

# **CONTACT**

## **The Southwest Region Interpreter's Newsletter**

**July - September 1990**  
**Vol. VIII**

### **INTERPRETING INDIANS AND INDIAN CULTURES**

*A Cross-Cultural Approach*

**". . . for so long we have gone without having  
people hear our side of the history."**

**June Greene, Nez Perce NHP**

# INTERPRETING INDIANS AND INDIAN CULTURES

## *A Cross-Cultural Approach*

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
Interpretation in a Cross-Cultural Setting	2
WORLD VIEW AS AN EXPRESSION OF CULTURE	3
Indian Religion: A Human Rights Issue	3
The World Through Sinagua Eyes	4
Some Grouches Even Complain About a Party	5
Respect for What Makes us Different	7
THOUGHTS ON CROSS-CULTURAL INTERPRETATION	8
Selena	8
Culture and Interpretation: Potential Points of Conflict	8
Custer Battlefield as a Symbol of Cultural Differences	10
A Cradleboard and a Culture	12
Can a Non-Indian Interpret Indians?	13
WORKING IN TWO WORLDS: INTERPRETATION AS SEEN BY INDIAN INTERPRETERS	14
The Navajo Storyteller	14
A Nez Perce Interpreting the Nez Perce	15
How Does One Convey the Essence of Being Dine'?	17
The Moral of the Story	18
SWRO LIBRARY ASSISTANCE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	19
A FINAL WORD	21

## INTRODUCTION

Some years ago my family and I visited Toledo, Spain, and went to see a famous 12th century synagogue that was a religious center in one of Spain's thriving Jewish communities of the Middle Ages. In the early 15th century, however, things went bad for the Jews, as they have in many times and many places. There was a bloody pogrom in Toledo. Those Jews who weren't killed were driven away, a horrible prelude to the total expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492. The deserted and ransacked synagogue was turned into the Santa Maria la Blanca Church, and was later used as a military stable. Today it's a tourist attraction.

As Jews, we were moved to be in a place of such tragic significance to our people, and we joined a guide as she took us through the structure. She talked of the architecture and of this having been a synagogue, then, "when the Jews left," it became a church.

When the Jews left!

We didn't leave, we were driven out or killed! We had nothing to say about our holy place becoming a church and then a stable!

As Jews, sensitive to our history and respectful of our ancestors, and already saddened by what we knew to have happened in this place, we expected the full story to be interpreted to visitors, and to be done with some sensitivity to the memory of those who had worshiped here.

Instead, we felt that another injustice had been done in the telling of the story.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our Spanish guide had a lot to overcome in her history and culture if she were to interpret her historic site correctly from the Jewish perspective. The same is true for the National Park Service if it is to interpret correctly - not to mention sensitively - sites that relate to Indians.

Our nation consists of Indian peoples whose ancestors lived here before 1492, of Europeans who began arriving in the 16th century, and of many who trace their origins to Africa and Asia. Yet, sometimes forgetful of the real events and the multiplicity of peoples that made this nation, our awareness of history begins in Virginia and Massachusetts in the early 1600s and consists of a white, English speaking people who rolled west building a nation.

We in the NPS are good at interpretation, and have raised it to a profession that we can all take pride in. But how have we of the Anglo majority done where our interpretation touches Indians? Have we been able to overcome our perception of history and our cultural biases any better than the Spanish guide in Toledo?

In his 1970 book "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee," Dee Brown looks at the climactic and bloody period between 1860 and 1890, when that great westward movement and Manifest Destiny were finally triumphant and the American Indian's subjection was complete. For the first time, this piece of American history was told from the Indian's perspective. "Read this book facing eastward," Brown says.

This issue of CONTACT tries to guide NPS interpreters of Indian culture and Indian sites into doing it more completely, sensitively, "facing eastward."

\* \* \* \* \*

The purpose of these articles - as in the reference to the Toledo incident - is to discuss the cultural point of view and unintended bias that sometimes colors Anglo interpreters' approach to Indian topics. We have treated it as a cross-cultural issue, in which two cultures are involved, and the world views of the one can lead to exaggeration of or insensitivity to the values and experience of the other.

Some of the articles discuss specific cultural differences in non-interpretive contexts, but they are some of the cross-cultural differences that affect the success of our interpretation. They deal with attitudes and values, the ways two peoples view the world.

A word on terminology:

"Indian" and "Native American" are both terms that are widely used today, and are used in these pages according to each writer's preference.

"Anglo" and "Anglo-American" are used loosely to include not just Whites, but generally all non-Indians who have been raised in the "dominant" American culture.

And on attribution:

The writers of these articles express their personal views. Those views are not necessarily those of the National Park Service. The layout and art work was provided by Judy Chetwin.

Don Goldman, SWRO

---

## Interpretation In A Cross-Cultural Setting

The official NPS view on interpreting Indians can be boiled down to a single sentence in Management Policies:

*"The National Park Service will seek to present factual, balanced, and to the extent achievable, value-neutral presentations of both native and nonnative American cultures, heritage, and history." (7:5)*

But as the writers of these articles show, that's not easily done.

The NPS is largely an Anglo-American organization, and most of its interpreters are Anglo-Americans. They understand American history, their relationship to the land, and the centuries of contact, conflict, and harmony with Indians -- but they understand all of them from their point of view: that of the English speaking, westward moving, Western educated culture that raised them.

Each of us is a product of our culture. It colors the way we think and act. An interpreter of one culture who speaks about things that are basic to the lives, values, beliefs, or history of another culture is

liable to interpret those things from his own perspective, possibly overlooking or misstating key parts of the story as perceived by the interpreted culture.

The writers of the following articles speak to the practical and philosophical problem that NPS interpreters face. If Navajos and Hopis were interpreting Colonial NHP or Independence Hall, places of great significance and reverence to Anglos, they would need the mirror-image of this CONTACT in order to avoid the same cross-cultural problems in reverse. But, to a large extent, in the Southwest Region Anglo interpreters are talking to Anglo visitors about Indians. These articles are intended to help those interpreters understand the two worlds they work in.

These articles express the personal - sometimes very personal - views of Indians and Anglos, interpreters and anthropologists, insiders and outsiders. They are by people who have experienced and thought about these issues.



## WORLD VIEW AS AN EXPRESSION OF CULTURE

---

### Indian Religion: A Human Rights Issue



For most of us today, religious tolerance means getting along with fellow adherents of the various Judeo-Christian faiths, a few agnostics and atheists, possibly an occasional Muslim and, rarely, people of less closely related Old World religions. It is probably safe to say that most of us see such conflict as still exists as an anachronism that belongs to the past. We are willing to live with people of other faiths except when they try to impose their beliefs on us.

The major exception to our practice of the principle of religious freedom has been in the treatment of native tribal religions. In non-Indian society, there has been a lack of attention to surviving attitudes toward Indians that dominated thinking when they were separate societies, regarded either as enemies to be feared or romanticized as noble savages. Although Indian people have been citizens since 1924, we are still very much in a transitional phase in our relations with each other.

Rather than seeing Indian religions as faiths that have the potential to contribute to the total heritage of humanity and as having the potential to grow as the world view of their believers grows, most non-Indians see them as mere superstitions that inevitably will be replaced through the efforts of Christian missionaries. Few recognize tribal religions as the bases for entire ways of life, embodying complex theologies that give meaning to existence. The guarantee of religious freedom requires that we respect the rights of these people to their beliefs as fully as we respect the rights of members of the Old World religions or of those who choose to hold no religious beliefs at all.

Intellectual freedom is also vital to society, so much so that we uphold the right to express all ideas aside from those that

advocate interference in the rights of others. We tolerate, albeit oft-times uncomfortably, the abuse of our most basic symbols, including the national flag, the cross, the star of David and apple pies. Freedom of expression is limited to symbols, however. It is a crime to burn a synagogue or a church or to harm another human being because of differing religious belief. Official actions by governments, whether federal, state, local or tribal, must be even more circumspect, avoiding either criticism or advocacy of any religion.

These rights and obligations apply to native tribal religions, and obviously they must apply to them in equal fashion. This has not always been the case. In the past, Indian tribes were required to respect the religious activities of Whites, in particular the right of missionaries to proselytize, but many of their own religious acts were forbidden. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act now explicitly recognizes Indian beliefs as religious in character.

Indian religions differ in some fundamental ways from the introduced religions. This is especially true in the manner in which they relate to the land and the natural environment. For many tribes, the events described in their religious literature are said to have taken place at nearby locations, not in some distant Holy Land. Frequent access to these places for rituals or to collect objects or substances for ritual use remains important, even essential, to their religious practices. On the other hand, restricted access to prevent desecration and spiritual harm is often equally important. The possession and use of many objects acquired directly from natural sources, both from specific sacred sites and from elsewhere, remains equally important. But when these things are acquired from rare or endangered species, or from certain kinds of resources on protected federal lands, there are inevitable conflicts between the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion and the laws and regulations intended to help preserve the environment, wilderness or park values.

Most attention currently is given to the desecration of Indian graves. There are very strict laws that apply to the treatment of human remains generally, but in many instances these are overridden for Indian remains found on federal lands by defining them as cultural resources which are considered government property. In practice, if not in accord with law, other land owners often regard these remains as their property as well. There can be no doubt that human remains can be used in scientific research, but when the remains of other peoples are so used, this is accomplished with very tight restrictions, and any use at all depends on permission from a legally recognized source, usually the closest surviving relatives. This condition for use applies not only to the use and disposition of the remains themselves, but of any associated artifacts. Until Indian remains receive the same consideration, we cannot assert that we really do give Indian religions equal respect with other religions. Respect for human beings of all races, cultures and faiths must always take precedence over scientific endeavors, or the knowledge gained from our science will be at too great a cost.

Another issue that I feel is of urgent importance is the ease with which most non-Indians speak of Indian religions as little but primitive superstitions. One obstacle to acceptance of Indian religious belief as deserving equal recognition has been the fact that it has remained close to its roots in the simpler times of the distant past, times when the peoples' lives were lived in close contact with, and dependence on, nature and each other. Few Indians who have received the kind of education that might help them adapt their native religion to a wider world view have remained believers, for they have usually also been converts to Christianity. Indian scholars and theologians with the formal education needed to grapple with the complexity of the modern world in terms of their religious beliefs are beginning to appear. Their success will depend in part on how well the greater society creates conditions conducive to true religious freedom.

The world and the Indian peoples themselves are perilously close to losing the deeper values of these religions, but the

present struggle of the Indian people to gain full equality in the eyes of the law portends hope for the future. Those of us of other faiths can best help by keeping in mind the spirit as well as the letter of the law.

David Brugge, retired,  
SWRO Regional Curator



---

### The World Through Sinagua Eyes

When an Anglo-American tries to describe or explain the behavior of an Indian -- or vice versa -- he is talking of a person whose culture has a different world view.

The two can stand at the same place, yet perceive very different realities.

They can reflect on the same historic events, yet draw quite different meanings from them.

The interpreter has two obstacles to overcome. First, she must understand that these differences exist. She must have recognized the gap that exists between her world view -- the attitudes, values, ways of looking at things, and relations with the natural world that were imparted to her by her culture -- and that of the person or group that she is interpreting. And second, she must bridge that gap with language.

It isn't easy. Some of us have difficulties expressing our own ideas and values, much less those of people who see things from a totally different cultural point of view. If the job of an interpreter is to draw word pictures, the choice of words is basic to how well the pictures are drawn. Consider the following passage about the Sinagua Indians of the Verde Valley in Arizona, from Bill Brown's People of the Stone Villages:

*The essence of Pueblo Indian life is its fitness -- with the world, with one another, with one's self.*

*Within the valley were the necessities of Sinaguan life: water for irrigation and the home, wild plants and animals to supplement the diet of farm products, building blocks and beams from limestone and tree, salt from ancient lake bed, clays for pottery making, fibers for baskets and clothing, ores for paint pigments.*

*Given these necessities - each one a gift of the gods, or a thing to be negotiated from the spirits immanent in all things - it remained only for the Sinagua to adapt. Except for a few trade items - say, shells for salt - they lived wholly within this valley. Their lifeway was determined by what the valley could provide.*

*With one another they made similar adjustments. No one chief told the people what to do. If a man of years and wisdom spoke an opinion, the people might agree or disagree with the opinion, depending on its practical worth. No police or judges meted out punishment. To be disliked or unwelcome was punishment enough. For this village was the whole world -- all the people one would need in life. No one person, by way of material wealth or personal accomplishment, stood very far above or very far below any other person. For the life way here was communal and cooperative.*

*From this set of community relationships derived a mirror set of personal ideals. The "good life" for a Sinagua -- as for a traditionalist member of a modern Pueblo society -- meant peace of mind, the presence of good thoughts. It meant freedom from anxiety, worry, and hatred. Power and prestige and position would work against this "absence of evil." Therefore, personal distinction was not actively sought. It would bring discomfort and distress. It would pit*

*one against one's neighbors.*

*----- In reality there was no breaking of life into parts and pieces labeled work, leisure, art, religion. For all of life, all things done, all things made and used were part of a sacred, seamless whole. It was impossible to unravel the fabric of life.*

Reading Brown's description, do you learn something about the Sinagua? More to the point, do you feel, or sense what makes them Sinagua and not somebody else?

Because Brown does indeed understand how different his own perspective and experience is than those of the Sinagua, and because he carefully chose words that talk to us from that other perspective, words that speak for the Sinagua, he has done what he set out to do: he carried us across that cultural gulf and brought us to where we might see the world, if only for a moment, through a Sinagua's eyes.

---

**Some Grouches Even Complain About A Party...or, it all depends on whose ox is being gored!**

A highlight of the year in Santa Fe is Fiesta, the major civic celebration that occurs in the fall. It is a lovely time of year - most of the tourists have gone, and the residents can reclaim their plaza. They make a joyous weekend of it. It begins Friday night with a mass gathering at the north side of town for the ritualistic burning of Zozobra, Old Man Gloom, accompanied by picnicking and music and an old fashioned parade back to the plaza. There are parties and celebrations. Everybody celebrates and has a wonderful time.

But just what are they celebrating?

The Spaniards made their first entrada into New Mexico in 1540, and within 60 years they came to stay. Santa Fe was established as the colonial capital in 1610, and over the next decades the crown and the church solidified their grips over the land and its original people. Especially the people.

Compared to other colonial conquests in the Americas and elsewhere, this one was not unusual or especially brutal, but the Spaniards took what they wanted and killed those they had to. The Spaniards conquered, and their conquest was decisive. The Pueblo Indians watched the gradual and forced destruction of their religion, the demands of tribute, the occasional massacres, and the taking of slaves. For them it was a century-long evolving tragedy.

In 1680 they had endured enough and rose against the conqueror, and drove him out. The Pueblo Revolt was a bloody business, and when it was over there were no Spaniards left in New Mexico. During the Spanish century the Indians had adopted some new ideas of tools and language and, to some extent, religion. But now they set about discarding those aspects of Spanish rule that had been odious to them, and returned somewhat to their earlier ways of life.

It lasted 12 years. It had been a blow to the Spanish crown, the only time they were forced to abandon a colony. They were determined to reclaim it, and make it stick. The reconquest was undertaken by the newly appointed governor, Don Diego de Vargas, when he led his troops into Santa Fe in September 1692. The decisive battle was fought in the old city 15 months later. That victory, including the execution of 70 Indian prisoners, left no doubt as to who was in charge. The Pueblos were reconquered.

It is that historic event of the fall of 1692, the reconquest of the Indians, that is celebrated in the annual Fiesta. Each year local citizens vie for the honor of being chosen as Don Diego, to ride triumphantly through the streets. It is always a fun-filled weekend. It's so much fun that many of the citizens can forget just what it is they are celebrating.

But not all of them. Pueblo Indians have begun to ask whether what was done to their ancestors by the Spaniards in 1692 is something to celebrate. The victors of any war have reason to celebrate their victory, and in 1692 the Spaniards must have felt great satisfaction in retaking "their" land. They certainly would have had motive to

recall and celebrate the event in succeeding Septembers.

The Pueblos, however, had little to celebrate in 1692. Today, their descendants are one part of the much-advertised tri-cultural New Mexico, living side by side with the descendants of the Spaniards in all walks of life. Is it reasonable, is it sensitive to invite this entire community to celebrate annually the conquest of one of its members by the other? Some of the Indians are saying "no," that there is no more reason to celebrate the conquest and subjugation of their people in 1990 than there was in 1692.

So, are the New Mexican Pueblos being grouches, raining on the Hispanic-Anglo party? Or are they saying that the dealings between cultures ought to be based on mutual understanding, on a dual appreciation for what makes the other tick? In its Fiesta celebration, the city of Santa Fe has fallen into a common intellectual trap, that of interpreting history only from the point of view of the dominant culture.

It is a trap that is intrinsic in interpreting many NPS areas of the Southwest associated with Indians. Many of them, especially those like Canyon de Chelly, the frontier forts, and the missions, mark contact/conflict points between the cultures. It is places like them where an Anglo-American background knowledge of Manifest Destiny and the westward movement can color our objectivity, where one's pride in culture can lead one to emphasize the wrong facts. When we are talking about an event or a place that is important to another cultural group, we ought to put our foot in one of their shoes.



## Respect For What Makes Us Different

To an Indian, lightning, especially when it occurs close to one, can be a frightening event. This is not merely because of the physical danger, but because it's an omen that something is very wrong here. The activities of daily life and work cannot go on as if everything were normal. If things are to be made right, there are certain rituals that must be undertaken.

Several years ago lightning struck near Hubbell Trading Post, causing considerable discomfort for some of the Navajo employees. It was necessary that everything stop and that the problem be dealt with. A medicine man was summoned, and the superintendent closed the park so that the ceremony could be conducted with the necessary decorum. The medicine man saw the lightning as a warning from the Hubbell family that we weren't taking proper care of the trading post. He prepared some medicine that was passed among those present, and he sang.

The correct thing had been done, the omen had been acknowledged and dealt with, and life could go on.

An Anglo visitor watching from a distance, who did not know how the Navajo employees feel about lightning, might have thought, "Closing a national park for this! How remarkable." A Navajo observing the same thing would probably think, "Closing a national park for this. Absolutely necessary!"

As told by Ailema Benally,  
Hubbell Trading Post NHS

---

*"For Navajos, everything the eye meets reflects the presence of deities or supernaturals. That is as true of the San Francisco Peaks as it is of the recesses and ridges on the Painted Desert. It applies to high mesas and tiny stones, to rivers and washes. The whole world testifies to the activity of spirits, whose role is to establish and maintain something called ho'zho' - a*

*difficult term to translate. The word means something like harmony, beauty and balance all wrapped up in one concept that dwells at the heart of the Navajo cosmic view."*

Paul G. Zolbrod

---

*"The Eskimo took great care in manufacturing and elaborating the weapons that would be used to kill their prey. After all, the animal was going to die so that they could live. There was a concern with the animal's spirit; when it was killed, a void was left in the universe, and they feared that something evil would take its place. Therefore, by showing reverence to the animal through prayer and the elaboration of weapons used to kill it, forces over which they had little or no control might be appeased."*

Henry J. Shafer, *Ancient Texans*



## THOUGHTS ON CROSS-CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

---

### Selena

She spoke softly, but there was still anger as she spoke. "If we had fought, at least we would have a reservation."

Since there was no way to prove her age, she did not begin to receive Social Security until her son turned sixty-two.

And so here she was, among the last of the Atsugewi, a northern California tribe that once lived on the forested slopes of Lassen Peak and land to the north. Perhaps five feet tall, Selena possessed the blackest of long, long hair. Even in her late 70s, so we guessed, she was attractive. Not in polish and chrome and physical perfection, for she was plump, but in demeanor, kindness, and modesty.

Widowed and discreetly poor, Selena lived quietly for many years alongside the road north of Lassen Volcanic National Park, largely unknown to the travelers who sped by on Highway 89.

Then, in a stroke of insight, the park's Chief Interpreter creatively crafted a one-of-a-kind position description, and hired Selena as a seasonal naturalist. Selena would play a special role.

Each summer day Selena would drive to the visitor center at Manzanita Lake, quietly walk into the museum, largely unnoticed in her Western clothes, and reappear attired in a deerskin dress lightly decorated with beads. Selena had used fresh deer brains to tan the hide in the tradition of her tribe, then she had patiently chewed the skin until it was soft and pliable and the color of cream. Her dress was as original as the earth, a creation of her own hands and heritage.

Twice a day, in her leathern attire, Selena would seat herself on a bearskin-covered log, and we traditional naturalists would join her for a conversation about her life on the mountains. Visitors would gather on

adjacent logs and listen to stories, always unpredictable in the directions they took, about the 1914 eruption of Lassen Peak, which she had witnessed as a young woman, about Atsugewi child raising, recipes, the use of medicinal herbs, or the treatment of her people at the hand of Whites. And all the while Selena would weave intricately designed baskets from the tiny, split roots of ponderosa pine.

The people loved her. And year after year parents would bring their children, friends would bring friends, so they too could experience a rare vision of life on Earth.

Years later, after I left the park, word came that Selena had passed away. It was perhaps her 83rd year. But still it hurt, for she was a special lady. And with her went most of the remaining language of the Atsugewi. A unique culture was all the less with her passing, and the world lost some of its human richness.

Boo-noo-koo-e'e-men-orra. Sunset Woman. Selena LaMarr. Even her Western names were beautiful.

Glen Kaye, SWRO

---

### Culture And Interpretation: Potential Points Of Conflict



The national parks were created, and are preserved, according to the values embedded in American society. However, the values of the majority are not fully shared by groups whose

lifeways are an expression of other American cultures.

Historically, park interpreters have attempted to answer the questions the

greatest number of visitors ask. Until recently, interpretation in the parks was designed almost exclusively to meet the demands of a majority rule philosophy especially predominant during the time when the "melting pot" theory of the evolution of American culture was most in vogue. This philosophy assumed that all individuals would blend in; their historical stream and cultural beliefs would add to a new and different whole. In this environment, a single interpretational perspective was considered sufficient. But history has dramatically failed to produce the "melted" society the theorists predicted.

Instead, we are faced with a fascinating pluralism held together by an overarching social and political system, but made up of a strong and persistent diversity of cultures. These include the regional Anglo subcultures and the long lasting cultural traditions of American Indian, Hispanic, Asian, African-American, and other groups found in the United States. They are multiple audiences and interpretive contributors which create a need for the NPS to diversify its approach, to aggressively pursue interpretation that takes into account the differences between the cultures that are being interpreted and the groups to whom that interpretation is being directed. In response to this issue, we conducted an ethnographic research project at Wupatki National Monument during the summer of 1989, with the help of American Indian, Hispanic, and Black anthropology students. Part of our purpose was to discover the questions visitors ask at archaeological parks in order to help us understand the interests of all of the culturally diverse audiences that make use of the national parks, as well as people whose ancestors are being presented to park visitors.

The students and I spent several hundred hours observing and interviewing visitors. We recorded the questions they would like to have answered about archaeological ruins in general, and Wupatki in particular. This allowed us to explore areas which members of various minority groups felt comfortable with, and areas of interpretation they found difficult or offensive. The following is a preliminary exploration of these topics.

## 1. **Culturally Positive Questions for Interpretation: The People and Their Lifestyles**

Some visitor questions present little or no problem for culturally sensitive interpretation, and lead to positive outcomes. These questions allow an explanation of the skills and intelligence of prehistoric peoples and support the development of pride in American Indian history, which is often poorly represented in school text books. Some of the questions commonly asked in parks can be used to develop both culturally sensitive and very interesting interpretations which go beyond a narrower view of human accomplishments.

One major topic that interests visitors is the lifestyle of the prehistoric peoples represented in archaeological parks. Visitors wanted to know about their physical characteristics: what they looked like, how tall they were, and how long they lived. They asked about subsistence: what the people ate, where they found water, how they got their food. Many people wanted to know about cycles of daily life: where, when, and how the people found game, if they hunted; and when, where, and how their crops were planted and harvested, if they farmed. They also wanted to know how the different kinds of foods were cooked. Others wanted to know if environmental factors (plants, animals, and climate) were the same or very different from those which exist at the park today.

Visitors were surprised by the technological knowledge that went into prehistoric construction and wanted more information about the architectural history of ruins and how many people they housed at any given time. Men, in particular, were interested in learning about construction methods. They wanted to know how the stones were shaped, how the walls were laid, what was used for mortar, and the types of tools used in the construction. The women seemed more interested in domestic activities. Where did people do various tasks, and how were the rooms set up for comfort and for useful activities? The women also made more comments about aesthetics and were interested in how people created beauty in their lives.

Visitors wanted to know who the people at Wupatki were related to, whom they traded with, and whether or not they engaged in warfare. They also wanted to know why the people picked the particular building sites they did, instead of nearby sites that looked equally interesting or useful. They were curious where the Wupatki people went when they abandoned the ruin, and why that abandonment occurred.

Focusing interpretation on these questions not only answers questions people want to know, it also provides a positive forum for expressing the values, beliefs, and accomplishments of prehistoric peoples and their cultural and spiritual descendants.

## 2. **Problematic Questions and Difficult Issues: Ceremonies, Sacred Places, and Burials**

It is safe to assume that discussions of religion, ceremonies, and other sacred topics carry a great deal of potential for offending living people. Some of the common questions asked in this realm include, "What kind of rituals did they perform, what were their religious beliefs, and where can their sacred places be found (many of which are also sacred to living peoples)?" These issues can be dealt with in a positive manner, but should be very carefully explored with living groups in the area before they are incorporated into interpretation to the public.

In addition to religion, Anglos are fascinated with burials. The Wupatki trail guide describes an infant burial in one room, a commentary which triggers more questions than any other. People want to know where other burials are located, and they want to know more about the beliefs of the people that would cause them to bury infants in their living rooms. Many American Indian groups are disturbed by the Anglo cultural interest in displaying sacred objects, burial goods, and human remains. These preferences should be taken into account when developing interpretive materials.

This brief summary of visitor questions indicates some differences in cultural interests and ideals. Today, the NPS must speak to a more diversified audience than ever before, and must speak from the vantage point of multiple cultures.

Hopefully, these findings will be useful in supporting this process.

Robert T. Trotter, II, Northern Arizona University

---

## **Custer Battlefield As A Symbol Of Cultural Differences**

Perhaps no unit in the National Park System evokes as much controversy as Custer Battlefield National Monument. Fought more than a century ago, the Battle of the Little Bighorn is a myriad of symbols to both red and white Americans -- heroism, brashness, honor, and tragedy. Park rangers have for more than a half-century endeavored to interpret to the public the meaning of the battle. But because the interpreters were mostly Anglos, bearing their particular cultural and historical bias, and the interpretive message was itself a product of the same culture, it is not surprising that the story they told was biased. It is also not surprising that the Indians didn't like it.

The park was established to pay homage to George A. Custer, the legendary commander of the Seventh Cavalry, and his fallen soldiers, with little regard to the Indian point of view or what they had accomplished there. During the Vietnam era, Custer was transformed in the minds of many from hero to villain. He, and the soldiers he led, became symbolic of America's guilt over its sorry treatment of American Indians. Custer Battlefield itself became an open sore in America's past that had not healed. Student protests over military involvement in Vietnam and the rising demand of minorities for equal rights spawned an awareness within the NPS for interpreting minority cultures.

Custer Battlefield, as did other NPS sites, began recruiting minorities and developing programs that focused on contributions made by minority groups or individuals. The park began hiring local Crow Indians to interpret the battle and discuss Indian culture. Despite the park's attempt to reverse the trend from an Anglo-dominated viewpoint to include Indian views, however, it continued to be plagued with interpretive and public relations problems.

American Indians have in the past and present pointed out that Custer Battlefield remains a monument to the white man, as shown by its very name. They have a valid argument. All the cultural resources on the battlefield - markers and monuments - were placed on the field to honor and memorialize Custer and the Seventh Cavalry. Indian visitors encounter no markers or memorials to commemorate their ancestors' most convincing victory in their 400 year struggle to retain their way of life against European encroachments.

Moreover, the soldier markers were erected in 1890, at a time when the U.S. Government still considered the Indians who had wiped out Custer's command as enemies, and victorious governments don't erect markers to their enemies. Times have changed. Interpretation has changed. In the 20th century we no longer view the Indians as enemies. They were Americans fighting to retain their way of life, but they lost.

Interpretive problems encountered at Custer are replicated throughout the NPS. Those problems include the lack of hiring minorities for interpretive positions. In interpreting Anglo-Indian relations, it is not enough to just recruit for the most qualified individuals. More often than not, no minorities will be available from the seasonal certificate because they normally cannot compete in education or experience. Park managers must do more than recruit; they must make sure through the KSAs (job requirements) that certain positions are truly targeted for Indians.

But at Custer, even the hiring of Indians is

no guarantee that a balanced interpretive program can be consummated. The dilemma there is that historically, Crows were scouts for Custer and were traditional enemies of the Sioux and Cheyennes, who were the very Indians who defeated the Seventh Cavalry at Little Bighorn. Sioux and Cheyenne charge that the NPS is insensitive in not hiring their people to interpret the battle. After all, they say, it was Sioux and Cheyenne who fought Custer, not Crows. The problem is even more perplexing since most Sioux and Cheyenne do not prefer to work in a park located in the middle of the Crow reservation, nor are they enthusiastic about working at, and thereby being a part of, Custer Battlefield with all its markers and memorials aggrandizing the army.



Interpreting the actions of two or more different cultures is extremely challenging for an interpreter. Anglo interpretation tends to be based on "hard core" evidence, such as written accounts and corroborating physical evidence. So, for example, the monuments to the dead soldiers: we know where they fell, precisely enough to satisfy the historians, because the bodies were recovered and the sites marked a few days after the battle. Warriors died too, but their

comrades removed them from the field, so we don't know precisely how many died or where they fell. Therefore, even had the government wanted to mark the Indian dead, we lacked the required historic data to do it. So the dead soldiers are memorialized by markers but the equally dead Indians are not.

Indians, on the other hand, have a different perspective on facts. They rely more on oral recountings passed down from generation to generation. In the Anglo world of academics and historians, Indian accounts have been widely discounted because the evidence cannot be verified or

documented. The Sioux and Cheyenne attitude might well be that precisely where a warrior fell and exactly how many died is immaterial. We know Indians died as bravely and as patriotically as the soldiers. That's all we need to know to memorialize them. From the Indian perspective, the rest of the "verification" and "precision" is a fetish of the Anglo historian.

As interpreters, we need to recognize the value of Indian oral history. Oral history can be as valid or invalid as any written document. Remember, written history is simply oral history transferred to print. Discounting Indian stories is simply imposing an ethnocentric viewpoint. Whether the source of the information is oral accounts or written documentation, the interpreter is charged with ensuring that the data is accurate.

Minority in-roads into forging their own interpretation of historic events have made immense progress in the past few years. The decade of the 90s will continue that trend. Ethnocentric interpretation, particularly of whites interpreting Indian culture, is on the way out. More and more, managers are seeking Indians to interpret their own heritage, much in the same way that Blacks are taking the role in interpreting their heritage and Hispanics their cultural past. Greater sensitivity and cultural awareness are needed in all interpretive programs.

Neil C. Mangum, SWRO

---

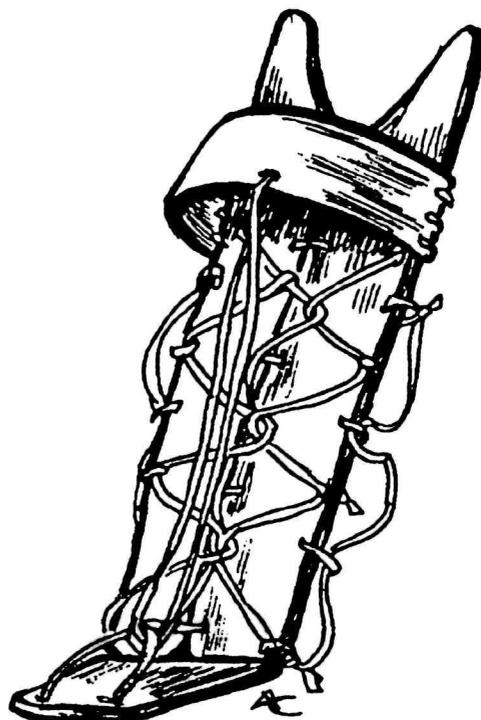
*"Romantics called them Nobel Savages. Those who saw them as an obstruction to westward expansion called them filthy savages.*

*Most history books called them Indians. They called themselves the People."*

*Witte Museum, San Antonio  
Lower Pecos Rock Art  
Exhibit*

---

## A Cradle Board And A Culture



If a child could articulate why his stuffed bear is so important to him and could describe all the qualities and relationships he feels, we could learn a lot about the child. Similarly, because the Indian draws a much vaguer line between the material and the spiritual worlds than do many of us, a simple object, landscape feature, or possession holds latent stories that a sensitive interpreter can reveal.

An interpreter at Canyon De Chelly developed such a story around the prosaic cradle board. Her purpose was to take her audience beyond the obvious, that the board is made of certain materials and is used in such-and-such a way. She tells how the person who makes a cradle board doesn't just find a well-shaped branch or bush and simply cut it down. Certain things must be said and done before removing these things from nature. Prayers are involved, and the necessary proprieties are observed. A child will start his life and begin the process of learning who he is on this cradle board; it must be a good board. And after it has served its purpose, it must not be discarded as if it had no value. It is something lent by nature, and must be returned to nature in the appropriate way.

In the taking and the returning, one must be cognizant that it is important to maintain a harmony with nature.

In other words, a perceptive and understanding interpreter tells not only what a cradle board is, but what it means. In so doing, one brings out of that simple and common object something of the Indian's world view, what things are important, and why.

As told by Wilson Hunter,  
Canyon de Chelly NM

---

### Can A Non-Indian Interpret Indians?

Park visitors coming upon a hogan see a very humble structure. When told that it is a home, they might be imaginative enough to ascribe to it some of the qualities and feelings that they associate with their own home, such as comfort, peace, rest, and loved ones. But the contrast between the visitor's home and the Navajo's hogan is more than in their appearances: There are taboos associated with the hogan; there is a woman's side and a man's side; it has a characteristic shape, and its entryway always faces east; there are traditional values that guide how one lives in a hogan.

The hogan is much more embedded in the Navajo's culture and world view and plays a larger role in his spiritual and ceremonial life than is likely to be perceived by a visitor, unless there is someone there to tell her about it. And therein lies a question

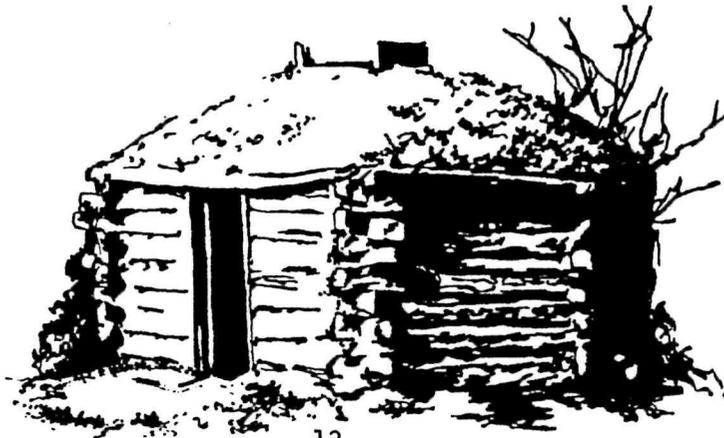
about interpretation and interpreters: Does one have to be an Indian in order to interpret such a central part of Indian experience?

No, one doesn't have to be an Indian . . . All around the NPS, in Indian country and elsewhere, interpreters explain and make sense of traditions, religions, and lifeways that are different than their own. All it requires is some knowledge and a lot of sensitivity.

. . . but it helps. A recent interpretive program about the hogan that was developed and delivered by a Navajo seasonal seemed particularly successful in catching the essence of the hogan, and was one of the most popular programs given in the park. The ranger not only talked about the structure - its logs and shape and how well it keeps warm - but he delved into the institution, just what a hogan means to a Navajo. He spoke of his personal experiences and about his family, of the stories told to him in the hogan by his grandfather. He was not talking abstractly, he was describing his life. His interpretation told not only of the hogan but of a person who grew up in one. In a sense, the interpreter was not just talking about the resource; in the telling he had become a part of it.

Clearly, the non-Indian professional interpreter can become an expert on hogans and can deliver convincing and moving programs on them, and many do so. But in the final analysis, he lacks one ingredient that can contribute so much to interpretation: He didn't live in one.

As told by Wilson Hunter,  
Canyon de Chelly NM



## WORKING IN TWO WORLDS:

### INTERPRETATION AS SEEN BY INDIAN INTERPRETERS

The other articles speak to the culture gap that exists due to the different world views and backgrounds of Indians and Anglos, discussing the issue from the perspective of the Anglo interpreter who is trying to understand and communicate basic Indian values and experiences. There is another aspect to the issue, however: that same culture gap as experienced by our Indian colleagues in the NPS. An increasing number of NPS interpreters in the Southwest Region are Indians. Many are products of the same educational systems as the rest of us, and they pursue the same interpretation standards and professional ethics. But many of them also have traditional upbringings within their tribes, and their Indian heritage and experience is a key part of their formation. As NPS interpreters, they have a foot in each world. What kinds of problems do they face as Indians interpreting Indian sites to non-Indians?

---

#### The Navajo Storyteller

The traditional Navajo storyteller is an educator, and so is an interpreter. Both are involved in explaining and making a very confusing world sensible. To the traditional Indian, the NPS mission of preservation and use is new and difficult to comprehend. Wilson Hunter has found that he can communicate these complex ideas in the role of a traditional storyteller. By using the morals and values told by the stories, he can draw together the Indian's philosophy and the NPS mission. He finds that not only can he communicate these ideas to Indians in this way, but that the same interpretive technique helps non-Indians to see things "through Indian eyes."

Wilson takes his perspective and ways of thinking from both the Navajo and the non-Indian worlds. He was raised a Catholic, as a semi-traditional Navajo, and studied the paralegal profession. Yet he was brought up on the reservation and identifies himself with - is, he says -

Coyote, the risk-taking, provocative, curious animal so important in southwestern Indian lore. He is a blend. He has learned from both cultures, and describes how he was tugged in two opposing directions by those cultures. But the result of that tugging, and of the values he received from the two, makes him a better interpreter. Wilson sees himself as an Indian storyteller, falling somewhere between the traditional Navajo storyteller and the non-Indian NPS interpreter, and drawing from both sources.

As Wilson interprets it, Canyon de Chelly isn't just scenery; it is a place of many deep values that are significant to his people. He tries to show this, how the Canyon fits into the whole world as it appears to the Navajo, taking the visitor beyond the surface beauty and the visible activity to the real meaning the place holds.

Yet, as a Navajo, sometimes he must draw a line. Visitors become interested, and have many questions about the Navajo way. But there are things he can't talk about or explain, things that only the medicine man should explain, personal things. There are some things that he wouldn't be able to explain; they are just too complex.

Wilson is an interpreter; on the one hand, his purpose is to educate people and to encourage their curiosity, but on the other, he is a Navajo. He must be careful not to lead a visitor to that line where he cannot continue, then drop it.

In the end, he is a storyteller and an interpreter. He feels that he does not represent the NPS or the Navajos, but both of those very different worlds.

As told by Wilson  
Hunter, Canyon de  
Chelly NM



## A Nez Perce Interpreting The Nez Perce

"Mrs. Greene, Mrs. Greene - where are they? Where are the Indians?" June Greene and I catch each other's eyes above the heads of the fourth graders and smile. She then gets to work and explains to the children that she is an Indian, a Nez Perce, that she grew up on the reservation, that her great grandfather was a well known medicine man, that she is proud of her heritage and culture. This type of scene is repeated over and over throughout the year. Sometimes the questions reflect the stereotypes and prejudices people bring with them to Nez Perce National Historical Park, sometimes they reflect great respect and concern for today's Indians. The questions are often emotional, seldom without merit.

June answers all such questions with patience and understanding. She is a rare person in the NPS: a Native American interpreting her own culture and traditions. In a recent interview, June allowed me a glimpse into what it means to be an Indian working for the NPS.

While growing up on the reservation, June knew nothing about national parks. When most Indians go on vacation, they go to pow-wows or church meetings. The first time she came to Nez Perce, just three miles from where she lived, was when her husband was asked to drum for one of the programs. "National parks just aren't a priority with Indians, and they just don't go to museums." June started working at Nez Perce in 1986 as a cultural demonstrator during the summer. Her interest was sparked, she stayed on, and finally became a permanent employee.

After much thought and hesitation, June explained that the hardest part of her job is when she has to talk to people who she feels are prejudiced against Indians. Sometimes they just don't know, sometimes they lump all Indians together under one stereotype. When she is faced with such a person, often someone from the surrounding community, she tries to keep in mind that she is a federal employee and can't let her true feelings as an Indian be brought out. She tries to politely inform them of some of her beliefs, but must remember not to put down

the U.S. government, which is still part of the problem in many current issues. She is very concerned right now about the hunting and fishing rights of her people. The key seems to be balance - how to balance her views as a Nez Perce against being a federal employee. "I don't really let them know how I feel. I keep my feelings to myself. Sometimes I do try to give information to let them know my views, and sometimes at the end of our talk they have changed their minds. And it makes me feel good if I've helped one person to take a different view of our history and culture or hunting and fishing rights."

Dealing with children's preconceived notions is a special challenge. "When I'm playing the Indian music, the children will be running all over looking for the Indians. They want to see an Indian. Their parents get all embarrassed and bring the children over to me and explain that I am an Indian, but they don't want to see me. They want to see someone in a buckskin dress, long braids and all that. Then, as children get older, the simple stereotypes are often replaced by other negative attitudes, finally resulting in discrimination toward Indians when they are adults. That's why it's so important to reach the children at an early age."

---

"We, as Native peoples, are expected to bridge into the dominant culture. They in turn do not find any reason to necessitate bridging into our culture"

---

The struggle to be understood, and given a chance, was a main theme in our discussion. June thinks that many Indians feel they have no chance when controversies arise because there are so many white people. "We know we have boundaries to live within and we just stay there and sometimes don't try to change. Our Indian people have to work harder to get where we are. Often we've been raised being called names like squaw and chief, so our self esteem is very low. It's hard to overcome those obstacles. We have to prove ourselves. It makes me very proud to see Indian people achieve success."

And what about NPS employees who are Native American? Do they have to work

harder to prove themselves? "I think so. Like me - I don't have perfect English. I often don't pronounce words correctly or finish sentences. It's because of the language barrier. Even if Indians don't speak their own language, they were brought up listening to the way their parents talked. It's a different language pattern. It's very hard to change." Parks that are on or near reservations should make an effort to hire more Indians, give them that chance, but not as tokens. Having had many experiences on different boards as the token Indian, June knows how futile that can be. "I feel very strongly that Native Americans should be treated just like everyone else - for their qualifications, not just because they are an Indian person or as a token. We have a lot to offer, just like everybody else."

Should the Park Service do more for Indian employees involved in interpreting their own cultures? June feels that there needs to be more sensitivity training for superintendents, chiefs of interpretation, or anybody that works with Native Americans. There are many cultural differences, and not all Indian people are the same. "A lot of our people are real bashful, what some people call backwards. But they are just a bashful people. They can't have eye contact, it bothers them. I used to be like that, but I've slowly changed. A woman I went to Ranger Skills with said her boss, the superintendent, said he didn't want Indians working for him because the Indians couldn't have eye contact and they'd hold their heads down. But I feel that as time goes on and the Indians get more comfortable with you, that eye contact would be there. Cultural sensitivity training is vital."

"When I took my Ranger Skills training I really found out how little most of those people knew about the Native American, even about our rights. They brought up things like killing eagles and bears, etc., without really knowing what they were talking about. They need to understand what the majority of Native Americans feel, then see what the laws are all about." In addition, more PR needs to be done among the Native Americans themselves. "Half of our Nez Perce people don't even know the Park Service is here or what we do. They need to understand that the NPS is here to

help preserve and interpret the culture."

I thought then that we were done with the interview, but after a pause June left me with one last thought. "It makes me feel good when I hear people change their views when we get through talking. It means so much to me because for so long we have gone without having people hear our side of the history. I think it's very important that the NPS is interpreting Native American culture. Strong barriers are gradually breaking, not right away, but I can see changes in people's viewpoints. Attitudes take a long time to change, but at least there is a start. I thank the NPS for being part of it."

At Nez Perce we are extremely aware of the need for cultural sensitivity, the need to heighten the awareness of our visitors and employees about the differences, and similarities, between cultures. That's part of what Nez Perce NHP is all about, bridging cultures. But in the words of Jeannette Armstrong, a member of Canada's Penticton Indian Band,

*"Bridging cultures requires the active, positive participation of two separate cultures. We, as Native peoples, are expected to bridge into the dominant culture. They in turn do not find any reasons to necessitate bridging into our culture, wherein lies the whole attitude of cultural supremacy."*

All NPS interpreters have an opportunity to participate in building their half of that bridge. It's not only an opportunity, but an obligation.

Marie Myers, with June Greene,  
Nez Perce NHP

---

*"These clever (Paiute) foragers lived in far more intimate association with the natural world than today we can ever imagine; they were integrally a part of its cycles, more immediately subject to its bounties and scarcities, more finely attuned to its demands and resources."*

*Catherine W. Viele*

---

## How Does One Convey The Essence Of Being Dine'?

I've been with the NPS for seven years now, and have spent most of it talking about Navajos as part of my interpretive programs. My focus has been on the Navajo culture and sometimes includes some personal experience in order to make a point or to use an example.

Because I am a Navajo, it is difficult to talk about these things, and sometimes I don't feel that I can say what I really want to. Also, I have learned that it's my listeners who influence how much I will tell them, how much I want them to know of the truth about the culture I live in. Their attitude lets me know if they want to know the truth or if they want me to just confirm what they already assume is true. With all of their questions and fascination about the Indian people and our life ways, I find that many visitors mistakenly think that life out here on the reservation is romantic, even glamorous.

Many of the Navajo (Dine') keep in mind that they came from Changing Woman and that they have close ties to the earth and to the animals she nourishes, and that she supports everyone all their lives. Because of this, she is respected for providing life and the things we need to live, a home, food, tools, and clothes. These blessings come from her, and to get more we need to continually remember to thank her for all of them. Before Changing Woman, there were other beings made of mist, beings who have powers that control and balance the world.

For the world to be in balance, we must all be in balance individually. And balance is crucial. The Anglo and the Dine' view balance differently. To the Dine', balance is recognized as being beautiful and happy - ho'zho'.

If you or your world is not balanced or is out of harmony, then you must have the situation diagnosed by a medicine man as soon as possible. He or she will then say what is wrong, what caused the imbalance and what to do next to remedy the situation. The imbalance can be in the mind, body, or spirit, and will show through "symptoms." They may not be obvious symptoms, but they'll be there. Balance returns when one

goes through the recalling of certain mist beings that are responsible for that part of the world and repeats the ceremony from when the imbalance first occurred. Each medicine man knows many of the songs and prayers to remedy all kinds of "imbalances."

Because of this way of living, the condition of the spirit, mind, and body are not treated separately, but all together in order to restore the harmony that is needed for a healthy, peaceful, and happy life.

One example of an imbalance might be a Navajo who works with artifacts from ruins or in the ruins themselves. Because of feelings about death and places where death occurred, Navajo culture does not allow us to handle such items or to enter a ruin. Even the handling of a small potsherd can cause harm to any one or all three parts that make up a person. The handling of the sherd invites bad spirits to enter your spirit world and disrupt the harmony within you.

You may not be affected tomorrow or next week, or even next month, but possibly years from now. One day you find yourself having an aching in your arms or legs, you may get headaches or dizzy spells. At first you attempt to treat these yourself and brush them off as nothing to worry about, something that a couple of aspirins will take care of. Months later you realize that they keep occurring, are more frequent and painful, and are hard to ignore. It becomes even more persistent and soon you decide you must get medical attention. After several visits and tests, it is apparent that the physician is baffled. Then you finally decide to see if the medicine man can determine what's wrong. Through songs and prayers and special powers, he will learn that the patient at one time entered the ruins of an ancient people or handled pre-historic artifacts or even walked on the ruins themselves. He then realizes that the spirit of the artifact or ruins is within the patient's spirit world and is causing the disturbance in his life.

Now a visit to a healing medicine man is in order. He will tell you exactly what you did and what other ways the sickness will affect you. He will cure it by song, prayer, and his special powers. Each song and prayer discusses the sickness and its origin, and those spirits that are involved in the

healing process are recalled by the mention of their names and become part of the healing during the ceremony. Those spirits responsible for harmony come at the mention of their names and restore harmony and balance within the patient.

A third and separate ceremony, the Blessing Way, may be done to assure harmony. It acts as a "force shield" against bad forces in the world until you disrupt it again. You disrupt your own harmony mostly unknowingly, but one can learn most of the do's and don'ts that will prevent disruption. Stories are also learned this way, stories of the creation and how things came to be the way they are. Our parents and our grandparents tell us the stories. We, in turn, tell our children and grandchildren so that they can retain harmony in themselves. If harmony is in each one of us, then there is more harmony in the world. Isn't that what we're all striving for ultimately?

This is only an example of the spiritual and other values that lie beneath the surface of the Navajo culture. Visitors to Indian Country may see the dances, turquoise, silver, Monument Valley, hogans, and the Navajo men, women, and children, but how does one convey to them the essence of being Dine'?

As a Navajo and as a National Park Service interpreter, it is a question I try to answer every day.

Ailema Benally,  
Hubbell Trading Post NHS

---

## The Moral Of The Story

Whether interpreting the story of Indians to Anglo visitors or working with a member of another culture, it is essential to understand what makes the other person what he is. If we don't understand, if we don't learn about the other person, we are fertile ground for prejudice.

As Ailema Benally said, some Indians have strong feelings about death and things related to death. It is not a fear of death, but rather a feeling that death is important

and must be respected by certain observations and ceremonies. Here in the southwest, we in the Park Service work in and around ruins, places where people lived and died. Even if those deaths were long ago and to people unknown, the place can evoke bad feelings among Indians. Some, therefore, are very reluctant to enter such a place or to handle things found there, like pottery. There are ways to prevent the bad feelings, but they require care and consultation.

Consider a hypothetical situation:

An Anglo foreman and two Navajo maintenance workers are to clean up the litter in a ruin, once the home of people long dead. The foreman assigns tasks, and begins his own. He notices that the two men are hanging back, taking long breaks. They seem to spend more time outside talking than inside the ruins working.

It is easy to imagine the thoughts that result:  
"They're lazy!"  
"Why does he pick us to do this?  
Doesn't he know how  
painful it is?"

No, he probably doesn't. He didn't think to ask if something were wrong; after all, he's seen lots of lazy Anglos do the same thing. For their part, the workers never mentioned their concerns about the working conditions, either because they assumed that the foreman already understood the situation or because it was too private a topic to discuss with an outsider.

So the two parties walk away from the situation, each with a complete misunderstanding -- a prejudice -- about the other. Anglos and Indians, like Jews and Catholics or Democrats and Republicans, have some differing values and different perspectives. If the one is to understand the other, he has to be told.



## SWRO LIBRARY ASSISTANCE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

There is an enormous body of literature about Indians. Understandably, it is a daunting challenge for the lay person to know where to begin to find a book or journal on a particular tribe, event, historic period, or other topic. Most of our park libraries are very small, and much of what they contain is of limited value as a source work.

The SWRO Library, located in the Division of Interpretation, has become a major source of help (not just as regards Indians, but in all fields relative to park needs). The actual shelf space and the number of volumes there are limited, but librarian Amalin Ferguson is rapidly establishing contacts with other libraries and literary/scholarly sources. The library participates in various inter-library loan systems and subscribes to a computer-based information retrieval service. Substantial sources are now available to the parks. Just a sampling includes these sources:

American Indian Culture and Research Journal - an interdisciplinary journal of history, anthropology, literature, and the arts.

The Handbook of North American Indians - A still-in-progress 20 volume set that will deal with the prehistory, history, and cultures of the Indians north of central Mexico.

The Spanish Borderlands Sourcebooks - A 25 volume set dealing with ethnology of various tribes, Hispanic/Indian relations, missions, Indian perspectives on Spanish colonization, and many other topics.

Native Americans on Film and Video - A catalog of 400 items, most of which are recent (1970s), with older classics and anthropological projects.

Indians of the Southwest: A Critical Bibliography - One volume of the bibliographic series of the Newberry Library Center for the History of the American Indian.

The library also has biographies, oral histories, historical and ethnic atlases, and many other rich sources of information. For help on how to find specific or general sources, call librarian Amalin Ferguson at FTS 476-1840 or (505) 988-6840.

### Bibliography

Marilyne Mabery, a college teacher and writer on Indian topics, suggests the following books from her extensive personal collection as good sources for the study of the Indian-Anglo culture gap:

Touch the Earth, compiled by T. C. McLuhan. A collection taken from the statements and writings of American Indians about their values and lifestyles and the tragic history of their people. Individuals from every tribe speak eloquently with wisdom and prophetic vision. It provides a thought-provoking comparison of the Indian and Anglo world views. Illustrated with a collection of Edward S. Curtis prints.

Warriors of the Rainbow, by William Willoya and Vinson Brown. Written by an Eskimo and a white biologist, this book has two parts dealing with the spirit of dream visions of a conquered and poorly understood culture. The dreams and visions are taken from a selection of tribes, including southwestern, northwestern, and Eskimo. The second part interprets the visions and dreams in a practical and critical fashion. Both are valuable for gaining insights into

the mind set of the Native American population, no matter the tribe.

The Pueblo Indians, by Joe S. Sando. Mr. Sando is a Jemez Pueblo Indian. He is an educator and a lecturer and has written this history knowing the traditional values as well as the historic role of his people. The book allows a glimpse of the cultural history, as well as the workings of Spanish and Anglo world views today and their relationships with each other and the Pueblos. Traditional Pueblo history is taught even today among the Pueblo people in comparison to the Anglo world view.

Understanding this spiritual history moves the reader closer to understanding all the people of the southwestern pueblos.

Daughters of the Earth, by Carolyn Niethammer. Drawn on interviews with modern Native American women, anthropological writings, and old songs, legends, and ceremonies, this book explores women's roles within the differing tribes of North America. From birth rites, to puberty ceremonies, to legends of corn and marriage, this book paints a picture of proud, sometimes stoic, always human individuals with dignity and purpose totally unlike the general Anglo view of the downtrodden "squaw."

Seven Arrows, by Hyemeyohsts Storm. Plains Indians and the role of the medicine wheel are

explored and discussed along with the world vision of the Plains people, in reference to each Anglo and Indian individual's perception of the world we live in. An excellent history of the Plains Indian culture, told through stories and illustrated with many beautiful photographs.

No Turning Back: A Hopi Indian Woman's Struggle to Live in Two Worlds, by Polingaysi Qoyawayma (Elizabeth White) as told to Vada F. Carlson. This is the story of one Hopi woman's experience in being educated in the white man's schools and her struggles to bridge the cultural gap when she returned to Old Oraibi, Arizona. A landmark work dealing with the sensitive topic of cross-cultural world views and of trying to integrate and understand both.

Zuni Folk Tales, by Frank Hamilton Cushing. Cushing's literary skill, sound knowledge of the archeologist's world view, and his unique experiences at Zuni are alive with insights and an excellent perception of cultures thrown together without understanding each other. Each story is a dignified account, as are the beautiful English translations of the world view according to the people of the Pueblo of Zuni.

The Sky Clears, by A. Grave Day. This book reveals mental and emotional qualities of Native Americans through their poetry. Each region

of the country is represented. It is a fascinating insight into the turmoil and questioning of the human spirit, no matter the culture or the condition. The poetry speaks for itself, touching the universal experience each of us shares.

Dine' bahane': The Navajo Creation Story, by Paul G. Zolbrod. The most complete English version of the Navajo creation story. The power and delicacy of the oral tradition is accurately maintained throughout the book. The social and religious significance of the story comes fluidly to life. It is based on archival materials, including transcriptions of early twentieth century Navajo performances, as well as Navajo elders. A folklore epic is turned into a highly sensitive work of art.

Tapestries in Sand: The Spirit of Indian Sandpainting, by David Villasenor. Throughout the book, Mr. Villasenor, a renown Navajo sandpainting artist, works with the Native American tradition of being a caretaker of mother earth. He presents the legends behind the stories and speaks directly to the reader concerning traditions and world views. The book is a classic.

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, by Dee Brown. Mr. Brown documents the systematic plunder of the American Indians during the second half of the nineteenth century, battle by battle,

broken treaty by treaty. It is the Indian side of the story of the western expansion of the white man across the plains. Beautifully told with great depth and heart-wrenching clarity, it is a unique and disturbing view of the American west told from the Indian point of view.

Black Elk Speaks, by John Neihart. The vision of the meaning of life on this planet as Black Elk, an Oglala Sioux medicine man, saw it and sees it for the future of his people, and possibly for all of

mankind. A spiritual guide for his people, Black Elk traces the life and death of the Sioux. It is a book that won't die in the memory of any far thinking interpreter.

Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions, by John (Fire) Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes. A wonderful inside view of the Native American world view and life styles. The book demolished much misinformation and many stereotypes about Indians and their values. It is an eye opener for the student

of Indian history, and a masterpiece of sensitivity and insight.

Right After Sundown: Teaching Stories of the Navajo, by Marilyne V. Mabery (to be published in August 1990 by Navajo Community College in Tsaile, AZ). Twelve stories tracing the Navajo from their creation story, through the prankster antics of Coyote, to modern tales surrounding Chaco Canyon, illustrated by Navajo artists.

Marilyne Mabery

---

## A FINAL WORD

These articles are intended to remind us that in interpreting Indians or Indian cultures, there are two cultures involved, and to show us that the two tend to see the world from different points of view. Some of the articles have highlighted specific differences between us (e.g., attitudes toward death, the meaning of the Battle of the Little Bighorn), but it would take a volume to educate us to the myriad specific cultural differences that make an Anglo different from an Indian. That has not been our purpose.

The broader purpose has been to remind you that this culture gap exists, that both groups confront it daily in working together or when one interprets the other. However well meaning and sensitive you are, the other guy is occasionally going to do something unexpected or inexplicable; the Anglo interpreter's best professional attempts at interpreting Indians or Indian cultures may occasionally upset Indians. When this happens, you have probably stumbled into the culture gap - it is there, it is real, and it affects all of us who live or work in a multi-cultural place. You may not know what specific word or act upset the other person, but knowing that your interpretation is dealing with someone's deep-seated values and perceptions, and that your own values and perceptions may be quite different, you will at least know what happened.

In that event, don't be like the Anglo foreman and the Navajo workers in one of these stories who, ignorant about what had happened between them, satisfied their mutual ignorance by forming prejudices about each other.

**Talk to each other. And ask questions.**

Don Goldman, SWRO



