

American Indian Libraries Newsletter



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Media Stereotyping of American Indians: An Editorial Focus

Cheryl Metoyer-Duran

One of the major considerations that Indian and non-Indian librarians share is that of stereotyping in literature. A related consideration, perhaps of greater importance to the non-print-oriented individual, is that of stereotyping in nonbook media. It has been generally assumed in the research and professional literature that there is a close relationship between the stereotypes of minority people presented in the print and those stereotypes apparent in the nonprint media.



Cheryl Metoyer-Duran, Ph.D.

At a recent conference (UCLA, spring 1978), I was asked to present a brief reaction to the aforementioned issue. As professionals, we must be aware of the reinforcing power of all media, particularly television, as it relates to stereotyping. Therefore, I have summarized below some of the issues and problems associated with the analysis of American Indian stereotypes

The media-use research of the last decade, particularly the last five years, demonstrates the fragmented and non-specific focus of American Indians. While a number of Indian groups and individuals have commented on the negative portrayal of Indians in both fictional and documentary programs, the brunt of the research on the subject has focused on two concerns: (1) frequency of the portrayal of Indians in television programming and (2) the characteristics connected with gross stereotyping. The general consensus by researchers has been the need for more specific research on the history, contributions, and current status of the spectrum of American Indian groups.

While there exist both talented American Indians and some sympathetic television producers/directors/sponsors who are capable of presenting authentic programming for Indian and non-Indian viewers, the stereotyping of Amer-

ican Indians on television is still apparent. The need for nonstereotyped programming is crucial for at least two reasons: (1) to begin rectifying the negative stereotypes held by Indians and non-Indians; (2) to emphasize the need for cross-cultural respect and the integral value of pluralistic traditions in American life.

Some of the issues we must confront in attempting to rectify the negative representation of American Indians are briefly outlined below:

1. The need to determine the availability of both television sets and the variety of stations providing programming for Indians in rural settings, such as reservations, as well as in major urban centers;
2. The need for a series of comparative analyses of the effects of television on urban versus reservation, or rural, children over periods of time (longitudinal studies);
3. The impact of American Indian actors on influencing content of programming in regard to authenticity;
4. The extent to which American Indian communities have either suggested or actively developed documentary, news, and other community-oriented programs for commercial, educational (i.e., PBS), and cable television (legal implications of community involvement in establishing cable TV franchising);
5. The availability of educational, intern, and other training programs for developing American Indian actors, newscasters, producers, directors, and writers;
6. The need for a content analysis of both national and local news programs in relation to their coverage of crisis and general-interest items concerning American Indians;
7. The similarities and differences between Indian, Chicano, black, and Asian children in the sense of self-esteem and effective orientations to nonminority children as evidenced in their TV viewing patterns.

It is obvious from the statements above that many of the

issues of concern to librarians are directly related to stereotyping in all the media, particularly television. As librarians become more vocal in their advocacy of honest and accurate portrayals of American Indians, it becomes incumbent that we simultaneously focus on the single medium that has permeated our households and captivated the average person for a minimum of three hours per day. Indeed, if children and others continue to equate television with reality, as some research suggests, the validity of non-stereotypic print literature becomes seriously undermined. The impact of valid print literature is eroded when our communities are saturated with the frequent inaccuracies and distortions of the more widely used mass media.—*CMD, Ph.D. (Cherokee), Editor, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, UCLA.*

Akwesasne Library and Cultural Center: the Tribal Librarian's Perspective

Margaret Jacobs

The Akwesasne Mohawk Reservation is located in the northeast corner of the state of New York and extends into the Canadian provinces of Quebec and Ontario. It includes an area of approximately 14,600 acres, half of which is in the U.S. and the other half in Canada. The Akwesasne Library and Cultural Center, constructed in 1970-72, was officially opened in September 1971.

Beginnings

In recent years, the people on our reservation have become increasingly aware of the educational disadvantages of Indian people. Concurrently, students at St. Lawrence University became aware that there was a minority group right on their doorstep. Through the help of Dean Wells and Rene Atkinson, a close working relationship developed between faculty, students, and the Mohawk community. After a series of meetings, Mohawk parents decided to start a tutorial program as their first cooperative educational project.

Previously, there had been some consideration of building a tribal library. Finally, a bold decision was made by the Mohawk people and their St. Lawrence friends to raise funds to build a community library at Akwesasne. Students at St. Lawrence held box lacrosse games, rummage sales, and dinners. We also received contributions from individuals and small churches in the surrounding areas.

The community sought funds and grants for additional support. Operation Mainstream and the Office of Economic Opportunity funded the construction of the building. The facility was built by men from our community. The library furniture was donated by the Rotary Club of Herkimer, New York. Books were collected in much the same manner as the funds for the construction campaign. The Akwesasne Library and Cultural Center was dedicated on September 25, 1971.

While building construction was progressing, Margaret Jacobs, Beatrice Cole, and Ann Rourke received five months of on-the-job library training. These community members were trained at St. Regis Mohawk School,

Salmon River Central School, and the Massena Public Library.

Services

Today, the library offers many services in addition to circulating materials. The interlibrary loan services with cooperative libraries have been especially useful for students enrolled in extension courses. The library also maintains a reserve reading shelf for college courses.

Children's services include the children's story hour, Friday, 10 to 11 a.m., and a bookmobile that stops on both the American and Canadian sides of the reservation. The schedule is as follows:

Bookmobile stops on American side of reservation during summer vacation: Monday—Snye; Tuesday—Cornwall Island and Racquette Point; Wednesday—St. Regis Road, Pyke Road, and Hogansburg; Thursday—Jock Road, Beaver Meadow, Tarbell Road, and Cook Road.

Bookmobile stops at three schools on Canadian side throughout school year: Snye—Monday, 9 a.m.—12:00 noon; Cornwall Island—Tuesday, 9 a.m.—12:00 noon; St. Regis—Wednesday, 9 a.m.—12:00 noon. In addition, film programs are offered on the third Sunday of every month.

Adult Services

The library offers a variety of services for the adults in the community. The library publishes the community newsletter, which is free upon request. Classes offered at the library include the following: (1) upholstery, in which Aldon Ladle offers instruction in furniture and fabric selections; (2) interior decorating, taught by Beatrice Brewerton; and (3) courses in home nursing, taught by Mrs. Aldon Ladle. Adult consumer education classes are also taught in the library. Films, filmstrips, records, phonographs, and cassettes are available. Also, a Children's Corner, designed as a play area, is available during adult activity periods. The library is open sixty hours a week.

The museum that is housed in the library building is directed by Martha LaFrance. The collection consists of arts and crafts and Indian artifacts. The library, in cooperation with the museum, sponsors craft classes and also classes in traditional basket making, dressmaking, and bead work. The museum hours are as follows: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (winter); 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (summer).

Administration

The policy of the Akwesasne Library and Cultural

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Center is developed by the board of directors. The current president of the board is Ella Peters. This board dictates library policy, makes all major budgetary decisions, and controls employment procedures for the library and museum.

Training

Since the library personnel at Akwesasne lack M.L.S.'s, we continuously make use of library courses offered at the library. Recently there were fifteen individual courses offered by schools, such as St. Lawrence University (Canton, New York), Potsdam State University (Potsdam, New York), Mater Dei College (Ogdensburg, New York), and North Country Community College (Saranac Lake, New York).

Legislation and Funding

As of August 4, 1978, the Akwesasne Library and Cultural Center officially became a public library and member of the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System of New York. The library has always been a public institution, since the people in the surrounding areas have consistently used our library and assisted us in attaining the proper library legislation (New York Indian Library Bill signed into law August 1, 1978). This legislation has helped somewhat in financing our library. However, we are still dependent on LSCA funds for additional support. Akwesasne, like most reservation libraries, must continually seek funding sources.

At Akwesasne, an Indian library does not mean a library that houses only Indian materials. It does mean that Indian people work in the library, which is located on an Indian reservation. We do have a large collection of Indian books (approximately 1,000), but we also offer other resources, all of which have been classified according to the Dewey Decimal system. Therefore, in addition to the traditional resources of a public library, our library includes materials of special note to our Indian population—*MJ (Mohawk), Librarian, Akwesasne Library & Cultural Center, Hogansburg, NY 13655.*

Indian Library Services in New Mexico: an Update

Joanne Werger

Some months ago we received an overview of Indian Library services in New Mexico from Joanne Werger, program consultant for the New Mexico State Library. The following highlights were presented:

There are currently fifteen community libraries in Indian communities here in New Mexico. (Some school libraries may be serving the general adult needs, but I know of only one at this time.) These are located at the pueblos of Acoma, Cochiti, Jemez, Laguna, San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Santo Domingo, Zia, and Zuni; the Navajo communities of Canoncito, Navajo, Ramah, and Sanostee (the school/community library); and the reservations of the Mescalero Apaches and the Jicarilla Apaches at Dulce.

Isleta Pueblo has the beginnings of a library, but it is not yet in operation.

The New Mexico State Library bookmobiles stop at several Indian communities. Some of these stops supplement the community's own library, while other stops provide the only library service in the area.

Funding of Indian libraries varies considerably. Most Indian libraries receive state grants-in-aid through the New Mexico State Library. Other funding is through tribal funds, Save the Children Federation, CETA funds, adult education programs, donations, and special grants (federal, state, and private). The need for stable funding is a serious problem among most Indian libraries.

Staffing also varies. Two Indian libraries (Sanostee and San Ildefonso) have professionally trained librarians; both are Anglo. A few of the other libraries are assisted and advised by trained school librarians in the community. Six of the current pueblo librarians received training through Lotsee Smith's Community Library project. One librarian is currently enrolled in a library science correspondence course from Loyola University. Some of the librarians attend state library conferences and workshops. Individual consulting by state library staff is done, but not to an extent that can be considered a full training program. Because of a lack of stable salary funds in many libraries, turnover is high. Currently, two Indian libraries are without a librarian. Most of the libraries have only one staff member, who, in most libraries, is an Indian.

The libraries are usually housed in a building such as a community center, adult education center, or administration building. I am not aware of any Indian library that has a completely separate building.

All of the Indian libraries are eligible to share in all the cooperative services in the state—interlibrary loan, film loan, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped services, reciprocal borrowing.

Organization of the libraries varies. Some use Dewey, while others have adapted a color-coding system. Materials themselves usually include books, magazines, newspapers, filmstrips, etc. Usually there is an emphasis on Indian-related materials, but collections also contain materials you would find in any library in a small community.—*JW, Program Consultant, New Mexico Library, Santa Fe, New Mexico.*

Letters to the Editor

Dear Dr. Metoyer:

I read your newsletter today for the first time and was amazed to find that there are so many established Native American libraries and growing interest among our people.

As I have been newly appointed to my position of coordinator for our tribe's library project, I am seeking any and all assistance available so that we may establish our Indian Library on a solid foundation.

We are only in the early planning stages, so we would appreciate any information, pamphlets, etc., that your or-

ganization may have available on establishing library service for Native Americans. I am particularly interested to find if there is any list of publications that would be a "must" as far as reference or circulation books on Native Americans is concerned. Any information on training and workshops that you are aware of would also help our cause.

If you are not equipped to distribute this information, perhaps you will direct us to other sources.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation. I enjoyed reading your newsletter and look forward to forthcoming issues.

Rae L. Snyder, Coordinator
Seneca Nation of Indians
Library Project
P.O. Box 231
Salamanca, NY 14779

Dear Dr. Metoyer,

I received a copy of the winter issue of the *American Indian Libraries Newsletter* and wanted you to know how much I enjoyed reading it. It is a very good tool for informing the public about Native Americans. The article by Velma S. Salabiye was most informative. This particular issue had so much information that a building-level media specialist as well as teachers need to know in order to avoid repeating those same old myths and legends about Native Americans. This *Newsletter* will be of value to all who work with students in our country.

May I have a copy of number one if you have any left?

Rosa L. Presberry
Specialist in Special Programs
Maryland State Department of Education
Baltimore, MD 21240

Dear Dr. Metoyer:

Your publication is a welcome source of energy in the Native American scene. Perhaps, after many years of Indian privations, abuses, and sufferings, this instrument of the dominant society may do some good for generations of Indians yet to come. To be stripped comes suddenly; the recovery goes at a turtle's pace.

I am speaking on behalf of Pima Indian children at this school who are in grades K-5.

There is a dire need to expand library facilities and increase its materials. The present library is barely cottage size. We are hoping for a Title IV grant sometime in the future.

We would appreciate helpful information to acquire facilities. Federal grants these days do practically nothing for federal schools in acquiring facilities. However, we are interested in the whole picture of multimedia instruction. Perhaps you may be able to help us, and as well, your readers.

Joseph Cruz, Media Specialist
Gila Crossing Day School
Rt. 1, Box 770
Laveen, AZ 85339

Dear Dr. Metoyer:

During the month of December 1977, I had the opportunity of obtaining a newsletter which was published by your office. I personally found the newsletter very in-

teresting; however, since that time, I have not been able to locate another newsletter. Please send me information regarding subscription rates and any information regarding your work toward the development of Native American libraries.

I would also be interested in any information you may have regarding reading material for children, ages four years to high school level. Also, do you have any sources we may contact regarding the donation or matching funds available in order to set up a library for a Native American community.

Any information you may be able to forward to me would sincerely be appreciated. Thank you.

Linda S. White, Administrative Assistant
Comprehensive Planning Department
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 745
Wewoka, OK 74884

Special News

Technical Assistance Project

During the January 1978 ALA Midwinter Meeting, members of the OLSD Subcommittee on Library Service for American Indian People planned a project to provide on-site technical assistance by American Indian librarians to help develop libraries and/or relevant library linkages for Indians living in semiurban and urban areas. The project began in September 1978 and will terminate August 31, 1979.

Several members of the ALA/OLSD Subcommittee on Library Service for American Indian People will be project consultants. Those who have been named as consultants are: James May (Cherokee); Cheryl Metoyer-Duran (Cherokee); Lotsee Smith (Comanche); and Mary Alice Tsosie (Navajo).

A request for consultative service by an American Indian librarian must come from the Indian community or Indian community agency. Contacts will be made prior to a visit by the project consultant with the state library agency and local public library. Efforts of state and local libraries to reach the specific American Indian community will be assessed. Background information will be gathered regarding the local Indian community, e.g., population, resources, etc., by/for the project consultant prior to the visit. Each visit will last from two to three days. Travel expenses for the on-site technical assistance service will be shared (where possible) by a combination of funds from the state library agency, the Indian community, and ALA/OLSD. All arrangements for trips and payment of expenses will be coordinated from OLSD.

Indian communities or agencies interested in obtaining such assistance may contact: Jean E. Coleman, Director, Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 944-6780, ext. 261.

Ford Foundation Releases NARF Film

The Ford Foundation has released a new film entitled *Indian Rights, Indian Law*, which deals with the work of

the Native American Rights Fund (NARF). NARF is a nonprofit, nationwide Indian law firm devoted to the protection of Indian rights.

The film concentrates on a number of lawsuits and activities that are illustrative of NARF's priorities: preservation of tribal existence, protection of tribal natural resources, human rights, enforcement of government's legal obligations to Indian people, and the orderly development of the field of Indian law.

Among the cases included in the film are *United States v. Washington*, which concerns the off-reservation fishing rights of fourteen tribes in the state of Washington; *United States v. Truckee Carson Irrigation District*, brought on behalf of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe to prevent further erosion of the tribe's water rights through diversion of water from the Truckee River in Nevada; and *United States v. Maine*, a suit on behalf of the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot tribes, who contend that their land was taken from them illegally under the terms of the Indian Nonintercourse Act of 1790.

Indian Rights, Indian Law was produced by Sandra and Joseph Consentino. It is available for purchase from Films Incorporated, 733 Green Bay Rd., Wilmette, IL 60091, in 16mm (\$625) or videocassette (\$440). It may be rented from Association Films, Inc., Ford Foundation Films, 866 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022, in 16mm (\$50). The film is in color; running time is sixty minutes.

For further information: Nancy Boggs (212) 573-4825.

NCAI Endorsement of the White House Preconference On Indian Library and Information Services On or Near Reservations

Resolution

The Executive Committee of the National Congress of American Indians extends its appreciation to those groups and agencies which are trying, through a variety of coordinated means to facilitate improvement (or initial establishment) by Indian communities of library and information resources on or near reservations.

Especially the NCAI expresses its support for the BIA plan for the improvement of library, media, information programs; and for the White House Preconference on Indian Library and Information Services On or Near Reservations to take place in October 1978 to raise awareness, develop consensus on a long-range plan to fully develop information resources in reservation communities, and to provide an organized Indian contribution to the National White House Conference.—*Charles E. Trimble, Executive Director, National Congress of American Indians.*

Listening to Indians . . .

. . . can be a rewarding experience . . . and during the past several years we have talked with and listened to hundreds of American Indians. We encouraged them to speak candidly of whatever concerned them, and they did. We recorded 143 conversations with Indians of 69 tribes found in the western two-thirds of the nation. The result is a collection of comments on many things, from how a medicine man heals his patients to the takeover at Wounded Knee to the latest developments in Indian

education. They spoke of poetry and painting, of poverty and politics; there was talk of frustration and progress. They spoke in their homes, on reservations, in schools, in pueblos, in a tipi, and even in a jail cell. We talked of beautiful sand paintings, their pottery, their carvings, their songs and dances—all integral parts of their daily lives. In some tribal tongues, there is no word for *goodbye*, for once they have come to know you, you are always part of them. The tapes in this collection are reminders that we have not said goodbye to the Indian people we spoke with.

Original Material

All the interviews are preserved on the original, unaltered tapes in our college library. To make them more readily accessible, the tapes have been transcribed with just enough editing to reduce such things as repetition and unrelated digressions, but not enough to change the *feeling* of the speakers' own words. These transcriptions were made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the cooperation and support of St. Louis Community College throughout the project.

Availability

The National Endowment grant provisions specify that complete sets of the transcripts be placed in the libraries of eight major universities and in the Newberry Library. We are happy to be able to report that the transcripts will soon be available in microform as a part of the *New York Times* Oral History Program.—*Samuel I. Meyers, History Department, St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley, 3400 Pershall Road, St. Louis, MO 63135.*

Western Michigan U. offers courses for minorities

Western Michigan University announced the second year of its program for public library service to Native American and Spanish-speaking groups. Based on the criticism from current students, we are enhancing the offerings to include work in political and legal concerns to minorities as well as a special program on materials and demonstrations by Mary Eileen Shimizu, an Ottawa Indian who has been doing special research in this field, including an internship at the Smithsonian and a student research grant from Western Michigan University.

Field experience in the Grand Rapids and Portage Public Libraries, where programs for Native Americans are being expanded, is available. In addition, it is expected that this year's students working on Spanish-speaking persons' needs will have established a demonstration project in Holland and a special bilingual elementary school age center in Lansing. Minicourses are available to anyone interested in further study in this area—not just library school students.

If you are aware of Native Americans or Spanish-speaking persons who are interested themselves in library service for their people, please tell them about this new emphasis at Western and about the fellowship.—*William K. Smith, Program Coordinator, Western Michigan University, School of Librarianship, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001.*

An Invitation to Share Information

In an effort to broaden the information network of the *American Indian Libraries Newsletter*, we are asking that our readers respond to the accompanying questionnaire. Reservation libraries, public libraries serving urban Indians, tribal libraries, and state library agencies are all invited to help us increase our ability to keep you informed about the happenings in American Indian library services. We need this information by *January 1, 1979*. Please answer the questionnaire and return it to the following address: Dr. Cheryl Metoyer-Duran, Editor: American Indian Libraries Newsletter, UCLA, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, 405 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024.

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