

**NATIVE STUDIES**  
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**CANADIAN NATIVE STUDIES BY EUROPEANS**

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The basic pattern in the first half of the Twentieth Century for Native studies in Canada was that scholars would come up to Canada from the U.S. to work on occasional research projects in Canada and then publish most of their results in the U.S. Canada was considered to be within the sphere of American anthropology at the time so that, for example, George Dawson of the Geological Survey of Canada was on the original executive of the American Anthropological Association. The American Museum of Natural History in New York funded the Jesup Expedition at the turn of century which brought about two dozen anthropologists over several years to study the British Columbia coast Indians.

Of course many of those scholars were still close to their European heritage. Franz Boas, who worked among the Inuit and the Kwakiutl, was German and many of his students who worked in Canada were also Germans, such as Edward Sapir the linguist who directed anthropology at the Geological Survey of Canada, Alfred L. Kroeber who did research among the Gros Ventres, and Robert H. Lowie who published on the Assiniboine and required his graduate students at Berkeley to be able to read German. In an earlier time Aurel Krause did research on the B.C. coast in 1880 with support by the Bremen (Germany) Geographical Society and he published a monograph on the Tlingit.

The French heritage was strong among several early ethnologists: the explorer Gabriel Sagard who described the Huron; Lucien Adam researched the Cree and Ojibwa languages; the missionary Emile Petitot who worked among the Chipewyan, Hare, Inuit, and Kutchin; the missionary Adrien Morrice who did

ethnography, history, and linguistics among the Dene, particularly the Carrier; and Marius Barbeau, born in Quebec, studied the classics, attended Oxford, and worked out of the National Museum on the Haida, Huron, Iroquois, and other cultures.

Then there is the work in the Arctic of such Danish anthropologists as Knud Rasmussen and Kaj Birket-Smith, once Curator of Ethnology at the National Museum in Copenhagen, Denmark. A Danish-Canadian, Vilhjalmur Stefansson wrote *My Life With the Eskimo* (1913). In 1903 the Societe des Americanisms was founded in Europe with a periodical on American Indian studies.

I made a list of 100 major pioneers in Canadian Native studies who published books or monographs and found that 54% of them did most of their basic research in Canada when they were foreigners. Only about 22% of the list, which includes several Native people, were born in Canada. So it is clear that foreign scholars were important in the founding years of the discipline.

Because Canada has been a colony of Britain for much of its modern history we might expect a major interest and contribution from Britain, but for some unknown reason scholars from Britain have contributed almost nothing to Canadian Native studies and there seems to be little interest in the subject of any of the Native peoples of the Americas today in Britain. Thus, for example, there have been no articles on Canadian Native peoples in *Man*, the journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, in the last ten years (1976-1985) nor in *The Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* since its founding in 1970 through 1983. In the same sampling of journals only 3% of the articles in *Man* and 5% of the articles in the Oxford journal are on the broader subject of Native peoples anywhere in the Americas, mostly on Meso-america and South America and by American authors.

In the 1960's and 1970's Native studies based in Canada came to such a maturity that the vast majority of research was being done by Canadians and published in Canada. This trend was so strong that Native studies in Canada became nationalistic and tended to ignore Native people in the rest of the Western Hemisphere. Thus I found that in 1975-1984, 97% of the graduate theses produced in Canada and 95% of the books and monographs published in Canada in Native studies were just about Native people living in Canada.

There were a few Europeans working in Canada in the 1970's. I have been impressed by the ethnographies of one British scholar from Cambridge, Hugh Brody, on the skid row Indians in Edmonton (1971), on the eastern arctic (1975), and on northern British Columbia (1981). J.H. Van Den Brink, a Dutch scholar who teaches at the Hagnum Gynasium in The Hague, has an excellent book on Haida history (1974). Yngve G. Lithman, a professor of social anthropology at the University of Stockholm, has published an ethnography of a Manitoba Indian reserve (originally published in Sweden in 1978 and then in Manitoba in 1984) and then an analysis of economic development projects associated with the same reserve (1982).

Peter Gerber, the Curator of American Indian studies at the anthropological museum of the University of Zurich in Switzerland, visits Canada every few

years. He has been writing articles (1985) and a text in German explaining Native Canadian ethnological, economic and political issues to the German reading public. He has a new, well illustrated, text coming out on the Indians of the Northwest Coast. He also publishes an illustrated annual calendar with German and French descriptions for an organization called Incomindios, International Committee for the Indians of the Americas.

Ake Hultkrantz from Sweden studied Lapps in the 1940's and then moved on to do comparative studies of religion among circumpolar peoples in general. *His The Religion of American Indians* (1979) has been very influential. Christian Feest is a professor of anthropology at the University of Vienna and a curator in the American Department of the Museum for Volkerkunde in Vienna. He recently published an overview on Native Arts of North America (1980), he has an article on Indian alcoholism, and he is working on a new book on tribal arts.

Claudia Notzke, a geographer from Dusseldorf, Germany, has an article on the Stoney and Piegan Reserves in Alberta (1985A) and a general book on *Indian Reserves in Alberta* (1985B). A recent study in the U.S., but involving tribes with members in Canada as well, such as Ojibwa, Oneida, and Sioux, was done of the history of Indians in Chicago by Janusz Mucha of Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland (1983). An early ethnographer of the Ojibwa, Paul Radin, also came from Poland.

There are also a few cases of researchers who have come from Europe to work in Canada, but have kept up their old contacts and sometimes publish in Europe. Ludger Muller-Wille in Geography at McGill, for example, has articles in both the German volumes on Ethnicity in *Canada and North American Studies* listed in the references. Ted Brassler, of the Museum of Man in Ottawa, originally came from Leiden, Netherlands.

Now the Europeans are having an occasional conference on American Indian studies in Europe. A by-product of one of these conferences is an anthology published in English called *North American Indian Studies: European Contributions*, organized and edited by Pieter Hovens (1981) of The Hague, Netherlands. The book has twenty contributors and Hovens lists twenty-three other prominent European specialists in North American Indian studies. His introduction reviews the history of European contributions to North American Indian studies.

On the Canadian scene there are articles by Hultkrantz on circumpolar religion; Lothar Drager, who is associated with several film projects in Germany, on "Chieftainship and Religious Authority Among the Central Algonkin"; Yulia Averkiewa, of the Institute of Ethnology in Moscow, on Kwakiutl heirship; Johanna Herweg on the supernatural home of animals in the subarctic; Rolf Krusche shows the conflict between the Wabeno Cult and the Midewiwin; Hans-Joachim Schepker describes Haida ecstasy; Fedora Giordano writes about poetry and shamanism; and the McGill geographer, Ludger Muller-Wille, comments on Indian land issues in Canada's national formation.

## CONCLUSIONS

There seem to be two trends and the continuation of a curious ethnic tradition in this recent European work. The most important trend is that it is the ethnography of contemporary Native communities. The work of Brody, Van Den Brink, Lithman, Gerber, and Notzke give a great amount of factual detail on economics, laws, politics, and administration. They are not trying to reconstruct a description of aboriginal life or exploring some highly specialized question from anthropology. *The Ethnicity in Canada* volume is largely a product of geographers who bring their own perspectives into the research, including William C. Wonders at U. of Alberta on a geographer's perspective on northern Native ethnicity. In light of this connection between German geographers and Indian research it is worth noting that Canada's most prominent geographer of Indians has a German heritage, Conrad Heidenreich of York University.

They are researchers who seem to be particularly sensitive to the Canadian context itself as something that needs to be described to the readers. They are taking notes on what they see and hear in a rather refreshing, and perhaps naive, way and they are working in a largely inductive way to their conclusions. Academic reviews of their books have tended to appreciate them as ethnographies and to dismiss their theoretical contributions. They tend to use the descriptive, rather than the theoretical, materials of current Canadian ethnologists.

A second and minor trend is the work on religion, which does deal with careful literature reviews, ethnographic reconstructions, and much theoretical speculation. Hovens (1981:7) traces this back to the Vienna School of Father Wilhelm Schmidt and writes that an "interest in aboriginal Indian religions has remained a prominent part of the European in Indian studies." He cites the influence of the work of Ake Hukkrantz in Sweden and Werner Muller in Germany on a younger generation of European anthropologists.

The curious ethnic tradition is that Germans, Scandinavians, and Poles would be interested in doing research on Indians when (1) it is in an area of British colonial heritage and (2) actual migrants from those countries have tended to have the lowest opinion of Indians of all immigrants in Canada or the U.S. I have mentioned the German heritage of many of the early workers such as Krause, Boas, Sapir, Kroeber, and Lowie and now we find that most of the modern researchers from Europe come from Germany, Austria, the German-speaking part of Switzerland, and the neighboring countries of Poland, Holland, and Sweden.

This seems to me to be diametrically opposite of what we should expect from several kinds of data that indicates that people of central and eastern European heritages are the most prejudiced and discriminatory against Indians (Price, 1979 :Chap. 9). The geographical zone to which many of these people immigrated is the area where Indian-White relations are the worst: Minnesota and North and South Dakota in the U.S. and the adjoining Canadian provinces to the north of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Saskatchewan and Manitoba, for

example, have a long history of much higher arrest rates for Indians than the other provinces of Canada. In a national survey of attitudes towards Indians, Ponting and Gibbons (1981) found the high or favorable rankings among people with such heritages as African, West Indian, French Canadian, British, and southern European and the low or unfavorable rankings among the people with eastern European, Scandinavian, German, and Polish heritages. While the facts of British colonialism and the attitudes of British immigrants would seem to favor research by the British, the strong interest comes instead from parts of continental Europe from which immigrants who have come here have had the lowest opinions of Indians.

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