

of these laws and organizations, Townsend instead allots her mid- and late-twentieth-century sections to items like the 1935 Arts and Crafts Act, AIM activists, a Louise Erdrich poem, and an excerpt from Vine Deloria's *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969). I mention this not to minimize the importance of these authors, or the events at Alcatraz Island or Pine Ridge Reservation, but rather to raise the issue of including these voices at the expense of crucial, long-term influences on Native people as well as recent US history. Why include Erdrich's poem or Deloria's excerpt from books that are readily available virtually anywhere at the expense of, for example, the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act? The latter is still considered by many scholars today to be a revolutionary break from the past that fundamentally changed aboriginal law in the United States. The 1971 law created thirteen Alaska Native regional corporations, paid them \$962.5 million dollars over twenty years, and gave forty-four million acres to Alaska Native regional and village corporations ahead of land selections by the state of Alaska. Although the law was certainly not perfect, it has arguably provided Alaska Natives with the most economic and political power of any aboriginal group in the United States.

Although Townsend's document selection can be questioned, particularly for the twentieth century, her collection is still an invaluable resource for presenting the diverse complexities of Indian history to undergraduate students. To take on the daunting task of representing more than five centuries of history and an entire continent within the confines of sixty documents is admirable, and instructors will appreciate Townsend's skill in raising key issues and questions in Indian history. Little doubt exists that her book will spark tremendous interest in many students and even foster some aspiring scholars of the history of North America and its indigenous peoples.

Erik Hirschmann

University of Alaska—Anchorage

At the Font of the Marvelous: Exploring Oral Narrative and Mythic Imagery of the Iroquois and Their Neighbors. By Anthony Wayne Wonderley. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009. 188 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

Anthony Wonderley's latest work on the too-often neglected subjects of myths, folktales, and legends is a significant contribution to the literature on the Iroquois. Wonderley posits a classification that not only differentiates those three areas of oral narrative that focus primarily on the various tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy and their linguistic relatives in the Northeast, but also draws upon Iroquoian linguistic relatives in the Southeast (Cherokee and Tuscarora), Algonquian-speaking tribal groups surrounding the Iroquois, and other tribal groups farther afield. Wonderley also draws upon his extensive experience and knowledge of the subject of the Algonquian Windigo phenomenon and of Iroquois ceramic smoking pipe zoomorphic and human figurines in archaeology in order to support his conclusions and add interesting features to his analysis. The work does not attempt to compile a

comprehensive analysis of all Iroquois stories or individual elements from other areas of oral narrative.

In the extensive literature depicting Iroquois origin stories, there are some thirty recorded versions of these oral narratives, ranging from “The First Woman Who Fell from the Sky” to the “The First Senecas Emerging from ‘the Great Hill.’” Only the two major divisions of Iroquois origin stories are presented in this book. The author discusses probable oral narrative influences from beyond the initial cultural sphere of the Northern Iroquoians, such as the influences of the Southern Iroquoian speakers, the Cherokee and Tuscarora, especially the latter during their relocation in the early 1700s from the coastal area of North Carolina to New York State to become one of the Younger Brothers of the Confederacy.

Contrary to the common misconception regarding the Iroquois, these tribes were not isolated groups huddled in the forest without contact with tribal groups near and far. These contacts were avenues for diffusion of oral narrative, along with many other cultural features. As Wonderley mentions, the flow of influence was in both directions. The arrival of early Europeans—Récollet and Jesuit missionaries, later various Protestant missionaries, European traders, and various early white contacts—potentially added their oral narrative traditions in order to influence the Indians. Bible stories, Grimm’s fantastic fairy tales, Aesop’s fables, and other influences, overlaying older Native narratives, probably influenced many of the oral narratives later recorded by ethnographers.

The contemporary Seneca, for example, are comprised of some thirty separate refugee tribal groups that have been incorporated into their ranks, including the remnants of the militarily defeated Kahlkwa, the focus of Wonderley’s chapter on the Kahlkwa War. The popularity of the recitation of this war is judged to be justification of the Seneca conquest and ownership of western New York State. The present-day Seneca are the biological and cultural descendants of the Kahlkwa. In addition, the Lenape (Delaware), especially the Munsee division of the Lenape, have had a long association with the Seneca, from the early 1700s to the present. Munsee descendants are still recognized at the Cattaraugus Reservation in New York and at the Six Nations Reserve in Canada, for example. Their influence on the corpus of Seneca and other Iroquois oral narrative from an early date to the present would not be surprising. Wonderley’s mention of the “beneficent lion-being,” which kills a giant lizard, as recorded by the Tuscarora David Cusick in 1827, may refer to a cougar, puma, panther, or perhaps a lynx, the latter having a greater role in traditional narrative (43). Iroquois terms for exotic animals exist, for example, monkeys, but the time depth of these is uncertain. If the reference is to the lynx, this may be associated with *Jo goh sah sen*, the woman associated with Deganiwidah in the founding of the Iroquois Confederacy. The name is translated as “Fat Face,” referring to the full cheeks of the lynx. The antiquity of some narratives is questionable; for instance, one of the “little people” stories relates the hunting and killing of a mammoth or mastodon in southwestern New York State, a site where a mastodon skeleton was discovered in recent times.

The Seneca geographical term Oh He Yoh (Ohio), mentioned in legend and history, applied to the length of the present Ohio River upriver to include what is now called the Alleghany River, including “the Great Bend of the Alleghany” that flows upriver from the present New York–Pennsylvania line and curves in an arc upriver back into Pennsylvania. The geographical term *Alleghany* (Allegheny, and so forth) is not an Iroquois word, perhaps deriving from early Algonquian-speaking groups that lived along the river under Iroquois protection, including the Lenape and others.

By 1900, the general period when many Iroquois oral narratives were collected, the traditional culture of the American Indian had vastly changed, adopting and adapting to innovation and introduction from without, including the overlay of many of the oral narratives. Nevertheless, the older core of values and mores continue in contemporary belief. The Gai-wiio of Handsome Lake, the Seneca prophet, encompasses some Christian elements layered on a much older belief system, a classic example of the syncretism of beliefs. The feature of spousal abuse occurs in several of the narratives in Wonderley’s book, a factor receiving attention in Handsome Lake’s prohibitions. It seems reasonable to project that this may have been the basis for inclusion in much earlier oral narratives.

Among many tribal groups, including the Iroquois, these “stories” ideally may be traditionally told only during the late winter, as they were viewed as a cultural diversion during the period when food resources became increasingly scarce and starvation was a distinct possibility. Periods of starvation and drought are well documented in Iroquois archaeology and history. What part such periods of privation may have played in the development of the cannibal genre is an interesting question.

Unfortunately, few contemporary Iroquois families know or tell these stories, the knowledge of them being increasingly rare. Some thirty years ago, while creating a major Iroquois exhibition, one large museum sought a child on the Alleghany Reservation who knew some version of the Seneca origin story. Only one girl of five was identified who knew the story, and she was filmed for the exhibition. The loss of these stories would be a further erosion of this important cultural resource.

Wonderley mentions that Iroquois artists have depicted many of the fantastic Iroquois oral narratives. This publication would have been enhanced by inclusion of some of these artistic examples, such as those of the extensive collection of the late Seneca artist Ernie Smith. Wonderley’s interesting book will be of great interest to Iroquoianist scholars and will find its way to the book collections of well-read Iroquois, as well as those generally interested in mythology, cosmology, and oral narratives.

George H. J. Abrams
San Buenaventura, California