to note here is the emphasis on Lakota and other western Indian ways being learned from people visiting. Recently there has been a revival of interest in returning to "old ways" of the Ohio Valley. It is not as easy to do this, since there are no living representatives of the past cultures. This will be discussed more in other chapters.

### **Modes of engagement combining powwows and reenactments**

The degree to which people commit to a powwow, reenactment or "traditional Native" lifestyle varies. For some people it is a way of life involving employment, home and daily commitments. Others sometime humorously referred to as "weekend warriors" spend some weekends or occasional spare time at powwows or other events but rarely involve all their family and are mostly disconnected when not at an event. The commitments can vary for federal Indian, non-Indian and Ohio Natives, each has members with varying levels of commitment to performing or demonstrating the culture.

Reginald and Gladys Laubin are examples of performers who focused on remaining accurate in representation to the past and made it a way of daily life. They spent years with the “old time” Lakota, Crow, Blackfoot and other Plains Peoples. (2)

Indianists and Indian hobbyists try to make sure they accurately depict Indian culture. As one hobbyist elder told me “we are white people, so we don't have the right to invent, imitation is the best form of flattery, so that is how we show respect to the Indian people. You need to copy as closely and accurately as you can”. This imitation takes the form of “adopting” a culture and it is even better if it is one where families from that Nation adopt you in. Then it is expected that dance regalia and even ways of acting be as “Indian” as possible. Many adopt a contemporary culture and become singers or dancers in a certain tradition. For example, there is at least one hobbyist Southern Oklahoma drum in Nashville, Indiana. In 2001, the one year I visited with them, drum practices were held on an every other week basis. Some of the singers made regular trips to Oklahoma to learn both songs and drum protocol. Later, in Indiana, these same tapes are listened to frequently to become familiar with the western songs. This pattern of bringing songs from the west and learning them for performance in the east has been going on for several decades at least. I remember, in the early 1970s, knowing Western Indian singers at Indianist powwows New England. When a well known Lakota singer was asked how he felt about non-Indians adopting Lakota traditional old ways and learning songs, he said “some one has to keep the old ways alive and our people aren't doing it”. Since this period, I think there has been an increased interest for both Indians and non-Indians in “keeping the old ways alive”.

Some hobbyists, in a similar fashion to reenactors, pick a past time period and try to stick accurately to that for their dance clothes and styles. This means spending time in museums and looking at old photos. It is important to use only certain types of beads. For example, if beads are used that are size 12 “greasy yellow”, “robin’s egg blue”, “Cheyenne green”, “egg shell white” and “old style white hearts” then it is clear you are accurate for the reservation period Northern Plains of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Also, it is important for the hobbyist to read accounts of the “old time” or conservative Indians of your adopted tribe. This attention to accuracy is very similar to that of the non-Native reenactors. It might even be considered the main characteristic of both types of non-Native performers of Native culture: an attention to historical (i.e., past time) detail.

It is important to distinguish between attention to details and the effort to be historically accurate. Both Indian and Non-Indians may be seen at powwows putting emphasis on learning about, or performing to the standards of either conservatives or traditionalists. The Laubins make distinctions between these two categories, reflecting on their contact with old people of the western plains born before the reservations:

The conservatives are the Indians who lived and retained the old culture. The traditionalists are the products of modern schooling who have not actually lived the old Indian way but are now aware of their heritage and are endeavoring to preserve it. A large group of non-Indian students of Indian lore also call themselves traditionalists (Laubin, 1977:77).

In the Ohio Valley today, I have heard people describe themselves as “traditionalists” and fit the later definition of the Laubins. However, it is interesting that many of the Ohio Valley Natives are attempting to go “back in time”, with the help of reenacting and “living history” in an attempt to become more like the Laubins’ “conservatives”.

The degree to which various individuals participate in powwows varies. In an interview I conducted with four members of one Ohio Valley Shawnee Tribe, for example, each one viewed powwow participation differently. One was a powwow organizer and singer on a Lakota “Northern Plains” style drum group. Another, is a woman dancer who dresses in an Oklahoma “Southern Plains” ribbon dresses. Neither of these two participate in reenactments and “living history”. Their expression of Native identity, outside of Shawnee ceremonies and tribal socials, is all powwow. Another person is interested in the past history of the Shawnee and is exclusively involved in historic reenactments, living history and local politics affecting state parks and the reburial or protection of Indian remains. The fourth person has “attended a few powwows” but found them to be “commercial and for selling to non-Natives”. She finds the “living history” her main setting for engaging an Native identity by connecting the “past to the present through places”. All of these four people felt that diversity of experience is part of the new reclamation of Native identity (field notes 2003 to 2005).

### **Reenactments/living history**

The second major way to express Native identity in the Ohio Valley is through “living history” and reenactments. There are various forms that are performed through some type of “reenactment” that I observed in the Ohio Valley. As described in Chapter One, what is reenacted or “recreated” is a period of time and sometimes an event happening in a place. There is a similarity here between all the non-Native and some Native forms of expressing what an “Indian” is through performance. Hobbyists act on more options even at a single gathering. Some may copy a period of Indian history or may choose to reproduce a current event such as a western Plains style powwow in

present time, both old time and new are okay at a hobbyist powwow. The hobbyist is performing the “other” in time, the 19<sup>th</sup> century or reservation period, and in space, Indian styles from “traditional areas”, or a combination of both space and time as in “I’m wear a traditional northern outfit of a type worn early in the 1900s on reservations that were Lakota” (description a hobbyist gave me of his dance clothes).

Reenactors are similar to hobbyists but are focused around both actual historical events and places in the Ohio Valley. There are a number of authors who specifically write for people wanting to dress accurately. One of these, Sheryl Hartman (2000), lives in southern Indiana. She does school programs and also sponsors reenactment and living history events on her land. Other authors of books have focused on reenacting topics ranging from clothing (Hartman 2000) to the tanning of deer skins (Gibby 2001). Bob Gutierrez (1999) has a book giving instructions on “The Art of Simulating Eagle Feathers” which is needed for the many people with no federal recognition, as possession of eagle feathers is restricted only to “federal Indians”. Other books focusing on specific crafts such as beadwork (Heinbuch 1992, Smith 1983) and porcupine quillwork (Heinbuch 1990, Orchard 1982) silver work, also known as “trade silver” (Beauchamp 1976, Fredrickson and Gibb 1980, Hamilton 1995), arrow making (Wallentine 1987) and “black powder” or muzzle loading guns (Bridges 1985) are also available.

There is the problem of a gap in time that is impossible to erase in attempting to find the “actual” past through books or any other source. What actually is found is a “restored behavior” as described by Richard Schechner (1981). From this perspective people may be described in historical novels, “based” on “fact”, paintings done by avid reenactors, and movies made “based on fact” but the actual recreation is as much a part of

the imagination of the actor as a true recreation, which is never really possible.

Reenactors also do research on their own or with the help of “experts” like those attending conferences, writing books and performing as reenactment “elders” teaching others at their homes or the larger “living history” and reenactment events.

Reenacting is often associated with the periods of war time. Any basic web search will give numerous websites for the French and Indian War, American Revolutionary War, and the American Civil War. Also, reenactors imitate warriors and “common people” from many other time periods and places, such as medieval Europe. I was told there is a distinction between the form of historical reenactments for people who take the “hobby” as a lifestyle and those who just do it for “fun”. It seems that for people that identify as Indian, who are of Indian descent, reenacting as a person from a certain period and tribe takes on additional meaning and intensity. As one man told me, he “becomes” his Mingo ancestor: “I don't have any other way to know him, all my grandmother told me was I had a great great something grandpa that was a warrior in one of the wars, this (reenacting an 18th century Mingo warrior) is my way of getting into who he was” (interview Kentucky 2003). Another person expressed it in a similar way:

Through searching records I found my ancestor married a Shawnee woman and then didn't go on the removals, so I reenact as a Shawnee woman. It is interesting, I feel more myself when I'm dressed 19th century and cooking over an open fire than I do in my modern kitchen (field notes from Southern Ohio in 2005).

There are various connotations and emphasis attached to the different terms for what people call the things they do in restoring the past. For example the concept of “rendezvous” is very different than that of “reenacting” for many Ohio Valley cultural participants. I used the term “rendezvous” and “rendezvouer”, which I knew from living

in the western U.S. where hobbyists and reenactors are few. In western North America people who are “doing primitive living” events are often reenacting “mountain men” or “buckskinning” at rendezvous (Scurlock 1983). The mistake is fairly easy for someone who moves cross country a lot, the time period is the main difference, those reenacting in the Western states tend to index more recent times of the historic “mountain men”. Tara Browner mentions both mountain men and rendezvous in her book on powwows:

My source of information on the American Mountain Man Society is my cousin ... an avid participant in the society for decades. ... any item that did not exist, or was not used as trade goods, before 1840 is prohibited at rendezvous. That does not mean that all gear is antique, but rather that it must be an honest facsimile. For example, smaller, “seed” beads are not allowed on clothing because they were not traded to tribes until the late 1850s. Only pony beads (larger than size 10) can be used. (2002:149).

I was told by an Ohio based Indian reenactor that: “I find it offensive for you to keep using the term ‘rendezvous’ for what we take very seriously. We are trying to be as Indian as we can; a rendezvous is just an excuse for a drunken party” (interview in field notes Ohio 2003). It seems the reenactment of rendezvous includes some of the “fire water” and “hairy men” stereotype also. Clearly there is a diversity of types within the reenacting community, and their accompanying meanings. I was told, repeatedly that Indian reenactors were trying to do “living history” which was real to them, which is what the word “living” is meant to imply. For some Ohio Valley Natives, the past in the Ohio Valley, before the removals, is the index to Native culture, “history” is what needs to be made living again.

The criticism of reenactment and “living history” often is based on its lack of relationship or relevance to today’s American Indian people. American Indians in the Ohio Valley are thought of, by many people I have spoken with, in a way that would fit a



more “full-blood” Indian person from a federally recognized reservation stereotype. The Ohio Valley Native person, being racially mixed and “undocumented”, is not considered in this definition. Complicating this further is the lack of socialization and culture that is accepted as “real” Indian. It is at performance events, such as powwows, in contrast to living history events, that socialization to “American Indian” rather than “Ohio Native” ways takes place:

The many American Indian nations that participate in powwows have developed a complex code for dealing with cultural differences and potential points of conflict, a code built on respect. It is assumed that powwow visitors honor this code as well, but since some visitors come with the same view of participation as they would hold when visiting a “living history museum” or a “re-enactment,” the contextual information in the program and the powwow etiquette section specifically reinforce those considerations. While American Indians do expect visitors to be respectful, they recognize that most visitors know little or nothing about the event they are attending and the existence of ...Indians today (Sanchez 2001:14).

Ohio Valley Natives I spoke with, unlike non-Native hobbyists, often saw western “reservation” Indians as having little relevance as teachers or to be imitated since, as one Ohio Valley Native elder said to me in 2003:

They [the Indian people who left the Ohio Valley in the 1800s] lost touch with the land here, this place and its spirits, even if their ancestors lived here 200 years ago, their ways are Plains Indian now and not from here anymore. They may be recognized by the US government as Indians originally from here, but that has no relationship to the land and culture here, maybe that is why they changed to Plains Indian ways (field notes Ohio, July 2003).

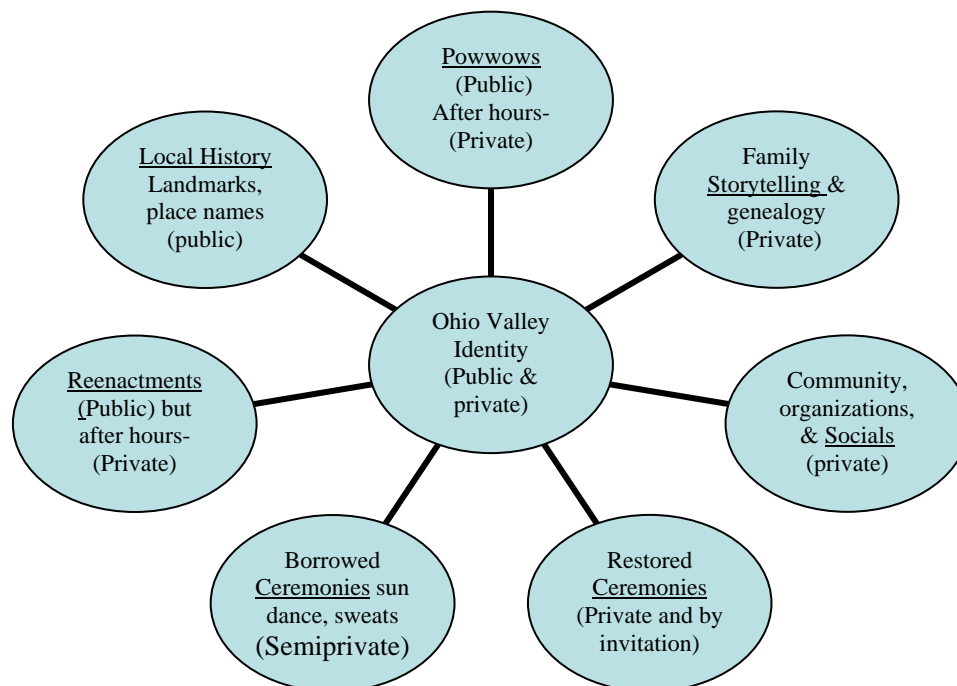
For people who are more interested in “bringing the past to the present”, or learning about the past to inform the present ways of being an Ohio Valley Native person, “living history” becomes very powerful in its possibilities. The idea that “everything” can be “brought back” is not seen as the goal by most people I talked with. Generally, there is an understanding that living history projects, like the one described for “Plimoth [sic]

Plantation” (Schechner 1985:81) is a “re-creation” and not a “restoration” as no buildings or other items survive, except for a few poorly labeled artifacts often in foreign museums. The participation in living history, was described to me in an interview with an Indiana Shawnee man, as attempts to find what “was put away years ago” and to “get as close as possible to were we had to stop showing our culture openly” (fields notes August 2003). He went on to say, “living close to the land, where the ancestors did, may help me understand what it was for them, then we can go forward from there.” Several people expressed to me that there is a great interest in bringing the past into the present in order to continue Native Ohio “presence” into the future through the Native Ohio Valley version of living history. Perhaps, this is in order to bring more closure or healing from the genocide and “removals” that occurred in the Ohio Valley that have not had other forms of resolution. One Ohio Valley Native elder said to me that: “It is to find some healing or closure or resolution to the past pain and loss on the Native side of my family that I am involved with the [name of a tribe]”. Multigenerational healing may be another purpose served by the attempts at the restoration of the culture and languages of the indigenous peoples of the Ohio Valley. For the “mixed bloods” who “stayed behind” there has been no opportunity to openly acknowledge a shared ancestral experience or join together as Native Ohio peoples until the last few decades.

### **“Invitation Only” and non-public events**

As pointed out in the last section, powwows and reenactments both offer the opportunity to signify identity, but what ties many Ohio Valley Natives together is participation in non-public “tribal” events. At powwows and reenactments the tribal and linguistic identity of community participants is mixed and often includes non-indigenous

members as well. There are settings that are more private and open only to members of the various tribal or pan-indigenous healing and recovery communities. The interaction between the more public and private types of events can be shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Many events, a mix of public and private, contribute to identity as realized through performance. Not everyone participates in all of these, they are chosen by the type of performance a persons group engages in most. But some participants engage in more of these than others**

### Ceremonial events

Some events are described by participants as an attempt to bring back the ceremonial cycles of the various First Nations. I specifically heard of this from members of the Miami, Cherokee, Shawnee and Mingo communities in the Ohio Valley. Also, some Lakota ceremonies are held. However, sometimes these are controversial, with the

request by a few Lakota people and others, that only “authorized” sundances, and sweats be done. My experiences with the Lakota events in the Ohio Valley are limited to a few powwows and one sweat ceremony, but several people I spoke with, both Native and non-Native, reported regular participation at “Lakota” ceremonies in the region. A Sundance is held annually near Nashville, Indiana, but not being a Sundancer or a Lakota, and focused on the revival of Ohio Valley Native identity, I never attended. I did attend a sweat in Bloomington, Indiana which, as it turned out had several members who were Sundance regulars. I also met Ohio Valley Sundancers at several other events in all three states.

Despite my own reluctance to attend the Sundance I found that many of the Ohio Valley Natives who are active in Native spirituality do participate in the Sundance, especially the one held in Indiana. The Lakota influence, including the spiritual ceremonies mentioned here have been introduced from the Plains states mainly since the 1970s. Some of these, including sweat lodges and pipe ceremonies, were traditionally done in the east, but the Sundance was a Plains specific ceremony. Recently, Arvol Looking Horse, keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe of the Lakota, ordered a stop to all non-Natives using Lakota ceremonies, but allows other Native Americans to continue. Part of the rationale is that only federally recognized Native Americans in the U.S. have access to eagle feathers. It is interesting that this reasoning would not apply to Canada, as possession of eagle feathers is not restricted to federally recognized Indians as it is in the U.S. Despite this order, some eastern Sundances, like the one in Indiana continue. Many of participants are non-Native and the majority of Native participants are non-Lakota and non-federally recognized tribes. One of the spiritual leaders at this event,

according to a Sundancer I met in Indiana, is “Shawnee but adopted by the Lakota who gave him permission to do this Sundance in Indiana” (field notes August 2005).

There has been a great deal of controversy generated by the restriction of Sundancing to “card carrying” Indians. Some traditional Lakota, who have taken a stand to have a non-race based approach to the Sundance, use of Pipes and other Lakota ceremonies, have gone public with their concerns. One Ohio Valley Native directed me to several publicly available responses such as the following:

Mitakuye Oyasin! We say this all the time. But what does it really mean? Are some of us more related than others? After discussions and consultations since the Looking Horse Pipe Proclamation was issued, the tiospayes involved in our Sun Dance in the Black Hills feel they can not endorse the ethnic limitations placed on the use of the Sacred Pipe, as of March 9, 2003... Based as it is on race, we feel the Pipe Proclamation contains an unfortunate racial foundation, and we can not, in the spirit of these ancient prayers, endorse a racist approach. It appears to be an attempt at ethnic cleansing of the ways, and in effect, says, “This is just for us.” Not only does this approach run counter to the cultural value of generosity for which the people are known, it presents other complications regarding Hunka relatives, and non-Indian spouses married into the tribe. Based on the teachings we are following from our elders, we have difficulty thus endorsing the potential inhumanity and the heartbreak of exclusivity inherent in the idea behind the proclamation (Cook 2003).

Many unenrolled Native people in the Ohio Valley told me they have decided to follow their hearts and continue to use pipes and go to Lakota style ceremonies, “even though they don’t have the ability to prove they are American Indian”, which is what the Looking Horse Pipe Proclamation required (field notes August 2005). During my field trip in 2005, I had the opportunity to attend a Lakota style sweat ceremony in Indiana. The sweat I attended is associated with traditional healing and alcohol recovery. I was invited to the sweat from someone in the local Alcoholics Anonymous chapter. The sweat itself was run “Lakota style” although the sweat leader was Cherokee descent. The

only Indigenous language used in the ceremony was Lakota and this included only words that I could easily understand with my limited Lakota vocabulary. This use of Lakota is a common feature of many pan-Native ceremonial events I have participated in all over “Indian Country”. The sweat was a well run, good hot sweat, similar to those I find all across North America (3).

Interestingly, hobbyists and reenactors rarely participate in sweats or other ceremonies. The exception is those reenactors that report that they have Indian ancestry. The emphasis by non-Indian hobbyists often attempt to focus on the material culture as the only legitimate focus open to non-Indians. Since first meeting hobbyists in the late 1960s, one thing that that seems off limits is Indian religion. I remember being told that this was especially true for Lakota religion because there was so much interest in it, and powwow organizers wanted to keep things strictly secular. It was explained to me that religion was off limits for the hobbyists, but invited Indians attending hobbyist events, are certainly encouraged, especially elders from “out west”, to do a prayer or dedication whenever possible, such as before meals. Most of these that I observed were Christian prayers. As one hobbyist elder woman told me in the 1970s “imitation may be the best form of flattery, but this does not go as far as religion. Most of us [Euro-American] hobbyists have the Jewish or Christian religion already and we have no right, and it could be seen as rude to try to do Indian religion openly.” She did admit to me, however, that she herself had done sweats and other ceremonies when in private with adopted Indian family. Her main concern seemed to be possible criticism from Indian people whom she respected. For example, if a western Indian saw any young hobbyist, recently out of Boy Scouts, getting involved in religious activities, that are very personal to the Indian people,

this might be a cause for offense. The point here is that many of the hobbyists, while imitating western Indian culture, have expressed to me a great concern with showing respect to the people they copy. I was told, also, that this elder hobbyist, mentioned above, was asked to open with a prayer (Christian) at the hobbyist 2005 National powwow in Illinois, and that this was a very “moving experience for her and those others present”. Perhaps there are more commonalities between human participants at “Native” cultural events than can be explained solely by biology and material culture.

The ceremonial cycle of events for the Ohio Valley Native Nations, named previously, mostly center around recorded seasonal ceremonies. All of those I had described to me, have some form of Green Corn Dance. The Ohio Valley Shawnee communities add to this Bread Dances and in some cases some of the communities have Midwinter Ceremonies. There also has been a recent revival of women's “Moon lodges” and I have heard of at least one vision quest for a young man during my 2003 to 2005 fieldwork. Naming ceremonies and marriages at powwows and tribal events are fairly common in all these groups. The methods of performing the ceremonies appear to be a hybrid form of what people have seen at other Ohio Valley events and read from books. I found no one that claimed ceremonies were passed down intact, from the past, in their families. However, several people mentioned elements such as harvest festivals, which were passed down, and parts of family rituals that were “related to the old Indian ceremonies”. There were several individuals who, a few years ago, claimed inheritance of the masking society and other rituals. But most people I interviewed did not take these claims seriously. One group however, the United Remnant Band in Ohio, does have ceremonies that claim to have elements passed on to the community from various

sources, some spiritual and some from persons. This is described in detail in a recent book “The Shawnee: Kohkumthena's Grandchildren” by Dark Rain Thom (1994).

### Social events

Most communities that consider themselves “tribal” have their primary activities as social events rather than public performance events. These socials often combine potlucks, raffles, some Indian social dancing such as round dancing, and the sharing of craft work. I asked one Ohio Valley Native elder how you can tell the difference between a Native social and a non-Native one and was told “raffles combined with a potluck”. The importance of the raffles is due to the inability of the Ohio Valley Native groups to get money for land projects, language programs and any other projects that might be seen as needed that are not available from government sources, as organizations representing federally recognized groups, such as urban Indian centers, are able to apply for. The difficult circumstances of non-Federally recognized Indians are discussed in detail by a recent book by David Bragi (2005). However, it should be noted that there is not sufficient funding for any Native American entities in the Ohio Valley, recognized or not, and raffles and other fund raising ideas are common at all types of “Indian” events.

Socials are the time that communities also discuss politics and cement relationships. I have been invited to and traveled to Shawnee social events in both Kentucky and Ohio. At these events people have traveled as far as Alabama, North Carolina and Ontario in order to be part of the social network. Due to the lack of land and facilities most socials are held in rented or donated buildings at state parks or campgrounds. At these events only a very few people “dress Indian”. The main exception to this is a number of men can often be seen wearing ribbon shirts and some



women with shawls. During my observations the time for fully “dressing Indian” is limited to dancing at powwows, performing at an actual reenactment, and during the ceremonial part of a weekend ceremonial dance gathering. Additionally, some dances were described as “both social and spiritual” such as stomp dances. At these, dressing fully Indian is not required. The “traditional” people, however, are expected to put an eagle feather in their hat. However, most people in the Ohio Valley region do not have access to eagle feathers, due to their lack of federal recognition, the basic requirement for requesting eagle feathers through the BIA (Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940). This is seen as a clear form of religious discrimination to many people I spoke with and an additional source of tension between Indians with federal Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood cards (CDIB) and those without the cards.

Social events often are associated with organizations or groups. Urban centers, such as the Indianapolis Indian center, may sponsor more than potlucks and actually have social services types of meetings including employment or health services. Other organizations either incorporated as non-profits or as informal “clubs” may sponsor socials as well as powwows. These may be found throughout the region and many have their events posted on websites such as the “Native American Indian powwow calendar and related events listing” found at Crazy Crow Trading Post’s website (2006).

Some reenactments can also be private and “by invitation only”. There are, as in the other types of Indian cultural events, participants who feel more deeply about what they do as a “way of life rather than a public performance”. An example of this was a group of women who, I was told by one long term reenactor who: “need to just get away from the men sometimes, by ourselves. We need to discuss moon time, women's things

and get closer to the earth our own way. We need to go out with just the things we would have had 200 years ago, before the white man came and spend a few days being real” (interview 2000). This interview points to a direction for more research in the gender based differences in the viewpoints of Ohio Valley Native people.

### **Demonstrations and Storytelling at powwows and reenactments as Performance**

A national Boy Scout “Order of the Arrow” week-long conference was held at Indiana University in 2002. I observed several of the sessions on the schedule of events that offered to help with Indian dancing, dress and other aspects of performance culture. Both American Indians and hobbyists were utilized as presenters to large groups of Boy Scouts who were attempting to perform Indian culture, such as dance, dress, and singing in a respectful and accurate way. One of the sessions on dress was conducted by a nationally known hobbyist from Oklahoma. The presentation was to encourage Scouts to be as accurate as possible and demonstrated how to wear the appropriate dress for powwows today. Different types of feather dance bustles, roaches, and beadwork were demonstrated. He described in detail different types of dances and powwow protocol, making it clear that the Boy Scouts needed to respect the “correct way” of dress or offence might be given. This correct way was very specific to what comes from “real Indians” and was a western “Plains Indian” culture as central to being authentic. The role of the presenter was to disseminate this information. He mentioned videotapes and magazines such as “Whispering Wind” that are available to follow-up on the presentations. At an evening session, later in the week, there was a craft contest in conjunction with a small powwow. In this Scouts had the opportunity to display their

crafts, many of which were finely done beadwork and yarn work mostly done in Oklahoma “Southern Plains style”.

### **Indigenous literature - Literature becomes performance**

About thirty years ago, I remember being told by other Native people “you can’t learn about Indians from books” anytime the subject of reading about something Native came up. In contrast, today’s Ohio Valley Native community draws heavily from books, pictures, and other forms of mass produced media available to the general public.

The newsletters I reviewed include those of organizations that discuss powwows and reenacting. The books participants identified as “important” include a variety of types. Some are more “factual” descriptions of performance such as dance and powwows and others are more “romantic” novels and “historic fiction”.

During the 1950s to the 1980s there were a wide variety books available on Indigenous subjects. The interest in Lakota spiritual belief systems has been generated for many years by a series of books found in common circulation. John Neihardt's “Black Elk Speaks” (Neihardt 1972) and Joseph Epps Browns “The Sacred Pipe” (Brown 1953) were two of the most popular and deal with Oglala Lakota religion through the teachings of one man: Nicholas Black Elk. Other popular books complementing these were “Crazy Horse” (Sandoz 1992), and movies such as “Little Big Man” (Penn 1970) and “A Man Called Horse” (Silverstein 1970) all containing descriptions of Plains religion. A Lakota author, Vine Deloria Jr. wrote “Custer Died for Your Sins” (1969), “We Talk You Listen” (1970) and “God is Red” (1994[1973]) which gave additional fuel to the interest in Lakota and general American Indian world views. In the 1970's “Lame Deer Seeker of Visions” (Lame Deer and Erdoes 1972) and “Touch the Earth” (McLuhan

1971) came out along with many new books and films on Indian art and culture. Protest music also called up themes of spirituality with several major American Indian singers becoming known in the '70s for the first time, Buffy St. Marie, Floyd Westerman, and the rock bands Red Bone and XIT. For those interested in the most mystical aspects of Indigenous world views Carlos Castaneda (1968, 1971, 1972, 1974) led the way in what would become a major new genre of “new age” spiritual books.

During the 1980's and 90s there was a surge of interest in Indigenous healing and spiritually. The books and journals devoted to this have become so large in number and diverse in scope that I cannot provide a comprehensive overview as could be provided for the previous decades. Sweat lodges have become common-place, as have “healing circles” and some Sundances. There has now developed a network that is not tied to books necessarily. What seems to have happened is that a movement and interest in Lakota ways generated from the books of the past 50 years have now entered into a performance of spirituality on a regular basis. The desire to return to Native North American spiritual roots has created for large numbers of peoples a new pan-Native spiritual identity. As languages have been destroyed in the communities, books have become the voice to past. The gap between these texts and the linguistic communities that people are from may be huge but it now is filled by new “spiritual lingua franca”, Lakota, being accepted as standard for spiritual discussion.

It is important to consider the role of the oral, as contrasted with the written, expression of culture. The written sources of knowledge, from books and newsletters, provide material to be retrieved and then regularly transformed into oral forms in today's Indigenous communities. For example, a storyteller will first read the story in a book and

then tell it to an audience with the tellers own embellishments and style. From this version, the storytelling may be copied by another person and retold. This second (or third and fourth version) may begin with “I heard this story from an elder” but the original version was a written text. Therefore, there is a gap between the “original” oral “traditional” story and that of some oral stories found at events. I have noticed this process as true of reservation and reserve communities today also, but written forms are certainly a major source for new oral “traditional” knowledge in the Ohio Valley today. This also holds true for other forms of media such as audiotapes, CDs and videos. These also influence songs, storytelling, language, historical programming and political material. It is important to note that there are oral traditions and family stories that have been passed down in the families I met. What happens is that more “western Indian” stories have been added to the regional repertoire.

The media has had an impact on the way people in the Ohio Valley think about Indians. For example in the movie “Powwow Highway” (Rollins and O’Connor 1998) Philbert, one of the main characters says “I want to buy one of your fine ponies,” (p. 144) Philbert was using similar language to the used car salesman in the TV ad. (Anderson, 1989). This kind of talk might be referred to as “Tonto talk”. Also Pauline Turner Strong (1998) has written about how media is changing the way people think about language. She comments on Russell Means using his voice in the cartoon “Pocahontas”. Means speaks with an accent that many people may now identify as an Indian mans. Over the past 20 years a number of educational films have been produced that have used Native Ohio reenactors. If more films are produced using people with “Ohio Valley” accents, this may be considered a legitimate way of speaking “Indian” over time.

Pauline Turner Strong also points out that there are some positives about the actual use of a Native language, Onondaga, in “The Indian in the Cupboard”. Perhaps the positive use of “Eastern Woodland” Native languages will increase interest and pride in their use. All of these media types influence the Native Ohio community as they offer reference points that had been lacking before TV and other media began portraying Native peoples. There is now the reality that the media reproduces stereotypes for Ohio Valley Native people in addition to non-Natives, but maybe some positive uses may develop too.

An extreme example of how books, as form of non-oral cultural media, can affect the way someone labels their identity: “I’m a full-blooded sish-ox Indian and my grandpa was Geronimo” (actual conversation with an older gentleman at a Dunkin Donuts, 2AM). The point being that he had obviously done a lot of reading about the Sioux and Apache but had a few details mixed up! (4)

### Historic fiction

One of the most important genres is that of the novel based on the life of historic figures from the days of “the frontier”. Numerous times, participants asked me if I had read the books of James Alexander Thom or his Shawnee wife Dark Rain Thom who live in southern Indiana. Dark Rain is enrolled in the United Remnant Shawnee in Ohio, which gives an additional breadth to their combined credibility and interested readership. Through a series of books written by the one or both of the Thoms (1981, 1986, 1997, 2003), these books have influenced the perception of what it is to be an Ohio Valley Native. The books weave two strains of authoritative interpretations together. One reflects the voice of the non-Native historic researcher and the other that of a tribal

member active with the Shawnee United Remnant Band. For example “Panther in the Sky” (1989), a novel based on the life of Shawnee leader Tecumseh, recreates descriptions of culture and daily life mixed with historic events documented by Eurocentric historians. The book by his wife Dark Rain, in “Kohkumthena’s grandchildren: The Shawnee” (1994) presents a novel based on a child learning about Shawnee history and ceremony through talking ceremonial objects. During my research, I found that the details given in these books on Shawnee life are a source for both reenactors and Native people. The books are easy to read in comparison to documents and texts from historians, linguists and anthropological sources. Also they describe and situate the people described in areas familiar to Ohio Valley residents making them, as one participant said “seem real, like I was there”.

Other books take a more research-based style and approach. An example of historical fiction that is based mainly on historic research is “That Dark and Bloody River: Chronicles of the Ohio River Valley” (Eckert 1995). Many other books which take a historical approach to the Ohio Valley present themselves as non-fiction versions of Native history. However, they often contradict each other based on the biographies of major figures such as Tecumseh or Blue Jacket (Edmunds 1985, Gilbert 1989, Sugden 1999, 2000). Another three books, with an ethnographic or historic research styles that were mentioned as a reference by several Ohio Valley Native people, were: James Howard’s “Shawnee! The Ceremonialism of a Native American Tribe and its Cultural Background” (1981), Clark’s “The Shawnee” (1993), and Rafert’s “The Miami Indians of Indiana” (1996). Howard’s book was considered “very important” by some Ohio Valley Natives. One elder reported that he was “concerned about being sure the

ceremonies being revived in the Valley are matched and connected to those of the Oklahoma Shawnee described in Howard's book". This connection would "provide something more accurate than just making it up like some people are doing". In answer to that concern, however, another elder member emphasized that:

The people out there changed! When you're talking about ceremonies, I just think when they went out west; a lot of their elders were dead by then, Black Hoof died before he ever went out in removal. I think we have to think of them in today's terms of like emotionally upset, they had lost their way of life, there had to have been depression, there certainly was food deprivation and housing, so for 10 years there, they were probably were just existing, just trying to hold on and a lot of them died. So, I think a lot of the ceremonies, out there, took on some of the others (field notes, Ohio 2004).

The emphasis, for this person, was that we had to use multiple sources. This included books but also photographs and an "attempt to put oneself in the place of the person who lived then". Several participants mentioned that films, paintings depicting the past, and historic novels were helpful in this "recreation of the past".

In summary, the material and examples in this chapter have described a variety of types of interactions between the two major performance genre that reinforce an Ohio Valley Native identity. Powwows and reenactments/ living history overlap and intersect for many people who negotiate the cultural indexes with both. For others, most of their participation is limited to one or the other genre/ type. These differences include feelings of comfort based on being a "recognized" Native person or not. For non-Natives these events remain primarily hobby or recreational, although some individuals engage more deeply at a spiritual or political level. For Ohio Valley Natives, however, most find a deeper meaning in either or both of these genre, but participation is primarily to help in the development of a resurging sense of Native identity. This is further reinforced through a growing participation in more private "tribal" ceremonial and social activities



which serve to unite Ohio Valley Native people distinctively and mark them as different from both Ohio Valley non-Natives and from American Indian people connected to other parts of North America.

## **CHAPTER 4: SYMBOLIC FORMS AND TRANSFORMATIONS**

In this chapter I will profile some individuals' stories and examples to highlight changes and the forms that are changed by people through performance. I will also use some charts/graphs to help clarify points being made. This is to link the participants in the demographics in the last chapters to the symbolic forms used. A description of important symbolic forms identified by participants is combined with profiles of participants to show how these forms are expressed in various combinations.

### **I. FORMS:**

Language, song and dance are all examples of symbolic forms that show the way performance influences identity. Much of the Ohio Valley has been without American Indian-specific expressions of these for many years except in stereotyped forms available to the general public. These have included Fraternal Order of the Redman lodges, Boy Scouting or the Buffalo Bill shows of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today there are events accessible to people living in the region, including both ceremonial and secular goals, such as powwows and Sundances. These have come to the Ohio Valley during the last half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both the historic forms available to the general public and the more Native American specific recent events have contributed to forms now utilized by Ohio Valley Natives in reclaiming a Native indigenous identity.

### **Language**

One gauge to measure identity has been the degree to which an Indigenous language has been retained. This reflects the belief that culture and language are inseparably linked and if language is not saved the culture will die. Roger Spielmann

(1998) describes this dilemma for one First Nations: “Some elders go so far as to say that, if an individual does not speak his/her Aboriginal language, that person is a not fully Anishnaabe and lacks a deeply-rooted sense of identity” (p. 49). However, language and identity are tied to more than language proficiency and seem to be embodied in a broader conceptualization of ‘culture’. In this system of thought a person retains a sense of identity tied to an indigenous community, even when speaking English or French: “Knowing how to speak one’s Aboriginal language is a key component to one’s sense of identity, but is it the sole determinant? ... Traditional values continue to exist and inform Aboriginal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors which in turn continues to provide the foundation for their sense of identity” (Spielmann 1998: 55-56). As some authors have pointed out, the shift from one language to another does not end the continuation of culture:

The overwhelming evidence is there can be cultural continuity despite language shift. The new culture is not the same as the old, of course, but it is not totally different either. The outstanding question, which research has hardly begun to elucidate, is to establish what the differences are – to determine what is retained and what is lost, from a cultural point of view, when language shift takes place. Which elements of the old language can be taken over by the new, without significant cultural loss? [Crystal 2000:122]

The research on discourse in the Native community of the Ohio Valley adds to the understanding of what part of Native American identity is tied to specific languages and to what degree an identity as a group, such as a tribal community, Shawnee, Cherokee, Mingo or other, may be constructed and expressed in other discursive linguistic and symbolic anthropological ways.

The importance of this research is to contribute to the understanding of continuing identity and the emergence of new identities and language research on First Nations that

go beyond descriptive grammars. As Treuter (1997) reports: “The facts are chilling ... North American Indian languages are in terrible state of decay. There are 300,000 speakers of 148 different Native languages in North America but most ...are small, with a small percentage of fluent speakers. The Diné (Navajo), Inuit (Eskimo), Cree and Ojibwe are the only large groups showing enough strength to make it though the next [21st] century” (p. 9). This study contributes to the examination of the way Indigenous linguistic identity continues under these circumstances. Ways of speaking English have often developed in these communities to maintain the identity function of language. This has led to some recent studies of “Indian English” which is: “...the English they use at home, on the job ...and in other areas of daily experience...” (Leap 1993:1).

In the Ohio Valley region, I found little evidence of a single community of “Indian English” speakers. However, words are used in specific ways which are becoming a new code for indexing Native American culture in a similar way that African American communities do. Since language is tied intimately to ethnic identity then linguistic cues may either develop or maintain to reinforce this different identity. This linguistic difference could both be maintained and reinforced from passed mixed-language pidgins or from a form of Indian English based on an increasingly long-term community usage. Alternatively, since the Indian English has not been maintained or developed from a continuity of separate language culture in the Ohio Valley, new forms of language may be developing. A parallel example to this is found in African-American vernacular (AAVE). Here some studies have shown that AAVE is actually becoming more different from Standard English as time progresses. This is possibly due to sections of the African-American community asserting a stronger sense of in-group identity (1).

In the Ohio Valley I found that African “mixed” Native descent people used words from Indigenous languages, and had different discourse styles, in the same ways that European “mixed” Native descent people did, to distinguish their identity from other “white” and “black” people. A common pan-Native Ohio Valley linguistic community seems to be emerging and being constructed in the context of an increase in Native American oriented events.

The need for this research also addresses the small amount of research done specifically with minority languages in sociolinguistic and communication studies (Giles et al. 1991:117). Since the vast majority of American Indian languages are in some stage of language death, or are already extinct, and language is tied intimately to ethnic identity, then how did indigenous identity develop, sustain and continue to be viable over time in the Ohio Valley? Linguistic differences could either be maintained from a form of “Indian English” based on long-term community usage or new forms of language may develop as people construct identities as Native communities, as in today's Ohio Valley. Also, how is what is talked about and who is doing the talking determined to be legitimate, genuine or “real” in some culturally marked manner?

I maintain a belief that language is related in fundamental ways to world view. However, the language being spoken by American Indian people today is increasingly not that of their Indigenous heritage. I originally wanted to focus my dissertation research on persevering languages, and had planned to focus on an eastern language: Western Abenaki (2). There are no more fluent Abenaki speakers to help with a linguistic project, only recordings and texts, the people express their Abenaki identity now through French (the main reserve Odanak is in Quebec, Canada) and English. If Indigenous

Nations are still to exist as a distinct people, identity and the meaning of being “Native American” will be performed in new ways in English, and we may find this through language discourse.

I have used discourse as a linguistic method to describe my points throughout this study. Language in its more specific structural form has also been a topic of the general discourse. During my interviews and observations, many Ohio Valley Natives claimed an American Indian language and expressed hope for instruction in it. Specifically, “classes” or “tapes” were mentioned that would help in this learning in order to, as several said to me reflexively, “bring it back”. However, in practice, I saw only a few small attempts by participants to actually learn languages. Among the non-federally recognized groups, most of these attempts involved languages with materials that were readily available such as Anishnaabe, Lakota and Cherokee (3). A few used word lists for harder to find languages like Mingo and Shawnee. Very few languages are offered at colleges or universities in the Ohio Valley. Northern Kentucky University incorporates some Ohio Valley languages into its Native Studies program and Miami University has a Miami language program. The large universities in the region only offer languages of First Nations distant from the Ohio Valley region. For example, Indiana University in 2004 offered Quechua from South America and Lakota, but no Ohio Valley languages.

Powwows especially offer the opportunity to use linguistic material to signify identity. In these, the tribal and linguistic identity of community participants is mixed and often includes non-indigenous members as well. Indian identity at powwows is displayed through linguistic means, as well as through dance and dress. Other

researchers have noted the connection of language and identity display in performances (see especially, Bauman 2000; & others in Pagliai and Farr 2000).

Out of all of this new interest in American Indians and the increasing availability of written and recorded material, has come an interest in getting back to the old ways among some of the younger generation of Indians whose families had mostly given up their cultural “traditions”. Specifically, the availability of and access to material on the Lakota made it easiest to add their concepts to new spiritual events. This I see clearly demonstrated in the use of language, especially for sacred concepts. I have traveled across North America and found that Lakota is the pan-Indian language of choice for many ceremonies. I have heard Lakota used in sweats on a regular basis in the states of Washington, Oregon, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine to name a few. Recently I heard it in British Columbia. In all of these cases the speakers were not Lakota and represented a number of Nations including Makah, Salish, Cherokee, Pottawatomie, Abenaki, Shuswap, and Cree. The popular books on Indian religion are often about the Lakota such as Black Elk (1991), Crow Dog (1996), Mails (1998, 2001) and Powers (1982, 1997). One book written by Mary Elizabeth Thunder (1995) is a very good example of the Ohio Valley connection to the Lakota. She reports being from Indianapolis, was a student at Indiana University (at IUPUI), worked in the office of the mayor, and then had a vision experience in 1981 telling her to work with Lakota elders and medicine people such as Grace Spotted Eagle, Leonard Crow Dog, and Wallace Black Elk. She became an adopted Lakota and now has a traditional American Indian-based spiritual healing center in Texas. Many of these books contain Lakota vocabulary, which may be a source for the Lakota words used by people in the Ohio

Valley. Examples include: Wakantanka [God/ Holy Mystery], Wasté [good], Kola [friend], Tunkašila [grandfather], šunkawakan [horse], Cannunpa or Canunpa [pipe], also, some words were used for food: wiglioguyapi [fry bread], wojapi [fruit soup], wakalapi [coffee]. The word for coffee used by a number of people in the Ohio Valley was the old term “paezhuta sapa” [black medicine] which must have been learned from reading the books of the “old days” as wakalapi is the newer form. Books, I remember, were the main sources for traditional Lakota words used in the Eastern powwow circuit 40 years ago. These words would be checked out with Lakota speakers when possible. Much of this book borrowing continues today and seems to have added strength given to this method as less and less Lakota people speak the language. Today there are Lakotas in the eastern powwow circuit, but many under 40 do not speak the language themselves.

The same difficulty, a lack of fluent speakers, exists for those trying to restore languages originally indigenous to the Ohio Valley. I spoke with an Ohio Valley Shawnee man who asked some Shawnee fluent speakers in Oklahoma for correct pronunciations of some words. He developed a series of lessons on the Shawnee language, but it is a hard thing to do with no fluent speakers. Several communities are in the planning stages of reviving this effort. The Miami already have a strong language program going in Indiana and at Miami University in Ohio. There are also Ojibwa and Cherokee classes offered in parts of the Ohio Valley according to people I spoke with.

Styles of speaking different from mainstream American English are common in what is usually referred to as “Indian country”. I have found that western Indian country seems to be different from that of the east and south. One example of “Indian talk” is the use of “enit” as a universal tag question. For example: “prize money is still a good thing,



*enit*” (Browner 2002:101). In western states I have heard “*enit*” used alone to emphasize a point. Basically it serves to ask a question or search for consensus or agreement as in the more American- English “ain't it?” But it serves an additional purpose as well. It marks the speaker as Native and also can be used to encourage a more lighthearted friendliness. Many times after hearing an “*enit*” there will be a short chuckle among the speech community participants. In the Ohio Valley I only heard Indian folks from western reservations, now living in the Midwest, or Indian hobbyists who had spent time “out west” who seemed to recognize or use it. The Ohio Valley Native community seemed unaware of this tag. Another example of Native communicative competence that is understood generally in the western parts of North America, but seems to not be understood by many Ohio Valley Natives, was the tag “*ayyee!*” This tag is used after a statement meaning “I'm only joking” or “gotcha!” I tried telling some jokes from my years living in western Indian communities, and found no recognition among Ohio Valley Native people when the punch line ended in “*ayyee*”. Another example of a Native-specific use of a word is “*Drum*” used to encompass the instrument, the singers and the songs as in: “He is a member of that *Drum*”. This term is used in the Ohio Valley by those who have been socialized into the more generic Pan-Indian style of powwow speech. The Ohio Valley Natives that are not “regulars” at powwows do not seem to use this term, but the need to use the term is mainly associated with the “big drum” powwow song tradition throughout North America.

Communicative competence is a concept useful in understanding how language use that is shared by community members may mark the boundaries of that community. I was hoping to determine how much the Native Ohio Valley population shared a common

way of speaking that might mark identity. Almost all of those interviewed denied any special differences in the way Ohio Valley Natives spoke. For a better understanding of marking identity through speech, I gathered data on the impressions of participants on the speech of others. In one case it was seen as a mark of performing for an audience only:

Author - How are people trying to identify as Indian in the Ohio Valley, are people doing it also by the way they talk?

Kentucky Shawnee Man - Well, I know of one guy who does it and he's a storyteller and when he's got a crowd he's telling stories ...

Ohio Shawnee Woman - His whole speech pattern completely changes, completely changes and he hesitates, and has those stops like he's looking in his head for that English word, you know, he talks like someone whose English is not their primary language...

KSM - But he's not Native at all!

OSW - And yet he copies, especially when he is storytelling, its actually upsetting, for me, to watch that change happen.

A - How did he learn to do this, what's he imitating?

OSW - Well, he imitates the Wisconsin accent and I think its probably from hangin' with Native people, don't you?

KSM - Yeah.

OSW - In fact its so good for business, there at [a public site], right inside the door is this prayer that he did dedicated and [they] think that they got, I guess a real Native Chief, who wrote out this prayer in dedication for 'em, I mean he completely does the whole kit'n'caboodle [(kit and) caboodle]. And, dyes his hair, and actually, he's somebody that I noticed, that normally doesn't have the Wisconsin accent but if he's storytelling, he shifts, he has pauses in his voice like he can't find the English word, that kind of thing.

They went on to explain that there is has never been an opportunity to develop a different way of talking that would identify a person as Native. In fact they pointed out that there is still anti-Indian racism in the Ohio Valley that acts as a motivation for people to “sound local”:

OSW - Speech hasn't changed because, since, there is not a huge Native presence, most people here may powwow on the weekends, they go to work with every good ol' boy and, if you can pass, you pass, you don't do anything that really points you out. That would be one of the things that practically everyone that I know, from around here talks about.

KSM - Yeah.

OSW - I know my daughter, she didn't like being called Pocahontas and she got that nickname just because they had seen some of her beadwork on some lighters, that was the only identifier.

A - So there is not enough social pressure here in the Ohio Valley for people to try to sound Indian.

OSW - In fact there is probably no advantage what so ever, except to increase the prejudice.

This description of the reasons for a lack of motivation to “sound Indian” is suggesting that the speech community of mixed bloods in the Ohio Valley has been integrated and hidden from most of the non-Native community. Codeswitching occurs in speech between different dialects of English and often serves as a marker for a different ethnic identity. For example in the case of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) Fasold et al. (1987) and Mufwene (1992) report that it is diverging from Standard English (SE) rather than converging toward it, and that this may be due to increasing willingness to identify as separate from SE speakers. Language codes may provide the same function in the Native community, but in the Ohio Valley there has not been enough time to see a separate community dialect develop. With the increasing interest in reforming distinct Ohio Valley Native identities more and more differences may develop in speech.

The area where differences are already developing is in the topics discussed and the accompanying words that index knowledge of subjects specific to Native events. For example, “After the powwow I’m going to 49 until the doin’s done” may be said with either an Ohio or Kentucky accent, but it has a specifically Native Ohio meaning of: “I’m going to drum and sing in my regular clothes (not powwow or ceremonial) tonight with a bunch of guys and gals while round dancing until sun up, sort of Indian party-time style!”. There are, also, many other examples of

names, cooking, ceremony, camp life and other aspects of the Ohio Valley Native circuit.

Many Native people in the Ohio Valley have never had the opportunity to hear words from the actual languages of the tribes they claim membership in. For example, in one case Shawnee language was taught through copies of the available word lists that are published. Many languages of interest to the Ohio Valley such as Cherokee, Abenaki, Delaware (Lenape) and Lakota have a number of language materials around that include both sound recordings and written material, but Shawnee only has a few descriptions of grammar and several 19th century word lists. What has come of this is the memorization of words by a few people who have the interest and the passing on of the words to others at tribal gatherings. In one case, I was told that the words had been “run by” an Oklahoma Shawnee who spoke the language to help with pronunciation. What may be of interest, however, is in use I mainly see the words used in ceremony. Rarely a word may be found in an e-mail or other publication and only occasionally in closing a conversation or meeting. The primary two words are “Nyah-weh” is “thanks” in both Shawnee and several of the Six Nations languages and “pesalo” is interpreted as a Shawnee word for “see you later” and was taken from a word list and now in use in the Ohio Valley.

However, there were a number of speech forms that were event specific and marked people as either powwow goers or reenactors. For powwows, the use of nouns like “gift” can be used to show action and other English words are adapted to do work in usage at powwows: “He was gifted last weekend at the give away” then

“everyone danced him out as part of the honoring”. These, along with humor, mark speech that can be heard at powwows across the country. They influence the speech of everyone who attends powwows, Indians and non-Indians, but reenactor speech has a different set of types. One strong example given to me involves the use of naming to transform people in a social way:

Author - What is the difference between a Rendezvous or Reenactment – Reenactor Man - A reenactor does things correct to emulate the past at a Rendezvous you find a guy named “Griz” with a beard and turquoise jewelry.

Many reenactors are white, many ex-military. A lot who do the Native stuff are ex-military.

A – Why?

RM – Partly being history buffs is the basis of re-enactment. Go through books, look for dates on types of buttons and they like going to museums mostly. Regular people are not interested in this stuff but a certain trigger guard may be important to a reenactor, where others may say that’s an ugly gun. Now a lot of bikers are involved. They want to do things together. People think a biker is dangerous; this is a way to express themselves. They become close friends and like family but see each other only once or twice a year but they get to know and care about people. Names are personal; one guy breaks his arm and from then on is called “Busted Arm”. From then on people forget their other names. Names are more personalized. “Few Words” describes a quiet person better than his other name. One guy forgot to take his ramrod out of his gun and shot it with his ramrod in, from then on he was known as “Ramrod”. Why some reenact is their way to honor their ancestors Red and White. Not only the books but was their way of honoring the past and the place. Some people take tobacco ties and put in a place or sitting against a tree praying (field notes, 5/13/05).

The spiritual and personal nature of reenacting described above is a theme I found repeated many times. I was told that it was the reenactors who had “Native background” that were most interested in the spiritual dimension and that Indian talk involved understanding this spiritual connection. In a discussion with a Shawnee woman who reenacts, she described this connection well:

We couldn’t do a certain reenactment. The place was too spiritual, believe we were there before. Someone asked why we wouldn’t do it and he asked

if he could. We said it was up to him, but he is Cherokee descent, we are Shawnee and just couldn't. While the battle was going on, lightning hit down through there. To me it was spirits or ancestors. If you are going to do something where something really happened you better do it with real respect. But a lot of these boys didn't really respect the place. I think that's what the lightning was about. If you're emulating a group of Shawnee or Ojibway ancestors you should always try to think: What was I doing here? Why was this done then? This is getting your face on as I call it before you go. You become your spirit name, who I was when I was there. It is past life experience doing this (field notes, May 13, 2005).

This was one of the clearest statements I was given connecting place, ancestors and names all together. In many interviews it was a theme, but the discourse above points out an aspect of searching for meaning from the past to bring it into the present as a transformation through the ritual of the reenactment. Words are connected to the past and spirits through names in this example, but language as a whole was also mentioned by some. During one interview with another Ohio Valley Shawnee woman I was given an example of current belief systems held by some on the important link between language and past Native spirits still residing in places:

One person had ancestors step out of the woods and speak to her in Shawnee. What she understood was enough in the Shawnee language to speak to her. When it happened to me it wasn't in Shawnee because I couldn't speak it. So spirits don't talk to me in Shawnee but I know the spirits communicated to me at one old fort, I go out of the "wigwa" to tell [mans name] that the spirits had told me that the next chief was from a certain clan, I didn't know it then but the chiefs were chosen from that clan in the past, that was back in 1998 and then he was chosen to be chief, but in 1998 I couldn't have known that! The spirits, in my experience have used the language to communicate. This is most common in Lakota and Cherokee because you can run into people who know how to pronounce it. If you don't understand the language you are hearing, it doesn't matter if it isn't translated. It's almost like religious trances or speaking in tongues. Your head may not be able to understand it, but your heart knows (taped recording, May 20, 2005).

In answer to a question about how language is used at tribal events, since no one speaks whole languages any more, I was told that even a word transforms events:

The need for these words is to have some way to communicate my feelings toward God that are different, and my way of speaking the language is the way to show I am different, and don't see the way other English speakers see the world. The words note a spiritual ritual is taking place. In Living History events for example a spiritual instance is made at, even meals, when even one Shawnee word is said before a meal. It notes I'm walking in 2 worlds - I have to... but here I'm in the Indian world. It is like a reminder like getting dressed - how could you go to ceremony without getting dressed (taped recording, May 20, 2005).

The importance of even single words, therefore, is that they can serve as an index to Native cultural identity and the events and places associated with that identity. I was told by several people that there is an increasing desire to have language classes in Ohio Valley languages at ceremonies, powwows and reenactments. Several attempts, during the past 15 years, using old word lists (Cummings 1999, 2001, Voegelin 1938-40) have been made to reintroduce languages. If additional language classes develop, I was told they will have the goal of introducing a greater understanding of morphology and language structure, but at this time isolated words are mostly used outside the context of fluent language ability. More complex uses of languages, such as Shawnee, may increase as some Shawnee language learners, such as Sara Wagar have done recently (personal communication 2003). This increased complexity includes the help of recent sources such as the Shawnee Language Dictionary (Pearson 1991), Shawnee Grammar (Andrews 1994) and Lenape language materials (Dean 1979). The Lenape materials also come with audio cassettes, made by the last fluent speaker Nora Thompson Dean in Oklahoma, which may help introduce new pronunciation as well as vocabulary into the Ohio Valley Native community.

The book title “Kohkumthena’s grandchildren: The Shawnee” (1994) provides an example of using a Native word in a structurally English manner. For an Algonquianist, it is easy to recognize “Kohkumthena” as “our grandmother” but the use of an English possessive morpheme /s/ is redundant and is only needed for people who do not already know that the word expresses a possessive form without the “-’s” at the end. This type of adaptation of Native words, to conform to English structures, represents a way I have seen Native words used in the Ohio Valley with consistency. Basically, a word is chosen from a word list or other available form and then treated, for other purposes, as an English word. The point of using it is to mark the discourse as “Native” and index a specific tribal connection.

### **Results from Questionnaires**

As mentioned in the introduction, a language use questionnaire (see appendix) helped to gather some basic information at two events, one in Ohio and one in Kentucky. The questionnaires provided information, in attitudes about Native language use and samples of the words actually being incorporated or known by Ohio Valley Native cultural participants. Only 9, out of the 12 returned questionnaires, provided specific Indian language words. Three people said they did not know any Native words. This is a small sample size, but it represents people who go to either powwows or reenactments regularly, and all go to Ohio Valley Native ceremonies. I am providing the data as it was recorded:

1. Middle aged woman. Shawnee and Cherokee from Ohio.  
Said she was – “semi fluent in Cherokee, knew some Lakota, Lenape and Shawnee”.  
Hello – Osiyo (Cherokee); Good morning – Osiyo (Cherokee)  
Thank you – Wado(Cherokee); Nyewah (Shawnee); Meguich(Ojibway)



2. Elder woman, Cherokee and Shawnee from Ohio and Tennessee.  
Hello/Goodbye – Peshalo (Shawnee); Thank you – Niyawe (Shawnee)  
Animal - Weshea “dog” (Shawnee)
3. Elder man, Shawnee, from Indiana  
Good bye: Pesalo “take care”; Wishii kiteshi “Good day”; Thanks: Neyahwh  
Kee-wah-ko-mee-lay ni-kaha na hehiwe kitesioo? “Hello my friend, what is your name?”  
He could identify numbers up to 3 (Shawnee) with some trouble  
Foods: 10-20 or more including: Mishii mina “apple”, Pecan “nut” , nebi “water”  
Animals: “Knows 10 -20 or more”: example of Maqua “bear”  
Where learned – self study and a visit to Oklahoma (All the words are Shawnee)
4. Middle aged man, Kentucky – Cherokee/Shawnee  
Hello: Osio (Cherokee); Thank you: Wado (Cherokee)  
Where learned: “from my Indian Frinds [sic]
5. Middle aged woman – Lakota from Ohio  
Hello: How (Lakota); Thank you: pila me(Lakota);  
Where learned: “self taught”
6. Young woman – Algonquian  
Hello/Goodbye: Bozhoo, Bezon, Ani; Goodbye: ba ma pii, Tanakia  
Good Morning: Gitchee wapanee; Thank you: Megwetch, newi  
Animals: wasin, muwa, wapiti, penashes  
Where learned: “Others who took the time to share” (All the words are Ojibwa)
7. Elder man Shawnee, also names peselo definition: until we meet again  
Hello/Goodbye: kimakwmole (Shawnee); Good Morning: migwtich(Ojibwa)  
Thank you: migwtich(Ojibway); Foods: Selu “corn” (Shawnee)  
Where learned: “Hanging around other Indians, they weren’t used when I was at home”
8. Young woman - Iroquois, Seneca and Shawnee  
Thank you: genanyo (Seneca)  
Where learned: Prayers
9. Middle aged woman, Shawnee from Michigan  
Hello/Goodbye: KiweKomile (Shawnee); Pesalo(Shawnee)  
Bozhoo, Baamaapii Gawabmin (all Ojibwa)  
Thank you: Nyaweh (Shawnee), Wado (Cherokee), Miigwech (Ojibwa)  
Numbers: beshick, neesh, sway, neewin, nood, nong - (Ojibwa)  
Foods: Meejem (Ojibwa)  
Animals:  
waboose “rabbit”, wabsheski “deer”, miigiis “eagle”, gageck “hawk” (all Ojibwa).

(Note: The word spellings written on the questionnaires were kept).

What the data show is that at the two events, where I asked the question, I found a range of words from Cherokee, Shawnee, Ojibwa and Lakota. Only one person (#3) was able to identify more than 30 words in Shawnee or other First Nations language. The next closest was (#9) who felt comfortable with basic words in Ojibway but “wants to learn Shawnee”. Others questioned had a few words in a variety of languages. No one I questioned “grew up” with a First Nations language spoken at home. All of the people I asked, however, said they wanted to learn more, but the languages were not available. Several asked me if I could help them get materials for language learning.

### **Singing/drumming Dance and Dress**

Most songs in the Ohio Valley are “borrowed” from other parts of North America. This was necessary as there is no ongoing tradition of “Native American” powwow or ceremonial music. Many Ohio Valley Native people are involved with, play (or have friends and relative who play) fiddle, bones, guitar or banjo. There is a deep affinity for Appalachian music in general and many people are familiar with clogging and jigging to accompany this. It is interesting that, as seen in the chapter on demographics, there is a Métis movement in the Ohio Valley but this jigging/ clogging and fiddling, marked as Métis (and therefore “aboriginal” or “Native”) performance in Canada, has not yet been defined as Native in the U.S. In Canada it is easy to hear fiddle music and other tunes labeled Aboriginal and described as I recently heard an elderly Métis man say: “an old Métis fiddle tune, but I don’t know its name” (this was a popular tune called “Rocky Top” in the United States). In time, maybe the Appalachian music will also become associated with being part of the emergent Ohio Valley Native identity.

Powwows and tapes are a source for “traditional drum” songs as well as hobbyists and others who have traveled to western reservations. There is an increasing interest expressed in reviving old songs of the Ohio Valley. One person in Ohio told me the songs “are still out there, you just got to be quiet and listen, sit by a creek or old mound, and listen, they’ll come to you.” This is similar to a comment I heard in Kentucky: “We don’t need to worry about losing songs from the past because they are around us and if we listen right they will come to us”. Interestingly, William Powers reports that this is an old concept for the Lakota. It is possible that, if this is in print and has been read by others, it may have re-circulated the concept. It is also possible that it is an actual unbroken oral tradition in the Ohio Valley, but I could not identify the source. This concept is described, in a similar way, by Powers (1986:59): “Given that music is part of the natural order, it is there, occupying a niche in the natural universe with a humanlike capacity to be born and to die, to undergo changes, to be renewed...The term *yatun* “to give birth to a song” is perhaps the closest gloss to “to compose”, but the connotation of *tun* is ‘to give rise to something that has already existed in another form’.” (Also see Powers 1977). In an interview with a ceremonial participant at the Shawnee Green Corn dances I asked about the importance of bringing back the songs to the Ohio Valley and was told:

For me a song makes it fuller. It doesn't change the meaning but music or praying in the language changes us out of that left brain not like the 'you have to point the pipe this way" or doing things in a certain order. It helps us get out of... to dispel the heaviness around it. Singing the songs and addressing the ancestors shifts the energy (taped recording, May 20, 2005).

Songs are also being composed to reflect the new forms of Ohio Valley Native ethnic awareness. As one powwow participant and author, Linda Carter, notes:

There is a song recently written for the Pow Wow drum with the words,  
Way ah way ah oh, Way ah way ah oh, Way ah pa way oh

Ohio, Kentucky, Carolina, Virginia, Wataca asutupiah, Monisiccapano.

Way ah pa way oh

Tutelo, Saponi,d [sic]

Occaneechi, Monacan,

We are called the Blackfoot people, Monisiccapano

Way ah pa way oh.

The song is becoming popular along the Pow Wow circuit in Ohio, North Carolina and Virginia and is spreading the association with the word Blackfoot among descendants. (Carter 2004).

I had heard this song, or versions of it, several times at powwows and socials in the Ohio Valley. It was interesting to find out from Linda Carter that this song was written by Ohio Saponi (personal communication 2/17/06), which is one of the tribes mentioned in Chapter 3 as also being the source for the name eastern “Blackfoot” (Carter 2002, 2004).

The type of dancing done varies, depending on the performance. One of the things that non-Indian hobbyists are well known for is their attention to proper Indian dress. The areas of cultures that involve the mind or spirituality may be off limits in open discussion, but copying dress, as it is a physical and objectively definable object, is viewed as a legitimate goal. In this framework tribal styles and specific categories of dress become extremely important, perhaps heavily influenced by early 20th century versions of recording other cultures that salvage anthropology brought to the “hobby”. If you are a “Northern Traditional” dancer or an “Oklahoma Straight” dancer there are guides and even videos showing you how to dance, some produced by hobbyists, featuring Indians and distributed to Boy Scouts, hobbyists, Indians and academic institutions alike (Full Circle Communications 2006, Fancy Dance 1997, Martin and Jones 2003, Powers 1963, 1966). Personal innovations and blends of tribal dress and clothing styles become very problematic for hobbyists. My own dance clothes are a blend from living in various places. This created a great deal of interest to some

hobbyists at a powwow who took numerous photos because they said it represented a new category “Eastern Straight dance” which surprised me greatly as I did not realize until then that I was a “type”. However, this style has been noted as a relatively new innovation for “eastern Indians” by some observers of contemporary powwows:

Since the late 1980s, a number of new categories and one new competition dance have entered the pow-wow circuit. ... Northeastern dances have split further because male Iroquoian dancers at times compete in the Eastern Straight category. To call this style of dancing “Straight” is a misnomer. The term *Straight* in a pow-wow context refers as much to the act of following a trail, dance stick in hand, as it does to the lack of a back bustle (evidently the inspiration for the category's name). Although it is understandable that men want to compete in a separate category from Plains-oriented men's Traditional—because their regalia and footwork are so different from judging norms—another name for their dance would be more appropriate. By calling the dance style “Straight” they do disservice to Southern men who perform the Oklahoma-originated dance (Browner 2002: 64-65).

It is important to note that the standard for what is considered “original” is the western and that an Eastern use of the name becomes seen as a “disservice”. This is interesting from the perspective of 2006 because the Schemitzun Pow-Wow at Foxwoods, Connecticut, now one of the largest powwows in North America, has “Eastern Straight” as a fixed competition dance category. The Pequot people, who host this powwow, were, until recently with their federal recognition in the 1980’s, considered a mixed racial or “tri-racial isolates” group, similar to the people of the Ohio Valley. They too, although clearly considered “real Indians” as they are “federally recognized” still are compared against the standard of western American Indians in performing “real” Native culture.

## **II. REPERTOIRES**

All the varieties of Native participants including Indians, Métis, and federal, state, non-recognized white mixed and black mixed people have repertoires. These constitute a

link to symbolic actions. To give more background on what constitutes a “typical” Ohio Native person and what shapes their identity over generations. This is first described from a linear historical perspective and then I will present a profiled family history example.

### **Profiles of a “typical” participant history**

The types of people emphasizing different aspects of “being Indian”, described above, overlap in the formation of a Native identity. My focus was not on people describing themselves as non-Native but on their “Native performance” which has an influence on the Native Ohio people. The Ohio Native identity is influenced both by perceptions of the contemporary “real Indian” and the past as reenacted. In order to show the depth of time involved in the family histories and connection to a historic past I asked some of the Ohio Valley Indians to describe their ancestry, how they knew they were Indian, and how this connection relates to the present [see Figure 3].

One contemporary participant, who has been involved in powwows, reenactments and has been active in the rebirth of a Shawnee community, has the following background. She knows of her Native identity both through her father and mother's lineages but has only been able to research her mother's line. She started when she found out that her great-grandfather had worked for the Buffalo Bill Wild West shows in Indiana. The family story tells how he and his brother “rode as Indians in the show because they were Indians”. To help verify the history I checked with the archives of the Buffalo Bill Cody museum in Cody Wyoming. I was able to find that there were actual records that her ancestor, William Henry Hutton, did work for Buffalo Bill in Indiana during the late 1890's but he was listed as working in the canvas and tent department.

The interpretation by the family is that he may have sometimes filled in as an Indian rider performing as an extra because “they were Indian and often needed more riders”. Also, they were sure his brother George Hutton was a rider in the performance as that branch of the family had a clear oral tradition on this point including heirloom posters and other Buffalo Bill in Indiana paraphernalia. Both the brothers were illiterate and signed their contracts with an “x” so there were no diaries or other information. Family pictures show that both he and his brother also fit a category that might have been termed “tri-racial isolate” as described above. In tracing this family history back as far as records exist in the various county and state archives, William's ancestor, Amos Hutton is found living in 1810 on the Ohio river and having one son, William and George's father, born in Darke County Ohio, which was the location of one of the possible remnant Indian communities (See above). I then traced the family back to southern Indiana where William was later living in Paris Crossing near a mixed school founded by a “half Indian” from Virginia.

The family claimed another Indian connection in that William's son joined the Order of the Red Men during the 1920s. This son had blue eyes but it was noted that his father William had to move to an isolated farm in southern Indiana because of a threat from the Ku Klux Klan for marrying a white woman. The problem in tracing any of this family history is that none of the early census records include race. Even the census which had the option for a number of decades in the 1800s to record “White” or “colored” had those columns blank for everyone in all the records we checked. What is clear is that no one in that branch of the family went to school, voted or owned land until the 20th century and the work was somewhat migratory involving selling horses and tenant farming. Finding a “tribe” was hard because this information was not passed on in

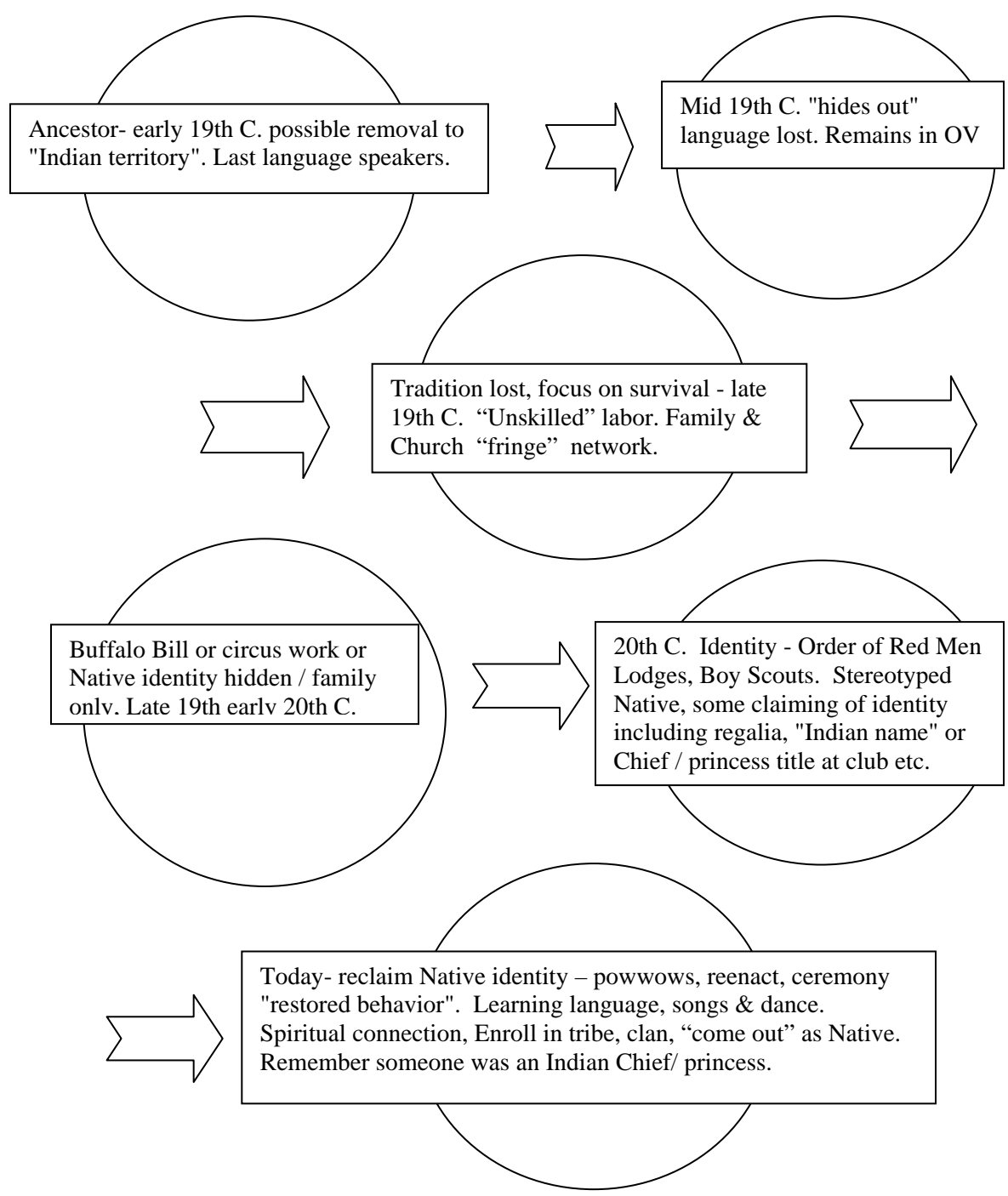
the family. Up until ten years ago they simply assumed Cherokee because that was the term used, I was told, “by almost everyone if they are Indian from around here”. Today a few members of this family are reclaiming their heritage as Shawnee because of the clear connection to former Shawnee territory in the Madison, Indiana area. Also the family had intermarried with families that some believe were Indian in northern Kentucky, and that area was historically Shawnee. The motivation and meaning for developing this family Shawnee connection was to “heal family wounds”, to “understand what is missing” and “provide identity and connection to the place our family has lived for generations” (personal communication, 2005).

There are several themes that this Ohio Valley case history demonstrates that are supported by the literature. One is that the mixed racial identity of the family shows a history of the family operating on the fringe of “white society” and keeping a private separate identity. Second, is the maintaining of ties to areas historically concerned with Indian remnant groups, in this case Darke County Ohio and other locations described above for about 200 years. Third is the continuity of maintaining connections to Indian linked iconic events for over a hundred years: William with Buffalo Bill, his son with the Order of the Red Men, a grandson with Order of the Arrow scouting and the granddaughter with the present revival of Ohio Valley Shawnee culture through powwows, restored ceremony and political redefinition. All of these are part of a continuing claimed connection to place through generations. These past cultural connections are to organizations and activities that involve stereotyped and romantic visions of Indianness due to a gap of cultural connection to core communities. The culture is separated and at best peripheral to the core culture (Hannerz 1992) which exists



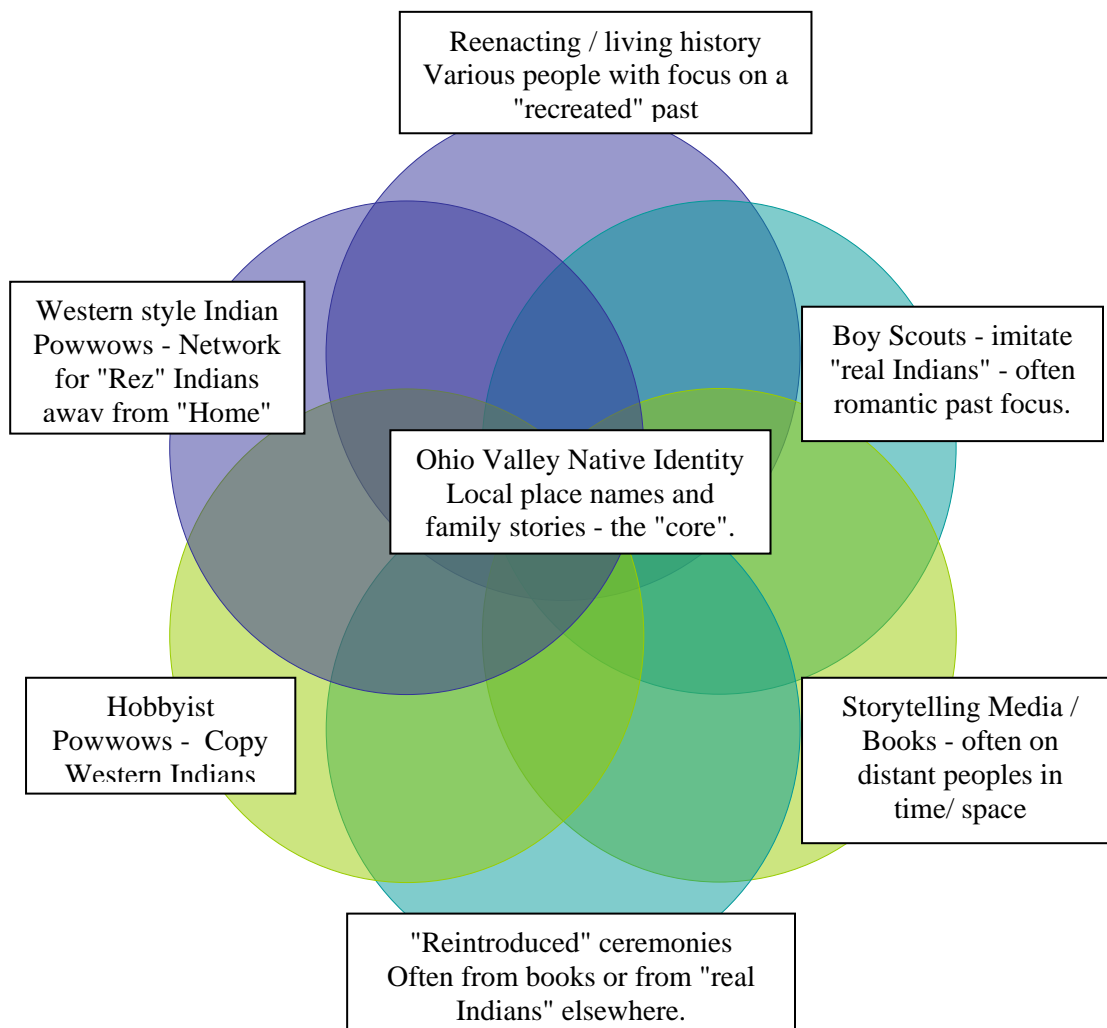
“somewhere out west” or “somewhere in the past”. The stereotyping includes acting out the image of what some call the “Hollywood Indian” or imagined Indian “other” (Churchill 1992; Deloria 1998; Dilworth 1996; Francis 1992). This is found in performance repertoires such as “riding with Buffalo Bill and the Sioux” and the donning of Indian regalia 20 to 30 years later as member of the Order of the Redmen Lodge which is a patriotic fraternal order highly involved with romantic and stereotyped Indian costuming and pseudo-Indian ceremony. But, if you are Indian and you have no other connection, it was pointed out to me, at least it “feels like some kind of connection to dress up and get involved” (field notes, 2004). Fourth, genealogy and family stories are an important part of discourse for many Indian people in the Ohio Valley. This, as illustrated in the story above is a theme I heard about many times. Also, many websites and blogs are now associated with this. The main point is that performing Indian identity for this family, as with many others I interviewed, is tied to the Ohio Valley as place. This land is still “Indian land” to these families and they continue to act as part of it, often with minimal or no official recognition.

**Figure. 3**  
Linear flow as described by some Ohio Valley Natives - often as genealogy. Example from this Chapter.



**Figure. 3** Today there are many influences that contribute to a possible for Ohio Valley Natives. In the section on demographics many groups defined their identity in terms of different possible performance repertoires. The different influences are outlined in Figure 4 on the next page.

**Figure 4.**  
**Today's Performance**  
**Influences**



**Figure 4.** Several forms of performance that influence the cultural enactment of identity in the Ohio Valley are shown as overlapping. Note the emphasis on non-Reservation based influences. The dominant influences are performance based on "restored behavior" from the past or the outside. The "Core" is the memory in families and in the stories in places. The outside influences attach to this core.

### **Indian and non-Indian**

It is important to note that the non-Indian “Indianists” and “Hobbyists” draw on a time period that is more recent than reenactors. Their time period begins with the early reservation period (1870s to 1920s) and continues to the present. The focus is not the Ohio Valley; it is outside the region - the West, mainly the Plains, the center of the “real Indian” culture of the main symbolic American Native.

The repertoire of both non-Indians and many Ohio Valley Natives is limited to the more superficial aspects of material and culture and secular powwow dance and song rather than ceremony. I asked one Ohio Valley Native who spent a great deal of time with Hobbyist about this and he said: “The Midwest is very Christian and Indian means to many, ‘not Christian’ so we are very careful to keep a clear distinction in what we do”. I asked another, similar, participant where his knowledge came from and he answered: “I may of got some of this from books but so what? I got most of this from experience. I don’t just try it out. I cannot tell you what’s from books, what’s from family, what is from other people and what is from experience. Maybe some it is from the spirits here” (Ohio interview August 2005). There are a variety of perspectives that can be put into general types, but there were many overlaps and clear boundaries between types of Native participation were hard to find.

For example, I asked a teenaged participant who is now a second generation participant involved with Ohio Native cultural events. He mentioned that powwows and reenactments were:

Not enough, there is ceremony, there is meaning in Ceremony. It is very affirming. I no longer claim the white descent. I’m American Indian,

Cherokee. This was all ours. When you are walking on this earth you need to be careful, it is not yours. I let people know I'm not a Christian. I don't want to be where they are. I am very spiritual but not Christian. I have to constantly reaffirm my Indian-ness. Silver arm bands, wrapping hair. But most of the time I don't tell teachers anything about Indians or that I know something because they always say I'm wrong (field Notes, Ohio, August 2005).

The issue of the activity being tied to meaning was brought up many times. I was told that there is an importance to bring back the dances "that belong here" and as an example was told "Stomp Dance is something all over the east it is coming back." by one Ohio Native who is very interested in ceremony but not powwows. And the reason is:

Meaning is bringing it back. It was hidden now there is a change to bring it back. This makes balance to bring back what we can and the spirits will fill in the rest. The dreams I've had are about my Indian-ness. The spirits have no problem with me being Indian. It is people that have a problem with it. It is the same with places that aren't recognized as sacred sites. The mounds and caves are sacred. I can feel the spirits but now they are historic sites for tourist. I picked up a green rock shaped like an egg at one place, that meant something to me only (field Notes Ohio August 2005).

The point is that for those people to define themselves as Ohio Valley Natives in contrast to non-Natives, who perform as Indian Hobbyists or reenactors, being Native is not an "act" or about the performance. The performance through dance, dress, language and other forms are reinforcers of who one is, as a "core" identity. For them, this is an identity that transcends the opinion of others or official recognition by governments. Non-Natives, on the other hand, who do not identify as "Native" through adoption, marriage, Indigenist/ Activist or other form of intimate connection with a North American Indigenous identity, are solely performers at many "Indian" events, ranging from "accurate" to "hokey" but simply are not "Native" with a tie to thousands of years of place. Despite this, some observers of powwows and reenactments confuse Native Ohio people who do not look enough racially Indian with actual non-Natives and identify

anything that is not displayed as a marker of a stereotyped western Indian powwow identity as evidence of the person appropriating the culture of “real” Indians. The irony is it is the opinion of people not Native to the Ohio Valley or non-Indian “experts” who are using their authoritative voice to label this. An excellent example can be found in a recently published edited book “Powwow” (Ellis et al 2005) in a section on “New Agers” that uses an example of women shaking rattles at an Ohio Powwow:

A number of powwows seem to be springing up that are run by New Agers. Unsuspecting Indian powwow dancers often attend only, to be shocked by what is going on. One such powwow was held in the summer of 2002 in Austin Village, Ohio. Organized by a couple...the powwow was advertised as the first powwow for the Lenape village. However, neither of the [organizers] appear to be officially enrolled members of the Lenape... [A “real Indian”] was shocked at the powwow’s disorganization and failure to follow any recognized protocol for Grand Entry. One of the three drums there consisted of 8 white women, one of whom shook a rattle while drumming with one hand, a practice he had never seen before... [He] was most offended by a white vender who was selling sacred pipes. He explained to the arena director that the pipes were sacred and should not be sold (Aldred 2005:263-64).

The above quote, written by an anthropologist working in Montana, using web blogs and e-mails from a distance as a main source of information, invokes a series of assumptions and stereotyped judgments of what is an Indian powwow. I have seen many examples of using rattles at a drum over the past thirty years in the Eastern powwow circuit. This has often been the subject of embarrassment for non-Native Indian Hobbyists who want to appear legitimate to western Indians (numerous personal conversations with Indian hobbyists since 1970). I do not know the women described above, but I doubt they are simply “8 white women”, especially since Aldred (2005) points out one of them identified herself as a Lenape. The use of rattles and women singing at drums in the Eastern Tradition

has a continuous history that is well documented by those familiar with Native communities east of the Mississippi (Cronk 1987; Diamond et al. 1994). The use of these at a powwow that blends western and eastern is an attempt to keep the diversity and identity of Eastern Native peoples, including Ohio Valley Native people tied to what is an “old” Eastern Woodland tradition rather than Plains “recent” tradition. The issue of pipes being sold is another that is of fairly recent discussion at powwows. I have known of and continue to know western “full-bloods” who sell unused pipes regularly. This issue is a matter of personal concern for some but there is no Native American consensus of belief on this. The main point here is, who determines the standard of what is a “recognized protocol”? If this is to be determined as that of any regular western or urban style powwow dancer or an uninformed anthropologist from another part of the country, then the unique cultural identities of Ohio Valley Native peoples will never be recognized.

### **Reenactors**

When reenacting the past, contributions of historians, anthropologists and other researchers are the major sources for the past that is to be reenacted. This category of performing Native identity becomes based on a “researched” image of a human “other” found in this distant historic past. I asked a person who is both Ohio Native and a reenactor, to describe the main characteristics of a person who reenacts:

A reenactor is a history buff, searching for connection to the past, whatever this may be. For Natives it is mostly before the Civil War and the place is the old frontier. This is different than people who just attend Rendezvous, that is more party and shooting guns. They don’t care about detail like reenactors. People reenact because of pride in the work and connection to ancestors. Also, it is fun, to perform. Some of us do it to understand what it feels like to be that person. I started reenacting as a way of exposing my

children and teaching ancestral ways. We did not have ready acceptance at powwows because of the way we look racially. You set yourself up if outlandish (taped interview August 8, 2005).

He went on to describe the diversity within the genre and how different people take reenacting more or less seriously. Also, he contrasted the powwow with what he felt was a more meaningful encampment in the places “where ancestors live”:

But there is a real difference in groups. Some involve alcohol especially the white reenactors. And pre 1840’s rendezvous there is a lot of alcohol. So there is a real gradation. There are those who dress up and drink all weekend. I don’t understand why they don’t just drink in their backyard and not dress up! Others “motel it” and only come to camp like a performance. Most of the meaning comes in after the public has left for those that stay around the campfire. Here is a chance to learn about your culture in a relaxed non-public role. Going to powwow is like mass on Sunday. It is so confined to a set ritual; there is no place to share if someone does have a spiritual experience. There is a need for community and here in the east there is a need for community, and powwows don’t give it. You have people here who have Native ancestry. You can’t be in some places and not feel the spirits. The people of Indian descent in reenactments that have some knowledge have a profound effect on the history buffs. Often after conversations people bring up they have Indian. I don’t think I’d be doing it if I didn’t know I had the blood (taped interview August 8, 2005).

As described in the powwow section, reenactments, as performance, have a purpose for Native Ohio people as a way to get in touch with their ancestry and identity.

Reenactments especially provide this link because they are connected through a well known Ohio Valley history with numerous historic place names, and accounts in movies, books and local stories. These weekend or even weeklong reenactments provide more meaning for a Native identity than the daily “realities” of jobs listed to me by Ohio Valley Natives such as Wal-Mart, Sears, military bases or other places of employment that are generic and not tied to a connection with place over time. “White reenactors” are described as distinct from “Native reenactors” in the interview above, by degree of commitment: “I don’t understand why they don’t just



drink in their backyard and not dress up!” As for powwows, confusion by outside observers, not knowing the various levels of commitment, and the fact that many people are still Native in the Ohio Valley, may cause misunderstandings of the meaning of these events. I was told by several Native reenactors that they resented the “way white reenactors portrayed and organized events”, but that they themselves had been mixed in with them at the same events and “had been labeled as playing Indian also”. They made it clear that this is “in no way accurate”, it is “very real” to them but not to the non-Native reenactors as much, because for Ohio Valley Native peoples, reenacting is intimately tied to “place and ancestors” (field notes August 2005).

### **Ohio Valley Natives as demonstrators of arts and crafts**

I also visited a powwow in central Indiana that had a crafts contest. This will be discussed again in Chapter 5 in terms of standards of authenticity.

Some of the arts demonstrated at powwows are not those that would be considered “old time” traditional arts that would be of interest to hobbyists or reenactors trying to represent accurately the past. Examples of these new crafts that are demonstrated are “dream catchers”, cedar flutes, both entering the powwows in the 1980's. At the Andersonville powwow and again at the Pawpaw Moon Festival in 2004 a Cherokee flute maker demonstrated his flutes both in terms of how they were made and how they were played. He was also selling a CD of his music. He later performed through the sound system to all of the spectators of the powwow.

I have observed that most reservation-based Native American people, who do what would be considered fine-quality craft work, make these items in their own homes rather

than displaying and demonstrating at powwows or other events. Therefore, there is a gap between the average or ordinary powwow participant in the Ohio Valley who is not connected with a reservation-based family and what is locally considered traditional Indian. In fact, many of the Ohio Valley Natives have adopted the contemporary “dream catchers” and flutes as the primary modern craft. Also, one might find some rattles or drums being made and sold. The influence of the historic reenactors can be seen strongly in arts and crafts demonstrations. An example was a Shawnee man who demonstrated leather moccasin making at many Ohio powwows. He used thick commercial leather and a pattern similar to those in many muzzle-loading, black powder and reenacting books. These books show rough stitching and in very few ways resemble old-time traditional moccasins, either in museums or in Oklahoma. However the moccasins are accepted because of a general belief that people used to live in a “primitive” condition. In fact I showed this person some photographs of 19<sup>th</sup> century Cherokee and Shawnee moccasins that were finely stitched and beaded and was simply told, “I don't think we did them that way here” indicating a belief that the detailed fine work was not “primitive Indian” (field notes May 2003).

At a southern Indiana powwow, I met a demonstrator of flint-knapping. Arrowheads and other stone artifacts are a popular and important index to Indian identity in the Ohio Valley and many families have them, due to the ease at which they can be found in the Ohio Valley. The only places I have seen flint-knapping demonstrated at powwows is east of the Mississippi, in this case the Ohio Valley but also in the South and in New England. The influence of a focus on the past as being the location of authentic “Indianness” is clear, although copying early types of pottery may perform the same

function for some southwestern US Native communities. In this case, I interviewed a Native American man who demonstrated the work, sold it, and made cultural teaching points as part of this. The stone work that he did was of beautiful quality. It was interesting to see fine craftsmanship valued in Native communities all over North America. This, high quality standard, is a value I have seen for older “conservative” Indians. In the Ohio Valley it is expressed with an index to the far past through stone artifacts. This past is however linked to present day social and educational themes:

Author - Can you tell me what you do?

Flint-Knapper -- Well, if I make these, maybe people will buy these instead of going out and desecrating graves and digging them up. That's how I feel. I was even approached by [a large organization] that they would like me to quit making them because it was too hard to tell mine from the real ones.

He didn't mean and as a compliment (laughter). I took it as a compliment.

A -- I'm interested in your tools. Why copper at the end of that tool?

FK -- Copper is soft enough that it grabs but strong enough that it will fracture the stone. What a lot of people don't realize it is our ancestors were using copper before the white men, clean back to the Paleo Period. The white man wasn't even making metal back that far. So, actually the Indian was using metal before the white man. We was using copper and mixing tin that was found in creeks [pronounced krIks] beds and makin' bronze also (field notes, Indiana, May 2004).

It was very interesting to me the first comment was in regard to a social/spiritual consciousness about not digging up graves, this is an important theme in Indian discourse today. Note the educational aspect of this demonstration, the concern to talk about “our ancestors” and that Native technological ability is unrecognized by the general society. One of the points he made was about the ancient use of copper and the lack of information on this in the general public (4). Also, note use of “our ancestors” changes to “the Indian”. This may be for a sense of ironic effect or, perhaps, a reference/index to other “popular” texts about Indians and Indian artifacts:

FK -- I've watched a lot of guys at flint knappin' conventions that I go to, and I've seen them ... [demonstrating his point, he placed a piece of leather on his bare leg]... it's all in how you're taught. I've seen them go like this [demonstrated a direct downward strike] bringin' the flake back to center, usin' leather. [He then takes the leather off his leg and shakes out the chips and continues] I was taught by family, taught the old way, and I just feel more comfortable doin' it the way you seen, doin' it in my hand. People have asked "why don't you use a glove?" Well, I can't feel the shock when I wear one, I got to be able to feel what I'm doin'. A lot of times I set and talked to people, teachin', and while I'm doin' it, I'm feelin' what I'm doin'.

A -- So, other people in your family have done this?

FK -- Yes, it's been passed down from generation to generation.

A -- Your grandfather did this?

FK -- My grandpa, he died when I was just little, but he taught my cousin who is 15 years older than me. I'm in my 50s but my cousin taught me. It's been in my family for generation after generation. Grandpa wasn't going to be around to teach me so he taught my cousin (field notes, Indiana 2004).

The link to the past here is very important. This is not represented as only a "show" and the authenticity and authority are both linked to the past through a continuous succession of ancestors "been in my family generation after generation". This Ohio Valley Native man clearly demonstrates more than the craft, he also puts emphasis on the manner of the performance of demonstration, and in this way brings the past to the present. The way this demonstration is conducted is seen as very important to the linkage to the past as when I asked him about whether or not he "slabs" the flint first as I have seen others do, to save material. He then goes on to describe the present day aspects of the craft:

FK - Well, when I'm doin' a demonstration, I do it the old way. But when I'm at home, a lot of times, I'll slab some out because I'll waste less. It's quicker and it's faster too.

Customer -- what do you use that horn for?

FK -- This here? [Picks up piece of antler] it's soft like the copper, it's a little bit softer and it'll grab a little bit more. So, I use that for weight, to knock off the shelf [pointing to the end of a piece of flint] there are times I don't want to go too deep and take off too much, so then I'll switch to the bone [picks up another bone tool]. Then I have to do this a few times -- and begins pressure flaking on the edge of a box]. One thing is to make sure is to wear glasses; it only takes one piece goin' into the eye. One time I was workin' out in the shop and I had a piece of metal that was rough and I went

to buff it off, instead of grabbing my glasses I thought it would only take a second, and that is all it took, only a second, bang! I felt it hit me in the eye and I ended up havin' to go to an eye specialist [there's more but I'll leave details for another time].

C -- How long have you been doing it?

FK -- Well, I don't know how many [tools] I've worn out! [continues striking the flint]... I've got to thin this down. I've started large, some turned out 12 inch blades, others are six-inch [laughs]. I try to take pictures so I know what I've done. I've sold so many. I've done some frames for businesses but not many individuals can afford them that way. I just tried to make them so everyone can have them and then they won't go out and desecrate the graves. That's how I feel about it. I'm not against people picking them up from the ground. I've seen points where they have been reworked. I figure if the Creator didn't want me to find it he wouldn't put it out there for me to see, but I am dead set against anyone digging in graves (field notes, Indiana, May 2004)

Two themes stand out that I found in other interviews, the importance of continuing to teach the old ways and the importance of understanding why this should be done. There is also a willingness to sell, but the primary purpose is, according to my informants: “to continue a way of life that is not solely for profit”. The emphasis here is on teaching. Several other people at this event in Southern Indiana did teaching performance/ demonstrations including basket making, beadwork, and moccasin making. Also, three other people mentioned concerns about graves and repatriation issues in the Ohio Valley.

The repertoires people have overlap. Hobbyists, Indians, Reenactors all act as traders. Hobbyists and Indians both do powwow dancing and drumming. Reenactors do not do the “modern stuff” and are very careful to study “old things” and use them in their camps. Ohio Valley Natives reclaiming “Nation” identities are involved in bringing meaningful, tribal specific ceremonies back so they do Green Corn ceremonies, Bread Dances or Midwinter ceremonies. Some are bringing in “stomp dances” from the Southern states especially from the Eastern Cherokee and Alabama Creek. Federally recognized Indians sell as full artists (because of the Indian Arts and crafts Act) and do

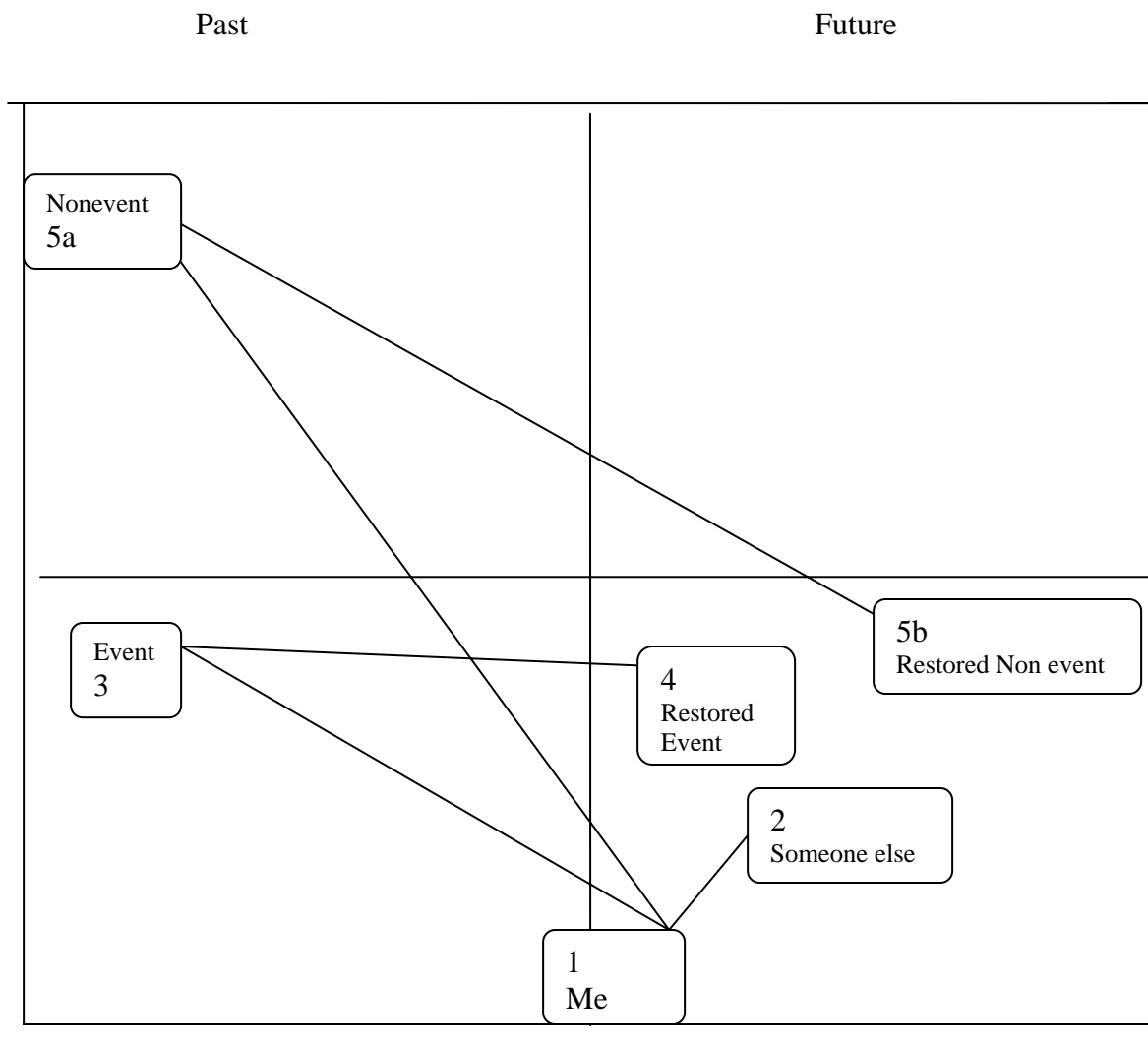
powwow dancing with eagle feathers. Non-enrolled Ohio Valley Natives use turkey feathers, suede or leather and gourd rattles more. Hobbyists do everything the federal western Indians do but do not innovate on their own: “I’m a hobbyist so I only dress up and don’t do the other stuff.” And almost everyone who wants to, does some of the Pan-Indian Lakota style ceremony, smudging with sage, going to the Sundance in Nashville, Indiana or to sweats throughout the three state region.

### **III. CONTINUITY, CREATIVITY, CHANGE**

Both the past and present (geographical west or “Rez”) are “restored” or “reproduced” to the Ohio Valley through reenactors and ceremonialists (reenacting past events or rituals) and powwow and ceremonial participants (reproducing western or reservation performance). This relationship can be understood through Victor Turner’s (1969, 1974, 1977, 1985a, 1985b, 1987) model of social drama combined with Richard Schechner’s (1981, 1982, 1985a, 1985b, 1998) understanding of public performance leading to what is now called “performance studies”. Schechner, in *Restoration of Behavior* (1988) in his description of a model that can be applied to help understand the various forms of identity being expressed or “performed” in the Ohio Valley:

Restored behavior is living behavior treated as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behavior can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, technological) that brought them into existence. They have a life of their own... Originating as a process, used in the process of rehearsal to make a new process, a performance, the strips of behavior are not themselves process but things, items, “material” (p. 35).

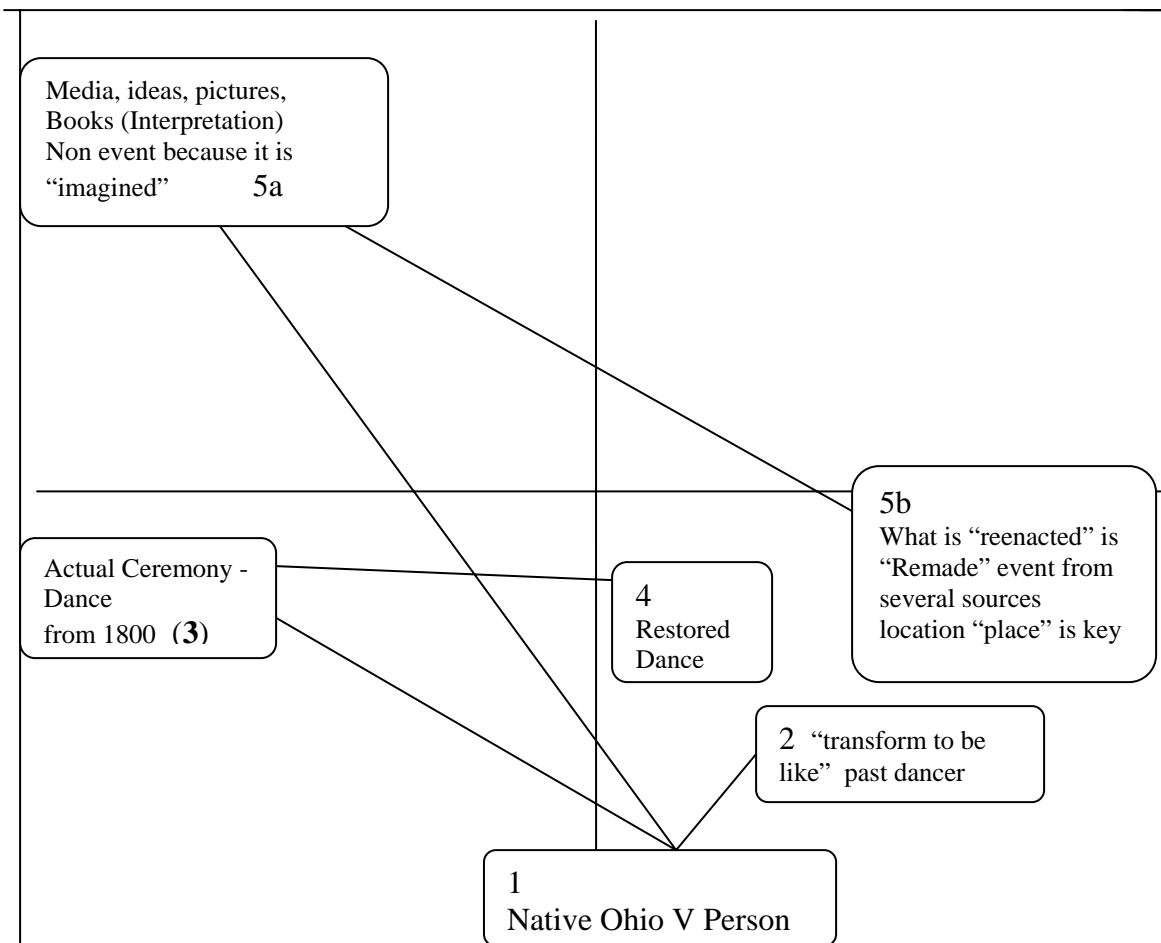
Here old recordings and distant events are modified as they are reproduced in the Ohio Valley. This can be shown in a diagram:



**Figure 5.** This figure borrowed from Schechner (1981) shows a basic model for conceptualizing the restored or reproduced events that I am discussing in this study. As Schechner pointed out this graph uses the future as the place for keeping restored models (pieces) of behavior for performance for use when they become “the present”. Restored behavior as either a projection of “myself” ( $1 \rightarrow 2$ ), or a restoration of a historically verifiable past ( $1 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 4$ ), But usually the restoration is of a past that never was ( $1 \rightarrow 5a \rightarrow 5b$ ). For example, a reenactor who reproduces as accurately as possible what he/she believes the past was. But all the information is from pictures drawn by, books written by and interpretations made by people who have studied old documents, museum collections, and visited places where events occurred and tried to “feel what was like” but still do not have a direct connection to a 200 year old event.



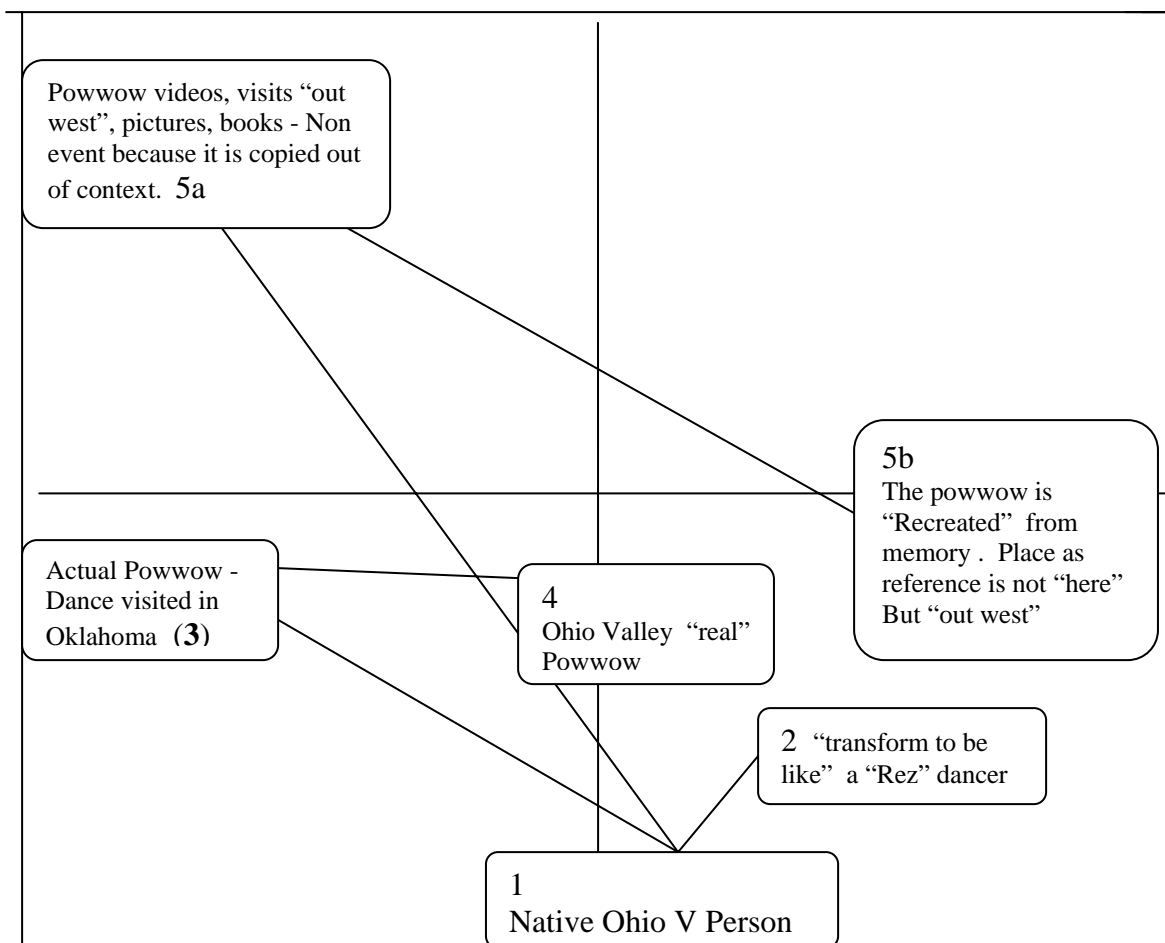
For those who are focused on reenacting the past (figure 6) adapts the design:



**Figure 6.** Shows how the simpler  $1 \rightarrow 2$  replacements, or  $1 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 4$  re-creations become,  $1 \rightarrow 5a \rightarrow 5b$ . For it is the dance (ceremony etc.) "to-be". 5b, controls what details from the past are chosen, adapted or created. Here the material in 5a is the reference more than the actual event. (3) is lost in time except for what can be salvaged to form 5b through 5a.

### **Sources, circulation, and distribution**

The sources for those interested in relating to the powwow, which performs the pan-Indian or the "real Indian" today, the reference point to perform powwows in Ohio is the western or reservation Indian. The can be illustrated in the following example:



**Figure 7.** Here we see that instead of distant “historic” time of the Ohio Valley reenactor, the restored behavior is that of distance in both near recent time and, especially distance. For example - copying the powwow or ceremonial dance or singing style of an Oklahoma, Wisconsin or Canadian Indian.

### Sources for Native language and songs in the Ohio Valley

A present sense of Indigenous identity in the Ohio Valley comes from many sources. Some of these taken from media that are emergent in their own forms such as movies, recorded music and books. In other cases, it comes through participation in healing ceremonies or from other family and community members who are using certain linguistic and cultural styles. At social events, such as powwows, there is a specifically stated indexing of past events through linguistic performance. Linguistic identity markers may also be used between powwow participants to emphasize that they are a

participant and therefore a member of the community and not an outsider. Language can serve as a marker of degree of integration and identification with the community. Certain genre of speech also exists, for example: powwow Master of Ceremonies (MC) and “trader talk”. Within other contexts language is used through the incorporation of Indigenous words to mark cultural “traditional” concepts, especially from languages that are well known to the public such as Lakota and Dené. The language of choice for “pan-Indian” ceremonial language, as mentioned previously, seems to be the Lakota, even for non-Lakotas from Washington to Maine.

As discussed previously, no individual identifies oneself to others through the use of language to communicate. Paul Kroskrity summed up the connection of language to identity: “Identity is defined as the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories. Though other non-linguistic criteria may also be significant, language and communication often provide ... sometimes crucial criteria by which members both define their group and are defined by others” (Kroskrity, 2000, p.111). This may involve code switching which has been noted as part of normal social use in conversation (Gumperz 1982). As pointed out in an earlier chapter, codeswitching occurs in speech between different dialects of English. Fasold et al. (1987) and Mufwene (1992) report that African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) is diverging from Standard English (SE) rather than converging toward it. Language codes may provide the same function in the Indian community.

Bauman (1986) points out: “Oral narrative provides an especially rich focus for the investigation between oral literature and social life because part of the special nature of narrative is to be doubly anchored in human events” (p. 2). The narrative creates a tie or

index to an authoritative past and to the social interactions within communities today.

This study examines how a contemporary Indian person in the Ohio Valley establishes a legitimate cultural identity. Does it come from books, the media, other Indians, grandparents or a combination of these?

As we have seen, in examining how a contemporary Indigenous person in the Ohio Valley establishes a legitimate cultural identity, many sources need to be considered. These include books, the media, other Indians, and family elders. Today's Indigenous identity developed out of a variety of sources. Language can serve as a marker of degree of integration and identification with the community, but most of my research showed most people have an accent or way of speaking similar to their non-Indian neighbors. Incorporation of Indigenous language words to mark cultural "traditional" concepts, are ways some people in the Ohio Valley Native community mark their identity.

A great example of the many sources for language can be found in songs used in the powwow circuit. Many songs contain Indigenous language or English words used in a way specific to Native American events. The distances traveled and circular movements of cultural and linguistic material can be seen in the following conversation with a trader selling CDs of Indian drum groups. In this case, I was discussing a Penobscot song as I know some of the singers in the Northeastern US. The trader added:

When I go to Ohio, the [Ohio] Singers sing a lot of these songs so I knew 'em, so when they, some of the Métis came to Michigan, they [participants in Michigan] said they [Ohio singers] got the CD from the same lady [trader selling CDs] that I did here. And I got on the Internet and found the singers in Ohio got the Penobscot CD from the same trader that she did. But she bought hers in Indiana and they bought theirs in Michigan (field notes, Indiana powwow, July 2004).

### **Raffle, vending and bingo discourse**

The reclaiming of an Ohio Valley Native identity is difficult because of the lack of resources including land and money. In order to grow and reconnect culturally, throughout the Ohio Valley, attention is being paid to raising money for events and for land purchases. At a number of events it was clear that fundraisers like raffles and bingo were major components. At each event the raffle usually has one doing the ticket calling but many people are involved in selling them. At one tribal event there was great excitement that over \$400 came from the raffle even though there were so few people present (about 40 people maybe- and many of these are not tribal members but guests or family).

In Kentucky I have heard a joke I usually only hear in reservation based communities “Do you know the new Indian war cry? BINGO!” Fundraising is an important part of many of the Ohio Valley communities. It takes money to run a powwow or other events. In the case of the Shawnee, there are at least 2 communities, the Remnant Band in Ohio and the Piqua in Kentucky, that are also trying to pay for a land base and tribal operations. Some of the revenue is from Bingo. At powwows and social functions raffles are often held. When I conducted a feedback interview with a couple of powwow participants in Ohio I got the following:

Author - What do you hear or see at this powwow [replaying powwow video] that would tell you this is a powwow?

Woman Participant: T-shirts, raffle, raffle, raffle...

Man Participant: (laughs nodding)

A: Is that something that you don't find at a non- Indian event?

WP: We don't do non-Indian events, ... we did go to the Valentines Day dinner and get together...

MP: Yeah but they wasn't hockin' T-shirts though...

A: But what marks it as an Indian event is talking about the raffles?

MP: Vending T-shirts and raffles for your powwow, you know that!

Raffles have styles and rhythms of their own. Bauman (2001, 2004) discusses the genre of Mexican markets and the calls of vendors that mark them with redundancy and repetitiveness. This is also done to get attention in the noisy setting of Native events such as powwows. I recorded a powwow MC in Ohio to get the feel:

MC -- (Raffle, each single number pronounced clearly and separately) -- movin on... 1-0-3...1-0-3-3, 1-0.. 3-3... OK, moving on, 1-0-0... 1-0-0-9, 1-0-0-9..1-0-0-9... anyone got that?... OK, movin' on... 0-9-9-6,... 0-9-9-6,...(a few repeats with lots of background talking) -- all right 1-0-1,... 1-0-1-5... that's the last number 1015... all righty! Come on! make some noise so we know you got a number! Moving on... all righty... all righty... 1-0-4-8,... 1048... hey, all right! Someone got that one! All righty, all righty, now for the stereo - get your blue ticket. 10... 11... 0-0-0, 10 ...11...0-0-0.... That's aaaall the raffle tickets! That's... that's aaall the raffle tickets! Put your phone# on it for the car next Sunday, next Sunday! Chevy Corsica for the benefit of the \_\_ fire Department. (Laughter and talk about tickets).

As can be shown from the above there is a distinctive rhythm and pattern to this form of speech. This means that a distinctive style has developed over time, and is recognizable enough, to have the people I showed the tape to say, they would know they were at a Native event, as one person put it “with eyes closed”. As with the calls in a Mexican market which are “highly effective in capturing and holding attention” (Bauman 1994: 80), MCs at powwows have developed methods to keep participants attention. Included are variations of pitch, rhythm, style and humorous comments.

### **Genealogy, DNA and Ancestry Discourse**

The lack of recognition by governments and others has left a documentation gap to the past history. I recorded parts of several conversations about genealogy and its tie to family and tribal history. Many of these conversations are similar in that they do not combine genealogy, which are mainly government records and history from a non-Native

perspective with oral tradition from families. In this case, I am having a conversation with three participants, who I will refer to as “Manny”, “Man#2” and “Woman#1”:

Woman 1 - I’ve been doing a lot of research in that book, I’ve found a lot!  
Manny -- Well sure! There were a lot of Cherokees in that area. That book is good to have and if you can't get it from a regular library there...

W1 -- interlibrary loan...

M - There you go!

W1 -- That's what I've been doing...

M -- That's right, it's the best way to get books on Native history and the history is for posterity!... When you're researching you'll find so much information. It's funny how you'll be looking for one thing and find something else or when you're researching your own family you'll find somebody else's as well because these ancestors all intermarried.

W1 -- Yeah, I was researching with this other woman and we started finding the same ancestors!

M -- Yeah! It connected with yours same thing with “Ginny” and I, my family married into hers and they married into “Jim’s” and the other guy's family. And my cousin's family was intermarried with the [an Iroquois Nation] medicine man's family. So, you need to consider how small the population was back then, and they all lived in the same areas.

Man#2 – I’m a lot of tribes but if you say you are too many tribes some people say you're crazy!

M -- I know! But then they don't understand the history. They think you're one and nothing else (laughing and turning to W1continues) -- well, those families were absorbed into the Nottoways and two other nations... (Taped conversation March 2004 Ohio).

The discourse about family connections in the Ohio Valley fits well with the material in the discussion on demographics. As the example above shows there is not one single ethnic origin for an Ohio Valley Native and there is a lot of diversity in the geographic range of travel for marriage partners. The connections between Native families involved some travel. The Nations given in this conversation as it progresses includes Mingo, Seminole and Blackfoot in addition to those mentioned in the dialog. The important thing emphasized is family connections, not specific tribal memberships. As part of a feedback interview, I played the above conversation to two other Ohio Valley Natives, a man originally from Kentucky and a woman from Ohio, to get their reaction:

Kentucky Man -- That whole scene there is Native...

Ohio Woman -- You would never start a conversation in white society with genealogy... this is a classic topic of conversation in Indian events.

KM -- It's like everybody seems like they have connections somehow and to me that is real.

OW -- I mean its real normal for me that when you tell someone you are doing genealogy and they start talking to you about ... oh well if you need stuff, they got everybody that came in through Ellis Island and you say 'no, no, no, I'm working back in the 1750s" and they look at you like you're nuts, its like who could possibly know who their ancestors were in the 1750s .. even the male lines which you have to follow... but in talking to another Native person its like 'I can understand why you want to know where they were moving or where they were at' and so forth, so just the topic of genealogy unless you are at some genealogy convention, it hardly ever comes up in conversation.

KM -- That's something you get in Native society.

OW: They want to know who you are and who your family is... (Taped interview July 4, 2004).

The importance of "roots" is at a number of levels. On one level people ask what Native Nation a person is when they identify as Native. Secondly, some level of proof is required for membership in most of the organized tribal groups. For those attempting to get or already have state government recognition, the standard of proof is usually fairly high. Since, as was pointed out previously, proving ancestry specific to an Indian Nation through Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) records or other sources is almost impossible, family stories and connections with others is very important. I met a number of amateur and a few professional genealogists at powwows and other events that specialize in helping with Ohio Valley genealogy. There are also a number of books dedicated to help with Native American genealogy specifically (Blankenship 1992a, 1992b, 1994; Carpenter 1987; Jordan 1987; McClure 1996; Pangburn 1993; Walton-Raji 1993).

The importance of genealogy to many Ohio Valley Natives is because their racial appearance is often not that of the American Indian stereotype. This has generated a lot of



additional discourse on physical types and characteristics. Much of this discourses centers on challenging or expanding the racialized categories and their accompanying physical characteristics that lead to the exclusion of certain people from being seen as “real Indians”. An example is eye color. In my research I found the following comments: “Well I could tell he was an Indian because he had black hair.” and “I could tell because even though his eyes were blue they had dark lines around the outside.” and “Well, even though he has a beard, I found some old photos of full bloods with full beards.” On skin color and looking “too dark” I heard: “Well, you know in the earlier years many of our ancestors were much darker, they just got mixed in with the Africans and sold as slaves, now most Indians just seem to be lighter”. On the other end of the color line were comments on looking “too light” including: “Lots of Indians, years ago, had blue eyes and blond or brown hair, just read about the Mandans that Lewis and Clark met, they had all different colors of hair and eyes” (field notes from 2003 to 2005).

The discourse about appearance and what an Indian “should look like” is extensive. I have encountered this discourse, to varying degrees, at every event I attended. The concept of racial type and the accompanying physical characteristics are devices for both inclusion and exclusion and used for the purpose of determining the reliability, validity and genuineness of anything named as Native. This is a fully discursive process where the genuineness is negotiated through various degrees of connectedness to racial traits and types.

The desire to prove ancestry through recent discoveries in genetics has also been a subject of conversations. The DNA research is not well understood but many people expressed an interest in trying it. The biggest interest was to test admixture rather than

either patrilineal or matrilineal direct lines. Most people I spoke with were very realistic about their “mixed” rather than “full blood” ancestry and nervous about their mixture being too great to give accurate test result for them. One specific example of discourse on this topic I recorded was:

I heard these tests are not accurate for Indians from the East. There was a Penobscot Indian in Maine that decided to have his DNA tested, he knew he was a full blood on both sides because his family history had been recorded since the 1700s. The tests came back and said he wasn't Indian at all! I don't think we should use these DNA tests because like everything else, they are just for western Indians” (field notes, 2003).

I have not been able to track down the accuracy of this story through the internet or other sources. It may be based in a factual situation, but it may also be an example of an “urban legend”. The main point is that discomfort with proving ancestry is a part of the Ohio Valley Native discourse also. I was told by one Ohio Valley Native that “being Indian is not about race or your genes, it is more about your heart and spirit” (field notes July 2004). I have had this or a similar sentiment repeated on many occasions.

### **Spirituality and Religious Discourse**

The significance of “heart or spirit” as a factor in participating in Ohio Valley Native culture is connected to discourse on “spiritual” topics. One theme that was repeated in many conversations was the importance of religious, spiritual or shamanic experience as part of being a Native American. In fact, this theme was so pervasive that it could easily be a separate study on its own. I found a focus on two broad aspects of this discourse. The first was ceremonial or ritual and the other, was shamanic or dream experiences.

One Ohio Native person mentioned using shamanic work as a professional activity. She has adopted techniques learned from contemporary shamanic studies such as the “Harner Method”. Dr. Michael Harner, an anthropologist, developed this technique which he calls “core shamanism” (Harner 1980, 1999) and attempted to separate the universal shamanic methods from its cultural connections:

By default, experimental research on the existence and properties of spirits has been largely left to shamans. Over many millennia in thousands of different cultures, independently on five different continents, they conducted countless healing experiments with their clients, often in life and death situations, with results that have consistently supported the theory of the reality of spirits. For this reason, the fundamentals of indigenous shamanic practice are remarkably consistent throughout the world....My own personal first-hand study of spirits began in 1961. Then, and subsequently in 1964 and 1973, I was trained by shamans in two different Upper Amazonian Indian tribes and also engaged in extensive research on shamanism worldwide in order to discover its underlying cross-cultural principles and practices. These fundamentals I named “core shamanism” (1999).

The irony is that the shamanic practice is very “Western European” in its cultural feel due to the majority of workshop leaders and participants being of this background. In the 1980s with increasing criticism of appropriation of Native American and other indigenous ways, core shamanism became popular as a way to distance from connections to specific Indigenous cultures and attempt to avoid this criticism. In the Ohio Valley, however, with some Native people reclaiming Native identity, the core shamanistic practices need to be repatriated or retribalized. So, here as in other attempts to restore a Native identity, the question becomes: What source are we to draw on to do this?

In one case, the source is found by asking the Spirits themselves when one goes on a “Shamanic journey” (Harner 1980). Since these involve personal and individual experiences the best way to describe it is in the words of the participants themselves:

I've been involved with the Harner classes because it is the closest thing for those of us here in Ohio who want to work with the Spirits. We don't have old Medicine people still around here willing to teach. But through this method of doing a journey in the Harner method, we can get in touch with our ancestral Spirits and bring some of this knowledge back. The method does have almost all white people involved but the ancestral Spirits may help us know the ways it should be for here. In fact a leader of a tribe here asked me several times to ask the Spirits for guidance on old traditional ceremony and other ways. He just doesn't trust the sources or people available today. Where else can we go but to the ancestors and the Spirits of this place to get our ancestors? (field notes, May 2004).

Another genre of participation was observed at both public powwows and more private events. There are three general areas I will describe. One is powwows; the second is "tribal events" and the third, private non-tribal specific events such as sweats and sundances.

Powwows, as described before, can be seen as performing social, economic and cultural maintenance functions. However, the additional purpose of providing a spiritual or healing experience was repeated to me many times. These spiritual aspects of powwows are well documented and observed anywhere in the powwow community. These include the usual beginning with a prayer by a respected person, respecting eagle feathers, the drum and the general atmosphere that powwows generate through the connections between circles and tradition. One of the distinguishing characteristics of powwow performance is the continuation of the connection between material and spiritual symbols.

However, in the Ohio Valley, there is an additional thing happening. Some people are described as having their own ways of using powwows to express themselves ceremonially. For example, in an interview in Ohio, I was told by a woman upset about the invention of new traditions: "I hope you will discuss the new tradition hocus pocus of

things like turning around as you leave the dance circle saluting with fans”. This is an innovation at powwows done mostly by local Ohio Valley Native people. Basically it may be “cultural diffusion”, combined with an innovation. Many powwow dancers raise their dance fan at certain times to honor something in time with the accent beats of the drum during an “honoring”. This, however, seems to be a new invention of tradition as I have not seen it done outside the Ohio Valley, but was very obvious in this study. At one powwow each Ohio Valley woman raised her fan and turned around once on entering the dance circle. I asked one participant what it meant and was told “it shows honor to the spirit of the circle” (field notes, January 2004). The basic point is that raising the fan came from “powwow culture” as diffusion and the rest is innovation. I recently heard that this innovation is now spreading to the East coast and New England but I have not observed it myself.

As pointed out above, some long term powwow goers are concerned about this practice as it clearly does not seem “Indian” when compared to the standards elsewhere in the country. The concern here is that by incorporating these innovations by people who are seen as only marginally Indian themselves by outside observers, then this “hokeyness” may reduce the credibility of Ohio Valley powwows in general. In fact, I was told by a number of people that some of the exhibitions were “embarrassing” or “uncomfortable”. When I interviewed a person familiar with the activity, I was told “we do this to show respect for the spirit. Entering the circle is a sacred activity; the Spirit needs to be acknowledged” (field notes, January 2004).

Part of what may be happening is that powwows offer one of the only places for people to express Native spirituality in the Ohio Valley. There are no “long houses” or

other community based Native institutions, except for those being reintroduced over the past 20 years for those belonging to reorganizing communities such as the Shawnee. If the spiritual aspect is important to people, and they regularly attend powwows, incorporation of new, personally meaningful, innovations seems likely. Also, people may be combining genres by bringing into the powwow things that are commonly done at the developing tribal private ceremonies.

One of the things I was told many years ago about “the four” directions was that Christian influence has lead to north, south, east, west which makes the sign of the cross as in “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost” rather than going in a circle. I decided to ask about directions to see how they are used in the Ohio Valley ceremonies. I asked a young woman participant at a Shawnee Bread Dance in Kentucky. It shows the way that speech in English common usage may be modified by a cultural context:

Author - So what is your religion?

Young Woman - American Indian.

A - Okay, could you list for me the 4 directions then?

YW - East, South, West, North.

In this example, I do not know if it represents continuity from the past. Because of the history of the Ohio Valley and the lack of an outward continuity of religious celebration, it may be tempting to assume this circular directional orientation is due to the reintroduction of ceremony to the Ohio Valley. But, my hesitation to do this points out an important theme, there is an mix of continuous Native knowledge and ways in the Ohio Valley combined with an uneven distribution of new American Indian practices introduced through powwows and “reservation Indian” (e.g. especially Lakota and Anishinabe) ceremonies. The new hybrid Native communities are a fascinating and growing cultural dynamic.

## CHAPTER 5: AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY IN PERFORMANCE

### Rhetorics of authenticity with regard to forms

Language and discourse have been central in poststructuralist debates about the construction of meaning since the 1970s. Using this same framework, including the implication that the discourse I am examining in the Ohio Valley, I found discourse guiding the construction of what is a “real Indian” and on what was considered legitimate performance for Indians and others. Where is “authority” located to make decisions about which versions of various performance constructed forms are legitimate?

As mentioned in previous chapters, for hobbyists the only legitimate creators of dance styles and dress are from recognized, mostly western, Indian people. The strong connection between Scouting, hobbyists, and anthropologists may be one of the factors in the focus on particular styles now seen throughout the powwow world. This has led to videos, books and guides on material culture done by hobbyists but used by many people interested in Native culture. While some American Indians have contributed to the discourse and information on material culture, the main market for “real Indian” knowledge has been in the less tangible area of ideas, stories and spiritual culture. If a non-Native gets into production outside the physical and material genres of knowledge, they are wide open for criticism as many “white shamans”, criticized as “wannabes” have discovered. However, most enrolled Indians who may say similar things as the “white shaman” are mainly ignored rather than directly attacked even if their spiritual knowledge claims are questionable. For hobbyists and white anthropologists however describing “things” and putting them into categories is a long held acceptable behavior. For Ohio Valley Natives, who often have their own authenticity questioned, there may be

additional incentive to participate in reenactments and living history events where the focus is on material rather than “spiritual” and ceremonial culture. I have been told by several Ohio Valley Natives that when they have stepped into the realm of ceremony openly they have sometimes been criticized by both federally recognized Indians and non-Indians (field notes from 2003 to 2005).

### **Cultural Discourse, dress, dance, song, food and humor**

There are many examples of discourse about cultural matters, most of it in discussing the degree to which something is “Indian” or relates to a specific tribal culture. Food might be evaluated in terms of its closeness to “real” meaning “old time” as contrasted with canned food and other items indexing a present day connection:

I was so excited to see a sign for corn soup and I spent a lot of time getting fry-bread and corn soup. I was disappointed, I think it was cream corn soup- not traditional. We were told when we bought it that it was ‘real good, real Indian food’, I don’t think so! (field notes, January 2004).

At powwows I heard a number of comments about what was “proper” and not. Some examples include debates about woman drumming or even sitting at the powwow drum, whether traditional dress should be put together a certain way or by a certain person, and comments on dancing style: “dancers should glide not stomp” (field notes, July 2004).

All of these examples are a type of discussion I hear outside the Ohio Valley also, it says little about Ohio Valley Native identity specifically, except to point out that the region is becoming a part of the extended “Pan Indian” universe through the powwow circuit.

Humor and storytelling are examples of culturally based expressive performance rather than material cultural. Indigenous humor has been noted as a characteristic of speech-events since at least Vine Deloria’s chapter on the subject (1969:148-168). This



expression of humor does have regional variations but does seem to cross continental phenomena through Pan-Indianism and powwows.

Humor requires a common understanding of themes and concepts in order to work well. As described in earlier chapters, the mixed identity of Ohio Valley Natives is frequent discourse topic and this is expressed in the area of joking related to ethnic categories. Some joking reflects that found in other regions of North America in the powwow circuit and can be easily divided into two general categories. One directed at non-Indians and another more intertribal. Those directed at non-Indians included a wide variety of Custer, Lone Ranger and Tonto, Bureau of Indian Affairs, tourist, and John Wayne jokes. Intertribal humor often targets specific stereotypes of various tribal communities. These include Lakota and eating dogs (seems to have been generated by western films such as “Little Big Man” and “A Man Called Horse”), Northern singers sounding like they are in pain (a reference to the high pitch) and of course large varieties of “fry bread” humor. Other characteristics such as physical appearance, blood quantum, racial mixture, economic or political status also occasionally come up.

In the Ohio Valley, the joking that is utilized demonstrates a variety of types of humor, some of it reflecting attitudes about who is legitimately Native. One example is “What do you call a hundred Cherokees at a Powwow?” The answer is “A full-blood”. In my research I found, not surprisingly, that not all participants found this particular funny since being mixed and considered “low blood quantum” can raise serious doubts, some implied and some openly stated, about the right of the person to claim Native status. A similar joke I recorded was about a light complexioned person at an Ohio Valley powwow who told another person that he was Cherokee and Shawnee. I overheard

an Indian person (who had identified himself as a full Lakota) say to another person “the Indian blood must be in his little toe” (field notes, January 2003). This can work in a similar way for those who are “too dark”. I observed an Oklahoma Cherokee actor, Wes Studi, who was visiting an Eastern Native community that had a high percentage of African-American rather than Euro-American admixture, make a joke about his own appearance that also “fell flat”, due to audience. Wes who looks “classic Indian full-blood” on addressing this audience of Native/ African mixed ancestry people started with “Yes, I am a Cherokee and yes, speak my language and yes, I am brown!” Often this type of humor gets laughter from a mostly “light-skinned” Native audience because of the reputation that there are so many light skinned Cherokees. At this conference, he was met with silence and stares and quickly regrouped saying: “Oh, I guess you need to consider the audience” (field notes, 2004). I found, generally that in the Ohio Valley, humor did need to consider the audience.

Consider, for example, several factors: One is that many of the Ohio Valley Native people have a racially mixed background. Secondly, the lack of official governmental recognition or “blood quantum” cards that are identity markers for federal Indians. Third, lack of recognized land bases, Native language speakers and other markers of identity. Fourth, the mixed feelings generated by many generations of families not openly talking about their Indigenous identity. For some families, the only Indian humor heard for generations consists of generally negative stereotypes of generalized Indian “others”. Some of my informants attributed these comments and “jokes” to be a reminder to not talk about or “take being Indian seriously”. Also, Indian ancestry when mentioned was ‘mythologicalized’ and given status by making all ancestors princesses or

chiefs. Common terms heard in childhood as cited by informants for their ancestors who identified as Native were “squaw” as in “Oh your grandma, she as a real old squaw” and “princess” as in “My mother was said to carry herself proud because she was descended from a princess”.

As might be expected some jokes making fun of “part” Cherokees, Indian princesses and “wanabees” are not always seen as “funny” by some people in the Ohio Valley powwow community. This is of course made more complex by the communication norms by many “federal” Indians who now live in the Ohio Valley, having moved here recently or in some recent generations. A type of class system has therefore developed similar to those pointed out in earlier sociolinguistic studies which demonstrate how speech communities follow class and gender divisions (Labov 1972a, 1972b, 1975, 1990). This class status marking does not seem to follow as much dialect differences as it does topic deliveries and speech genre diversity. For example, “Southern English” is utilized not only by participants in Kentucky, West Virginia and Southern Indiana of the Ohio Valley but may, in several variations, be used by federally recognized Cherokees of North Carolina, Creeks from Alabama or Choctaws from Mississippi and various visiting or relocated Oklahoma Indians. However, what and how things are talked about clearly indexed identity concerns and differences among groups.

On hearing a joke about Lakotas, for example “Two Lakotas go to a football game in Ohio, they see a “Hot Dog Stand” each runs over and buys one. Each looks disappointed and one turns to the other and says ‘What part of the dog did you get?’”. The Ohio Valley participant hearing the joke reacted quickly saying: “Well... I’m tired of hearing Lakotas made fun of, that’s my background.” Later on further inquiry this person

was not from a Lakota community but comes from a family that claims descent from a Lakota ancestor. This person's family attended powwows in the Ohio Valley and have been multigenerational Ohio Valley residents. Occasionally, tribal jokes get these strong negative responses as is true with any ethnic joke. I have observed negative reactions to tribal ethnic jokes everywhere I have traveled in "Indian country" including federal reservations in the "West". In the Ohio Valley, however, I found that the joking complex noted by Deloria did not seem as well established. This may be because of the purpose it was developed to serve:

For centuries before the white invasion, teasing was a method of control of social situations by Indian people. Rather than embarrass members of the tribe publicly, people used to tease individuals they considered out of step with the consensus of tribal opinion. In this way egos were preserved and disputes within the tribe of a personal nature were held to a minimum.... Gradually people learned to anticipate teasing and began to tease themselves as a means of showing humility and at the same time advocating a course of action they deeply believed in. Men would depreciate their feats to show they were not trying to run roughshod over tribal desires. This method of behavior served to highlight their true virtues and gain them a place of influence in tribal policy-making circles (Deloria 1969:149).

The lack of a regularly understood "norm" of teasing may be an aspect of the scattered nature of Ohio Valley Native community life. The necessarily "hidden" and mixed Native population was surrounded by and interspersed with an often hostile non-Native population. One Ohio Valley powwow participant described this lack of humor by some as "a lot of people have been beat up for years about being Indian, and now people, like some Western Indians, say we are not and so we got sort of a 'chip on the shoulder' about this." In my fieldwork I learned to tread a little more carefully in teasing and joking about identity related contents than is norm in more "established" communities. However, joking and teasing are common in some subject areas that do not cut as close to

questioning identity. This provides further evidence that race and ethnicity are topics which hold powerful relationships for the core identities of Ohio Valley Native people.

### **Rhetorics of legitimacy with regard to participants**

Race, as a signifier of difference, cannot be ignored for Native Americans (Nash 1982; Sturm 2002). If race is a construct which it arguably is, it is also something that people believe they can see and identify. It is a subject of discourse: “he/she does not look like an Indian or does look Indian”. It is also used as a social boundary marker, for example, when Indian people with African American characteristics group separately from Caucasian looking Indians at a single gathering. This social division was something noted by Ohio Valley Natives. One African American/ mixed Native powwow dancer during a feed back interview discussion of a powwow video recording said:

One thing that I do notice about this [Ohio powwow] is they have cliques! Like different groups, they don't hang out like a whole entire group, they have clicks. As I saw in the beginning, I seen the traditional dancer, and the MC they were all like hanging out, then I seen those two Dark guys, they were together, and then like you know, the Monia (Cree for “Whiteman”) were sort of clicked up together, three groups. They are not there as one, they are just like three groups which it shouldn't be like that at a powwow but, sad to say, that it is (taped interview June 26, 2005).

Also, there are rhetorics of legitimacy coming from the various groups that seem to allow each to discuss the legitimacy of the “others”. Then these differences are noted as transcending the characteristics in various ways. For example, I recorded comments on accent that caused a person to be sociolinguistically considered Native rather than Black: “Well, I realized she was Indian when she didn't have that Black way of talking”.

Another comment was made about distinguishing a Native person historically by defining terminology broadly: “I found out that she had an ancestor called a mulatto and that

often was used to mean Indian in the old records”. Physical features also were discussed in ways to define legitimacy such as in a conversation on eye color or the way a person acted: “blue eyes that have a dark ring around them often mean that you have Indian ancestors” or “I could tell he was Indian by the way he walked” and “I could tell by the way I asked him what time it was and then he glanced at the sun” (Examples from field notes 2003 to 2004).

Physical appearance is an obvious mechanism for inclusion or exclusion. If you are “brown” but not too brown and your hair is black but not too curly or, especially “wooly”, you may be considered Native. Facial features also were mentioned to me in interviews in how to determine if someone is Native as in having a nose that was “just right, not too broad a nose”. What is interesting is I heard these types of markers for how you can identify a “real Indian” from all shades and “races” of participants. It seems that what a person looks like is clear marker still for many Native people in the Ohio Valley as it is elsewhere in North America.

Names can compensate for looks. People who have names that are recognized in the genealogy and history as tied to historic Native American names are “good”. For example, in a discussion about a person wanting to join an Ohio Valley Native organization: “We checked his genealogy and he has several good names”. But if you are the right shade of brown you will not get questioned as much as if you are not. This is much the same in all of North America as Eva Maria Garrouette points out:

Indian people with high blood quanta frequently have recognizable physical characteristics. As Cherokee Nation principle tribal chief Chad Smith observes, some people are easily recognizable as Indians because they pass “a brown paper bag test,” meaning that their skin is “darker than a #10 paper sack.” It is these individuals who are often most closely associated with negative racial stereotypes in the larger society (2003:48).

It is interesting that the “brown paper bag test” was used in the opposite way for Black people in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who wanted to join certain social clubs, one had to be lighter than a brown paper bag (Russell et al. 1992:27). The main point here is that, in the Ohio Valley as elsewhere racial appearance is important, but it is negotiated more broadly because of the range of mixing that has occurred. “Full-bloods” just do not exist unless they have moved in from elsewhere. What has happened is that some people have negotiated other factors into what a Native person looks like and the characteristics of an Ohio Valley Native may range from light to dark with a variety of physical features. By defining many characteristics as “Native” the definition has become broader and more complex than a simple racial type.

Another way to identify as Native, other than appearance, is to carry an “Indian card”. But, even if you carry a card, some may question people who are too dark or light. The issue is that race to many is a “real” construct in the Ohio Valley that just will not disappear easily. So how is “race” negotiated and performed? Hair may be adapted through use of wigs, dying hair, or straightening. I have been told of all these techniques being used. Tanning and brown coloring locations are used as in Ben Hunt’s specific instructions for Boy Scouts (Hunt 1954). For blue eyes either sun glasses or contact lenses are effective.

These become genre or systems of classification, the body as a “text” that carries meaning. The meaning of the physical appearance is tied to legitimacy. For example, I heard the same story told by two individuals, one was a mixed Italian and Seneca man and the other person was a mixed Indian of various tribes, but blue-eyed and light skinned. The story teller who “looked Indian”, and who later admitted to me that he

learned the story from the one who had the light complexion, was invited to come back and do a paid presentation. The other person, who had the story actually passed down to him, was ignored, he just did not “look legitimate”.

So the function that “race” and the various characteristics of appearance that it performs is what we need to look at. Textually, the concept is argued in many places such as the book “Real Indians” (Garrouette 2003), but, the problem remains. Who is more credible to believe, a “full blood” who grew up on a reservation when they talk about tradition, or a Caucasian or African looking person who grew up in the Ohio Valley? From my research I would say the answer depends on the audience. We all become socialized to “feel” what is legitimate. For some historically mixed communities I was told “we know our own” and that if one even appeared to be a “full blood” I was told “we sure know they aren't from here”. If they were seen, by some, as “authoritative”, I was told “they deny we exist, but we know who we are, so maybe they know some things we don't but they obviously don't know anything about us who still live here” (field notes, August 2005).

What is interesting to me is that the physical characteristics that imply racial categories lead to the potential of the person being read like a text. If they look “black” then the text of a history “slavery” and speech “inner city” came up like an index in conversations. In a similar manner, a Kentucky accent lead to both “racist” and “Cracker” comments when I played the tapes of events for some non-Southern “persons of color” in direct opposition to my referring to the people in the pictures and tapes as “Indian” or “Native”. These stereotypes held true even for some of those from the selected groups. Clearly appearance and speech dialect are powerful mechanisms for



inclusion as Indian or not. What was also interesting is it became difficult, on replay of tapes, for people to comment on the performance or the content of what was said after the determination of legitimacy was made. If the person did not seem Indian to the observer, then what they did or said was no longer used for inclusion in definitions of what is Native American, regardless, for some anyway, of how the persons defined themselves.

### **Mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion (boundary work)**

None of the people I spoke to apologized for being present at any American Indian or Native events in the Ohio Valley. There were others who made comments about those they felt should or should not be present. A number of powwows in the Ohio Valley have specified that participants should be “real Indians”. This is often a difficult matter as discussed for those who are from tribes that do not have government recognition, or in rare cases, from tribes with state rather than federal recognition. Also, there are many self-identified Indians with no specific tribal community connections. Also, there are various non-Natives variously described as Boy Scouts, New Agers, reenactors, and hobbyists who are clearly on the periphery of involvement except by invitation.

### **Genealogy**

Some individuals from Anderson, Indiana claimed direct descent from Chief Anderson through one of his daughters who “stayed behind” when the Delaware left for Oklahoma. They cite a specific historic reference about a trader named Stanley who married one of Chief Anderson's daughters (History of Monroe County, Indiana). I was told that the Oklahoma Delaware did not accept this relationship and that the descendents

from Indiana felt uncomfortable trying to participate in the events in the town they live in because they were relegated to not being “real Indian”. In this case they participated as spectators and decided to observe but not confront the issue. They said they had no way to “prove it” as all the genealogy was in question and it is easy to see that people would try to hide Indian descent. In fact, on contacting a Stanley family genealogist I was told that the Stanley Indian connection was an obvious fabrication “because the author of the history hated the Stanley family and made up this story to “make them look bad”. This “fact” seems no more verifiable at this point than the claim to descendancy. However, the issue remains that people believe they have descendancy from this tribe or any others in the Ohio Valley that are verifiable from official genealogy sources.

Other stories of ancestry that can not be verified from genealogy include western Indians visiting the East. In one case, they believed their ancestor was from a Boarding school and in another case, the ancestor was “part of a delegation of treaty Indians traveling to Washington DC” who in the travels took up with an Ohio Valley White woman, got her pregnant and then left for their western reservations.

### **Racial Appearance as a mode of exclusion and inclusion**

In the Ohio Valley mixed African and European people often hear “you don't look like an Indian to me”! Looking too white or too black are clear markers that serve to define the boundaries between participation in different types of events. This was brought home to me one day in a conversation with another person who had a very dark brown skin color. While we were discussing identity he remarked “there were many very dark Indians here before the Europeans arrived. Many tribes have gotten lighter in color since then.” This conversation continued with several more statements about how “in the

past people were much darker” including references to historical sources from the early explorers and Spanish colonists. I was a little defensive since I’m a much “lighter in color” Indian. I then asked him if he had been given a hard time for being too dark. He paused and said “yes”. I then asked if he thought I had been given a hard time for being light and he replied that he “didn’t think so” (field notes, February 2004). After talking a bit more it became clear to me that the color issue was pervasive as an experience of being American Indian for all colors. It may be similar to the ideas of color graduations found by some scholars of ethnic identity and boundaries for the African American community where being dark or light has various meanings depending on setting. These issues came up repeatedly in my observations and interviews.

During my field work, I found that appearing to be of African descent was a strong barrier to inclusion in consideration of “Native”. This was true for all “racial groups” of participants in the study. I recorded many examples in my field notes. For example, during a conversation with an older man who identified as a former “Navajo code talker” now living in the Ohio Valley, he told me how tired he was of “pretend Indians”. On asking what he meant, he spoke about “those niggers who are making all the money, anyone can see they aren’t really Indians, they’re just making money off it” (field notes, Indiana powwow, May 2003). Another time talking to a “white” hobbyist, who travels between the Ohio Valley and Oklahoma and prides himself on relationships with “real” Indians, I mentioned an east coast First Nation and was told “you know they are just niggers”. In both of these strong statements, the fact that the people were mixed Black seems to “cancel out” the American Indian since they were now African American. It is interesting also that the hobbyist several times asked me how much Indian I was, and

made comments that it could not be enough to really know what being Indian was. This is an example of the racial appearance as a category being used as means of assigning legitimacy.

I also heard a comment about a “chief” of a non-recognized group being criticized and several people thinking of removing them from office. During this exchange someone said that at least “he looks more Indian than the others (possible leaders) and we need to look good to be recognized”. After that there was silence.

How does the racial exclusion play out? Many people use paint, wigs, suntan, and hats to transform the appearance of skin color, hair, or lack of hair. I also recorded a story about “the old Indian woman” who sold at “pageants” and powwows who was “very dark”. The story continues that “when she died and they undressed her, it was only her face and hands that were dark - she had been dying them with boiled walnuts all those years to make her baskets sell better!”

DNA has also been identified as a possible way to include or exclude people based on biology. This is a new area of research and some groups mentioned it as important to future determinations of who is “Native”. In one situation I observed a discussion about a person who had their mtDNA test reporting a non-Native American haplogroup instead of the A, B, C, D or X that are specific to the Americas. In this case it was explained as the “Viking ancestry” that is carried by many eastern groups. This example shows that there is not a trust yet, among Ohio Valley Native people that this type of testing represents the genetic history of Eastern tribes. There is a need for much more research and samples of Native American DNA before this type of testing can be used comfortably as there is a possibility of error and for populations that are greatly

mixed with European or African the admixtures may not be accurate unless the person has over 10% Indian ancestry. Also, much of the baseline DNA for the admixture tests has been from southwestern American Indian people and therefore may not be reflective of Eastern American Indians (Malhi et al. 2001; Malhi and Eshleman 2004). (1)

**“Card carrying” and “Recognized” Indians as a mode of exclusion and inclusion**

At urban Indian centers the criteria often used is membership in a federal tribe or at least possession of a CDIB (Certificate of degree of Indian Blood) card issued by the federal government. Sometimes even members of state recognized tribes are excluded and frequently Indians with no government recognition are deemed ineligible for services. One of the best examples of exclusion was the use of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 to exclude certain participants from some powwows. I had a conversation about the criteria to sell as a trader at an Ohio powwow (2004) connected to an urban Indian center and was told they would not accept traders from state recognized tribes:

We need tribal registration cards with your vendor application. This group won't accept state recognition cards. You'll have to take it up with the board, they told me no state recognized, we have state recognized tribes here in Ohio but we don't accept them (field notes, Ohio, January 2004).

At another powwow in Indiana there was a craft contest. At this event, a visiting American Indian woman from California was selected as the judge. She told me she did this on a regular basis when visiting from the west, because it was felt that she “knew real quality much better than people living locally”. Several people repeated this theme that they wanted to see western Indian artists, so that they could be sure that the art was accurate and “real Indian” quality.

Several of my informants mentioned the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis, Indiana and its annual week long Indian Art sale in the spring, as representing a “true and authentic” standard for Indian art. In the year I visited, 2002, there are almost no representations of art east of the Mississippi. The exception was a black ash basketmaker who demonstrated while he worked. The majority of the other artists, mainly silver and turquoise workers from the southwest, sold their art without demonstrating the manufacture. The performance of making baskets, woodcarving and other “traditional crafts” is a part of most Eastern Woodland “show” selling going back 200 years (Phillips 1998). In my grandparents’ generation, this was a way to attract customers and assure authenticity at the same time. It is interesting that this tradition of demonstrating while selling continues among the Ohio Valley Natives, and that they are excluded from Indian Art shows because of lack of membership in a recognized tribe.

There was a strong emphasis at the powwows I visited in the Ohio Valley on the authenticity of “Indian art”. One way this is assured is through the requirement that crafts persons, artists and vendors be registered with the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. This has created some problems and confusion at powwows as the following interview points out. Some participants commented on the Indian Arts and Crafts Act as being one that excludes artists who are Indian by other Indians:

There is that law that you can’t sell your art as Indian unless you’re enrolled and that hurts a lot of people. Even people that have a lot of Native ancestry and some with even more than those who are on the books, but she still can’t claim it unless you’ve got that card. And the card’s not doing what it’s supposed to do because the imports have flooded the market. The general public doesn’t know anything about the law and the [federal Indians] that are having it shipped in don’t care. There are a lot of powwows now especially in Ohio where you can’t dance at them or sell your crafts. They are card only. In Ohio they have a strong card-carrying population. These powwows aren’t run by Indians they are run by other people and they want

real Indians. I don't sell at them because I don't have a card. My home base is Indiana (taped interview, southern Indiana, 2003).

The person in this interview, a retired Ohio Valley Cherokee, gave an example of how she continues to sell the art of Native Ohio Valley people: "I call it Native inspired. There are what I call 'woodpile crafts' because I can't put that they were Indian made on them. A lot of people put Cherokee on them but that's not legal." (taped interview, southern Indiana, 2003). It was also mentioned that this was a reason why there are big separations in the types of events that people attend. "Card carrying Indians" go to some and the non-enrolled go to others if they want to participate. This encourages a further gap between those to perform one way in contrast to the other. Separate identities are developing and these identities are performed in increasingly divergent ways.

The difference in the governments in each state has led to differences in exclusion and inclusion. For example, the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 does allow for "state recognized tribes" to be covered by the Act. However, it only applies to state recognition conferred by an office of Indian Affairs. In Ohio, several tribes have recognition by legislative action on a bill, but these do not qualify. In Kentucky, the governor's proclamation recognizing a tribe is not covered either; it must be a office of the government that is created with the purpose of recognition as part of its mandate. Alabama is the closest state with an Indian Affairs office that has a presence in the Ohio Valley and it recognizes the Piqua Sept of Shawnee (also sometimes "of Ohio Shawnee") so members of this tribe are able to sell art as "Indian Made" where others are not. Therefore, having state recognition from Ohio, Kentucky or Indiana "only" is not enough to allow tribal members coverage under federal laws such as, The Indian Arts and Crafts Act. None of these states have a formal Indian Office branch of its state government to

confer a more formal recognition acceptable to the BIA. The federal government's legal interpretation of a recognized tribe was made to include "state recognized tribes" only in the late 1990s. This is, therefore, a new concept. The discrimination creates a difference in the types of events participants will go to. The influence of pan-Indian culture that is emerging across North America among "recognized" tribes has been of less impact than might be expected on the emerging Ohio Valley Native culture. Reenactors have had more influence on Native Ohio emergent culture because they do not care if someone has some form of "official recognition" or not, and people feel welcome to participate. This was true even if it also involved many non-Native perspectives. Native Ohio Valley people joined into the historic reenactment circuit, instead of the powwow circuit, partly because of discrimination directed at "non-registered" Indians. This is helping to form a second type of emergent culture along side the more urban based powwow culture.

### **Metalanguages of evaluation**

Comments of evaluation were made at most events. What was considered a good performance for reenactors was the accuracy to the past, the ability to generate a feeling that people were "back in time" at a certain period. I went with two people to a reenactment after attending mostly powwows. After they put on their "old time clothes" with nothing on that could be considered "modern" one made the comment while walking into the camp accompanied by many greetings from people similarly dressed "I feel like I'm home, all my friends I've missed, its so familiar". It was made clear to me at one powwow that had many people who also were "Native reenactors" present that my dance clothes were not appropriate because they would change the "feel" of the event,



they felt “I had too many bright colors”. A good event was one where leather and the colors tan and brown were used mostly to the exclusion of others.

Another event that represented a ceremonial aspect of contemporary Ohio Valley culture was a sweat lodge ceremony I attended in Ohio, there were different evaluations by different participants. The Ohio Natives that had never been to a sweat before, but had attended a combination of powwows, New Age events, ceremonial dances and reenactments said they felt it was a positive experience: “This was really good, I’ve never done a sweat lodge before I feel so relaxed after it”. Another said “I could really feel the spirits close to me”. The ceremony was done in a style adapted to the Ohio Valley and not following the Lakota tradition. (All other sweats I attended in the Ohio Valley were clearly Lakota style). One person made the comment “I’ve been to a lot of sweats by real Lakotas, this one, just, I don’t know, didn’t feel right, its just different I guess but I can’t tell if its right!” A young man followed this with “Well, the Lakotas aren’t from here, I’ve been to them before and in this one I could feel the spirits of this place not the west!”

I have heard powwows evaluated in terms of large crowds, many dancers and many traders being in attendance as being the standard for a “good” event. Sometimes, however the quality was more important than numbers. One powwow I attended on the Ohio river had very few people attend. I thought it would be declared a disaster but at the end of the day on Sunday everyone still present was called together by the MC who said “I just want you to know what a special and great time this was! We didn’t have any tourists or trouble makers come. It felt real good, like family, I think of you all now like

family. Did you see the eagle fly over during the last song? that means powwow has been blessed. Please all of you come again next year!”

At one southern Indiana powwow in 2004 the MC made a long evaluative comment that spoke to the “feel” of the powwow:

It's real nice to be at a powwow where everybody shows love and respect to each other and is cooperative. It's a very special event -- good feelings, and to the best of my knowledge, we'll have the same drums which I'll introduce as I go along. I'm just happy to be here. Looking forward to this evening, making new friends, meeting old friends. That's what powwows are all about. We got a half-hour and we'll have a grand entry. I didn't have a chance to visit with many of the traders this time. I usually go around and visit with all the traders, but from what I can see from here, the traders really look good with displays of really nice merchandise and I recognize a few traders and really appreciate seeing everything real nice and laid out. People willing to help you and talk to you that means a lot. So keep it up traders! It's real nice! (field notes, southern Indiana, May 2004).

Here was an emphasis on good feelings, the drums and the performance of the traders.

Other participants may emphasize things such as the dancers or the dances. There has been an increasing trend at powwows in the Ohio Valley to devote more attention to honoring Veterans including “veterans honor songs” and dances. Veterans have always been component of most intertribal powwows but the past 20 years the focus has increased greatly. So much so that I recorded the following complaint:

There are so many Veterans dances and specials that it seems I can't get out there and dance at all! I know some of them [veterans] went through a lot but most of them never saw action even! Its like a big military club these days I just want to dance! (field notes, August 2005).

In contrast, a powwow organizer came to me, after hearing I had lived and worked on reservations in Washington State, and made the following request:

I'm trying to have the best powwows for veterans in Indiana, I heard you have contacts at many reservations; I want flags from every Indian Nation I can get. How many flags could you get me for this powwow? Wouldn't it

be a great feeling to dance in your Nation's flag? It would just feel so good to see that! (field notes, Indiana Powwow, July 2003).

Another point of evaluation was in terms of the weather. Some of the events were rained out, muddy, full of mosquitoes or just plain hot. This and location made a big difference in terms of evaluation of events. The point was that place and context were the important things to consider in Ohio Valley events I observed. There was a blending of reenactors with powwow and generic Ohio Valley Natives mixing and combining elements. The hybrid results are evaluated as positive or negative according to the usual frame of reference people have. Most evaluations were somewhat neutral but it was clear that many people had a preferred comfort based on their usual performance event styles. My own evaluation is that there is an overall new "Native feel" developing in the Ohio Valley. This may represent the emergence of a new hybrid blended culture which has not yet finished "mixing" and in this "the feel" is important. Now that I am working and living in "real Indian" country of British Columbia, I miss many of the sincere "family like" events I attended, even if I wear too much color, sometimes.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Erving Goffman (1959) described, from a sociological perspective, in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, how everyday human interaction is like a performance, similar to actors on a theatre stage. Performances, he said, are constructed and are “the arts of impression management” from what others may observe. The observer, not the one performing is, most important. There are private and public performances. We see that in the Ohio Valley, the differences between public powwows and private powwows and ceremonies are about audience. For Ohio Valley Natives, the context or audience both play a role in creating a new expression of “an old” culture. Most Ohio Valley Natives do not have the legitimacy conferred by federal recognition and often have racial appearances that label the person as “White” or “Black”. By having many performances held privately, the audience is mainly that of community members and similar social groups. Meaning is represented here as an “in-group” meaning, tied to the Ohio Valley as the place or location of what is performed.

The concept of “emergence” in both culture and performance (Bauman 1977; Williams 1973) applies in thinking about the Ohio Valley Native culture. It is forming, developing, recombining, in short - emerging into something new, a new culture that is utilizing elements of the old, but mostly filtered and reconstituted through both romantic and sympathetic sources. Appalachian and other “folk cultures” have combined with the culture of incoming reservation American Indians to contribute parts to this new emergent culture. What is consistent with most of the people considering themselves “Native” I spoke with was the importance of place. This emergent culture is tied to place which gives it power and meaning. This emergent culture is also, as Williams would point out, political and is resisted because it challenges the established norms and

constructions of what is real or genuine. One of the most consistent themes I heard from Ohio Valley Natives was awareness that they were judged negatively, as not “real” by both some “authorities” and some other Indians. Official blessing and sanction have not been bestowed on most of the groups I spoke with, except for the few state recognized tribes mentioned in the chapter on demographics. Despite this, all reported that they felt the “culture” and “ways of the past” are “rapidly returning”. In short, I found during my research, that there is a new Native American consciousness, identity and culture in the Ohio Valley that is growing and will be different from what we have seen before as “Indian”. It has clear centers and central figures the form new tribal nuclei, but many other people from the periphery with Native American ancestral ties are being attracted and becoming more actively involved.

This reemergence of a Native identity has as its base, a long history of mixed Indian, European and African peoples in North America (Forbes 1964, 1978, 1993, 1997; Nash 1982). The Métis people now recognized in the Canadian constitution have origins in the Ohio Valley (Tanner and Pinther 1987). The Métis or “Halfbreeds” have been a part of the fringe or periphery of society for over one hundred years in North America (Adams 1995; Campbell 1973). Many Métis traveled as far as they could in North America to escape the racism and destruction of Native peoples that occurred in the Ohio Valley and elsewhere. The Ohio Valley Métis were ancestors of some of the recognized Canadian Métis and were instrumental in the building of Pacific Northwest, where the Métis, as a US mixed Native group, are now also unrecognized by governments (Jackson 1996). This mixture of Native and non-Native led to the emergence of Michif a language which is the blend of two language families, considered by some linguists to be an almost

unique language situation with its genesis 200 years ago and still surviving in a few communities today (Bakker 1997). The fact that there is no option for Native people in the United States to be “Native American” or “American Indian” except through the governmental recognition process and that, unlike Canada, there is no recognition of historic mixed Native peoples, the identity of the Ohio Valley Native peoples is necessarily contested. Hopefully, the academy, including folklorists, linguists and anthropologists, may begin to examine its relationship with these peoples more closely. The academy needs to consider Indigenous perspectives on the relationship between tradition, language and identity as it is influenced by the attitudes of these academic disciplines (Tamburro 2002, 2004).

### **What does this mean in terms of Indigenous language and culture?**

Meaning is conveyed through activities, institutions, and discourse. We find that there are a variety of discourses going on in the Ohio Valley, with more than one meaning. I focus here, however, on the discourse of meaning, specifically for the subset of people who do define themselves as Indian through a continued presence in the Ohio Valley. Here we find that there is a convergence and overlapping of discourses associated with reenactments, historical fiction, historical “fact”, a sense of place, a learned Indianness from the “Rez” and from the past. This is similar to what Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) describes using his term “polyphony” to emphasize a multivoicedness that occurs in all discourse. His emphasis was on written works but the “multi” voices of the Ohio Valley community are diverse and powerful “interactions of consciousness” (Bakhtin 1984:32) including written works but also going beyond them. All of these are constructed in various ways, but reproduce and reinforce each other through cultural

performance. In this the identity being formed is connected to multiple concepts of language use and culture in highly intertextual ways (Morris 1994, for discussion especially from the writings of Bakhtin on intertextuality).

In responding to the debate often referred to as the “Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis” which is found in both a strong and weak form, there may be implications. The discussion about language and culture being connected and directly influencing each other is more complicated than studying whether colors or numbers are understood the same way by speakers of different languages. The influence of language on thought is more subjective than that – and therefore entirely missed by those trying to form an “objective” experiment. Perhaps this is why some researchers have a problem with many “post-modernist” ideas to begin with, the inability to do the “hard work” of using multiple ways of knowing, one of which includes intuition and feelings. This process is required for what Dell Hymes called communicative competence (1974). However, this lack of measurability does not mean that the concept of quantitative research does not apply here. It is important to use a diversity of research methods that take into account human impressions, thoughts and feelings (Becker 1996).

### **What does this mean in terms of Identity?**

The rise in ethnic consciousness since the 1960's has led scholars to discuss ethnicity in ways that transcend the assimilationist model. The question of what has created the power of people to retain or develop ethnic identities separate from the idea of melting pot has led to numerous debates. Is it possible that in the Ohio Valley the reclaiming of Native identity through powwows and renewed Indigenous tribal affiliations are a part of this new ethnic awareness and identification? In many of the responses from participants in this process was

a discussion of the importance of place. This discussion included two different general approaches: first was ties to past blood relationships and second ties to the stories of the place. The claim of identification with an Indigenous Ohio Valley identity did seem to consistently emphasize some tie to location, either through specific tribal identification or historical influence. For example, many participants who spoke of ancestors were not necessarily identified as having written records of Indian ancestry in specifically Cherokee, Shawnee, Mingo, Delaware, or other tribes known to have been in the Ohio Valley.

Additionally there are many references to caves, mounds, old battlefields and villages that tied their conversation and questions of identity to specific places. One is reminded of Keith Basso's discussions of the importance of place and stories to identity. In thinking of the power of the place to influence the thinking of participants in the current ethnic revival, I am impressed by the emphasis that participants placed on the multigenerational influence of residing in the Ohio Valley. Claims of blood ancestry and genetics tied to the specific tribal groups were often discussed as validated through oral traditions within their own families rather than through third party documentation. Part of this claim to Indigenous inheritance, was the point that their Ohio Valley Native ancestors stayed, because of the importance of place, while the others, who received recognition from the US Government, were the ones who left. A number of respondents mentioned the importance of the spirits inhabiting the land influencing their own and their families desire to maintain an Indigenous identity. I am reminded of the point made by Vine Deloria Jr. (1973), in his discussion of Native spirituality, that the land itself holds the religion or spirituality of the people and that over time the land, itself, may have the power to change the people who live here for many generations.



If we consider, using concept of indexicality, that for generations the people residing in the Ohio Valley, that are now the powwow participants, have collected artifacts, heard historical stories, and have resided in the places with such a strong connection to an Indigenous past, it seems likely that individuals will use this past to give meaning to their present and future. Therefore the need to prove Indigenous heritage through a third party such as provable degree of Indian blood as required by the Federal Government for recognition is eclipsed by the power of place in developing an ongoing feel of identification. The tie to the past is seen very clearly in the emphasis on dress related to reenacting, using as accurate as possible records of 17th, 18th, and 19th century. The reenactment movement, which includes many people not claiming Indigenous ancestry, therefore has close ties to the cultural reclamation of those claiming such ties. Emphasis on doing muzzleloading, dressing in buckskins, paint, quillwork and old trade beads are some of the many examples of this. Both reenacting historic battles and contemporary powwows show a marked indexing of the early 1700's and early 1800 for many participants. Indexing this time and culture is a form of cultural appropriation by non-Native Indianists or Indian hobbyists. These imitators of an idealized culture are often associated with Boy Scouts and other dominant cultural organizations and strive for contemporary accuracy by copying American Indian dance, dance styles and dress. For those claiming an Indigenous identity in the Ohio Valley, the Indianists provide a resource for knowing western plains traditions copied from both the Southern Plains peoples, especially Ponca, and the Northern Plains people, especially Lakota. By incorporating a combination of reenactment, Indianist versions of western plains culture with family oral tradition on what constitutes Indian identity, along with a variety of historical novels, both the Ohio Valley powwow and reenactment scenes become a huge hybrid.

The concept of an ethnic group identity, in general, becomes one that involves a complex hybrid of several forms. The core of this identification is Ohio Valley focused with an Indigenous “American Indian” origin. This origin however, may be tied to blood, culture and/or place. The focus of my research has been to locate the role that language and culture play in this identity. Language is a primary aspect of any Nations’ or groups’ identity. However, the Indigenous languages of the Ohio Valley have not been spoken in communities there for at least 150 years, since the removals of the last group of Wyandottes in the mid-19th century. Isolated pockets of some Shawnee, Cherokee, Seneca, Mingo and Miami speakers may have continued, but these seem to have contributed little to the speech of the Ohio Valley participants interviewed in my research. What I did observe, was reintroduction of language in the form of word lists and several attempts at classes in specific languages, usually in conjunction with either a reenactment or powwow. From these classes and lists, certain words and phrases have entered regular use. For example, some use of “pesalo” by some of the contemporary Ohio Valley Shawnee community. This can be traced to word lists, in the community, which introduced the word in the 1990s. This and other words may or may not be used in contemporary Shawnee speaking communities in Oklahoma. Other examples of these words are found in the questionnaire mentioned previously and found in the Appendix. What it showed was that the majority of people at the event knew a few words of a combination of languages including Anishinabe, Lakota Cherokee or Shawnee. Over time the, continued use of these combinations may develop into a new and unique linguistic code, specific to the Ohio Valley Native community.

In terms of racial identity the construct of “Semitic” is easier to use to help understand that you can not tell the race of a person by looking at them. The clear definitions of the “four

“races of mankind” that has been used by most North Americans as an “obvious” division between humans, and more recently in the “Medicine Wheel” constructs of Indian healing circles, has remained popularly applied to Indigenous North Americans. Anyone stepping outside these “clear” categories who may look partially, but not “full” White or Black are questioned. This is especially true for American Indians, since we all know what an Indian is supposed to look like, Indians were on nickels for years after all. It is interesting that the rhetoric of anthropologists today, that race does not really exist, is now seconded by some traditional First Nation Elders in Canada, such as William Commanda, who has added a fifth race, with the color “green” added to the “traditional” white, red, yellow and black to account for the mixed people today such as the Métis (personal communications with Indigenous social workers, Ontario July 1990). Of course the problem of which particular mixture is meant by green is not addressed. Maybe we will need to add many more colors to the medicine wheel to be more accurate. In Eastern Canada, where Commanda lives, the mixture is easier to identify, as it is mostly Caucasian and Indian. But as in racially classifying a Jewish person, the issue for American Natives is becoming complicated in similar ways. Racists have managed to do it as has been demonstrated by history but it is hard, what feature does one focus on? Noses? Circumcision? Brooklyn accent? In a similar way to the multiple factors historically, socially, culturally, biologically and linguistically that contribute to the present obvious diversity, with brown and blue eyes, dark and light skin or hair, for Semitic people (including Semitic Moslems and Christians etc.), we see a new and emergent “ethnic” category arising in the Ohio Valley, and in many other places, calling itself American Indian, Native American, Aboriginal or Indigenous even when this identification is challenged both within and from outside the Ohio Valley Native community. Here we enter into discourse on

ethnicity, which does not allow us to escape the rhetoric about race completely, but the specific construct of “Indian” as a racial type in the Ohio Valley is being modified with implications for the rest of the “New World” also. However, part of the script of socialization in the western world is a social hierarchy for many types of difference. It may be that we are seeing the continuing maintenance in the Ohio Valley of “high class” or “privileged” (in Canada the term is “status” and the US “recognized”) Indian, versus lower classes all marked by variations in appearance, speech and legal status as well as performance styles in terms of reintroduced (modified) languages, lack of eagle feathers, dance clothes and different singing styles/ song knowledge.

### **A Developing Oral Tradition**

There is a clear gap between the communities in Oklahoma, where the majority Native Nations from the Ohio Valley were removed to, and those of the Ohio Valley today. Much of this is related to very different histories for at least the past 170 years. Indeed any connections during those years are contested and likely to remain not provable. The connection is one of belief by Ohio Valley Natives and considered with varying degrees of documentation and acceptance by those who are members of the Oklahoma “federally recognized” communities. Part of the recent oral tradition of the Ohio Valley includes incidents of confrontation between them and representatives of Oklahoma communities. One incident mentioned to me several times is that of a Shawnee ceremony in Ohio during the early 1990s. It involved a dance that included a pole set in the center of the dance area. When visitors from Oklahoma came to the site they reportedly took axes to the pole to emphasize the ignorance of “wannabes” and “New Ager Indians” to do ceremonies they did

not understand. This incident, in a number of versions, was cited as a reason for caution in approaching the people of Oklahoma for more help in reviving traditions.

One thing that became clear to me in my first interview at Indiana University was that, many non-Natives living in the Ohio Valley believe American Indians no longer live in the region, they are historical objects or simply exist “out west” somewhere but of little relevance to the world today. Indian people they may meet are simply seen as part of the contemporary globalized American culture. Being Asian or African may be interesting and exotic but Indians are “gone”. This creates a past frozen set of images that exist in pictures, texts and museums put together and recoded mostly by people with no understanding and often hostile feelings toward the actual American Indian people. (The mural at Angel Mounds in Southern Indiana has many painted Indians – all copied after an Asian person model to “get the correct look”). In these constructs, the remnant mixed bloods of the Ohio Valley could be considered “not Indian” and as in the case of the formerly labeled “tri racial isolate” groups could now just be “disappeared”. There are gaps between what was in the past and what is today. These gaps are being filled in from various sources. Romantic novels of frontier life, western powwows through hobbyist versions of imitation, channeling spirits through dreams or visions in the locations of past villages, or invited “real Indians” from almost anywhere including Latin America, may all serve to fill the gaps. It is also wide open for new traditions to emerge that draw from both “accepted” sources and the fantasies of historical fiction. There is no way to be sure in many cases what is “real” and what is “fictional”, authors can make claims about the traditional knowledge they got from their “elders” who hid the knowledge from everyone else, but who knows?

So, what are we left with? Basically, the question becomes what can we ever really know of the past anyway, and how can we actually be sure of any of our past understandings of what “Indians” were? As ethnographers we are often left having to draw from the same sources, although hopefully with a bit more thoroughness and context, as those writing historic fiction. If we, on the other hand, view the present time as our focus and do our ethnography based on what we see actually happening in the here and now, in context, we may have the opportunity to explore some very exciting phenomena that can contribute to our understanding of how identity works, the importance of place to forming identity, and how culture and identity are negotiated through discourses of various types.

Phillip Deloria in “Playing Indian” (1998) points out that American Indian imagery has always played a part in the American national identity, but it is often a romantic, idealized and elusive identity. The romantic historic novels, Boy scouting, Indian hobbyists, Order of Red Men lodges and Buffalo Bill Shows in the Ohio Valley are all examples of this. The fact that Ohio Valley Natives are also influenced by these idealized images is only a reflection of these people also being a part of the general American culture, watching TV, reading books and attending schools. It in no way means they are no longer Native American and capable of the building of a new and unique Ohio Valley Native cultural identity in which they are now engaged.

While reading “The Heiltsuks” by Michael Harkin (1997) I was impressed by his discussion on ethnohistory. He writes: “The main form that such historical consciousness takes is narrative.... Oral cultures are especially adept at using narrative as a repository of historical information... [Much of cultural anthropology, especially of its] classic period,

is guilty of ignoring and devaluing history, despite the importance placed on it by those people anthropologists study” (p. 36). He goes on to discuss history being “embedded” in multiple discourses (p. 38). In the Ohio Valley I found many oral family history narratives, some parts of them shared in earlier chapters of this work, that clearly describe attempts to maintain an ongoing Native identification in the region.

For some people in the Ohio Valley the construction of an Indigenous national identity is tied to place. People define themselves as Shawnee because the places they live around are Shawnee, according to local place names and histories. In some cases they may only know that they have “an Indian ancestor” through oral tradition in the family (although several people I talked to do also have written documentation of Shawnee, Cherokee or other ancestors this is less common than the oral family stories) and have lost all the specifics of tribe, clan, language and anything else that they can latch onto. They may also have added stereotyped images from what was available to them such as warbonnets or tomahawks, or today while hitting the powwow circuit- “shades and braids” but the important thing is the tie to place.

Other people in the Ohio Valley choose some tribe that is familiar, something that is easier to connect to. I often hear Lakota or Cherokee. Those that claimed Blackfoot may be focused on the more romantic Plains people but they may have actually heard that name in their family histories as part of an Appalachian Indian identity (See Chapter 2). In the construction of identity some of what people know may be based on “real” family connections, the gaps are filled in by the immediate experience of place through geographic historical sites, and in their minds discourse through novels, media and the social discourse with others in the regional Native circuit. The blend of this within the

context of historic reenactment, pan-Native powwows, activist, shamanic and environmental political movements, is making a hybrid that is developing into a new and unique tribal identities in the Ohio Valley. The tribal names may be historical and often connected to Oklahoma or other First Nations west of the Mississippi but the Ohio Valley Native peoples, utilizing the same names, are constructing different identities. These may grow further apart except for the few who are trying to develop relationships and connections through a shared interest in keeping “the culture alive”. There are many barriers to this connection, some of it racial, some political, and some regional. However the biggest gap seems to be the commitment to place, the spirit of the Ohio Valley has become, or in some portion, remained, a part of the people living there. Those moving away may have legal, genetic and historical claims to the place, but they now have that also, and more well defined where they live now. The world has changed since First Nations were “owners” and had control or jurisdiction of the Ohio Valley, the new Nations will construct new identities and meaning, often drawing from contractions of what is said to be “the old way”.

### **The Hybrid reality today**

It is clear from the above that not all participants engage in one type of event or perform identity in the same way. Also there are many combinations of engagements with performative events that produce types of hybrids for expressing identity. As an example, I interviewed people in one State recognized Shawnee community that has members throughout the Ohio Valley. The community members gather together with each other at a number of socials and occasionally at ceremonial events but groups of these tribal members will go to powwows but never reenactments. Other tribal members



will go to reenactments but never powwows. Also, there are those who occasionally go to both. Other tribal members remain only passively involved in “Native culture” through their respective family members who are more active participants. For some the only contact is a tribal card and occasional newsletters. The diversity of experiences that tribal members have, occasionally results in conflict when events are planned. These conflicts seem to arise from misunderstandings when one group of people attempt to plan an event using the norms of one type of performance event that many of the others have little or no contact with. I observed two specific examples of this. One person who was getting a name at a private tribal specific event had family members prepare a give-away as is the norm in the powwow community to honor someone. One of the elder women who had not been to powwows but was a multi-generational Ohio Valley Shawnee expressed how upset she was when she saw this done. Her reasoning was, “Some people here are very poor and when they see someone giving all this stuff away for a name they may feel bad that they cannot do the same” (field notes, August 2003). On another occasion, which was a combined social event and Spring Bread Ceremony a person familiar with the Oklahoma Shawnee way of orienting the dance area was verbally attacked by an Ohio Valley Native. The accusation was, that since the person putting together the dance area was also a powwow participant, then what he was bringing in was based on “Western powwow ways” instead of “traditional Shawnee ways”. The whole dance was cancelled for that weekend.

Another conflict involves those tribal members who try to bring in the standards of reenactments where everything that is “real Indian” is indexed to the late 1700s or other distant time period. They may have a “hard time with” certain types of ceremonial

dress, people who want to use golf carts for elders, plastic containers for meals, and those who fund projects with bingo. Reinforcing a past time concept of what is “real Native” as not part of the present, is the endorsement of this concept by the occasional anthropologist or archaeologist. I brought a non-Native archaeologist friend to a Native event in order to show him an example of cultural continuity: cooking in the ground. A huge trench had been dug into which fire burned all day and night heating the stones at the bottom. On top of these rocks, whole corn plants with their ears attached were thrown in a wetted down, then wet burlap sacks of potatoes and wet sacks of whole turkeys all were hosed down, and buried over night for the feast the next day. My archaeologist friend’s only comment was – “the aluminum foil on some of those turkeys sure didn’t seem Indian”.

Another interesting source of change comes from the tribal members have spent years in other areas of the country as Sundancers in the west, Long House people in the northeast, or Stomp-dancers in the south. When they move into the Ohio Valley and join in with Native people there for ceremonial events, they often offer advice or are asked for advice on how things should be done as they are in “Indian Country”. These different ways of doing things are all contributing to changes in the Ohio Valley.

### **A paradox: Finding “meaning” in Ohio Valley Native identity**

All people are able to give reasons why they perform Native. But not all the reasons are the same. For some it is “a way to make a living” and also becomes a “way of life”. They are often defined by “society” as the “real Indians”, people whose performance is not questioned but rather held up as the example of correct behavior. These are often the paid singers, dancers and MC’s seen at powwow.

Then there are those who are looking for meaning. They make it clear that “white society” has no meaning for them so they search for this at the powwow or historic re-enactment. But this is not a simple search; it involves many levels of complexity, which makes describing and understanding it somewhat illusive. It involves the question of genetics, for example. Do those who have Native American ancestry actually gain a different meaning from the Native events than those who do not? It seems clear that some people choose to define their level, or intensity, of engagement along ethnic lines. Some hobbyists, for example, will perfect dance techniques and dress, but will draw the line at delving into meaning beyond this. They may consider the “hobby” a great exercise of fun and a great way to learn history or other cultures. Whereas another person, claiming a Native American ethnicity, may not care as much about dance steps and dressing “accurately”, the purpose of participation would be to find meaning. I have heard some say, “I only feel alive when I am dressed Indian and dancing to the heartbeat.” Others, feeling the same way, may pay great attention to dress. They say they want to transform themselves, either into the past or “to the west”, anywhere where there are “real Indians” and “real meaning” resides.

In my over twenty years as social worker, I have heard people say that those who “have religion” and attend Church on Sunday or the Synagogue on Saturday, are happier. Some have said they have more “meaning in their lives”. The same seems to happen for those who engage, at the deeper levels of meanings, in the Native American events in the Ohio Valley. There are no Federal reservations, long-houses, healing lodges, or other manifestations of an observably traditional culture, which have passed down from the past. The Native American (peyote) Church that has become a major religious movement

west of the Mississippi, giving meaning to the lives to many former tribes resident to the Ohio Valley, is not legal in the Ohio Valley states today. Eagle feathers, a major part of many First Nations', (including Lakota which many people consider the "ideal" spiritual form) religious activity, are also not legal for non-federal Indians to possess.

So, for those looking to find meaning through performance of Indianness what is left is the powwow or the Native events recreated and reenacted from books, media, shamanic visions, or in some cases, constructs of the mind. Here is the paradox. How does one create a "real Indian" identity, when one is not allowed to perform as a "real Indian"? The solution is what we are see happening in the Ohio Valley today. People substitute and mix what they can.

The paradox is that the more people who have Indigenous Native ancestry in the Ohio Valley try to reassert their identity through "real Indian" performance, the more they show they are not the same as constructs of "real Indians" as frequently defined by the law, popular belief, and historic anthropological convention. Also, genetic research, such as the recent interest in DNA, will simply show what we already know, the population is very "mixed" genetically when compared to "full blood" communities created by the federal government specifically to isolate Indians in the 19th century. The answer to resolving the paradox may shed light on many others identity issues in "Indian Country". For example, many "real Indian" people today have not been raised with "traditional culture". Many have been so separated from this culture through boarding schools, foster care, and urban relocations that connection to culture is almost non-existent. Despite this there are more and more people returning to the culture. This is seen by many as legitimate despite the gap between ancestral ways and present reality.

However, I have had conversations with “full-bloods” who grew up with white adoptive or foster families that have expressed their lack of comfort at powwows, other events and acceptance by other Indians. Some of the concerns expressed include not feeling natural, fear of “looking awkward”, and wondering what meaning there is in doing the cultural activity. Many of these are the same questions posed by Ohio Valley Natives who are not officially recognized.

The problem with performing Indian identity is that it is connected to the paradox of defining racial identity while in anthropology we know “race” to be a construct. Yet American Indian people, by law, are defined as a member of recognized tribes through genetics tied to federally recognized lists. Also, racial appearance is critical to being accepted. As many mixed “federal Indian” people can testify, even though meeting a racially based blood quantum criteria for enrollment, if they look “Black or White” their authenticity will be questioned in a number of ways. The paradox creates a situation where different Indians attend different types of performances, federal Indians may find conflict at certain events and non-federal at others. The socialization that goes on is therefore separate. Different norms of behavior are produced from within the two groups. Added to this, are the hobbyists, Boy Scouts and reenactors who define themselves as “White” and have limited investment at powwows and historic events in terms of identity. When all these various groups are brought together at a contemporary powwow or festival in the Ohio Valley the contradictions and paradoxes abound. When racism is added into the mix both federal and non-federal Indians may find conflict with the totally non-Native agendas of local people and historic experts who do not place high value on Native knowledge.

In order to get beyond what could become a constant rendition of paradoxes within paradoxes, which can be found through the examples in the preceding chapters, I will describe a possible future meaning for some. Ohio Valley Natives that are recreating tribes and bringing families together as group entities may be creating some lasting, meaningful identities. The issue will be resolved through the process of performing identities that become “real” over time. Several people said to me that we are experiencing a rebirth and one made the analogy that, “as infants and children it will take time to grow up and find who we are.” The new tribal identities cannot be the same as those of others either remembered from the past or reconstructed from visits to contemporary reservations in other regions. However, they are copying and reforming what they can, so there will likely continue to be a hybrid relationship to other Indians. More and more new cultures are forming in the Ohio Valley. When someone says they are Cherokee in the Ohio Valley today, there is no simple or universal definition one can find in order to place this person. You have to wait and experience how their Cherokee or other tribal identity is performed in context.

What does this say about use of language? It is through language that decisions made about “truths” representing various “voices” are rendered and heard. These linguistic “truths” are rewoven by taking excerpts from various historical, fictional, anthropological and other texts and putting them into new contexts. Historic descriptions of what a Shawnee warrior looked like are used to compose recontextualized paintings which are then copied by reenactors who then may be videotaped or observed at festivals or powwows and eventually become in some of their elements, traditional. Combined with this are pieces of oral tradition passed down and recombined with either what one

reads or is told about “real Indians”. Then with all of this, we linguistic beings, talk to each other, forming and reforming new social, cultural, and linguistic identities. As I have heard many people say at unexpected moments in the Ohio Valley, “Hoka Hey”, “Pesalo”, “I have spoken”, or “Wado”. These words serve as indices to an identity of being native to this land and place that continues to carry meaning for those still here. by using words from the “old languages” of the Ohio Valley, a claim to place is marked.

Powwows can often function as a way to claim identity despite the few where attempts have been made to “card” people, especially in some urban areas of Ohio, for enrolled Indian status. There are still powwows in the Ohio Valley that have become like a “folk festival” which is a non-privileged or non-elite event. There is little ability to control who attends these powwows and what version of Indian identity will be performed at these events. As Ivan Karp points out:

Festivals tell stories that deny or ignore the universalizing themes of elite culture, in that they often entail just those cultural experiences and groups that resist the universal. Universal stories lead to tidy events; particularizing stories do not allow their tellers to wrap them up into neat packages (Karp 1991:285-284).

The point that politics, cultural identity, ethnic identity and popular culture can not be separated has been the subject of much attention for at least the past 20 years (Bauman and Sawin 1991; Karp and Levine 1991; Karp et al. 1992). The emergent culture that is being sustained and “watered” in both public folklore-like performances of the powwow and reenactments in the Ohio Valley, and in private expressions of ceremonial and social gatherings do link together politics and identity tied to the specific place of the Ohio Valley. Also some are purchasing land and have organized with non-profit status.

Today we have many people creatively developing new oral traditions and re-readings of history to support a continuously emerging identity as Native Americans. At the same time we have developed a huge archive of officially sanctioned “records” from which the new identity claims may be compared. Increasingly, we hear members of the academy speaking out against the new “revisions” and appropriations” of cultural identity. It is interesting that for perhaps the first time in history a group of people’s spontaneous cultural and ethnic development may be judged from outside the community itself as authentic or spurious. The challenge this makes to anthropologists, folklorists and socio-linguists is that if we know culture is continuously changing and emergent. Why is it that so much effort has been put into discrediting the claims to a new and different, but actual, identity indigenous to America such as that described by the Ohio Valley Native people interviewed in this research? The implication is that we may need to become more aware of the limitations of the conceptions, categories and assumptions we still operate from as to what constitutes an “indigenous people”. Our professional “world view” based on past ideologies may need to develop new research directions giving a more privileged voice to what indigenous people actually say about their own identity.

As time goes by, the reemerging identity of the Ohio Valley Native people may increasingly incorporate concepts and views that have always been associated with the peoples of North America. Inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness has been one of these characteristics. The development of a mixed people, whether called the Métis, Melungeon, Mustee, Mestizo or other of the terms often used in North America (Adams 2001) are part of this openness to mixture. The exclusion of homosexual and lesbian



relationships in Western Christian culture is also foreign to this continent. Some of the Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Native Ohio participants I spoke with during my fieldwork have begun incorporating knowledges of the “Two Spirit” tradition still remembered in some First Nations communities (Thomas 1997, 2001) Recently an Ohio Valley Shawnee tribal elder, with important ceremonial and language knowledge, changed her physical gender from man to woman. She has read a copy of “Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender, Sexuality and Spirituality” (Jacobs et al. 1997) and the future may bring some interesting revivals of this tradition that has been absent from the Ohio Valley for many generations.

Recently, one of our great Native American scholars, Vine Deloria Jr., died leaving a generation of Indigenists and other Native activists a large written legacy to draw inspiration from. He knew my father as they had both crossed paths through Episcopal seminary experiences. It was points made in his book “God Is Red: A Native View of Religion” (1973) that helped frame my wording of the connection for generations of people living and burying their parents and grandparents in the soil of this “Turtle Island” continent, that leads to a change in the people themselves, influenced from the spirit of the land itself. I would like to add his concluding paragraph of this book to my conclusion:

Who will find peace with the lands? The future of humankind lays waiting for those who will come to understand their lives and take up their responsibilities to all living things. Who will listen to the trees, the animals and birds, the voices of the places of the land? As the long-forgotten peoples of the respective continents rise and begin to reclaim their ancient heritage, they will discover the meaning of the lands of their ancestors. That is when the invaders of the North American continent will finally discover that for this land, God is red. (p. 292).

It may be, that the emergent Native culture of the Ohio Valley is reawaking to a connection with place. Biology and genetics is only one part of this connection. Daily people absorb the air, water and soil from this continent. The history goes back millennia, and this history is all “Native American”. Maybe the connections some of my informants have connected to, through spirits and places of the Ohio Valley, are more real than connections with other more “foreign” places, histories, graves and spirits from across the oceans. One thing I learned from my “fieldwork” in the Ohio Valley Native community is that participation and commitment is growing. Perhaps is time for the Academy and others to help in the recognition socially, culturally and politically of these peoples. Perhaps, even, Indigenous Ohio Valley languages will be spoken again in the region, maybe changed as languages do over time, but like Hebrew in Israel, Pequot in Connecticut and Wampanoag in Massachusetts, languages can return to places, along with the spirit of the people.

**NOTES:****CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

**1.** I will use the terms “Native American” or “American Indian” interchangeably as my designation for the original inhabitants of North America. America or American here refers to the concept of the “Americas” as a place, not the political state of the United States. “Ohio Valley Native” will be used specifically to refer to people who identify as American Indians still indigenous to the Ohio Valley region, the majority of whom are not registered as a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe. Often my informants will use “Native”, always capitalized for respect, as shorthand for “Native American”. There is no generally agreed term for the first or indigenous peoples of North America. Occasionally, I will substitute “First Nation”, “Aboriginal” or “Indigenous”, mainly when my intent is more focused on Canada, Mexico, and Latin America in general and other areas where Indigenous issues are specific to the discussion. Also, when I am referencing the writing of other authors the terminology used may vary. American Indian is preferred in the case of this writing for two reasons, first it is easily defined historically and second it is the term conventionally used in US land rights and legal cases. Since we still feel there are legal issues in regard to the land base here in the US, including the Ohio Valley region, I will retain use of “American Indian” along with the more popularly used “Native American” and my new use of “Ohio Valley Native”.

**2.** There has been much recent discourse on the concept of what is a “real” Indian. See for example Eva Marie Garroutte’s (2003) book with a clear title on the subject: “Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America”. In this, the author systematically shows the weaknesses and contradictions found in various definitions of what a is an Indigenous person in North America.

**3.** By semiformal recognition I am referring to the fact that several tribes have received various degrees of government recognition. Most of this is state by state. In none of the three states in this study is there a legislative office or committee set up for the recognition of tribes. However several tribes have had either had bills passed recognizing them as a tribe indigenous to the State either by a proclamation of the governor or by a bill passed through State legislature. More on this is discussed in future chapters.

**4.** My focus in almost 30 years in social work, has been adapting this field to the needs of Indigenous peoples. I have been teaching social work for 15 years and worked in “the field” for 13 years before that. There are strong relationships between my teaching in social work departments, development of practice “multicultural” curriculum, work with Indian Child Welfare policy and my decision to complete doctoral study in Anthropology. I have found that social work functions more as system for maintaining a “normalization” standard based on “western” specifically Anglo- North American norms.

**5.** Frank G. Speck (1881-1950) was an anthropologist whose career spanned the first five decades of the 20th century (Blankenship 1991; Weslager 1991). Frank Speck claimed he was of mixed Dutch and Mohican background, which had maintained close relationship with the Mohegan-Pequot of Southern New England, hence the reason for

his being cared for by a member of the community in his childhood (Whitthoft 1991:2). His claim to Native ancestry was questioned by many of his contemporaries. His claim to this ancestry is also denied by some Mohegan people, those he claimed a relationship with through Delaware-Mohegan Indian roots, today (Fawcett 2000). In a conversation with Calvin Francis of the Federation of Newfoundland Indians in 1995, I was told that Frank's work was so admired because of his rapport with the Micmac and Innu that he was assumed to be Innu descent by some of the Innu. Also, I've been told by some people in the US that they felt his claim was legitimate. As one person said to me "his respect for the culture was certainly like an Indian". Also, it is not disputed that he was traditionally adopted into the Cayuga longhouse. As a traditionally minded person myself, that is good enough for me. This stands as an example of the debates about who has legitimate right to be considered a "Real Indian" which is part of this study.

6. I always checked first with anyone I recording in order to have them sign the forms required by Human subjects. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, people often just seemed uncomfortable with a person obviously recording. Therefore, I used short clips, followed by intermediate note taking and then more focused interviews after the events rather than during them.

7. My first clear memory a mixed Indian hobbyist and American Indian powwow in Monroe New York 1964. I still have a tape of songs from that powwow and many others that help foreground for me the changes that have occurred east of the Mississippi over the past 40 years. The "powwow circuit" is a commonly used terms among powwow participants. It implies a way of life connected to regular attendance at powwows.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE OHIO VALLEY NATIVE COMMUNITY**

1. I was skeptical about the claim I had heard from a number of Ohio Valley Indians that there was a historic presence of Cherokee not just in parts of Kentucky but also Indiana and Ohio. I then found in a close reading of the Moravian journals on the White River in Indiana that Cherokee man was living with them. The journals seemed clear that he was from the south but they also indicated that a Cherokee living that far north was not too unusual. Moving around appears to be common during the historical period. I also remember my surprise reading in La Salle's journals that he encountered Abenaki and Indians from Massachusetts living on the Mississippi River in the late 1600's. The wars in New England were bad, as was the slave trade, well before the early 1700's, so it does make sense that people would travel and settle far away from the European invaders and slavers.

2. As an example, when I first moved to Indiana in 2000, the director of an academic social program at IUPUI in Indianapolis told me that it would not be possible to do work focused on the American Indian community "as there were no Indian communities here in Indiana". I replied that I was sure I could find an urban Indian center in Indianapolis because urban areas all across North America are also sites attracting many American Indian people from a diverse number of places. He stated flatly I as wrong and reinforced the point by saying he had lived in Indiana "all his life". I was able to locate an Indian center that day; it was even in the Indianapolis "Yellow Pages".

3. In 2003, during my field work, Robert Black Bull from Browning MT was staying with me. We have known each other since the 1960's through the "powwow" circuit and I serve as an advisory board member on his "Blackfeet Buffalo Horse Coalition" (<http://www.buffalohorse.org/>). Over the years he has had the opportunity to see "Rez life" active traditionalist in the Montana and Alberta Blackfoot community and also the off reservation experience. During his years of art work he became very familiar with both Boy Scouting and its Indian cultural component - The Order of the Arrow and with many hobbyist groups as an occasional cultural advisor to these groups.

4. I declined to participate in the reenacted battle, basically because after being a social worker for years in reservation communities, my focus has been the present social context of our communities rather than the past. The past 200 years of various forms of genocide to Native peoples have left us with a very partial description of what life was like for us in the period the reenactors are replaying. I was also wondering if they really took this seriously or if the past history, that is so painful a one for First Nations people, was more of an act from TV or novels. I realize now, as I describe in this dissertation, that the connection to place and past events is an important aspect of identity for Native people in the Ohio Valley.

### **CHAPTER 3: PERFORMANCE OF INDIGENOUS IDENTITY**

1. The Indian Arts and Crafts Board website contains the following information:

"The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-644) is a truth-in-advertising law that prohibits misrepresentation in marketing of Indian arts and crafts products within the United States. It is illegal to offer or display for sale, or sell any art or craft product in a manner that falsely suggests it is Indian produced, an Indian product, or the product of a particular Indian or Indian Tribe or Indian arts and crafts organization, resident within the United States. For a first time violation of the Act, an individual can face civil or criminal penalties up to a \$250,000 fine or a 5-year prison term, or both. ...

Under the Act, an Indian is defined as a member of any federally or State recognized Indian Tribe, or an individual certified as an Indian artisan by an Indian Tribe...

The law covers all Indian and Indian-style traditional and contemporary arts and crafts produced after 1935. The Act broadly applies to the marketing of arts and crafts by any person in the United States... All products must be marketed truthfully regarding the Indian heritage and tribal affiliation of the producers... It is illegal to market an art or craft item using the name of a tribe if a member, or certified Indian artisan, of that tribe did not actually create the art or craft item. ." (Accessed at: Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, <http://www.doi.gov/iacb/act.html> on January 2006).

2. There are several books written by the Laubins and one about them that will give a fascinating background here. All of these books rely heavily on stories from the "buffalo days" and other old times before "contamination" by the Europeans. Personally, I like time and find them the best of the genre, as there is less romance and actual reporting of what the "old time Indians" said and did. The books include *The Indian Tipi*, *Indian Dance and Bows and Arrows*. I met them in 1972 when they visited Norwich Free Academy in Connecticut, where they had also attended school and where I was still in

high school. Reginald and Gladys were then elderly and had so integrated Indian ways into their personal lives that they “performed” as old time Indian people even when they were not being observed (I was fascinated and spent some time in the background observing). As an example, Reginald argued with his wife that he did not want to wear white man shoes anymore as they hurt his feet and his father (One Bull who had adopted him 50 years before) did not wear them. Also, he insisted, at the high school, of stopping at every water fountain because “One Bull told me to never pass up a water hole”. He made regular use of sign language when talking to others, including Gladys. When they got a break from speaking to students, they invited me to eat with them at their car. They gave me Wasna (Lakota for Pemmican) dried buffalo and dried chokecherries, but they did have store bought bread!

Many times I've heard an old grandmother say that if something is not done well, “you need to take it apart and do it over”, I've heard this from Lakota, Ponca, Micmac and Abenaki elders teaching me directly and I've heard it from many other places and nations for elders instructing their grandchildren. I rarely hear this standard used today by the newer generation of crafts people. The “poor quality” of craftsmanship is a fact noted by many elders across North America when discussing art and craft work today.

3. This reminds me of the one ceremonial leader doing sweats and other ceremonies in the early 1980s was a Choctaw who also “learned the Lakota way”. Ceremonial language in both these instances was done in Lakota. This created an interest for me over the years to observe the use of Lakota, by non-Lakotas, in spiritual ceremonies.

4. In an article criticizing the historic (in) accuracy of the movie *Hidalgo*, Vine Deloria Jr., points out how common the mixing up of famous Indian people and tribes is: “Try this on for size - Hopkins claimed to be the grandson of Geronimo who, he confided, was really a Sioux and not an Apache at all. Further Hopkins’ claims will amuse people - that Chief Joseph was Geronimo's brother. Seems one royal family had relatives in several tribes.” Deloria goes on to write: “The problem is that these distortions of the Indian history, the slandering of famous chiefs and leaders, and the presentation of these lies as history cannot be easily erased once they are promulgated as fact” (Deloria 2005).

#### **CHAPTER 4: SYMBOLIC FORMS AND TRANSFORMATIONS**

1. African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), a relatively uniform dialect of English spoken by the majority of African-American youth today (also known as “Ebonics”), has been discussed by Fasold et al. (1987), Green (1998), Montgomery et al. (1995), and Mufwene (1992, 1993). It has been demonstrated by some authors that AAVE is diverging from Standard English SE rather than converging toward it (see especially Fasold and Mufwene).

2. The lack of focus on specific First Nations languages is not meant to minimize the importance of this study today. My original doctoral research focus was to contribute what I could to revitalize Western Abenaki, a First Nations language close to my heart. Immediately before coming to Indiana University, I had been director of an American

Indian centric undergraduate program partly taught on five reservations: the Reservation-Based/ Community-Determined Program through The Evergreen State College (TESC) in Washington State. While in this program, and attempting to support the language and cultural preservation focus of some of the students, I saw several languages end as the last speakers of each died. I experienced first-hand the sense of loss this created for many community members and the lack of interest by both the surrounding Euro-American communities and in some cases the First Nation communities themselves. Some of the First Nations community members expressed opinions through statements like: “I don't have to speak the language to be Indian; I don't care what others say about that!” Several people made it clear that ability to speak an Indigenous language was not a primary mark of their identity as an American Indian. During what is considered a “traditional” ceremony, one woman told me that: “it is enough if you can say some words or pray a little in the language, I'm never going to learn it all, I don't have the time, and I'm still an Indian”. At that point, I saw the need for a shift in focus from descriptive grammars of unused languages; to a more discursive approach in order to understand the connection between contemporary identity and language.

The beginning of my doctoral studies were a result of a heightened sensitivity to language death, I wanted to preserve languages and had not yet looked at the linguistic power of discourse analysis. I had been asked by one of my own Elders, Cecile Wawanolet, to “hurry up” and start working with her on the language because, as she said “I may not be able to teach Abenaki much longer”. We hoped a doctoral program would focus the work to “keep it alive” and that through a more accurate descriptive grammar, language might be restored. Restoring the language seemed to be the clearest way to regain a “real Indian” identity. I entered Indiana University hoping to find a way to preserve Western Abenaki with the help of this last fluent speaker.

3. There are efforts by both the Miami and the Pottawatomie communities, which have connections to federally recognized tribes, to revive the languages in the Ohio Valley. One notable example is Darrel Baldwin's work at Miami University in Ohio and with the Miami community in Peru, Indiana. These were not part of my research and are documented elsewhere.

4. This information about the antiquity of metal work in North America is a point available from several books published in the past several years available in the Ohio Valley bookstores. I found one at Borders in Bloomington, IN and one in Logan Ohio at Dalton's. In other words, easily available books may be contributing to the discourse.

## **CHAPTER 5: AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMACY IN PERFORMANCE**

1. Genetic support for more diversity in mtDNA haplogroups does exist. For example Mali and Eshleman (2004) citing another researchers data (Smith et al. 1999) report that in a sample of 849 “full-blood Native American” individuals, 1% were different than the “99% of the individual as belonged to haplogroups A, B, C, D, or X”. In that “only 15% of federally recognized tribes in North America have been sampled to date” (Mali and Eshleman 2004:6) and have not provided DNA samples, there is still room to wonder about all “full blood” American Indians living today being provable through mtDNA. The implication is also that there is more admixture in “fullbloods” than is generally

recognized than 1% since this percentage only represents one direct line of female ancestors and there are many other lines for possible diversity in haplogroups type. In research conducted, “fullbloods” who do not match the set criteria are excluded from further study as they are assumed to be contaminated. This is an issue for a number of Native people with graduate degrees ranging from Chemistry to Anthropology that I spoke with in the Ohio Valley. Now that the “Natives” are getting educated in the “Western sciences”, perhaps the debate will get more “lively”.

Also, for the full ancestry admixture tests showing what percentage a person is of various groups: “The individuals originally studied to determine Native American ancestry markers in this test are all from the Southwest North America...Native American ancestry from other regions of North America may not be accurately identified” (Mali and Eshleman 2004:8). This makes the idea of an already acknowledged mixed community uncomfortable.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION**

1. But is this any different than any other performance rituals in North American society where legitimacy is not questioned? For years I watched my Dad, an Episcopal priest, reenact the sharing of the body and blood of Jesus on Sundays. He dressed in robes styled after the Romans in front of an alter styled from the past, using occasional borrowed words from ancient languages or archaic English, spoken in a ritualized manner. People knelt and even sometimes cried at these performance events. What meaning is there here?



## Appendix

This is part of a study on Indian speech and identity by Indian people in the Ohio Valley. I am exploring the way Indians in the Ohio Valley talk at events such as pow-wows, reenactments or tribal gatherings. These questions are to help begin discussions about speech and identity.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

Would you be interested in giving a taped interview? If so please give phone # & address:

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Where does most of your knowledge of being Indian come from?

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

2. How often do you go to pow-wows?

1 x a week \_\_\_\_ 1x a month \_\_\_\_ 3-5 a year \_\_\_\_ >5 a year \_\_\_\_ Not at all \_\_\_\_

3. How often do you go to Reenactments?

1 x a week \_\_\_\_ 1x a month \_\_\_\_ 3-5 a year \_\_\_\_ >5 a year \_\_\_\_ Not at all \_\_\_\_

4. Tribal gatherings?

1 x a week \_\_\_\_ 1x a month \_\_\_\_ 3-5 a year \_\_\_\_ >5 a year \_\_\_\_ Not at all \_\_\_\_

5. Indigenous Tribe(s) or Nation(s) (If Applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

6. What race do you consider yourself: Check all that apply:

American Indian \_\_\_\_ Caucasian \_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_ Mixed \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

7. In what state(s) did you grow up? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What were the Indian communities like where you grew up?

Organized \_\_\_\_ visible \_\_\_\_ isolated \_\_\_\_ almost invisible \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9. How much do you think Indian people have influenced your identity?

A lot \_\_\_\_ Some \_\_\_\_ Not much \_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_

10. How much do you think Indian people have influenced the way you talk in terms of accent or pattern?

A lot \_\_\_\_ Some \_\_\_\_ Not much \_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_

11. How much do you think Indian people have influenced what you talk about?

A lot \_\_\_\_ Some \_\_\_\_ Not much \_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_

12. How would you describe your accent to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_

- 13. Where do you hear Indian language used:** Email \_\_\_\_\_ Bingo \_\_\_\_\_ Songs \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reenactments \_\_\_\_\_ Powwows \_\_\_\_\_ Classes \_\_\_\_\_ Stories \_\_\_\_\_ Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_  
**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Questionnaire page 2**

**(Write on back if you need more room)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Optional)**

1. **Can you tell if someone is Indian by the way they speak?** \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
2. **Both Indians and non Indians sing Indian songs. Can you tell if an Indian is singing?**
3. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Do you refer to yourself as American Indian? If not what do you prefer?**
5. **Can you name some Indian words: List a few:**  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. **Where did you learn them?** \_\_\_\_\_
7. **What language(s) are they from?** \_\_\_\_\_
8. **Can you say? Write the word below and say what language it is (if you know)**  
 Hello/Goodbye                      Good morning                      Thank you  
 Numbers                                  Foods                                  Animals
9. **Do you know any Indian songs?** \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No  
**If so from what Tribe(s) and where did you learn them?** \_\_\_\_\_
10. **At what events do you hear Indian words?** \_\_\_\_\_
11. **At Indian events, what topics do Indian people you know talk about?**  
 \_\_\_ Genealogy \_\_\_ Cooking              \_\_\_ Selling or business              \_\_\_ Ceremony  
 \_\_\_ Land issues              \_\_\_ Politics              \_\_\_ Indian names              \_\_\_ Language  
 \_\_\_ Clothing              \_\_\_ Jokes Other: \_\_\_\_\_
12. **Of these what types of conversations stand out the most?** \_\_\_\_\_
13. **Can you tell where an Indian is from by the way they talk?** \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
14. **If so how?** \_\_\_\_\_
15. **Do people change the way they talk to sound Indian sometimes?** \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
16. **If so, in what situations?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**EDUCATION:**

**Ph.D. (ABD),** (& **MA,** 2003) Indiana University. **Anthropology.** Algonquian Linguistics and Indigenous identity revival. Ph.D. Dissertation: "Ohio Valley Native Americans Speak: Indigenous discourse on the continuity of Identity".

**MSW,** 1990. Salem State College, Salem, MA. **Child and Family Services.**  
*Master's Paper:* "New England Native American Attitudes Toward Grandparenting".

**MA,** 1982, **English Language and Linguistics,** University of New Hampshire.  
*MA Paper:* "Teaching English as a Second Language to Lao Refugees: a Cross-Cultural Perspective"

**BA (BSW),** 1980, **Social Service,** Minor, **Sociology,** University of NH (UNH- Durham).

1974-1975, **American Indian Studies,** Unity College, Unity, ME.

**PROFESSIONAL/CONSULTANT POSITIONS:**

2004- Pres     **Assistant Professor:** Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, B.C

2001-2003     **Associate Faculty (IUPUI):** MSW and Anthropology Programs.

1997-2000     **Academic Director,** The Evergreen State College: **Reservation-Based/Community Determined Program:** A community based (4 year BA) program on 5 Reservations.

1993-1996     **Assistant Professor/Indian Child Welfare Curriculum Specialist:**  
Division of Social Science, Heritage College Rockefeller Foundation Grant on Indian Child Welfare.

1992-1993     **Adjunct Professor:** Anthropology. Heritage College, Yakama Nation.

1991            **Family Coordinator:** Native Amer. Rehabilitation Assoc., Gresham, OR.

1980-88        **Social Worker:** Child abuse, case management, community services.

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