

"PLAYING OURSELVES": NATIVE HISTORIES, NATIVE INTERPRETERS,
AND LIVING HISTORY SITES

by

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**NATIVE HISTORIES, NATIVE INTERPRETERS, AND LIVING HISTORY
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Abstract

This study examines the representation of First Nations cultures, peoples, and histories at six North American public history sites: Lower Fort Garry, Old Fort William, the North West Company Fur Post at Pine City, Colonial Michilimackinac, Waswagoning, and Sainte-Marie among the Hurons. The study examines the history and development of these sites and of their Native interpretation programs. The different meanings that representations of Native histories have for Native and non-Native staff and visitors at these places are also explored. Traditionally, historic reconstructions, the national historical narratives in which they figure, and the representation of Native cultures within such institutions have been shaped by members of the economically and politically dominant class of North American society, and these representations have justified and naturalized the power of that class over Native people. However, I argue that they have come to be sites of opposition to such power and perspectives, opportunities to voice Native perspectives to visitors and administrators. The study thus challenges literature on the hegemonic functions of public history, national history, and tourism by examining the agendas, agency, and impact of Native staff at public history sites.

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Photograph by Drew Davey; reproduced with permission.

Bark lodges; bent poles; tipis of white canvas, machine sewn; Great Hall, Big House; stone buildings; log buildings; adze marks; 16-pane windows; colonial billiards table; the fort through hand-blown, rippled, bubbly glass. Woodsmoke: everything I own smells like woodsmoke; Drew's focusing cloth for the 4x5 smells like a combo of woodsmoke and castoreum. Someone gives me a baggie of homemade maple sugar in a calico pouch, and it has a maple-smoke flavour. Pinaykwe's stew of bear meat and wild rice; bannock, frybread, smoked fish, hominy corn [my eyes tearing from the lye smoke in the wigwam], "passenger pigeon" [Cornish hen, roasted over a fire], herb tea, baking bread; wine, beer, "high wines" ["Officially there's no alcohol allowed on site but I won't check what's in those period mugs"]. Monk-brown Albanyware, flashes of tin tied to sashes. Sounds of wood being split, musket and cannon fire, fiddles, tin whistle, bodhran, pipes, song, tinkle cones jingling on leggings. Sparks and logs crackling. Handmade knives, thunk of 'hawk throwing. Furs, leather, wool, cotton, beads, feathers, streamers on tips of tipi poles banner in the wind. And the clothing: 18thC Williamsburg florals on a linen skirt; flannel and cotton print voyageur shirts; dropfront pants, breeches of rough wool, corduroy, leather; commercially-tanned leather dresses. Beadwork, mostly bad; quillwork, surprisingly good; men with beards, many with hair longer than mine, wearing voyageur tuques. Everyone wears earrings, beaded necklaces, trade silver brooches and nose-rings and ear-bobs. HBC and other fur trade blankets everywhere, also deerskins with hair on used as chair covers. "Levi Levy" actually has an 18th century bedstead in his tent; I assume it has ropes and a feather tick, but I'm afraid to ask...Woven ash pack baskets; makuks; wanigans; canvas-wrapped bales. Beads of every colour: Russian faceted blues; whitehearts; chevrons; pony and greasy; seed and faceted; buttons of horn and antler and brass. NWC and HBCo stencilled on lots of stuff. Canoes, painted bows and paddles. Constant shocks of recognition at repro accessories: that's the bag from the Jasper collection; that's the knife sheath from the Canadian Museum of Civilization; that's a copy of the octopus bag given to George Simpson in 1840; that's from Bodmer, Catlin, Kane, Rindisbacher. Everything I've ever seen on time-stained fur post inventories in the HBC archives is here, and sometimes I look at something and archival references flash up from years of climate-controlled research: HBCA B.51/e/1, Fidler's Manitoba District Report for 1821...Someone is taking notes with a quill pen, only he's stuffed a ballpoint pen refill up the quill. Palisades. Mosquitoes. Trees. The River; paddle songs from upstream. Swallows weaving around the tipi poles; long grass; the scent of sweetgrass rising from the meadow in the summer heat [heatwaves shimmering over buffalo hides]. The Bishop's staid "sister" in new paisley dress [leg-of-mutton sleeves, lace collar, stays] playing baseball with a maid's broom and pinecones; her "maid" doing cartwheels, bonnet and all. Birchbark: canoes, rogans, shelters. Tobacco. Understanding just enough Ojibwa to follow the women's conversation as we sit moccasined on blankets. Canoe ribs steaming, spruce roots being peeled, hides defleshed [rot them for a week: authentic smell], moccasins made, beads spilled on the ground. Laughter...

Introduction

This study is, if you will, an ethnography of a certain kind of North American history: an analysis of the forms that the representations of such narratives take, the ways in which they are constructed, and the meanings these narratives have in contemporary society, both to those who create them and those who receive them. The particular kind of history that I focus on involves early situations of sustained contact between Native and non-Native peoples in fur trade and mission settings. The way we have traditionally told these stories has glorified the actions of the non-Native participants, minimized the roles of Native participants, and reinforced a colonial relationship in the present between Native peoples and the dominant society. What I focus on in this analysis, however, is not textualized historical narratives, but the embodiment and enactment of these narratives at reconstructed historic sites. These are generally state-funded, public sites which use costumed interpreters and period buildings and furnishings--all researched by professional historians and material culture specialists--to "bring to life" the past, the stories we tell about it, and the physical details of life in the past. Sometimes dubbed "living history," this form of communication is compelling in the vividness and immediacy of the physical details experienced by the visitor, and visitors are attracted to these places as much for the entertainment value of these sensations as for education's sake.

As with their textual parents, historic sites have traditionally emphasized the role of Europeans in establishing colonial culture in the wilderness. When first reconstructed, fur trade and mission sites typically had costumed interpreters

representing historic European traders and priests, but did not portray the Native sides of these encounters. This has changed in the past decade, and Native encampments and interpreters have been added to existing programs. Native staff have a rather different view of the history they show, have different agendas for their work, and see themselves as contributing a "corrected," or oppositional, view of the past to these sites. The question that ultimately came to concern me in this dissertation is: to what extent does the work of Native interpreters, and the addition of their unique perspective on the past, challenge and counteract the hegemonic processes that traditional historical narratives serve?

This dissertation, therefore, examines the representation of First Nations cultures, peoples, and histories at six North American public history sites: Lower Fort Garry [LFG], Old Fort William [OFW], the North West Company Fur Post [NWC] at Pine City, Colonial Michilimackinac [CM], Sainte-Marie among the Hurons [SMAH], and Waswagoning.¹ I examine the history and development of these sites and of their Native interpretation programs. The different meanings that representations of Native histories have for Native and non-Native staff and visitors at these sites are also explored. Traditionally, public history sites, the national historical narratives in which they figure, and the representation of Native cultures within such institutions have been shaped by members of the economically and politically dominant class of North American society, and these representations have justified and naturalized the power of

¹ I wish to make it clear that I am using Waswagoning as an oppositional example: except where specifically stated, my criticism and analysis of historic sites do not apply to Waswagoning.

that class over Native people. However, I argue that they have come to be sites of opposition to such power and perspectives, opportunities to voice Native perspectives to site visitors and site administrators. The study thus challenges literature on the hegemonic functions of public history, national history, and tourism by examining the agendas, agency, and impact of Native staff at public history sites.

The origins of this study lie in my observation--and frustration--that recent revisionist research on Native histories and Native-White relations in fur trade and mission situations was simply not being communicated to the general public, or indeed to anyone outside a very limited circle of academics. My own work on the Ojibwa of western Canada was part of a trend within ethnohistory that focused on the ways that Native peoples have coped with the challenges they have faced in the last few centuries. In particular, I examined how Ojibwa people adapted to the fur trade and were key agents within it: a very different approach from the older perspective, expressed most succinctly by Harold Hickerson, that Ojibwa people were "pawns in the trade, exploited, despoiled, and finally extinguished" [Hickerson 1988(1970):119].

As a young scholar conscious of my place within these shifting currents of research, I became very interested in the patterned and different ways that Native histories have been told. The shift from Hickerson's to my own approach has been general within scholarly treatments of this subject: over the past few decades, scholars have shifted from narratives emphasizing the destruction of Native cultures by European contact and participation in the fur trade to a focus on the ways in which Native peoples adapted to the trade and were key agents within it. In pondering these

changing stories, I became interested in the nature of representations of the past, and the meanings and uses of the past in the present.

Current revisionist work which explores the ways in which Native cultures have coped with contact and change has, I feel, very important uses within both Native and non-Native societies. While I do not mean to advocate "happy" histories of Native people that ignore the pain felt by these communities, I do feel that it is important for both First Nations and mainstream society to understand the vitality of Native communities in the past, and that Native cultures did not simply disintegrate as the result of European contact. And having lived in Ojibwa and Cree communities, I am aware--as are my colleagues who study Native histories, or what has come to be called the "contested pasts" of minority groups--that the past has a special importance for contemporary First Nations people. Knowledge of past ways of life and traditional beliefs informs contemporary struggles to reclaim lands and lives in Native communities. I think that the kind of work being done by ethnohistorians now can be extremely helpful in this process.

Furthermore, I believe that such narratives can serve crucial functions within non-Native society, for by demonstrating that Native peoples coped in the past, one suggests that they can in the present, and by examining positive and intimate cross-cultural relationships in the past, it suggests that these are possible in the present as well. If selective narratives about history have served the interests of the dominant society in maintaining control over Native peoples, stories that tell other aspects of history can serve to promote Native self-determination and non-Native respect for

Native peoples.

As someone who is concerned with communicating these alternative histories, I have been frustrated as to how to do so most effectively. Scholarly writing, with its jargon and limited distribution, reaches only a small audience and seldom finds ways to filter out into more widespread awareness. Most popular media, on the other hand, such as television and film, goes for dramatic imagery [dramatic, in many cases, because it conforms to accepted stereotypes] and tends not to explore complex ideas. After some contacts with historic sites and people who work at them as administrators, researchers, and interpreters, I began to wonder whether these could be places where challenging ideas about the past could be communicated to large audiences. Historic reconstructions occupy an interesting middle position between scholarly writing and popular media, for they appeal to large numbers of people who see them as entertaining, but are based on detailed, careful scholarly research.

With their large visitorships--combined, the sites I worked at have an annual gate of approximately 350,000--historic sites offer the potential to communicate important information about the past to large audiences. They have the potential to teach these visitors about the worth and dignity of Native cultures, about the crucial roles that Native peoples have played in the history of this continent, and about the strength, adaptability, and continuities in Native cultures over the past few centuries, as well as about the sharp challenges to these sparked by European contact. These are places where revisionist historical research might be communicated to an audience outside the readers of academic works, and where ordinary people might confront the

myths they hold about history and about Native peoples. As I learned, for most of the visitors to these sites, these are places of first contact, of the first opportunity in a lifetime to come face to face with a person of Native ancestry. These encounters have extraordinary potential as catalysts for learning and growth.

As I began looking closely at historic sites, however, it became clear that despite the fact that they ranged geographically across the Great Lakes and temporally over three centuries, the same kinds of objects and activities were always depicted in the Native areas, and there were serious differences between the representations of Native life at these sites and what Native life and Native-White relations were actually like during the historic eras that the sites represent. At one reconstruction, for which I had done archivally-based research on the local Native community, I walked around the recently-added Native encampment thinking "that's wrong! they never used tipis! they would never have said that in 1851! there was never a Native fishing camp here! why did they do this, when there's lots of material in the archives describing what Native life here was really like in the 1850s?" It seemed to me that somehow, despite the sense of authenticity given by their period furnishings, the messages that these places communicated, the histories they told, were somehow skewed.

Indeed, these sites have traditionally had a definite bias. Historic sites were reconstructed to celebrate episodes in the colonial history of North America: the stories that tell the history of the dominant, non-Native elements of society, that tell how Europeans penetrated the continent and conquered Native peoples. These are places of myth as much as history, for like myth, these sites tell stories which explain and

justify the nature of our society, and of the social and political relationships between Natives and non-Natives within North American society. Historic sites that have Native interpretation programs tend to be fur trade posts, frontier communities, or Indian missions. All of them have palisades, and many of them feature cannon firings or musket drills; all of them conjure up for visitors the racial [and racist] myths associated with frontier history, especially of the American and Hollywood varieties. Even today, these places tend to say much more about the nature and texture of the European presence at them than they do about the nature of Native lives, and to downplay interaction between Natives and Europeans.

These emphases communicate very blinkered, and often inaccurate, historical narratives and their messages: that Native people played supporting roles in North American history; that interaction between Natives and Whites was limited and unusual; that Native material cultures were technologically inferior to European ones; that pristine Native cultures were shattered by contact with Europeans and that Native peoples have vanished since then; and that EuroCanadian/American peoples "naturally" dominate Native peoples. While they have hired knowledgeable Native interpreters and are superficially accurate in details of clothing, house styles, and furnishings, these sites still communicate skewed representations of Native people and Native-White relations. They thus reinforce stereotypes, myths, and misconceptions that justify European treatment of Native peoples and naturalize the social and political chasm between Natives and Whites.

On the other hand, there are elements of these sites which successfully disrupt

such hegemonic narratives: these have also come to be sites of opposition to mainstream power and perspectives, opportunities to voice Native perspectives to site visitors and site administrators. We need to bear in mind, when analyzing these places, that they are created and continually revised through extensive contestation, negotiation, compromise, and potential. This struggle takes place between Native and non-Native staff, interpretive and administrative staff, administrators and government agencies, and visitors and the site in all its human and material manifestations. The expectations and meanings of historic sites may originate from each of these groups, but are revised in the communicative process which takes place between all of them.

Native interpreters are particularly effective at challenging ignorance and prejudice that maintains the status quo, and at voicing their own perspectives on the past, their own and their peoples' histories, and revising standard national histories. These staff do much to disrupt the traditional narratives and hegemonic functions of these sites: they raise sharply critical voices and pursue their own and their communities' agendas. Many non-Native staff--interpreters as well as administrators who began as revisionist social historians--also contribute to this destabilizing challenge by incorporating and fostering such perspectives in their own work on site, reminding us that those who create and operate historic reconstructions are not always members of the dominant, power-wielding elements of society.

As well as communicating revisionist academic research on Native histories, Native [and many non-Native] interpreters address visitors' stereotypes, misconceptions, and lack of firsthand information about present-day Native people.

These staff counter hegemony in the present as well as the past. Visitors who encounter, for the first time in their lives, Native people who are articulate, friendly, knowledgeable, and approachable are presented with powerful and positive role models. Such meetings can challenge non-Native visitors to think of modern First Nations communities as competent and talented, doing much to debunk older notions of Native people as drunks or as incapable of coping with modern, mainstream society. Visitors who watch interaction between Native and non-Native interpreters on site, or whose positive impression of the Native interpreters is reinforced by the statements of non-Native interpreters, also get the sense that positive Native-White relations might be possible both in the past and in the present.

One difference between Native and non-Native staff was voiced by Native interpreters who stated that they felt they were "playing themselves": that, despite, the word "playing," they were not exactly acting--and certainly were not "playacting"--when they donned historic costume, but that they were representing themselves in the present as well as their ancestors in the past. This is acting as being and as doing: action rather than pretending. The phrase also suggests their intimate connections to the history they depict and the importance they place on being themselves in the face of the stereotypes through which many visitors see them. This gives an entirely new meaning to the phrase "living history": history that lives, whether one wants it to or not; history that remains entwined in the present, its legacy affecting present-day lives. These qualities of interpretation are generally not true for non-Native interpreters, and are much less marked when they are present. The implications of the notion of

"playing ourselves" suggest that the addition of Native people and perspectives to historic sites also involves the addition of some very serious work that goes on in these otherwise somewhat ludic, fantastic, entertaining places.

The Native interpreters' statement that they are "playing themselves" prompted, for me, the realization that these sites are points of intersection for multiple and complex agendas and histories, and that the various combinations of these construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct meanings for staff and visitors. The histories and processes by which these complex representations of the past come to exist, to change, and to be communicated to the public, and the different ways in which Native and non-Native staff and visitors experience, read, and derive meaning from the site, are central to my analysis. At these places, representations always have multiple interpretations; nor are they ever finalized, either in their creation or in their reception.

Methods

To make use of my previous experience in fur trade history, I decided to focus on reconstructions having to do with the historic fur trade: Lower Fort Garry [hereafter LFG], Old Fort William [OFW], the North West Company Fur Post in Pine City [NWC], and Colonial Michilimackinac [CM]. I also visited Sainte-Marie among the Hurons [SMAH], a large reconstruction of an important 17th century Jesuit mission that has a well-established Native interpretation program, and made a single-day visit to a new, privately-funded site, Waswagoning, run by band members on the Lac du Flambeau Reservation in Wisconsin. I felt it was necessary to examine a number of

sites to uncover patterns in the representation of Native histories: to see, for instance, commonalities in budget and staff allocations in various parts of the reconstructions, visitor responses to Native interpreters, the special approach of Native interpreters to their work, and the different messages they give about the sites. The difficulty with this look "across the board" at so many sites was that public history sites have a very short season: they are fully staffed only between late May and September. Trying to pack in-depth fieldwork into a single season proved exhausting, and I later took every opportunity of re-visiting sites and corresponding with site administrators to ensure that I had the details I needed.

While on site, I worked with a broad spectrum of Native and non-Native people: senior administrators, staff supervisors, interpreters, and visitors. Using a standard set of questions and topics, I did informal interviews with administrators about the history and development of the Native interpretation program at each site [see Appendix 1 for questions]. I also interviewed several Native staff members who had helped to begin such programs but who no longer worked at the sites, as well as several former non-Native interpreters. While many of these conversations [with seven administrators and four former staff members] turned into general discussion about the nature of historic interpretation, parks administration, and Native-white relations, I asked in all of them about such things as goals for the future, about what the historic themes for the site were, and who had decided them; about differences in information communicated by Native and non-Native interpreters; about the dynamics between Native and non-Native staff; about visitor responses. I was made privy to a surprising amount of the

politicking and gossip involved in the evolution and administration of bureaucratic institutions, especially those as beset by budget cutbacks as these.

Gable and Handler's statement [1993:30] that "we learned that it was not possible for us to comment, as neutral observers, on Colonial Williamsburg's history-- that our interpretations would have political consequences...within the very "field" to which they referred" was also true in my case. Site staff treated me variously as a graduate student [harmless], a person who wrote and published [dangerous to visitation and budget, if I should expose a site's failings], an archival researcher [desirable, to answer interpreters' questions], and an interpretive neophyte [not to be taken seriously]. That I was trying to understand both the interpreters' and the administrators' perspectives, and that I would be publishing my findings, made me potentially useful to both groups. I often found myself mediating between interpreters and administrators, at the specific request of one side or the other. Interpreters frustrated by the lack of budgetary support for continued development of an encampment hoped I would be literally critical in my remarks about the site; administrators asked for my advice in dealing with Native interpreters. These sites involve a great deal of politics, and the negotiations for the fulfilment of goals and desires within the institution involve explanations and translations from interpreter to site administrator to heritage agency to annual budget and back down the line. The "authentic reconstructions" into which visitors step are formed by "the politics of administrative culture" [Gable and Handler 1993:26] as much as by historical research or popular assumptions about the past, and I tried to understand the struggles at each

site over the continued development of Native interpretation.

Site administrators and supervisors were by and large excited about what I was doing, and hopeful that my work might enable them to improve their programs. Some sites held a "de-briefing session" with me before I left, using me in effect as a free consultant [which I was happy to be able to do for them as a thank-you gesture]. Others made it clear that they did not wish to be given--in the words of one administrator--a "report card" when I left, and that they were already the target of enough lobby groups riding hobby-horses. All of them gave me their time and detailed information, as well as access to site planning documents and references to other people who had been involved in developing the site and its programs.

I also spent a great deal of time doing participant-observation on the sites. Most of that time was spent in the Native encampments, observing interactions between visitors and interpreters, and conducting informal interviews with both. At OFW, where the encampment is headed by an elder, and Waswagoning, I gave tobacco when I arrived; elsewhere the tobacco seemed inappropriate as the interpreters were mostly my own age or younger. At each site, an administrator took me out to the encampment on my arrival and introduced me. I explained the nature and goals of my research to the interpreters, and asked for their help. The interpreters were without exception enthusiastic and helpful. In a job involving hundreds of people-contacts each day, they bore my continued presence with grace and interest. They suggested questions for visitors, asked questions of their own, saved up stories about incidents with visitors, and contributed crucial information, perspectives, and hilarity. At LFG, interpreters

and supervisors decided that my presence in the camp would be less obtrusive if I donned period clothing, so I portrayed a mid-19th century Red River settler's wife bartering for moccasins with the Native ladies [who on more than one occasion informed startled visitors that I was their captive, and told the visitors to ask for a ransom at the Governor's House inside the fort!]. Apart from helping me to appreciate the special perspective of interpreters, the experience taught me a great deal about visitors' expectations and their general historical knowledge of Native people.

The Native staff who work at these sites represent certain parts of the spectrum of opinions held by Native communities regarding both the past and working at institutions controlled by the dominant society. Other opinions within Native communities regarding these sites range from a long-standing distrust of government-operated facilities to a wariness of being exploited in the name of tourism to a desire that Native people should gain increased control over these sites. Native staff also have very different backgrounds from one another. Those with whom I worked were mostly Ojibwa [Anishinabe] and Ottawa [Odawa] tribal affiliation; a few were Plains Cree, Swampy Cree, and Métis. They ranged from the ages of 18 to elders; had widely varying relationships with their bands; and spoke Aboriginal languages with varying degrees of proficiency. These are not "generic Indians," then, but I refer to them as a group distinct from the equally diverse non-Native staff at these sites. As a group, Native staff are representative of those elements of their communities which have historically been involved in negotiating [and often controlling] face-to-face encounters with outsiders, whether in the context of trade or of tourism. They also share an

approach to their work at these sites, which is characterized by the desire to educate non-Native people about Native cultures and to contribute an oppositional perspective on the past.

As well as observing and listening to visitors as they interacted with interpreters, I interviewed between twenty and forty visitors at each site. Some site administrators asked me to wear a T-shirt with their logo, or dress clothes, when I did this, with which I complied. I looked for a spot where visitors exiting the Native camp area tended to stop before proceeding to the next part of the site, and talked to them there; sometimes I also spoke with people in the site's cafeteria or as they headed back to their cars. I used a tape recorder and a series of questions to find out what visitors learned about Native people from the site. [See Appendix 1 for a copy of my questions to visitors.] This experience was difficult and frustrating for me: approaching total strangers was intimidating, and then I often found their answers to fairly basic questions to be superficial or inadequate. My husband, Drew Davey, who accompanied me during the fieldwork, is a high-school English teacher, and helped me to translate my questions into very simple English, which helped a bit, and I did get some good responses from a few people. The experience did teach me a lot about how people learn at these sites and what they respond to; it was not a wasted exercise. At least once at each site, I also accompanied standard daily tours of the site and taped both the interpreters' remarks and visitors' questions.

Another research technique emerged unexpectedly. I had felt that it would be useful to photograph each site and its programs extensively to facilitate recall as well

as to create material for "thank-you" presents and re-visits to sites. At each site, I sent Drew, who is also a professional photographer, out with a list of images I wanted, which included basic documentation of the reconstruction, typical interpreter activities, and interaction between visitors and interpreters. We had the slides developed before we left each site, and I reviewed them; if anything was missing from my list or if other topics had emerged, Drew went back out with the camera. He took nearly a thousand images, which turned out to be more important than I had anticipated. In the process of photographing "what went on" at each site, Drew and I began to discover a great deal about the dynamics of the interaction between visitors and interpreters, and about the patterning of the representations in different parts of the sites. As thank-you gestures, we sent duplicate slides to each site for use in publicity and made prints of shots of interpreters in costume and sent them to the interpreters.

One final activity was spending time with re-enactment "buffs," many of whom portray fur traders, voyageurs, Métis and Native characters. Two of the sites we worked at [OFW and CM] held "rendezvous" [weekend gatherings of re-enactors] while we were there. Since many "buffs" are hired by living history sites as interpreters, I felt it was important to have this contact with them. It was also interesting to see their interaction with the Native interpreters on site and to observe the special patterns that their representations took. In the end I decided to leave them out of this study, because their presence was sporadic on sites and their agendas and goals are very different from those of site staff. "Buffs" participate in this hobby for their own satisfaction [derived from their enjoyment of period material culture and

from their creation of a temporary utopian society set in the past]; they are not educators as interpreters are, and they often resent the presence of the public on a site during their events. They certainly added a dimension to my fieldwork experience, though, and to my appreciation of the importance of the past for those living in the present.

Overlapping with my on-site fieldwork was a contract that I undertook for Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site, to use archival materials to reconstruct the specific social, economic and material nature of the Native presence at the fort in the mid-nineteenth century [Peers 1995]. In sorting through fur post inventories, accounts for labour around the fort, settlers' diaries, missionary diaries and church records, trial transcripts, and census data, I came up with surprisingly detailed and vivid images of Native life at and around Lower Fort Garry. This work proved valuable in comparing the historic existence and material culture of these people with that which is re-enacted and reconstructed at Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site today, and helped me to define some of the specific ways in which reconstructions skew the pasts they represent.

These archival references and artifacts resonated with the physical environment of the reconstructed historic sites at which I worked, and with my own interests in mid-nineteenth century homespun textiles and vernacular Canadian furnishings, producing a deeply satisfying personal and professional response to the sites and to the special culture of interpreters and re-enactors. Just as the sites and interpreters integrated my presence and my knowledge into their daily life during our stays at each

site, and found our views influencing their own by the end of our stay, Drew and I absorbed much from them.

These sometimes tangled personal and professional ties to this project have made the work both very special and very difficult. I have struggled to reconcile my physical and emotional enjoyment of historic sites and of costumed interpretation with my scholar's intellectual, critical approach to problems of representation and the patterned skewing of history I see on these sites. Nor has my research proceeded along the lines of traditional ethnographic fieldwork, during which the scholar was supposed to move from an involved participant-observation stance in the field to a somewhat more detached, analytical position back in the university. Instead, I have found myself juggling these approaches both in the field and during the periods of analysis and writing, which have continued between field re-visits. The re-visits have proved invaluable in the process of analysis, by allowing me to test my ideas and hypotheses within field settings and with site staffs. I have found it a most rewarding, if intense, way to work.

After the hectic summer of fieldwork, I turned to other resources. While attending several conferences, I was able to conduct informal interviews and conversations with scholars whose work has been used by several sites to create interpretive programs and to shape interpretation about Native people generally [Sylvia Van Kirk, Jennifer Brown, Carolyn Gilman, Bruce White]; some of these people are involved in historic sites administration and research [Michael Payne; Robert Coutts; Frieda Klippenstein]. Audience responses to papers that I gave at the Fur Trade

conference and the Canadian Historical Association meetings also proved helpful. I also compared site reconstructions against primary and secondary documents detailing the original sites. For LFG, I was able to do this in great detail while compiling the documentary report for use at the site; for other sites, I did more basic research. Documents that I obtained at each site about the history of the reconstruction, the development of the Native interpretation program, and plans for the future also proved to be very helpful. Finally, I continued to correspond with site staff and administrators, and went back to three sites [SMAH, LFG, CM] to give slide shows and staff training workshops.

Orientation: a visit to a historic site

What are these sites like? What do visitors see and do at them? What are their attractions for visitors: why do people come to these places? What is a typical visit like? I will answer these questions in greater detail in subsequent chapters, but using a composite experience from my fieldwork I will now give an overview of a typical experience for several good visitors at one historic site.

Let's say that Bob and Betty, a Caucasian couple in their late 50's, are visiting Old Fort William. They are American, recently retired, and relatively affluent. They are on a month-long vacation [driving their own car and staying at motels] and have stopped at OFW because he is interested in the differences and similarities between American and Canadian colonial history--he has watched television documentaries with great interest, and read some popular works of history--and she reads historical

romance novels set on the frontier. They have been to Williamsburg a few years ago, and several other historic sites over the years.

On approaching the historic site, these visitors have already noticed that many local businesses use voyageur and fur trade imagery in their logos and slogans. Betty thinks she recognizes some of the names on street signs as historical figures. They leave the busy main highway near the fort and swing in the long, curving drive to a large log structure on a rise apparently backed by trees: it's very difficult to see the fort.

Our visitors enter the orientation building, and find the gift shop on one hand as they enter and the admission desk on the other; facing them as they walk through the main door is an enormous carved wooden mural depicting fur traders, canoes, Native people, animals, and trees. They pay their admission fee [about \$6.00 each] and go into the introductory display area. They see a replica of a beaver lodge, some trade goods and furs, displays on the development of the fur trade and on Native life in the region. They watch the orientation video, making them somewhat of a rarity among visitors. The video expands on the themes in the orientation displays and gives voices and living faces to some of the "typical characters" in the fur trade, as well as discussing the history and reconstruction of the site and giving a preview of what Bob and Betty are going to see.

As they leave the orientation building, Bob and Betty find themselves confronted by a solid wall of trees. They walk to the bus stop, and a minivan takes them on a five-minute drive deep into the woods. When they get off the bus, they

catch glimpses of a river and smell smoke. They walk along the pathway, and find-- almost hidden in a glade just off the path--three conical bark structures, and some Native people working in smaller shack-like shelters. Betty stops in her tracks, in wonder: it's so much like the descriptions she has read of Native villages! Smiling, she enters the camp area, and is greeted by one of the Native staff ["Boozhoo! Welcome to our home! Have you travelled far to visit us?"]. She engages in a brief conversation with the woman, and is invited to sample some bannock the woman has just made; Bill has some too. They go into all the lodges, pick up the cradleboard and paddles leaning against them, stroke the furs hanging from trees.

Bob talks to an older man who is carving a small burl bowl, and Betty is invited to sit on some deerhides with a young woman who is sewing a leather dress. Betty asks her how long it takes to sew such a garment, and how the hides are processed; the woman answers, and adds that the people in the fort are always buying moccasins from her: if it weren't for her they'd be barefoot, and come to think of it, if it weren't for her husband's hunting and fishing, those White people would be hungry! The woman has her young daughter with her, also wearing period costume. After some further conversation about the historic Native presence at the fort, Betty asks about contemporary Native people in Thunder Bay. After a brief discussion, Betty asks Bob to take her picture with the woman and her daughter, and then they leave the camp and walk towards the main fort.

They now see the large palisade, and reading from the site brochure, Bob says, "This place is the largest reconstructed fur trade post in the world, it says here that it's

got 2780 feet of 10-foot high wooden palisade!" The main gate faces the river, and is quite imposing. Betty notices the bastions at each corner of the fort, and wonders aloud if they ever fought with the Indians. Bob says, "Well, I guess they had to be able to protect their trade goods in case of attack." Betty takes a picture of Bob standing in the main gate.

Just inside the gate, a young woman--not Native, but wearing the same ribbon-decorated strap dress as the women in the encampment--greet our visitors and suggests that they might want to stay close to the river for a few minutes, because the Governor would be arriving by canoe soon and there would be a welcome ceremony for him. They go into the nearest building, which turns out to be the apothecary's shop, and greet "Dr. McLoughlin" and his wife. Mrs. McLoughlin sits sewing, wearing European clothes, and Betty asks where she is from. It turns out that the historic Mrs. McLoughlin was métis, and married the doctor in 1811, after being abandoned by her first husband when he left the fur trade. The doctor, meanwhile, seems to have a bee in his top hat about Native herbs and sweat lodges. He dubs these "primitive and unscientific," showing Bob the frightening-looking tools he uses to bleed his own patients.

At the sound of bagpipes approaching, the doctor invites his visitors to come with him to welcome the Governor, and they all go out to the wharf. Several other gentlemen in top hats and frock coats are there, and a servant is placing a jug of lemonade and some glasses on a fancy little table. An older Native woman also waits with them, a little apart from the gentlemen. As the big canoe comes in sight, the

visitors are enthralled by the sight of voyageurs paddling in unison and the Governor seated, smoking his pipe, in the centre of the canoe. One of the "voyageurs" is a young woman in very fancy Native dress; the older Native woman on shore waves frantically to her. A cannon salute is fired from the wharf, and the canoe draws in; the Governor is carried on shore, and the voyageurs all roll up their pants and hike their skirts and muscle the canoe up the bank. Doctor McLaughlin formally welcomes the Governor, and the men all drink toasts ["to the King," "to the Company," "to our brave voyageurs"]. Bob thinks there's something a bit funny about the response to these toasts, which is "Live long and prosper," but it is a lively and entertaining scene. Several hundred tourists are gathered on the wharf to watch.

Betty notices that the two Native women are greeting each other emotionally and are in deep conversation: this is obviously a reunion. A young man in voyageur dress approaches them, carrying a pile of blankets and trade goods, and he lays these at the older woman's feet. She looks at him very sternly, and then nods and smiles at the young woman, who beams. The voyageurs are offered a regale, a ceremonial dram [of lemonade], and then another toast is offered: "to Jacques and Nancy, on the occasion of their betrothal!" The young Native woman is handed forward to the handsome voyageur, who takes her hand and grins from ear to ear.

The crowd is invited to the betrothal festivities, which will begin in about an hour in the main square of the fort. The voyageurs hoist the canoe again and head into the fort, waving Jacques and Nancy away. The gentlemen stride away, led by the piper, and already have their heads together, gossiping and discussing business. Jacques,

Nancy, and Nancy's mother head toward the Native encampment, with Jacques making great proclamations of his prowess as a trader and hunter, and Nancy interpreting.

As the crowd disperses, Betty and Bob choose to have a snack in the "Cantine," which offers period fare: today it is bread just out of the fort's stone ovens and thick pea soup, washed down with tea. Then they tour the buildings inside the fort: the trading store, the voyageurs' quarters [filthy clothes of the recently-arrived voyageurs strewn about], and the cooper's and blacksmith's work areas. They touch the chairs and furnishings, photograph staff at their work, listen to voyageurs grumbling about their hard work, and "overhear" costumed interpreters gossiping excitedly about the Company's feud with "that other Company" [the HBC]. The Fort William inhabitants declare their trading methods to be much superior to that of the HBC and vow to break up that upstart colony at Red River: Bob, at one point, finds himself listening to an impassioned lecture on the impudence and effrontery of their rivals' attempt to prevent dried buffalo meat and pemmican--the staple diet of the voyageurs!--from being taken out of Red River.

Our visitors also taste more bread at the bake oven, and ask about the women in Native dresses inside the fort [mixed-blood, they are told, and a discussion of fur trade marriage and the roles of women in the fur trade ensues]. Bob asks about the boundary line between British and American territory, especially interesting as the fort is reconstructed to 1815, and the staff are well versed on the War of 1812. They both examine documents being copied in the elegant Great Hall [which they compare to colonial buildings in New England], and sign them as witnesses, using quill pens.

Betty takes Bob's picture as he signs, with the top-hatted clerk beside him. Hearing fiddles and a commotion outside the Great Hall, they realize that the betrothal celebration has begun, and they first watch [and take pictures] and then participate in several reels. Eventually, feeling quite tired, they go back out the main gate, past the Native encampment [only the older man is there now; everyone else is at the dance], climb on the bus, and go back to the orientation centre. Bob sits in the cafeteria and has a beer, and Betty buys her own quill pen, some beaded earrings, and a large dream catcher as well as some postcards showing the fort. They leave, well satisfied with their visit.

Bob and Betty are "good" visitors [an interpreter's term]: they have at least minimal background knowledge, however skewed it may be; they are interested and motivated and excited; they stay for several hours; they interact verbally and physically with the site and with interpreters; they purchase food and souvenirs on site. This account of their visit has described it on the surface. What their experience at the fort means to them, and to the interpreters they encounter, will be analyzed in detail in later chapters.

Perspectives and Contexts

This study asks a series of related, core questions. How have the Native areas of the sites developed, and what are they intended to convey? What do these presentations of Native cultures and histories mean to Native and non-Native staff and visitors? Given that historic sites have traditionally reinforced the historical narratives

of the dominant society, what effects do these recently-added Native encampments have on these narratives? To what extent do these places present Native perspectives on the past that may be oppositional to traditional history? And given that dominant-society historical narratives reinforce the hegemony of that class, do these encampments serve to reinforce or to challenge notions about the relative worth of Native peoples vis-a-vis peoples of European descent?

These questions cut across the disciplines of cultural anthropology and history. The perspective that I bring to the analysis of historic sites is thus informed by several discourses of current concern within both disciplines. These theoretical contexts include: recent musings on the hegemonic nature of national history, and the very different "contested pasts" of minority or colonized peoples; issues pertaining to the representation of Native peoples in texts, museum displays, and historic sites; cultural performance; and aspects of cultural, ethnic, and heritage tourism which relate to these discourses. While the literature on these topics will be drawn on more fully in the body of this dissertation, I provide here a brief intellectual map, a theoretical "you are here" starting point for my analysis.

This journey begins with the acknowledgement that the present study is part of the mutual exploration of anthropology and history. Anthropology's recent fascination with its own history and that of its traditional subjects, as well as our interest in the interconnections between past and present in the creation of ethnographic [and historical] accounts, has been expressed most recently in John and Jean Comaroff's Ethnography and the Historical Imagination [1992], which examines the intersection of

these disciplines and their perspectives, and the contribution these make to understanding the relationships between local communities and global systems [see also the essays in Clifford 1988, Berlo 1992 and Prakash 1995]. Greg Dening's and David Lowenthal's musings on how scholars in the present make and remake the past, imbue it with present meanings, rework it and rewrite it to suit the times, and how our knowledge and recreations of the past are a mirror into our own lives and times, have been central to this study [Dening 1991, 1993; Lowenthal 1985]. Similarly, Edward Bruner's 1986 article "Ethnography as Narrative," which examines how the stories told about the past, present and future of North American Native peoples, has been helpful as a starting point in understanding how such stories have continued to shift since the article was written, both in print and at historic sites, and the sociopolitical agendas and contexts which affect such shifts.

As Bruner noted in that article, "there are always feelings and lived experience not fully encompassed by the dominant story" [1986:143], and academic narratives about North American history have been challenged in the past few decades by Native people, who have pointed out that most of these narratives have ignored their lived experiences. Many of the shifts from one narrative to another have been from dominant-society, "national" historical narratives to the traditionally-denied stories of the very different historical experiences of colonized and minority groups. Much recent literature has explored the difference between the two kinds of narratives, on the ways that the "contested pasts" of minority groups are effaced and turned into narratives told from the colonizer's perspective, and on the social, cultural, and political implications

of this transformation for minority groups [Alonso 1988, Norkunas 1993, Hill 1992, Friedman 1992, Bodnar 1992]. The present study examines the introduction of alternate perspectives on the past to historic sites which were reconstructed to tell a dominant-society story about history.

The historical narratives of colonized peoples are, of course, as selective as those of colonizers. Beginning with Hobsbawm and Ranger's The Invention of Tradition [1984], debate has raged on the nature of "tradition" within indigenous societies. Work on tradition in the Pacific has been especially vitriolic, often being reduced to arguments between scholars from outside the region who analyze "traditions" which just happen to serve the political purposes of Native leaders [and are in fact recently created], and heated responses by Native scholars from inside the region who accuse the outsiders of continuing colonial traditions of scholarship to maintain their own authority [Lowenthal 1990; Linnekin 1991; Keesing 1989; Trask 1991; see also Asad 1991:316]. Part of the debate on contested pasts has analyzed such exchanges and their implications for both sides [e.g. Friedman 1992].

I wish to make it clear that the present study does not enter into this aspect of the debate over contested pasts and authenticity, apart from the acknowledgement that the representations of history at historic sites are negotiated and constructed. While I disagree with the historical basis for some of the traditions that Native interpreters are claiming at historic sites, I respect their right to voice their own perspectives and to use these alternate histories for contemporary social and political purposes. Furthermore, most of my quibbles with the information they impart are minor; their

basic messages about the competency of Native peoples, the crucial roles of Native peoples in history, and the importance of Native-White relations, are sound and are a much-needed addition to the dominant-society narratives also voiced at these sites.

This aspect of the literature on contested pasts is related to recent issues of representation in anthropology and in museology, particularly concerns over the Western representation of non-Western peoples [and their histories] in text and in museum displays. My research is very much concerned with these issues. The works of Edward Said [1978] and James Clifford [1988] have been especially important in exploring the hegemonic functions of the Western gaze on non-Western peoples, the ways that Western scholarly discourses about non-Western peoples reinforce Western control over non-Western peoples, and the patterns in the ways that non-Western peoples have been represented in scholarly texts [see also the essays in Clifford and Marcus 1986, Fabian 1983]. Lutz and Collins [1993] have examined this Western gaze on non-Western peoples in the context of National Geographic magazine, arguing that North American readers tend to read standard ideas about "primitive" peoples as reflections of Western peoples into photographs of non-Western peoples. These assumed ideas about exoticism, sexuality, living earlier in time, and primitivism are typical of Western portrayals of "Others," and tend to efface the contingencies and politics of actual encounters and relationships which go into the production of texts and photographs. This source has been especially important for me in understanding how tourists respond to images of Native peoples, especially the sight of Native interpreters at historic reconstructions.

Such patterns of representation of non-Western peoples have been pointedly explored by their subjects, especially in the global climate of decolonization and self-determination movements by indigenous and formerly-colonized peoples. Work by scholars such as Ranajit Guha's Sub-altern Studies group in India, Talal Asad [1991], Antonia Castaneda [1992] and others in the United States, as well as Native American authors from Vine Deloria Jr. in the 1970s to George Sioui [1992] and Lorraine Keeshig-Tobias [1992], has challenged the authority of Western scholars to represent non-Western peoples as well as the traditional claims of Western scholars to work in an objective, apolitical manner. The most recent additions to these debates point out that non-Western peoples are capable of returning the Western gaze, of participating in Western debates, of appropriating scholarly discourses about themselves and using--or redirecting--them for their own purposes. This dissertation explores the ways that Native interpreters appropriate and return the tourist gaze.

The same challenges to Western scholarly authority and textual representations of "Others" have been directed at museums, challenging the traditional authority of curators, the messages sent by exhibits, and the very function of museums, and exploring museum interpretation as a culturally-specific, power-laden gaze [Jones 1993; Karp and Lavine 1991; Doxtator 1988; McMaster 1992]. Curators have been accused by Native people of emphasizing the same elements of the "primitive" in their exhibitions as in traditional scholarly writing, and indeed, many displays have traditionally shown exoticized "Indians" frozen in time [Doxtator 1985, 1988; Nemiroff 1992; Karp and Lavine 1991; Karp, Kreamer and Lavine 1992; Price 1989].

Furthermore, the traditional ethnographic and art-history presentation of "primitive" man as childlike and essentially different has worked to justify and reinforce colonial control over non-Western peoples [Price 1989; Jones 1993:204-5; Clifford 1988; Doxtator 1988].

The response by Native American and First Nations people to these problems has been to demand the right to control, or at least participate in the creation of, the representations of their cultures and histories [Jones 1993:209-212; Ames 1991, 1992]. The force and effectiveness with which these demands have been made in a climate of eroding institutional authority for museums has resulted in sweeping changes to the expectations of relations between museums and Native people. Exhibitions are now routinely created in consultation with Native people, and Native communities expect to be consulted by museums [Ames 1991; Jones 1993; Karp 1992:1-18; Task Force 1992].

As kin to both museums and textual historiography, living history sites have been subject to all of these currents. Historic sites have tended to be developed as shrines to events and themes in national history [e.g. Plimoth, Jamestown] and as nostalgia "fixes," places where longing for "the world we have lost" could be satisfied [eg. Henry Ford's Greenfield and all pioneer villages]. This nostalgia was of a specific kind, felt by a specific audience. As Leon and Piatt note, living history museums almost uniformly "depict the lives of middle- and upper-income Protestants in agrarian settings" [1989:65], and have typically downplayed social conflict in the past [Leon and Piatt 1989; Wallace 1981]. By glorifying the deeds of affluent whites and

downplaying the roles of minority groups, these sites, like history texts, reinforced the sociopolitical status quo in North America.

After the explosion of "new social history" in the 1960s and 1970s, historic sites were challenged as presenting a highly selective, culturally and racially homogenous view of the past. [Another stream of literature on living history has been celebratory rather than critical: see Anderson 1984, 1991.] At first, critiques of historic sites were made by white scholars such as Wallace [1981]; Leon and Piatt [1989]; Lowenthal [1985; 1989] and Schlereth [1990(1984)]. By the late 1980s, sites were also being criticized by minority scholars. This began with criticism on the portrayal of Blacks at historic sites [e.g. Horton and Crew 1989].

Virtually nothing has yet been published on the treatment of Native history within living history sites, however. Snow [1993] mentions Native interpreters at Plimoth only in passing, and virtually the only other materials available are unpublished internal documents developed by each site for its Native history interpretation [eg. "Angwaamas--A Research Report on the Ojibwe-European Fur Trade Relations from An Ojibwe Perspective," prepared by Sandra Goodsky for the NWC site, 1993; Wes Andrew's 1995 "Appropriate Representation" report for CM]. Most of these are limited in scale to a particular site and its regional ethnohistory, and try either to recommend ways of viewing and interpreting Native history from a Native perspective or evaluate existing interpretive programs from a Native perspective. The present study comprises the first broadly-based scholarly work on the development and state of Native interpretation programs at living history sites.

Some recent literature has examined the implications of the development of historic sites for the messages they communicate. For instance, in both the United States and Canada, most reconstructed and staffed historic sites have been funded by state, provincial, or federal government. In both countries, heritage-agency policies and funding initiatives favoured sites and themes of national and regional importance [military sites, fur trade sites] and discouraged the commemoration of minority, labour, and other "divisive" themes. Norkunas 1993, Taylor 1990, Payne and Taylor 1992, Johnston 1994, and McGuire 1992 treat the development of historic sites from this perspective. Coutts 1991 and Payne and Taylor 1992 examine the difficulty of tacking Native history themes on to existing sites within such traditional historic commemoration schemes. Other internal documents have been developed for heritage agencies stating new policies on cooperation between agencies and Native people [e.g. Parks Canada 1995], but these seldom spell out how policies will be implemented at the site level.

At the level of the individual site, literature on the implications of site management has been especially helpful to the present study. I have tried to heed Gable and Handler's [1993:26] warning that "it is not enough to deconstruct representations. It is necessary as well to examine the politics of administrative culture." I have also tried to answer the questions of Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett [1994:436]:

What is being produced here and how? How did the site arise historically? How is it staged, who has artistic control, and how does the performance develop in space and time? How is the production organized in social and economic terms, and who gets what from the event? As the [performers],...the

tourists, and the [administrators] do not experience the site in the same way, we ask, what does the event say and what does it mean to its varied producers and audiences?

The detailed analysis of decisionmaking, staff training, the evolution of interpretation, and everyday site operation at Plimoth by Snow [1993] suggested lines of research and analysis as well. Gable, Handler and Lawson 1992--actually an examination of the process, politics, and problems of adding African-American history to Colonial Williamsburg--suggested many parallels affecting the addition of Native interpretation programs at the sites I researched.

Given their obvious biases, it is not surprising that living history sites have been examined as sites of cultural performance. Broadly defined as the public display of crucial beliefs and structures of a society within a special context or frame [on cultural performance generally, see: Beeman 1993; Manning 1983; Schechner 1985; Snow 1993:183-212; Kapchan 1995], cultural performance at living history sites encompasses the notion of history as a cultural creation myth or cosmology. Thus, historic sites function, on one level, as a stage on which "Indians" play roles in a white North American history of conquest and progress. Stephen Snow's work [1993] on performance and meaning at Plimoth explores living history as a type of performance, including the ways in which performances are created, rehearsed, and carried out both in a specific year and over a site's history. Edward Bruner's work on New Salem [1993b, 1994] and a privately-run Maasai tourist performance [Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994], explores the construction and meanings of cultural elements performed at such venues.

The other aspect of historic reconstructions that is central to this study is that they are tourist sites. Tourism is a multifaceted topic. The anthropology of tourism--the analysis of the relationships between tourists and the sights they see--is certainly relevant to the present study, and has generated a very large literature [Graburn 1983 reviews some of this work]. Some of this literature has focused on what scholars see as a desire for authenticity on the part of tourists: to see authentic sights, to have authentic experiences, or to feel more authentic themselves through tourism [Handler and Saxton 1988; MacCannell 1976]. I have not probed the issues of authenticity and modernity in the same ways that these scholars have, but have focused instead on analyzing the meanings of cultural elements performed at these places to their visitors and staff, the relationships between past and present, and the ways in which cultural assumptions are both performed and challenged.

This study also draws on the literature on ethnic tourism [defined as when the goal of the tourist's experience is an encounter with exotic Others: Smith 1978; and see review in Van Den Berghe 1994]. I approach the concept of "ethnic tourism" quite broadly, seeking to understand the perspectives and motives of tourists and those of Native peoples. On the tourist side of the equation, I include works which would not normally be classed under "ethnic tourism," but which examine the ways in which tourism reinforces and reproduces social structure and relations of power, especially between peoples of different social classes and races [eg. Horne 1984; Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994; Trask 1991-92]. As I discuss in the Staff chapter, I find much of the literature on ethnic tourism considers only the negative effects of tourism

on Native groups, and fails to consider Native agency and the benefits received from tourism [e.g. MacCannell 1984, Van den Berghe and Keyes 1984]. This literature also focuses on the artificial preservation through tourist performances of certain cultural elements which become the hallmarks of "authentic" Native culture for both tourists and performers [ibid.]; the literature does not examine the altered dynamics of performing "traditional" elements of culture in historic reconstructions, and seems, again, to ignore the perspectives of Native performers [or interpreters] as well as other members of Native communities who do not do such work; nor does it consider the differences between tourist performances and interpretation.

John Urry's 1990 The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies has been helpful for its explication of the ways that tourists read [their own] cultural meanings into the places they go to see. The tourists that I interviewed certainly read palisades and Native camps and the relationships between them in certain ways that were "socially organised and systematised," as Urry suggests the "tourist gaze" is, and which echoed the relationships they assumed existed between conquering Europeans and dominated Native peoples past and present. The "tourist gaze"--the way in which tourists read such meanings into what they see--is supported by the tourist's culture, and is related to political and social relationships between gazer [and gazer's culture and nationality] and sight [and the culture or nationality in which it is found]. Urry draws on Foucault; I would draw on Said's Orientalism. The tourist gaze involves the same reductionist and controlling processes as the Orientalist gaze.

Related to the dynamics of such gazing is material on the history of public displays of Native culture to Western audiences, such as those at World's Fairs and in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show in the late 19th century. On historic displays of Native cultures in Europe, at World's Fairs, and zoos, I have relied on Harris 1990; Dickason 1984; King 1991; and Meyn 1992. On Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, which I see as a precursor to the display of Native peoples at historic sites, I have found Slotkin 1981, White 1994, Blackstone 1986, and Limerick 1994 helpful. Patricia Jasen's recent book Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario 1790-1914 [1995] offers useful context on the gaze and expectations of 19th century tourists on Native people in Ontario. All of these works emphasize the assumptions by Western audiences that Native performers were exotic, primitive, savage, and inferior to the White members of the audiences.

As Kapchan [1995:482] has noted, however, cultural performance can either be a means of oppression or a way of resisting authority. What much of the literature on the "tourist gaze" and Native performances fails to consider is the fact that not all cultural performances are held on the same terms: not all are controlled by Western show promoters, and not all performers are coerced into performing. Native interpreters at historic sites are not, like the Maasai performers at Mayers Ranch,

merely players in a show written by international tourist discourse. Both are positioned by that discourse and are allocated space within it...The story line of the show, the colonial drama of the primitive Maasai and the genteel British, of resistance and containment, of the wild and the civilized, was in place long before the Maasai or the Mayers mounted their production...Tourism is unyielding in its demands. It insists on recidivism, atavism, and anachronism. It insists on true tribesmen and archetypal colonialists. But the Maasai and the Mayers are not powerless pawns. They do not have to perform for tourists. If

they choose to do so, however, they must follow the script. [Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994:467]

I do not feel that tourism is always so restrictive: many Native performers have either followed the script but manipulated it to pursue their own goals, or altered the script entirely. The Native interpreters at historic sites today do the latter; they also draw on a heritage of the former.

There is far less literature examining Native control, agency, motivations, or goals in tourist performances. I have relied on work by Trudy Nicks [at press; and personal communication] on the meanings and importance of souvenir production and tourist performances to Native communities. McClurken's work [1991] on Native pageants in Michigan and the relationships between the pageants, the goals of Native performers, and the perceptions of non-Native audiences has also been useful. Beauvais' 1985 history of Kahnawake, Blanchard's 1984 overview of Kahnawake Mohawk participation in the entertainment industry, and Theriault's 1992 autobiography give Native perspectives on cultural performances. I am indebted to interviews granted by Frank Ettawageshik and Jim Sky, Native artists, actors and activists. My interview with Mr. Sky resulted in an unpublished paper [Peers 1993] on his family's Wild West-derived performances. Mr. Ettawageshik's paper on his grandfather's craft business [Ettawageshik at press] devotes special attention to issues of identity and authenticity for Native peoples who perform elements of their culture in various settings, including historic sites.

While performing, or dressing in costume to sell souvenirs, Jim Sky, Frank Ettawageshik, their families, and many other Native people have been pursuing their

own goals in tourist productions; they have also been gazing back at tourists. If there is a "tourist gaze," there is also a "Native performer's gaze." On the return gaze, as well as the works cited above, several articles in the Annals of Tourism Research on Native American perspectives on [and jokes about] tourists [Evans-Pritchard 1989, Sweet 1989] offer useful information, although largely from the Southwestern experience.

One other body of tourism literature deals with the effects of tourism on Native populations and the efforts of Native peoples to control cultural tourism. I have drawn on this for general information and context on the subject of Native agency within tourism, especially on Hinch's 1995 "Aboriginal People in the Tourism Economy of Canada's NWT"; Van Den Berghe's 1994 The Quest for the Other; Keelan's 1993 Maori view on "Maori Heritage: Visitor Management and Interpretation"; and Boniface and Fowler 1993.

Finally, there is a body of data collected by consultants working for historic sites to determine what tourists know and expect when they come to the site, and what they learn from their visits [e.g. Prentice 1993]. Recently, several of my research sites have undertaken such surveys in regard to their Native interpretation material [Korn 1994-95; Andrews 1995]. This material tends to be very superficial, and difficult to work from, but it certainly adds a perspective to the visitor interviews and observation that I did as part of my fieldwork. Regular site evaluation comments by visitors have also been made available from LFG, SMAH, and OFW.

The dissertation explores the central questions within these larger contexts. Chapter One examines the relationship between national history narratives and social structure, noting that the marginalized place of Native peoples in North American texts parallels their place within society generally. The history of historic sites as places where history and culture are performed is also examined. Chapter Two discusses the sites which I researched, including their history and the development and current state of their Native interpretation programs; here I also discuss the messages communicated by the physical aspects of the reconstructions. Chapter Three focuses on the perspectives, motivations, and work of Native and non-Native interpretive and administrative staff at the sites, and the ways in which they work--sometimes together, sometimes against each other--to create the history depicted at the sites. Chapter Four focuses on the perspectives, expectations, and experiences of site visitors, and analyses their interaction with Native interpreters at the sites. Chapter Five, the conclusion, returns to the core questions and evaluates them in the light of these differing perspectives, motivations, and vectors of histories involved in the creation and experience of these six sites.

Conclusion

As someone who works in the space between anthropology and history, I have been inspired by Jonathan Hill's 1992 call for a rethinking of anthropology as the "historically situated process of listening to, contextualizing, and interpreting the historical discourses of contemporary peoples" [Hill 1992:815]. This study is such a

work.

I have already been privileged to see this study bear fruit, and hope that it will continue to be useful at both the site and the theoretical levels. At the site level, the information that I gathered on the messages that are being communicated by the site to visitors about Native peoples and their histories, what visitors know and expect when they come to a site, and what the typical dynamics of interaction between Native interpreters and non-Native visitors are, has been of use in staff training sessions at several sites. The slide shows that Drew and I were able to give during re-visits show staff what other sites do, how, and how well it works, and have encouraged program expansion and problem-solving. Together with Dr. Sylvia Van Kirk, a specialist on women in the fur trade, I was able to advise the Sto:lo Nation and Canadian Heritage on interpreting fur trade families at Fort Langley, B.C. Other material developed during the preparation of this dissertation is being used for staff training and public interpretation at the Pine City site and Lower Fort Garry.

It is my hope that interpreters and administrators will use this study to think about the messages they communicate about Native people and Native-White relations in the past, and that this study will suggest ways of creating increased understanding, respect, and dialogue between Native and non-Native staff and between staff and visitors at these sites. I hope that it will lead to the proposal of ways to communicate a broader, more realistic range of relations between Native and non-Native peoples at these sites, and to further questioning by scholars, staff, and visitors about the precise nature of these historic relations.

A Note on Language: I have chosen to use the terms "Native" and "Native peoples" to refer to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and the United States, past and present. This is a personal decision, made for the sake of convenience, and I hope that those who think of themselves as First Nations or Native American will understand my choice. All words appearing in quotation marks are direct quotations from textual or verbal sources.

Chapter One: History as Cosmology: Historic Sites, National History, and Cultural "Others"

The 'theatricality of history making' involves the notion of viewing in a space so closed around with convention that the audience and actors enter into the conspiracy of their own illusions [Dening 1993:74].

Our interest...is in the making and consuming of images of the non-Western World, a topic raising volatile issues of power, race, and history. We wanted to know what popular education tells Americans about who "non-Westerners" are, what they want, and what our relationship is to them [Lutz and Collins 1993:xii].

Beyond these images, whether their users knew it or not, lay a particular ideological agenda--the imagery constituted a kind of language for signifying the meaning and fate of the Native population of North America [Jasen 1995:17].

This chapter explores some of the ideas central to historic sites and their representations of Native peoples. These ideas have to do with the place traditionally allotted Native peoples in North American society and history by members of the non-Native, dominant elements of that society: the roles in which Native people are cast, the ways in which they are Othered, and the ways these notions are communicated through museum and living history displays as well as through the historiography on which these are based.

In this sense, historic sites are a type of cultural performance: they perform culture, place on display core beliefs, values, and structures. Such performances "evoke and solidify a network of social and cognitive relationships existing in a triangular relationship between performer, spectator, and the world at large" [Beeman 1993:386].

These relationships and structures are those of the present in which the performance takes place; the past is used as a temporal setting for the performance, but is arranged and represented in such a way as to refer to the present.

What the historic sites I studied actually perform, or place on display, is a highly selective set of facts which serves as the historical justification for the unequal relationship between Native peoples and the dominant society which continues today. These sites reiterate and thus reinforce the "meaning and fate of the Native population of North America" [Jasen 1995:17] which non-Native peoples have assigned them. Native people have meaning as a foil for peoples of European descent, by whom they have in the past been seen as less civilized, less technologically advanced, and less deserving of the continent than their colonizers, who "naturally" came to dominate them. The social relationships evoked by historic sites are thus hierarchical and hegemonic. Native people still occupy a less privileged position on the margins of North American society, and historical narratives justify and naturalize this position.

Historic sites enact these elements of Western culture in the theatrical setting of their reconstructed buildings, wigwams, and palisades. Tourists are both audience and actors in this performance; the costumed staff are the rest of the cast. These combine to form, in Denning's words, a theatre so permeated with convention, with a certain set of standard expectations, that both audience and actors enact them almost automatically. The script for this play was written long ago, and most of us know the characters, plot, and dialogue by heart. If you put a voyageur, a fur trader, an "Indian," a wigwam, a log building, and a palisade together, you conjure up a story about

history, culture contact, and Native peoples vis-a-vis European peoples. It is the story of colonialism, of the conquest of North America, of the winning of the West for settlement, of wagon trains and Mounties and patriotism, and it is always told from the perspective of the colonizers. Of a similar kind of performance in Africa, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Edward Bruner [1994:467] state that, "the story line of the show, the colonial drama of the primitive Maasai and the genteel British, of resistance and containment, of the wild and the civilized, was in place long before the Maasai or the Mayers mounted their production."

So pervasive are the conventions we hold about Native-White relations, so conventional our narratives about these relations, that both "audience and actors enter into the conspiracy" of the illusions that historic sites conjure up: children automatically break into Hollywood-Indian war whoops, parents make jokes about scalping, and we all enter into the illusions and conventions of Frontierland. The site suddenly ceases to be just a specific place reconstructed to a specific time and becomes, as well, a sort of Orientalized Frontier mental space--in the sense, as Edward Said has explained, that "the Orient" is an idea conceived by the West and associated with a body of imagery and thought which constitutes the discipline of Orientalism, used as the basis for the West's authority and control over the Orient [Said 1978:3-5].¹ Much of what Said has said about "the Orient" and its relationship with Europe may

¹ As, for instance: "For Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them")" [Said 1978:43].

also be said about "the Frontier" and its relationship with the dominant elements of North American society.

These conventions and narratives are filled with power. Being told from the colonizers' perspective--the perspective of powerful North American nation-states as they look at the tribal societies which now lie within their boundaries--they reiterate and reinforce, naturalize and justify, the attitudes, and historical acts, of the dominant society towards Native people. This perspective was expressed quite clearly by James Coyne, one of the original members of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board [and who was the author of several publications on Native prehistory in Ontario], who, speaking on Canada, its history, and its relationship to Britain, said:

The genius of the Anglo-Celtic race is towards union, toleration, federation, righteous law and administration. Its instinct for extension of property is...justified by its extraordinary success in governing inferior races upon principles of justice and equality" [cited in Taylor 1990:41].

The colonized nations of the Empire might have had a different version of the "extraordinary success" to which Coyne referred--but it was from the perspective that Coyne expressed that Canadian history has been written. Coyne's statement helps us to see how national historical narratives serve what Ellen Badone [1991] has called cosmological functions, providing an ordered vision of the links [or barriers] between peoples, the basic social and political structure of a society: in this case, between Native peoples and Europeans. Coyne's statement has been echoed by the tone and structure of Canadian historiography for most of this century, and the cosmology behind it still guides relations between Native and non-Native peoples.

These relationships and the histories we tell about them have been shaped by

Western attitudes about Native people, time, and technology. As recent theoretical work in anthropology has noted, Western societies have tended to think of non-Western, tribal, "primitive" peoples as living in the past, examples of the pasts of Western societies [Fabian 1983, Price 1991], while Western technology represents the future. The display of tribal peoples at World's Fairs as a counterpoint to the wonders of "modern technology" shown there, underscores this conceptual use of non-Western peoples by Western society. Similarly, Frederick Jackson Turner's famous work on the American frontier exhorted readers to imagine "the procession of civilization marching single file--the buffalo..., the Indian, the fur trader and hunter, the cattle-raiser, the pioneer farmer..." [cited in White 1994:13]. The idea persists today, a deep and unconscious expectation that shapes our response to the sight of tribal peoples: after an early-1980s visit to the Native encampment at OFW, living history scholar Jay Anderson wrote that "These Indians didn't have to simulate life in the early 1800s. They were already comfortably living history..." [1984:69].

Part of the concept of Native peoples as representing the past has been that they were also seen as essentially ahistorical, having a stable past until their encounter with Europeans, at which point it was assumed that they were unable to change and adapt. Such ideas presume and justify a position of European distance from and domination over Native peoples [Fabian 1983:29-30; Said 1978:232-240; Clifford 1988:4-17]. These assumptions include, as well as the superiority of non-Native peoples, that peoples of European descent have naturally, by virtue of their cultural and technological superiority, dominated North America.

Only recently have scholars begun to examine the ways in which Native peoples adapted to the changes introduced by the fur trade and early European settlement [on the fur trade see, for example, Krech 1984; Nicks 1987; and Morantz and Francis 1983]. Scholars have also begun to explore cultural continuities in the face of historic change and adaptation [Black-Rogers 1986; White 1982, 1987; Peers 1994]. Despite such revisionist work, the categories and concepts of Noble/ Savage, Traditional [prehistoric or contact era], and Vanishing Indians are alive and well amongst the general public, who continue to perceive and to value Native people in relation to their now-traditional expectations [Doxtator 1988; Green 1988].

These notions of us and them, then and now, hierarchy and power are at the heart of public history sites, which were intended to commemorate episodes or themes within national history, the history of the dominant elements of the nation-state [Alonso 1988:41; Meeker 1984:133]. Much of the current literature in both history and anthropology focuses on the hegemonic nature of historiography, on the difference between national histories and the very different perspectives on the past held by minority groups.

Until recently, it was taken for granted that national history was both made and written about by politically and socially important, wealthy men. Given the power structures in European and North American society, these men were almost always white. National histories have traditionally focused on the history of the dominant society: they have emphasized white men of European descent who were members of the political and economic elite, and have naturalized and legitimized the actions of

these men towards Native Americans, Blacks, and other minorities.

In Canada, for instance, historical narratives focus on European exploration and expansion into the continent, and on the political, social, and technological developments related to the creation of Canada. Donald Creighton's classic text Canada: the Heroic Beginnings, published in 1974, states that the major themes in Canadian history are: "the occupation of the Atlantic seaboard, the Anglo-French conflict, the drive to the Pacific, the settlement of the west, the defence of the coasts and the frontier, and exploitation of the north" [cited in Walker 1983]. Such narratives typically deal with Native people only insofar as they helped or hindered Europeans in the process of colonial expansion. Native people vanish from history once this process is complete: in Canadian historical narratives, the last mention of Native people in both secondary school and undergraduate university textbooks is usually the 1885 uprising, which is told so as to evoke all of these themes [Brown 1991; Walker 1971:30-31; Walker 1983:345-351]. 1990s history texts follow similar lines, with some token inclusion of materials pertaining to Native people, generally used as sidebars or introductory chapters: they still tend not to occur in discussions of the main themes of Canadian history.²

In creating national history, the "contingent and discontinuous facts of the past"

² Much of Native history remains in oral form within Native communities, which are sometimes reluctant to have such knowledge taken outside. The division between oral and written forms of history is not as much a source of conflict at historic sites as might be supposed, however; Native interpreters themselves use both, and repeatedly asked me for archival citations to use in their work.

[Lowenthal 1985:218; see also Alonso 1988:37] are strung together in such a manner as to create a narrative which explains who "we" are, how our nation came to be, who hindered this process, and who helped. Told from the perspective of the ruling class, national historical narratives thus reinforce the identity of that class by organizing events of the past into a logical progression from then to now [Friedman 1992:837]. The past is created in the present, says Martha Norkunas, "to legitimize contemporary personal, social, and political circumstances" [1993:6]. Similarly, in defining "public memory," the official version of the past created by social and political leaders, John Bodnar notes that it is

a body of beliefs and ideas about the past that help a public or society understand both its past, present, and by implication, its future...The major focus of this communicative and cognitive process is not the past, however, but serious matters in the present such as the...structure of power in society... [Bodnar 1992:15].

By focusing on privileged white men, historical narratives make such privilege [and wealth, and political power], and its concomitantly unequal relations of power with less privileged peoples, seem perfectly natural, to be aspired to and emulated. National histories thus "legitimate colonialistic relationships of power and domination" between a nation and the colonized groups within its boundaries, both past and present [Badone 1991:539; see also Norkunas 1993:5-6, Lowenthal 1985:44; Alonso 1988:33].

Communicated through state-sponsored educational systems, such narratives have been used by ruling classes to reinforce and perpetuate the sociopolitical system and the rights and privileges of the ruling class over lower classes and minority peoples [Arenas and Obediente 1990:56, 59].

This process occurs partly through the selection of topics of importance that historical narratives emphasize, and partly through the order in which facts deemed to be important are strung together in the narrative itself. In Norkunas' words, "This reconstruction is done through a series of subtle distortions: the simplification of imagery, the obfuscation of historical complexities and discontinuities, the reinforcement of stereotypes, and the presentation of history as natural and inevitable" [1993:6]. Native histories are incorporated into national history, but in ways that establish EuroCanadian/American domination over Native people: as elements of the story of the dominant society, a perspective which effaces and denies the very different perspectives on the past that colonized groups acquire.³

Venezuelan history provides an especially clear example of the implications of incorporating Native histories into national history. According to Iraida Arenas and Mario Obediente, Venezuelan history has always been written as if it began with Spanish colonization, as if only this European culture was the foundation of the modern Venezuelan nation, and as if Native peoples in Venezuela had been "assimilated and swallowed up immediately by Spanish culture" [1990:56]. Furthermore, by controlling the representation of Native histories in this way, national history reinforces and replicates the control over Native people by the dominant society. In the United States, McGuire criticizes

³ And see Bodnar [1990:14], who states that because public memory "takes the form of an ideological system with special language, beliefs, symbols, and stories," it can be used "as a cognitive device to mediate competing interpretations and privilege some explanations over others."

the double-edged process whereby Native Americans have become included into the pantheon of national heritage as symbols of premodern, naturalized social beings [i.e., "savage Others"] and, at the same time, progressively excluded from the mainstream of American political culture. They have become "vanishing Americans" in proportion to the degree to which they have lost control over their own pasts to archaeologists, historians, and other specialists and to the extent that their present existence has been reduced to a mere reflection of a past over which they have little or no control [described in Hill 1992:810-811].

Similarly, in Venezuela, the view of Native groups as "historical forms alien to the national process" [Arenas and Obediente 1990:56] has enormous implications for the present and future lives of Native people within this state, for it denies "the historical past that could legitimate their existence as part of the cultural plurality of the society or the nation" [Arenas and Obediente 1990:56-57]. Canadian historiography and contemporary politics have traditionally had strong parallels with these examples.

Enacting History: A History of Historic Sites

Like national histories, national historical sites and museums have traditionally told the history of the status quo. They were also overtly intended to inculcate values, information, and attitudes which served to "communicat[e] the power, authority, and dominance of the elite class" to immigrants and other minority, less-privileged, social groups [Jonaitis 1992:23; see also Wallace 1991:184, 185].

When national parks services and historic monuments boards were established by the federal governments of Canada and the United States, they focused on the commemoration and preservation of structures and events of national importance. These tended to be associated with white explorers, pioneers in various fields, and

wealthy and elite individuals: "regional, minority, or class-related symbols were deemed inappropriate" for preservation because they were less important and divisive, turning attention away from symbols of national patriotism [Norkunas 1993:27; see also Taylor 1990:44]. Fathers of Confederation, American political heroes such as Abraham Lincoln, railroad barons, wealthy businessmen, Chief Factors in the fur trade, and missionaries counted as "symbols of national patriotism" and development; labourers and their homes did not. For decades, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board (HSMB) in Canada refused to commemorate William Lyon Mackenzie and the other leaders of the 1837 Rebellion [Taylor 1990:48], because they were seen--from an elite perspective--as dissidents.

Thus, European explorers and entrepreneurs who extended the fur trade into the western interior were commemorated; their Native guides and customers were mentioned, if at all, in much smaller type. LaVerendrye received a plaque in the 1920s which stated that "his explorations and those of his sons doubled the size of Canada"; the efforts and perceptions of his Native guides remained unmentioned [cited in Taylor 1990:51]. In Manitoba, Chief Peguis was commemorated by a statue and plaque in 1924 which was dedicated to him as the "whiteman's special assistant in grateful recognition of his good offices to the early settlers" [Friesen 1990b:206]. The memorial makes no mention of Peguis' own goals or of his leadership of his own people.

Privately-funded sites also followed this pattern. Williamsburg and Plimoth, two of the earliest and most-visited historic sites on the continent, were for decades shrines

to wealthy, powerful men [Snow 1993:22-36; Wallace 1991:184-187; Schlereth 1990:350; Norkunas 1993:24]. Williamsburg's mission statement during the 1950s focused on the desire of the site and its primary funder, Winthrop Rockefeller II, to promote such patriotic ideals as "opportunity, individual liberties, self-government, the integrity of the individual, and responsible leadership" [Wilson 1992:218].

Williamsburg has also functioned since the 1950s as a reception centre for foreign dignitaries because it is both perceived and promoted as a shrine to such national principles.

As well as focusing on the deeds of the dominant members of society, events were considered to be of national historical importance insofar as they contributed to the nation-building dreams of that class [Taylor 1990:48-51]. Historic sites were commemorated for their roles in Canadian national [and British imperial] history. Thus, the railroads--which tied Canada together as a political entity and contributed to the development of its economy--were deemed to be of national historic importance. In a remarkable statement in 1929 at the unveiling of a monument at the historic Kaministikwia portage [near what is now Old Fort William], HSMB member James Coyne acknowledged what he saw as

our national indebtedness to the canoe, for giving the French priority of discovery, enabling them to hold the territory north of the lakes and westward with their scattered trading posts, and to retard settlement west of the Ottawa to such a degree that it was practically a virgin territory that was awaiting the UE Loyalists when they were forced to leave their homes at the Revolution. That Canada is British today is largely due to the birch-bark canoe [cited in Taylor 1990:51].

Coyne then linked the Kaministikwia portage route [symbol of "the early commercial

development of the country"] with the railroad route which in 1929 ran over much of it, linking the country and facilitating economic development [Taylor 1990:51]. Coyne, who had written about prehistoric Indians in Ontario, did not mention how the French had obtained canoes.

Coyne's statement was quite in keeping with the perspective of national historiography on the western fur trade, which was seen as the extension of capitalism into the wilderness and thus a precursor to the founding of modern Canada. As A.J.B. Johnston has noted, the Canadian parks system acquired and developed many military and fur trade sites "as examples of the advance of EuroCanadian civilization and sovereignty across the land" [Johnston 1994:4]. The fur trade fit perfectly into the "nation-building" concept of historical significance as a

necessary link between savage wilderness and civilization. The notion of the fur trade as having paved the way for later agricultural settlement remained a persistent theme in Canadian historiography as expressed in the staples theory of Harold Innis. The colony to nation model... presented the fur trade as the forerunner of Canadian hegemony in Western Canada, a kind of Canadian version of the "winning of the West" [Coutts 1993:1].

Thus, LFG was originally designated as being of historic significance by the federal Historic Sites and Monuments Board in 1929 not because of its role in the fur trade, but because it had been the location where the first western treaty was signed in 1871, clearing the way for settlement from Ontario.

In Canada, of course, the West was won by the British. As early as the turn of the century, provincial heritage bodies had been formed by citizens and governments in a "spirit of patriotism, or, more precisely, of neo-romantic, British-Canadian nationalism" [Jasen 1990:12; see also Friesen 1990b:199]. These groups, which were

quite in line with academic and government thinking at the time, wished to celebrate a nostalgic vision of the expansion of the Empire, the extension of British culture to the darkest corners of the globe, and the virtues of British culture during a time of high non-British immigration to Canada in order to maintain their perception of the superiority of British civilization and the natural right of rule of the Empire: Coyne's "genius of the Anglo-Celtic race" [Jasen 1990:12; for American upper-class parallels, see Jonaitis 1992:23, 41-45, and Wallace 1991:185]. According to C.J. Taylor, the members of the first Historic Sites and Monuments Board in Canada

emphasized their moral value [and that of historic sites] in helping to civilize a raw and materialist society. They considered themselves part of an educated élite whose duty it was to impart proper values of patriotism, duty, self-sacrifice, and spiritual devotion to young and new Canadians and members of the lower orders of society [Taylor 1990:47].

Forty years later, Barbara Johnstone, the first superintendent at LFG, felt strongly that the site should communicate the value of British laws and society in Red River's past to "problem groups" of society, including adolescents and recent immigrants [Johnstone 1960], and that such education comprised one of the primary reasons that LFG should operate as a national heritage site.

Native people were included in these sites within this nation-building perspective, but in patterned and patronising ways. "Indians" were part of the "colourful and romantic" history of the fur trade at these sites in much the same way that they appeared in entertainments such as Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show: as exotic and fascinating Others in fringed and feathered clothing, and as both the Noble Savage who aided the fur trade and settlement and as the Savage of the Wilderness, suggesting

the threats to British civilization that were overcome in the course of the fur trade and frontier era to allow the establishment of British law and order. They were always presented as sidekicks to European historical stars; their important contributions to the fur trade and to exploration were downplayed, and their own perspectives on the past were neither consulted nor voiced. Within this script and characterization, Native appearances at sites were strictly controlled by Whites.⁴

Again, LFG is a good example of this perspective. At the 1919 commemoration ceremony, no Native people spoke. An HBC employee, instead, spoke about "the Indian and his habits of life," surely a colonial performance if there ever was one, and fully reinforcing the message of the fort's role in the triumph of British civilization that the Historic Sites and Monuments Board intended [Coutts 1993:18]. In the early 1960s, when the fort was interpreted to the public for the first time, site director Barbara Johnstone similarly placed topics such as European fur traders, exploration history, the founding of the Red River Settlement, and the transition from Rupert's Land to Canada well ahead of "Indians" in her list of important themes to be interpreted. When she did mention Native people, it was in superficial categories that suggested they were not really important in the trade or in Red River [Johnstone

⁴ Something that puzzles me is that the HSMB always included men who wrote about Native peoples, yet this pattern of minimizing the commemoration of Native people in history persisted. A.G. Bailey, author of one of the first works on postcontact Native history, joined the board in the 1950s [Taylor 1990:150]. I assume that Bailey and others who knew about Native contributions to history were either locked into a view of history which emphasized the activities of EuroCanadians, or outvoted by their fellow board members.

1962]. [See Fig. 1.] Of the sites at which I did research, only OFW had Native interpreters in its early years. Even there, the single first lodge, according to veteran interpreter Freda McDonald, was built "for dwarves"--unlike the large European structures and many non-Native interpreters elsewhere on site.

Such controlled representations of Native people are similar to the ways in which "cultural Others" have been represented at historic sites since their inception. The first reconstructed historic villages were developed in Scandinavia in the late nineteenth century to preserve elements of folk cultures that were being destroyed by increasing industrialization. In Michael Wallace's words, these sites

blended romantic nostalgia with dismay at the emergence of capitalist social relations. As the new order had introduced mechanized mass production, a burgeoning working class, and class conflict, these museums, often organized by aristocrats and professionals, set out to preserve and celebrate fast-disappearing craft and rural traditions. [Wallace 1981:188; see also Anderson 1984:18-33, Wilson 1992:220]

Such displays were nostalgic in Renato Rosaldo's sense of "imperialist nostalgia" [Rosaldo 1989:60]. They kept the focus on quaint clothing and customs, often sentimentalized, and avoided dealing with issues of modernization; the reconstructions were done through the eyes of, and for the benefit of, middle-class people who admired these European equivalents of the Noble--and Vanishing--Indian.

Contemporaneous with these early sites were displays of non-Western people at World's Fairs; in fact, at least one early site founder, Artur Hazelius, sent groups of people to be displayed at these fairs [Anderson 1984:25-26]. Within the fairs themselves, some of these people were viewed in tableaux showing the changes from traditional to modern life: Dakota children at their lessons in a schoolroom, for

[to follow p.59]

STORY II THE STORY OF THE FORT ITSELF Continuation

Main Divisions	Location	Technique
4. Life at the Fort in Various Periods and Specific Events		
Daily living-officers' families	New Bldg.,	Modern and Period
" " -men's families & at "Bachelor's Hall")	Big House, Bell Tower, Guard House	
Daily trade and other fort business	Engineer's House (south area)	
Special Days-New Year's (Annual)	Reconstructed Bldgs.	
-Christmas		
-Weddings, etc.		
-Arrival and Departure of Brigades	(north & south)	
-Mail Packets	Part of Community	
Uses of the Fort Bell	Kitchen Bldg.,	
Launching of boats	Specific ground areas	
Meteorological Observations		
Unusual Events: Hurricane 1868		
Floods 1852-60s		
24th May-Explosion 1877		
Suicide in Guard House 1855 Watson		
1870 MacLeod		
Garden Parties and "At Homes"		
Governors-General etc.		
Crafts associated with the Fort		
Blacksmith shop		
Brewery		
Saw Mill		
Grist Mill		
etc.		
The Farm set-up(north)		
5. Historical Events		
Northern Department Council Meetings		
First Manitoba Asylum		
First Manitoba Penitentiary		
Riel-Over the Wall 1870		
Troops-1846 and 1870		
First NWMP patrol-and garrisoning of MPs		
First Canadian Govt. Indian Treaty in West		
Lisgar Masonic Lodge		
Visits of Lord Dufferin, Lord Minto, and Earl Grey		
250th Anniversary of HBC 1920	At	
6. Buildings- Specific Uses at Specific Periods	Buildings Themselves	Per Plans, Photos, sketches and paintings
7. Grounds-Sundial, Company Arms, East gate pillars (initials-Wolseley Troops) Flag Staff, cannon, bake oven (prison-north wall) Wells, Roadway, prisoners' rockpile, York Boat,		
8. Indians- Cree and Ojibway neighbours		
-Individuals: Pegowis, Mistakun, Long Bones, Chief Prince,		
-Treaty #1 1871		
-Camps		
-Indian connection (local people) with Historical events at Fort		
-Company Indians-their jobs (local people)		



[to follow p.59]

STORY II THE STORY OF THE FORT ITSELF Continuation

Main Divisions	Location	Technique
4. Life at the Fort in Various Periods and Specific Events		
Daily living-officers' families	New Bldg.,	Modern and Period
" " -men's families & at "Bachelor's Hall")	Big House, Bell Tower, Guard House	
Daily trade and other fort business	Engineer's House (south area)	
Special Days-New Year's (Annual)	Reconstructed Bldgs.	
-Christmas	(north & south)	
-Weddings, etc.		
-Arrival and Departure of Brigades		
-Mail Packets	Part of Community	
Uses of the Fort Bell	Kitchen Bldg.,	
Launching of boats	Specific ground areas	
Metecrological Observations		
Unusual Events: Hurricane 1858		
	Floodal 1852-60s	
	24th May-Explosion 1877	
	Suicide in Guard House 1852	
	1870 Mac-30d	
Garden Parties and "At Homes"	Governors-General etc.	
Crafts associated with the Fort		
	Blacksmith shop	
	Brewery	
	Saw Mill	
	Grist Mill	
	etc.	
The Farm set-up(north)		
5. Historical Events		
Northern Department Council Meetings		
First Manitoba Asylum		
First Manitoba Penitentiary		
Riel-Over the Wall 1870		
Troops-1846 and 1870		
First NWMP patrol-and garrisoning of MPs		
First Canadian Govt. Indian Treaty in West		
Lisgar Masonic Lodge		
Visits of Lord Dufferin, Lord Minto, and Earl Grey		
250th Anniversary of HBC 1920		
6. Buildings- Specific Uses at Specific Periods	Buildings Themselves	Per Plans, Photos, sketches and paintings



Figure 1: HBCA E.97/53: Interpretive Plan for Lower Fort Garry, 1962
 Figure reproduced courtesy Hudson's Bay Company Archives.
 Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

instance. Outside, on the Midway or in Ethnological displays, groups of typical houses were inhabited by everyone from Inuit to Hottentots. While ostensibly intended to be educational or to communicate the humanity of non-Western peoples, the crowds saw these people as exotic curiosities, and their "primitive" ways were contrasted with the technology in the central exhibits, which was promoted as the hallmark of civilization. Tribal peoples were exhibited within the context of Western culture and control, reinforcing their assigned position within the hierarchy of white Christians over darker-skinned "savages," and naturalizing and justifying Western control over them [Kreamer 1992:368; Harris 1990:122-123].

As historic sites developed in North America, they tended either to show a white past or, when minorities were shown, a colonial one. Williamsburg initiated its African-American interpretive program only in the 1970s, and still does not portray the correct ratio of black to white inhabitants of the town. At most sites where African-Americans were historically present, they are not interpreted; where they are, it is in a scaled-down manner that minimizes their historic numbers and duties. Native interpretation has followed the same pattern. For years, at many fur trade and Great Lakes military sites, a token chief would be interpreted, generally only on special occasions when events illustrating colonial control were enacted: treaty signings, ceremonial welcomes of settlers, or the return of an explorer and his Native guide. Only in the 1990s have the numbers and roles of Native interpreters at historic sites become significant.

This manner of displaying cultural "Others"--either downplaying their presence

or displaying them within the context of difference and colonial control--makes historic sites into

hegemonic texts reflective of a particular ideology that legitimates the current social structure. This structure involves several ideas: that those of middle- and upper middle-class, white European descent are naturally and logically in power as the result of the forward linear movement of history, and that contemporary relationships of power and domination are justified in social evolutionary terms [Norkunas 1993:8].

Sites perpetuate such ideas by processes similar to those involved in national historiography: by repeating, over and over, the image of the controlling elite, and by not displaying or discussing the complex realities of the past, such as the perspectives of minority groups, or the conflicts between them and the elite [Wallace 1991; Norkunas 1993:24]. Perhaps most importantly, historic sites tend to present history "as an inevitable progression from the simplicity of the Native American to the complexity and sophistication of the Anglo-American" [Norkunas 1993:23].

These elements of the historical narratives of the dominant society, and their enactment at historic sites, are partial truths. The facts they string together and display are highly selective, the perspective blinkered. Yet the stories these sites tell are powerful and compelling to large audiences, because they act as creation myths, touchstones for the identity of dominant-society narrators and audiences. As David Hewison states,

You don't know who you are if you don't know where you have been. This is a matter that concerns individuals, and concerns nations. Heritage is a source and vehicle for myth...[Myth] is true in a special sense, in that it has truth for a great many people, and this general belief gives it a contemporary validity. It may contain elements that are unhistorical, or ahistorical, but it adds up to a cultural truth. It may indeed contain a great deal of historically accurate and factually testable material, but this is transformed into a touchstone of national,

local, even individual, identity [Hewison 1989:17].

The most crucial setting of North American historical myth, the place in which all the important themes and struggles and stories occurred, is the frontier. Whether one speaks of the frontier of the American West, or the earlier Great Lakes or later northern frontier, what both Americans and Canadians think happened on the frontier lies at the roots of North American identity. It was the very place where the "inevitable progression" from Native to Anglo occurred. Its symbols say much about who we think we are today. We associate it with "honest values, good neighbors, hard work, virtue and generosity, the success ideology, and the sense of community in small-town America" [Bruner 1994:411]. As Richard White has noted, we have imbued such things as covered wagons and log cabins with "latent narratives" about "migration, primitive beginnings, and ultimate progress" [1994:12-13]. These symbols and their meanings are true for Canadians as well as Americans. In both countries, the frontier has been thought of as a wild place to which European settlers brought the light of civilization, of Christianity, of Western technology and agriculture. For centuries, the frontier has been popularly thought of as "the engine of progress and the domain of real men who dominated other men and nature..." [White 1994:49]. When North American historiography and historic sites have not been busy glorifying wealthy or politically important men, they have glorified the sturdy and honest pioneer--who is another symbol for dominance and the establishment of control over the continent.

In this narrative, the people who were dominated were Native. Like the

wilderness they lived in, they, too, had to be transformed and subdued--or allowed to vanish in the face of progress. The frontier, where this process occurred, has become, in our collective consciousness, a sort of crucible for the production of "real men," a place and process heated by conflict over access to land and resources. The imagery of the frontier, in this sense, has become an equally coded and ideological "language for signifying the meaning and fate of the Native population of North America" [Jasen 1995:17].

Displays of Native people have often used the frontier as a setting for such dramatic stories. Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which was advertised as "an exact, complete and entirely genuine historical and equestrian revelation," [Blackstone 1986:53] was the most popular such display, and it had many imitators. In this century, we have seen other re-enactments of the frontier myth. Some are privately-run, such as Frontierland at Disneyland, where visitors are encouraged to shoot at various targets at the entrance. Frontierland works so well, says Patricia Nelson Limerick, because its designers have created

a scene chock-full of the shapes and forms that...say "frontier," with the assumption that any visitor so stimulated visually will fall into step with the mythic patterns of frontier life, pick up a gun, and blast away at whatever is in sight [Limerick 1994:72].

Many frontier-theme venues do not include Native people in them, but repeat and reinforce notions about race relations, violence, and the frontier, usually while glamorizing the role of White settlers. The false-fronted town at Knott's Berry Farm has conjured up similar notions about the "frontier" and the "Wild West" for decades. Beginning in the 1950s, it has also been common for families to re-trace the wagon

routes of the Overland Trail or sight-see in the Old Wild West on vacation: the re-enactment of Native dispossession, reincarnated as leisure [Wilson 1992:206; White 1994:55]. Daniel Boone and the Hollywood Western industry have also contributed to maintaining the frontier myth in the consciousness of most North Americans, and the furor over the reinterpretation of frontier art in the recent exhibition The West As America suggests that the frontier remains central to North American identity.⁵ Most recently, the public is encountering the frontier at state-funded historical reconstructions.

Many historic sites are in fact reconstructed frontiers: trading posts, explorers' wintering camps, missions, and military posts that functioned as outposts of empires. These reconstructions have poured literally millions of dollars into researching, constructing, and accurately furnishing their buildings, and advertise themselves as authentic, offering a glimpse into life as it was lived in their particular pasts. Despite this attention to detail, though, the stories these sites tell are skewed. As well as remembering Norkunas' analysis of the ways in which public history sites reinforce the power structure in North American society--by repeated assertion of the worth of wealthy whites, and patterned diminution of the importance of anyone else--we might also take a closer look here at Buffalo Bill's show. Cody was brilliant at "interweaving

⁵ This was a Smithsonian exhibition which treated art images of the western frontier as "ideological texts" [Karp 1992:10]. The exhibition produced such irate responses from visitors who saw it as heresy that the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution was questioned about it in the American Congress, and it was even suggested that federal funding to the Smithsonian be cut off if it was going to fund such work.

mythic symbolism with authenticating touches of historicity" [Slotkin 1981:29] to make his show believable--by which I also mean that he did this to make his show resonate with popular imagery and expectations of the frontier. And as well as weaving history into the myths, Cody also wove myth into history, transforming historical events [real battles between Native people and troops; real attacks by Native people on settlers] into drama, so that they "cease[d] to represent contingent events, and [became] embodiments of timeless and typical struggles between forces and figures that are emblematic of progress and right against savagery and evil" [White 1994:32].

Like Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, "living history" sites and other historic reconstructions have always incorporated elements of entertainment and myth as well as authentic period details. And, like Buffalo Bill's show, historic sites have tended to portray Native-White relations as a dramatic battle between the forces of Good [Europeans] and Evil [Savages]. Since its reconstruction, displays and an annual re-enactment at CM have focused on the 1763 attack and capture of the fort by Native people, without discussing Native motives or context for the attack. The stories that historic sites tell, says Alexander Wilson, "are meant to take visitors back to an earlier day: the years of victory over wilderness and savages" [1992:207]. In planning the early interpretation at LFG, Barbara Johnstone referred to life in Red River as "a war against the wilderness and starvation" [Johnstone 1962:5]. Similarly, a picture of an early, parade-float reconstruction of OFW during a 1952 Jubilee Parade shows a popular understanding of the fort: it has Hollywood bastions, gun slits, and palisades

[flying the Union Jack, of course]; and in front, characters representing Daniel Boone, an RCMP officer, a wild west cow hand, voyageurs with modern firearms, and Indian chiefs in plains headdress [Jasen 1990:15]. [Fig. 2: Float, Jubilee Parade, 1952.]

Somehow the daily canoe landings and cannon firings at sites today, for all the archival research behind them, seem all too like Buffalo Bill's daily attacks on wagon trains, and the characters represented all too familiar.

When the average white, middle-class visitor to an historic site [and most visitors fit this description] sees a palisade, a "fur trader," an "Indian," and a wagon or a canoe, together, the site becomes--at some part of the visitor's mind--Frontierland, a place where one ought to shoot at Indians before they try to scalp you, a place where it is necessary to establish EuroAmerican or EuroCanadian dominance, a place where whatever specific fort and year have been reconstructed becomes a setting for the frontier drama of good white guys and savage Indians. This is a place as constructed, as racist, as political, and as mythical as "the Orient," and visiting it invokes a powerful and empowering [for members of the dominant society] origin myth [Bruner 1994:411]. No wonder visitors break into Hollywood war whoops when they see a Native interpreter at one of these places! They are "viewing," as Denning says, "in a space so closed around with convention that the audience and actors enter into the conspiracy of their own illusions" [Denning 1993:74].

I will discuss the tourist "gaze," the social and political implications of "viewing," in the chapter on visitors. For now, I wish to state that these sites are not value-neutral, "objective," three-dimensional versions of scholarly research or "facts."

[to follow p.66]



Figure 2: TBHS 1952.984.880: 1952 Jubilee Parade Float
Figure reproduced courtesy the Thunder Bay Historical Museum,
Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Just as scholars have acknowledged the political nature of historical interpretation and of their own positions and perspectives, especially of Western interpretations of non-Western peoples, so are historic sites "fictional," contingent, positioned, and composed of partial truths [Clifford 1986; Said 1989:212]. They are vehicles by which we tell stories about the past and about ourselves today, and about how we should act toward Native people and Others [White 1994:55]: they express a belief system and an implicit model of social and political structure that is central to the dominant society from whose perspective they portray the past.

When I analyze public history sites, then, I am not looking at them as facets of the tourism industry, but, like Donald Horne, as reflections of public culture, as sites that reflect and reinforce social structure, the patterns of relations between social groups, and the legitimacy of authority in North American society [Horne 1984:2]. I see visitors to these sites not just as tourists, but as participants in enacting these power structures [Norkunas 1993:26]. Lutz and Collins have noted that the images in National Geographic magazine tell "consensus narratives": "pictorial stories that employ a stock of common symbols and that can be understood by most people" [Lutz and Collins 1993:220]; so do historic sites, and they are understood and enacted by visitors to those sites. The stories are about the "proper" social and political order in the present as well as the past, the justification for the domination of Native people by Whites, and the "proper" social relations between Natives and Whites: distance, distrust, and the denigration of Native peoples by Whites.

Other Perspectives

Power, however, is rarely monolithic and is frequently contested. Despite the efforts of a nation or an organization to present a monolithic view of itself as integrated and unified, without dissent or internal conflict,...[this] is something strived for rather than finalized or achieved. There are always dissident voices and challenging readings...It is not just a tension between the official and the heretic, or between the establishment view and its resistance, but is rather one of multiple competing voices in dialogic interplay [Bakhtin 1981]. The notion of resistance reduces polyphony to a dualism" [Bruner 1993b:14].

"We're playing ourselves, the real First Nations people" [Native interpreters; first stated to me by Cecilia Littlewolf-Walker, OFW].

The relationship between historiography and hegemony that I have described in the preceding pages has been the focus of a great deal of recent scholarly work. The problem with all this material on the contest of dominant and minority groups for control over historical narratives is that it describes a partial truth: like other kinds of hegemony, "something strived for rather than finalized or achieved" [Bruner 1993b:14]. There are, as Bruner points out, "always dissident voices and challenging readings," alternative voices telling other histories. Native people have never been passive victims, either of history, of historical narratives, or of historic sites; they have always responded creatively to further their own needs and agendas. The fact that we are hearing their voices more clearly in the last few decades has to do with their increasing political power in North America, a development linked to global decolonization.

Nor, as Bruner also points out, is it simply a contest between "the establishment view and its resistance, but is rather one of multiple competing voices in dialogic interplay." There are many Others, many stories, many histories, many perspectives on

history that result from different life experiences and positions within any Native community, within academia, within the field of public history. And even if we introduce multivocality into this process, it is still something other than a simple tug-of-war, a question of whose version is right and whose is wrong. If society, hegemony and history [and therefore these sites] are in process--rather than completed and foisted on the public through these sites as a form of social control--then there is room for contestation, revision, and negotiation by many voices in the present, just as there was in the past. This more complex view suggests that the hegemonic functions of these sites may be seriously compromised, and that the messages of these sites are much more complex than simple reinforcement of the social order. Public memory and public history are less organized, less homogenous, and less threatening than the hegemonic steamroller that some of the literature makes them out to be.

Acknowledging the multiple perspectives involved in creating a site, and visitors' multiple perspectives when "reading" the site, suggests that analyses such as Michael Wallace's [1991], which emphasize the elite and hegemonic nature of the history communicated by reconstructions, are very much partial truths. Sites are simply not this monolithic. On the other hand, they certainly do reinforce a hegemonic status quo, but again it is not as simplistic as Edward Bruner's dismissal of this aspect of New Salem on the grounds that the state itself does not interfere with the interpretation of history provided by the site [Bruner 1994:400]. These places reinforce the status quo through ingrained and unconscious values and belief systems which affect budget, implementation, and programming priorities and decisions [even for administrators

who are committed to emphasizing Native issues at the sites] and which also affect the ways in which visitors perceive them.

The traditions of "national" and "public" history have been shaken in the past few decades by the effects of global decolonization: by formerly colonized peoples talking back to their former colonizers. This has included the development of a body of recent scholarship which has explored and problematized the relationship between the dominant elements of nation-states and their academic and public representations of minority groups [e.g. Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Said 1989; Trigger 1985]. Western representations of non-Western peoples have come under fire for their political, controlling nature and for denying the voices and experiences of non-Western peoples; the authority of the West to present "authentic" representations of Others has also been eroded.

As Keesing [1989], Thomas [1990], and others have noted, control over historical interpretation has become especially important to formerly colonized peoples who are seeking to maintain their identities and to regain control over territories--just as it is to nation-states which seek to forge national histories and identities [Alonso 1988; Brow 1990; McGuire 1992]. Jonathan Hill has expressed this most forcefully:

Not to create a poetic counterdiscourse to the historical reality of domination is to risk acquiescing in the role of powerless victims of more powerful others. To successfully resist ongoing systems of domination, racial or ethnic stereotyping, and cultural hegemony, the first necessity of disempowered peoples, or of marginalized subcultural groups within a national society, is that of poetically constructing a shared understanding of the historical past that enables them to understand their present conditions as the result of their own ways of making history [Hill 1992:811].

These issues have had great consequences for public institutions such as historic

sites which were constructed to tell varying episodes within national histories, and which have displayed the cultures and histories of non-Western peoples within this context [Payne and Taylor 1992:5, 19, fn.6]. In seeking to strengthen their autonomy and their identity, Native peoples have begun to demand that their versions of the past be acknowledged; they also demand that the traditional dynamics of the relationship between scholars and Native people be altered. As with museums, public history sites have had their authority to represent the pasts of minority groups challenged. Historic sites, like museums, are increasingly expected to consult and collaborate with these groups and even to make their sites "forums for discourse" between cultures [Ames 1991:15; Task Force 1992].

As well as seeking to change the basic relationship between historic sites and themselves, Native people seek in many cases to change the basic narratives told by these sites, to voice their own perspectives on history and the complex relationship between past and present [Ames et. al. 1988; Ames 1992; Karp and Levine 1991; Karp et. al. 1992]. Fur trade sites, and other sites which deal with historic interactions between Native peoples and Europeans, have been grappling with these issues for years. Site administrators and staff are actively seeking answers for questions about the nature and control of representations of Native people and Native-White relations, of voice, of the purpose of these representations, and of the intended audiences for them. Older narratives about history as the process of the cultural domination and disappearance of Native people are being replaced [partly in the form of the Native interpreters themselves] by stories about adaptation, continuity, and mutual cooperation

both past and present [and see Clifford 1991]. We are now acknowledging the fact that, in Randall McGuire's words, "just because two peoples share a common history does not mean that they shared a common experience" [McGuire 1992:816].

At historic sites, these developments were also propelled by the new social history of the 1960s and 1970s, which prompted the addition of women, labourers, and minorities to interpretive programs. By the late 1970s, historic reconstructions had also begun to challenge elite portrayals of the past by showing the underclasses and the "rough edges" of life in the past. Since then, the whole tenor of public history--as Jean Friesen calls it, "heritage ideology"--has continued to swing toward "the legitimization of those outside the English-speaking commercial society," including Native and minority groups [Friesen 1990b:199].

This shift has been to such an extent that at least some public historians are also beginning to consider the implications of portraying Native history only at European sites. Wes Andrews, an Anishinabe consultant to CM, notes the need for "Indian-centered History," and states that "Historic themes such as the fur trade, missions, explorations are all phenomena generated by a European-centered approach to scholarship" [Andrews 1995:(n.p.); see also Payne and Taylor 1992:15, Coutts 1991]. Sites such as Waswagoning, Head-Smashed-In, and Wanuskewin begin to offer a corrective to this, but so far are all set in the pre-contact era. It would be interesting indeed to see an historic Native village or house site that is not part of a non-Native site.

Native interpretation of the past is still very much an oppositional form, its

messages challenging stereotypes about the past and their contemporary implications. The dynamics of "Frontierland" are beginning--just beginning--to shift as Native staff at these sites "shoot back" at the dominant society. Paul Chaat Smith, a Comanche and a photographer, writing of the controlling ways that Native people have been represented and of photography as a means of breaking free of these, recently wrote:

We are shape-shifters in the national consciousness, accidental survivors, unwanted reminders of disagreeable events. Indians have to be explained and accounted for, and somehow fit into the creation myth of the most powerful, benevolent nation ever...

We're trapped in history. No escape. Great-uncle Cavayo must have faced many situations this desperate, probably in godforsaken desert canyons against murderous Apaches and Texans. Somehow, I know what he would say: Get the best piece you can find, and shoot your way out. [Smith 1995:9]

Native people are, indeed, shooting their way out of the spaces to which they have been confined in non-Native thought for so long; the inverted Buffalo Bill image Smith conjures up is most appropriate. And just as Native photographers such as Smith are giving us representations of real Native lives to balance the superficial, romanticized or demonic images of popular imagination and history, Native interpreters at historic sites are "shooting back"--at all the tourists looking for those old images through their point-and-shoot cameras, at site and government officials who allow them only token representations, at the confines of history, ignorance, and stereotypes--by investing their own meanings in their work, by imbuing their representations of their ancestors' lives with these meanings, by directly contradicting public expectations. Every one of the Native interpreters with whom I spoke said something to the effect of, "We're playing ourselves, the real First Nations people" [Littlewolf-Walker, personal communication, 1994]. Though called squaws and braves

many times daily by site visitors, they are not such in their own minds; their roles and their work mean completely different things to them than they do to non-Native visitors.

In assigning such meaning to their work, these interpreters have much to teach us about how meanings and messages are created and communicated at these sites; about how Native lives have been very different from [but affected by] their representations by non-Natives; about how scholarly discourse on such topics as national histories, contested histories, and the creation of hegemony is only partly true, and misses the spirited resistance such as these Native interpreters raise to such concepts. Whether they, and historic sites along with them, will be able to refute the misconceptions they need to, revise our understanding of the past and along with it our understanding of Native-White relations in the present, remains to be seen.

I think, though, that they are beginning to achieve these goals. If historic sites are a form of cultural performance, then both the culture and the performance are constantly changing. The change in global conditions that has led to increased Native self-determination in recent years is now being reflected in our public dramas.

Consider, in this context, Corinne Kreamer's thoughts about such performances:

Expressive events such as tourist encounters and museum exhibitions are stages...The drama enacted in these events is the drama of civil society...Official history, social justice, appropriate norms for behavior, definitions of identity--these are all contested and negotiated in exhibiting contexts. The drama metaphor is appropriate, but this is not a playful drama... Exhibitions can be, and are often taken to be, certifications of self and history. These are no small matters [Kreamer 1992:372].

If the drama enacted at historic sites has been revised with the addition of Native

interpreters and perspectives, if these officially sanctioned reconstructions of history have been altered, does this mean that North American society is changing? The balance of power has shifted somewhat in the language that sites use to describe the past: the magic phrases used to describe historic Native-White relations in the 1990s are "alliance" and "interdependence."

Most importantly, sites have added Native areas and interpreters, and are now weaving Native themes throughout their reconstructions. If these are places where culture is enacted and displayed, then the new stage sets are in place to perform a different drama. And it is now a drama in which Native performers are, to some extent, writing their own script: the White, elite, historiographical hegemon is no longer the sole playwright. The determination of Native people to reclaim their histories and lives has also led them to challenge the scenes they enact, the play they perform, at historic sites. It is a serious challenge, and they do it with force and vigour. I think that these people, and their colleagues, have the potential to affect the response of the audience to this cultural performance and the very culture they enact at historic sites.

How has the physical revision of these historic reconstructions proceeded? What does the visitor actually see of Native cultures at them? What do these stage sets look like, and what do they communicate? In the next chapter, I will examine the physical aspects of these sites.

Chapter Two: Sites: Physical Realities and Myths

Both [museums and tourism] are in the business of representing the culture of others, usually those who have lived in another time or in another place. Both must construct and hence invent what they display. Both have to select from a vast array of potential objects and events to valorize some as worthy of exhibitionBoth museums and touristic sites have themselves been constructed in a particular social context and historical period, and are embedded in the politics of their settings [Bruner 1993a:6].

A wooden palisade, dubiously claiming to be a "fort"; a clearing in the forest. Outside the walls, a few dome-shaped bark wigwams, their bent-pole frames tied together with bark fibre. A fire-pit outside, sheltered with bark scraps; a birchbark canoe. Inside the lodges, a cradleboard; pine boughs and hides on the floor; birchbark mokuks holding dried corn, wild rice, maple sugar. Round beaver skins on sapling stretchers outside the door; a trade gun, bow, and quiver of arrows inside. Knives, tin lantern, metal scissors, glass beads, flashy trade silver brooches. A painted drum, swinging gently in the darkest corner of the lodge.

Walk away from the wigwams, through the sturdy main gate of the fort. Square buildings, tiny multi-pane windows, the steeple and bell of a church. Laneways, back yards, kitchen gardens. Laundry hanging from lines. Fireplaces, bake ovens, herbs drying; smells of stew and bread. Four-poster beds, upholstered chairs, fine turnings on table-legs; pewter dishes, patterned china. Tapestry in a frame; a ruffled shirt being mended. A fur-press; bales of furs; the trading-shop, with its cloth and powder and shot and muskrat spears and strings of beads.

These are the physical essences of a reconstructed fur trade site: every site that I worked on included these kinds of objects and was divided between a small Aboriginal encampment outside the walls and a larger, more elaborate European area within the walls. While each of the sites at which I worked portrays a different moment in time, a different aspect of history, and is situated in different cultural and geographical areas, all of them show remarkably similar histories of development as historic sites. The dates and stages of the addition of their Aboriginal components are also similar. In this chapter, I will explore these histories, as well as the messages communicated by the physical layouts and furnishings of the different areas of the sites.

In analyzing the messages communicated by the reconstructed buildings and layouts of these places, I have found Edward Bruner's observation that the messages and intended social and political effects of such places are complicated by a "struggle over meaning between the "official" interpretation of the site and how that official view is undermined by the processes of its own production" [Bruner 1993b:15] to be quite true. As well as the processes of production of these sites, the processes of reception are crucial in determining their meaning: what site administrators intend to communicate is often not what visitors think or learn. While the Native areas of these sites were deliberately added to counter a Eurocentric perspective on history, they still communicate messages to visitors which can reinforce those perspectives. Some examination of how sites are physically composed and revised, and how the Native encampments at these particular sites have evolved, is necessary as background to the analysis of the messages communicated by the physical layouts of these

reconstructions.

Historic sites have undergone enormous changes in the past few decades. Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s--the very period when many historic sites were being reconstructed [Taylor 1990:168]--the historians who supplied much of the data for these sites began to research and value the past experiences of minority peoples. Driven by the rights campaigns of the times, women, Native peoples, and Black and Hispanic peoples became important foci within the history profession, as did class relations and social conflict. Work on Native histories gained momentum from the publication in the 1970s and early 1980s of ground-breaking research using new perspectives and techniques. Works such as A.J. Ray's Indians in the Fur Trade [1983(1974)] and Sylvia Van Kirk's Many Tender Ties [1980] increased interest within the historic sites bureaucracy to incorporate Native history within their sites. These new subjects slowly began to permeate interpretation at historic reconstructions and to be legitimized by being written into the bureaucracy of historic sites, appearing on site and heritage agency planning and review criteria.

At the same time as these academic developments were occurring, social and political change within Native communities and in the relationship between Native communities and the dominant society sparked a powerful movement to gain Native control over public and scholarly representation of Native people and their pasts. The same challenges to scholarly authority and textual representations of "Others" voiced by Native peoples have been directed at museums and historic sites, challenging the traditional authority of curators, the messages sent by exhibits, and the very function

of museums [Jones 1993; Karp & Lavine 1991; Doxtator 1985]. Widespread media interest in Native issues, an increasingly educated, articulate and effective Native leadership, and the use of ethnoprotest to great effect [e.g. the Spirit Sings controversy in 1988¹] have combined to place great pressure on site administrators to increase the amount, quality, and autonomy of Native programming at historic sites. Most recently, the Task Force on Museums and First Peoples [1992] in Canada, and the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act in the United States, have continued to set the tone for professional relations between Native groups and museums and historic sites.

These changes have had far-reaching ramifications for historic sites. Lower Fort Garry, to give just one example, has gone from being a "little Scottish village on the Red" emphasizing the cultures of Great Britain to emphasizing race, class, and gender relations in the fur trade, portraying the fort as part of a multicultural community. Now it is going even farther, and forging strong ties with the local Native community and involving them in planning and delivering interpretation and programs on-site. Sites have not only added Native people to their staffs, but are beginning to add what are often oppositional Native perspectives on history to their messages. These are profound changes that are very much in process, and very complex in nature and

¹ "The Spirit Sings" was an exhibition organized by the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, for the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics. The Lubicon Lake Cree and their supporters attempted to organize a boycott of the exhibition by lenders and visitors to protest the fact that the show's sponsor, Shell Oil, was drilling on lands the Lubicon considered theirs. Jones 1993 cites the extensive literature on this controversial exhibition.

implementation.

How does such revision of site themes and messages work with the physical components of a reconstruction? How does one revise a palisaded group of buildings? How are decisions made about such changes, and how do they proceed in practise?

The processes by which such revision occurs are very political. There is a great deal of political pressure on heritage agencies to be accessible and responsible to Native people and to other minority groups. Most recently, large heritage organizations such as Heritage Canada have acceded to Native demands for participation and consultation by establishing official procedures through which Native advisors review broad policy guiding the interpretation of all national historic sites as well as offer input locally [see, for example, the document "National Historic Sites Systems Plan Review," Heritage Canada 1992].

Change is also a very bureaucratic process at historic sites. Decisions about what themes should be interpreted come from the top down, especially in federal heritage organizations. As Payne and Taylor state, "systems or master plans [within heritage organizations] identify a range of historical themes and sub-themes and then slot existing sites into the appropriate category" [1992:2]. Sites work with these plans to develop appropriate themes. Revisionist themes, such as Native history, are generally added to existing themes, rather than completely replacing them. Thus, LFG's official themes still involve its role as a transshipment depot, industrial-agricultural supply centre for the fur trade, administrative headquarters and focal point for the Lower Red River Settlement, and model of fur trade architecture and landscape [Coutts 1993:114-

5]. In smaller heritage agencies, sites have more freedom to determine themes and topics for interpretation, but are still subject to general trends such as those to add women, labour relations, and Native people. In part, however, the pressure comes from within the site, for site administrators are usually historians by training, who want very much to keep abreast of developments within academic history.

In adding the Native areas, historic site administrators have generally chosen to interpret the historic presence of Native people at the site: who they were, where they came from, and what they did on site. The manual for Native interpreters at CM, for instance, states that

Interpretive themes [in the encampment] will focus on Michilimackinac as a gathering place where Great Lakes Indian nations and Euroamericans conducted trade, diplomacy and warfare as partners and allies. This was a relationship of interdependence where diverse peoples established a cultural common ground in order to negotiate mutual concerns [Porter 1992:2].

The manual then lists major "communication objectives":

1. That from pre-contact times Native Americans have gathered at the Straits of Mackinac for seasonal subsistence and spiritual worship...
2. That the Indian and Euroamerican experience at Michilimackinac in the 1770s was a relationship of partnership and interdependence as regards the fur trade, food gathering, and military alliances...
3. That American Indians, especially Odawa and Ojibway, still live in northern Michigan and, in recent years, have developed a renewed interest in preserving and teaching their history and traditions [Porter 1992:2].

These are obviously major additions to the existing themes of a historic reconstruction that has traditionally emphasized the British military presence in the region. Other sites have very similar themes and goals for their encampments. While these themes sound quite radical, in living history terms, offering new perspectives on the past, their

integration with sites as a whole has as yet been incomplete: the encampments, and their themes, have been grafted on to existing sites without, in some cases, changing the rest of the site.

Once interpretive themes and messages are determined, they must be implemented. At this point in the revision process, budget constraints greatly affect what can be done to alter an existing site. Changes must be researched, which takes time and money. Then, recommendations from the researchers must be translated into a physical reconstruction, furnishings and decorative objects, costumes, activities and props for interpretation, and training for interpreters so that they can communicate new messages.

Researchers come up with the details and references to give concrete form to revision at historic sites. They investigate topics such as the exact pattern of china a household would have used, the kinds of decorative techniques and objects used in the homes and working spaces of the multiethnic population of the site, the clothing worn by the various people who worked at a site, the exact nature of the social and economic and political relations between site inhabitants and visitors--all to facilitate site reconstruction, furnishing, and interpretation. Researchers vary in accessibility from site to site, depending on the size of the heritage agency of which each is part. Heritage Canada has the largest number of historians on staff and contract at any given time. These individuals have graduate degrees and expertise in archival research; some are contracted from outside the organization for their specific expertise. As a group, Heritage Canada researchers comprise some of the most influential academic historians

in the country. Over the past few decades, researchers who have done contract work [archival research or site review] for federal sites include Sylvia Van Kirk, Jennifer Brown, Michael Payne, Jean Friesen [all major names in Canadian ethnohistory] and their graduate students.

Other sites run by provincial or state-level heritage agencies have fewer researchers to draw on. Old Fort William's librarian continues to do research in response to specific interpretive needs, but the site lost its full-time researcher several years ago. Pine City draws on the Minnesota Historical's Society's research and curatorial staff. At most sites, interpreters informally seek answers to questions that arise in the course of their work, and may themselves pursue archival research. This pattern has changed slightly with the addition of Native interpreters, who also use oral tradition and determine their own research needs and goals once the encampments are established--but during my fieldwork, the admission that my background was in archivally-based ethnohistory always resulted in a deluge of questions from interpreters in the Native areas.

After references comes the process of fleshing out historio-graphical trends, revising the buildings, furnishings, and costumes used at a site to communicate new messages. This is obviously also subject to budget, and sites are constantly faced with hard choices. Funding the construction of a new wigwam may preclude replacing an ageing draft horse; replacing generic strap dresses may mean there are no craft supplies for interpretive activities. These constraints, in addition to the way that new themes are grafted onto existing sites, can lead to a rather incoherent overall set of

messages or storyline from any given site.

Thus, at LFG, the transition from "pioneer village" to "multicultural fur trade transportation/support community" involved guidelines from the national office in Ottawa about the need to incorporate women and minorities as well as to interpret technological history. The site still portrays "pioneer" activities [blacksmithing, bread baking], but in a different context [interpreters point out that it is mixed-blood women baking for upper-class white women, for example, with differences in dress between servants and served]. Objects were added to officers' quarters to suggest reliance on local Native people [bark containers] and attitudes towards them [typical souvenir work such as scissors-holders and embroidered jackets]. The Native encampment was added, albeit on a shoestring, and without research being done beforehand [I was hired to do that several years later]. What the administrator or interpreter sees when looking at this site is thus "labour history," "women in the fur trade," "class and cultural differences," "LFG as fur trade support site," "Native history/Native-Métis-European relations." On the other hand, what the average visitor would see is probably more like "woman baking bread," "man in top hat," "Native women sitting at tipis with fishing net."

Ideally, LFG would also use new activities to communicate its revised, overarching themes [eg. having mixed-blood tripmen transfer bales to York boats], but staff reductions due to budget cutbacks do not allow this--especially as the addition of the Native encampment at LFG involved the re-assignment of at least four interpretive staff from other areas of the fort. To keep costs manageable, a decision was made to

use commercially-made canvas tipis, which are inauthentic but much less expensive than paying someone to strip birchbark [now no longer found around the fort] and build a traditional lodge. Furnishings were collected from elsewhere in the fort where possible, leading to a fairly "European-looking" assemblage. More accurate furnishings and lodges will be added in the future, as budget and evolving site priorities allow.

Also involved in the politics of physical revision are pressures from Native interpreters and local bands, who demand a good deal of autonomy in their work at these sites. While it was often non-Native staff who planned the addition of the encampments and prepared the initial training manuals and materials for these areas, Native staff [see chapter on Staff] quickly assumed ownership of their work spaces and are now setting goals for the interpretation and development of the encampments. Non-Native administrators still retain a shell of control over their Native staff because they control site budgets [and therefore what areas of a site will be most developed in any given year]. However, demands by both the public and local bands to increase Native interpretation--and the political realities which make it expedient to satisfy such demands--mean that it would be difficult for administrators to stop funding the encampments.

These debates, levels of decisionmaking, need for the research and finding of artifacts, and budgetary constraints raise the question of authenticity. Clearly, what the visitor sees, and a site claims, as "authentic" is the product of extensive negotiation by administrators, researchers, curators, and Native interpreters. Bruner is right that authenticity is closely linked to authority at these institutions [1994:408], but one

needs to delve into the politics of budget approval and administrative [and authoritative] hierarchies at these sites to fully appreciate the "trade-offs" involved in formulating "authentic" reconstructions. The competing claims and authorities of historical researchers, Native staff, and budget-minded administrators do, as Bruner says, make authenticity into "a struggle, a social process, in which competing interests argue for their own interpretation of history" [1994:408].

These are some of the political and practical factors which have affected the addition of Native interpretation programs to historic sites. Each site, of course, portrays a different moment in history, a different reason for and kind of European presence, a different Native presence, and different kinds of Native-White relations. Sites are funded by different heritage organizations, are of different sizes, and have vastly different budgets and visitation numbers. In the following sections, I will explore these and other factors as they pertain to the development of each historic site. In the second half of this chapter, I will examine the remarkably similar messages that these very different sites communicate about Native peoples.

Lower Fort Garry

Lower Fort Garry was built in the 1830s on the Red River between present-day Winnipeg and Lake Winnipeg. Intended as a residence for George Simpson, the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, it was used for that purpose for only a few years and then became a transshipment point for the entire western fur trade. The fort

also served the population at the north end of Red River settlement, and after the 1850s a large farm, brewery, and other facilities were begun there to supply the trade in general [Coutts 1993:5-7]. In 1871, the first western treaty with Canada's Native people was negotiated and signed at the fort with bands of Ojibwa and Swampy Cree.

LFG officially closed as a Hudson's Bay post in 1911. The Manitoba Motor Country Club used the buildings as its headquarters until 1963; the buildings were also used at various times as a penitentiary and an insane asylum. In 1929, the federal Historic Sites and Monuments Board erected a plaque at the fort commemorating it as an historic site--but for its role in the treaty-making process rather than in the fur trade. The text of the plaque read, in part, that the treaty "ended the restlessness of the Natives and left the way clear for peaceful settlement." As Robert Coutts has written, early ideas about heritage and reasons for commemorating sites "were inextricably linked to the perceived "triumph" of Anglo-British culture and institutions in Canada"; this plaque obviously emphasized these notions, and "made clear that the settlement and "civilization" of the 19th century Canadian West were the dominant commemorative themes at LFG" [Coutts 1993:1,2].

As tourism expanded after WWII, there were increasing calls for LFG to be purchased by the federal government and turned into a heritage site. This finally happened in 1951, and the site has belonged to and been administered by the federal government [Parks Canada, now Canadian Heritage] ever since. Repairs were begun to the buildings, but the Motor Club continued to lease the site for its own use. In 1963, when the lease expired, an extensive restoration program was begun and "over the next

two decades the rest of the extant buildings at the fort were restored to their 19th century appearance" [Coutts 1993:3]. The interpretation program also grew, and in the 1970s became "a full scale animation program which saw costumed seasonal interpreters role-playing a variety of historical personalities who lived and worked at the fort in the 1850s and 1860s" [Coutts 1993:3].

In keeping with the theme of the triumph of British civilization over the wilderness that fuelled the development of Canadian historic sites for so long, the expansion of the interpretive program turned LFG into a sort of pioneer village with fur trade associations. In Barbara Johnstone's planning document of 1962, Native subjects for interpretation ["Cree and Ojibway neighbours"] come last on the list, after "Garden Parties" and "Crafts Associated with the Fort" [blacksmith shop, brewery, saw mill, grist mill]. Native people were discussed only as a minor point within the discourse about the establishment of British society in Red River. During the 1970s, interpretation focused on senior fur trade officers at the fort [and their wives]. Since the 1980s, interpretation at LFG has emphasized class and race relations in Red River. Women, mixed-blood and European labourers, employees and settlers began to feature prominently in the characters portrayed by animators. In the early 1980s, administrators also decided to focus interpretation at the site on the 1850s for consistency.

About 1990, managers of the interpretive program at the site [one of whom is of local Métis ancestry] decided to add a Native component to their program. This component was intended to demonstrate the local Ojibwa and Swampy Cree cultures,

and the interactions between these people and Lower Fort Garry, to the public. Without budget allocations for research or large expenditures on costumes and furnishings, these two staff members managed to hire several interpreters [about half of them Ojibwa and Cree] to staff the encampment, and purchased [or borrowed from around the site] several canvas tipis, buffalo hides, furs, beading equipment, kitchen gear and other furnishings. The plan was to get the encampment up and running, and gauge public response to it; if favourable, then Parks Canada would hopefully fund further specific research on the Native presence at the fort and the interpretive presentation and furnishings could be refined.

This has in fact been the manner in which the encampment has progressed, although change is occurring in a more complex way than anticipated. Scholars working on Native history in the Red River area voiced disapproval at the inaccurate canvas tipis, the interpreters' dubious claim that Native people brought fish in large quantities to sell at the fort "for the tribe," and other unresearched aspects of the interpretation. My first visit to the new encampment in 1992 provoked a determination to look more closely at historic sites' portrayals of Native peoples, and ultimately led to this dissertation. Quite astonishingly, photographs exist of Native people and dwellings in Red River in 1858, along with a wealth of detailed archival references to Native life there, and I [along with others] was disappointed that Parks Canada and its careful, big-budget approach to reconstruction had not utilised them. Ultimately, I was hired by Lower Fort Garry in 1994 to research the material, social, and economic nature of the presence of Native people around the fort in the mid-nineteenth century,

and delivered a report that will enable staff to more accurately reconstruct that presence [Peers 1995]. What administration does with that report will be interesting to watch.

LFG is an awkward site to interpret. It is associated with the fur trade, yet was not a stereotypical fur trade post; it is the closest thing to a pioneer village that Winnipeg has, yet it was tied more to the fur trade than to agricultural settlement. Interpreting the Native presence there is no easier. At present the encampment, located on the riverbank outside the main gate to the fort, includes two large and one small canvas tipis; a cooking area; a pole shelter; and four interpreters, two of whom are Native [all are dressed to represent Native people]. Interpretive activities include cooking and beading. The plains-style tipis should be replaced with historically-correct bark and rush-mat lodges, and we need to find a way to suggest the whitewashed log cabins, used by the Northern Cree and Ojibwa Christian converts in the area, who had small farms, made their own homespun cloth, and grew flowers as well as vegetables. The encampment's messages do not mesh with the site's designated themes, which include LFG's role as a transshipment depot, industrial-agricultural supply centre for the fur trade, focal point for the Lower Red River Settlement, and model of fur trade architecture [Coutts 1993:114-5]. This is one of the most important reconstructions in Heritage Canada's roster: it received huge amounts of funding for reconstruction during its early decades, has one of the largest visitorships, at about 70,000 annually, and employs about 40 interpreters each season [Robert Andrews, personal communication 1995]. LFG is a very complex site which has already redefined itself

several times to reflect shifting academic historiography; it will be interesting to see how its messages continue to keep pace with the times.

Old Fort William

With 42 buildings, "2780 feet of 10 foot high wooden palisade" [OFW Visitor's Map], and dozens of summer interpretive staff, Old Fort William is the largest reconstruction I worked at. Its visitorship is approximately 90,000 annually. It's a daunting site even for the casual visitor: a walk through the forest or short ride on a bus brings one to the Native encampment; another stroll brings one inside the gates; there are all the buildings inside, and a farm [including draft horses and gardens] at the far side of the fort. The buildings include everything from the Great Hall and fur store to the Indian trading shop and a hospital. In the midst of all this, dramas are staged every few hours throughout the day all around the site. This site, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communication, was reconstructed in the early 1970s about 15 km from its original site on Lake Superior. The original site, first Fort Kaministiquia [by 1803] and later Fort William [1807], was the North West Company's main shipment point for furs coming from the west and trade goods coming east from Montreal. The fort was seized by Lord Selkirk after the Red River troubles of 1816, and the site was transferred to the HBC when the two companies merged in 1821. Fort William finally closed in 1883.

Fort William was a tourist site as early as the 1830s. As Patricia Jasen has noted, its position at the Lakehead, its romantically decaying buildings, and its

association with the declining western fur trade and the cult of romance surrounding the trade made it a "must" for early tourists [Jasen 1990]. The fort was also on the main water route [and, later, the main rail route] from east to west. As early as 1876, years before the fort closed as an operating fur trade post, the Thunder Bay Sentinel stated that "Fort William's early days would be sure to capture the imagination of the public if, through the artifacts that survived at the old fort, its history was properly placed before them" [Jasen 1990:8].

In 1902, the last of Fort William's original buildings was demolished. The Thunder Bay Historical Society commemorated the site with a plaque: like many other historical societies, they desired to record their area's contribution to the making of Canada, to reinforce civic [read British-Canadian] virtues, and to encourage tourism and economic development [Jasen 1990:12]. In the 1930s, there were plans to build a replica of the fort, but disagreement over the location and funding, and the interruption of the war, prevented real progress.

Increasing interest in tourism as a major form of revenue for the Thunder Bay area, led to a commitment to the Old Fort William project by the Ontario government in the 1960s. By the end of the 1960s, archaeological excavations of the original fort had been completed and a site was chosen for the reconstruction [Jasen 1990:17-18]. The 1971 feasibility study was entitled "Hinge of a Nation," another reference to the view of the fur trade as an episode in national history. Academic and public history consultants hired in the early 1970s researched the social history, material culture, daily life, and visual appearance of the fort, and a decision was made to portray the

fort as it would have looked in 1815. Construction commenced in 1971, and Old Fort William opened in 1973; the reconstruction was finished in 1975 [OFW Management Plan].

Like LFG, OFW emphasizes class relations in the fur trade, with staff portraying top-hatted gentlemen in frock coats, drunken voyageurs in tattered clothes, farm hands, and the Métis women who were the workforce within the walls. The daily dramas enacted by staff, and standard lines given to visitors by staff, are about conflict between these groups: a Métis woman working in the surgery tells visitors that the European doctor despises the herbal medicines she learned from her Native mother, and that all she is allowed to do is clean; a voyageur celebrating the end of his contract gets a bit too rowdy and is hauled off to gaol. Another drama involves "Native" [actually White women in Métis/Native clothing] women who pick up furs at the Native encampment, and take them to the trading shop where visitors are coached to trade for necessary goods. The dramas bring the site alive for visitors and help to unify the disparate elements of a major trading post such as Fort William.

The Native encampment was begun about five years after the reconstruction of the main fort, and is intended to interpret the way of life of the Ojibwa people who historically traded and laboured at the fort. When Freda McDonald [an Ojibwa elder originally from Fort Alexander, upriver from Thunder Bay] began work there in 1977, the site had a single lodge that she describes as being dwarf-sized. At present, it consists of three wigwassikamikag [conical structures covered with birch bark] and three bark-covered work shelters. Eight to ten Ojibwa men and women from all over

northern Ontario, including two supervisors [one of whom, Cecelia Littlewolf-Walker, is Plains Cree], engage in crafts, sewing, carving, and cooking as they talk to visitors.

This has always been a very "political" site. Edward Bruner [1993b:14] might say it is a place where competing groups have argued for their own versions of the past. These differing visions began with the notion of the "romantic fur trade" [Jasen 1990:2-9] in the 19th century, and shifted to a vision of the site as a Wild West frontier outpost [with a Mountie and the Union Jack thrown in to uphold British law and order] by the 1950s [see Fig. 2, 1952 Parade, Thunder Bay]. Academic consultants in the early 1970s suggested quite a different view of Fort William in their research reports on the people of the fort. While drawing on popular stereotypes [the French-Canadian voyageur as strong, courageous, and skilled (Halloran 1972), the dandified Scottish officer, and the fur-trapping Ojibwa], these were essentially well-documented profiles of the people and life of Fort William.

This material has been augmented as further research has been done by fur trade historians [e.g. Sylvia Van Kirk's work on Native women in the trade and Jennifer Brown's work on differing HBC/NWC relationships with Native families], but it remains the basis of interpretation at the fort today. Research material has developed into a series of detailed interpretive themes or messages for every single building on site that encompass the sweep of fur trade history. Some of these, taken from the "Thematic Guide to Old Fort William Structures and Areas" training manual, are listed below:

Theme: Operations and Management

Location: Counting House

Interpretive Messages:

- Major:
- 1) North West Company profits
 - 2) Role of clerk in North West Company
 - 3) Types of records kept at Counting House
 - 4) Quill Pen making.
- Minor:
- 1) How profits affected by logistics of fur trade, War of 1812, competition with Hudson's Bay Company, Lord Selkirk, extravagance, etc.
 - 2) Terms of employment of engages through discussion of contracts, men's accounts, etc.
 - 3) Trade routes.

Theme: Commerce and Warehousing

Location: Indian Shop

Interpretive Messages:

- Major:
- 1) North West Company trading methods--Indian debts; Indian presents; the plus and the barter system in general.
 - 2) Impact of European manufactured goods on Indian culture in general.
 - 3) Contribution of Indian culture and Indian labour to the fur trade.

Theme: Native Life

Location: Indian Camp

Interpretive Messages:

- Major:
- 1) Culture, customs, skills, beliefs of the Ojibwa
 - 2) Influence of fur trade on native culture as reflected in clothing, axes, kettles, guns, and so on.
 - 3) Role of the native in the fur trade.

Within the site documents for the fort, and as communicated by day-to-day interpretation, Ojibwa people at OFW appear as part of a European-oriented fur trade: they contribute to it in the form of furs, country provisions, and women. That their contributions were crucial is made quite clear, but the fur trade itself is interpreted from a non-Native point of view. In the Native camp, interpretation focuses on Ojibwa

culture, although the interpreters also convey a sense of an Ojibwa perspective on the fur trade and its impact on their lives and history.

However, local Ojibwa people often feel that the Fort does not depict "their" history, and they tend not to visit the site themselves. The one time they feel differently is during the annual "Ojibway Keeshigan" festival, which brings in tradition-bearers from local bands for demonstrations of crafts, a powwow, and other activities. Native staff told me about this event with great enthusiasm and a sense of ownership that did not extend to the rest of the fort on a day-to-day basis. Although some of the non-Native staff sniff at the lack of historical authenticity during Ojibway Keeshigan [pow-wows are modern inventions; fry bread was never made in 1815], the Native staff says that they feel that this event brings their history to life, and attracts hundreds of Native visitors that would never otherwise enter the fort. It's "their" event, "their" time in a way that they clearly feel is not the case the rest of the season.

As the OFW Management Plan [ca.1976:section 2.44] states, the Native encampment at the fort was designed "to meet the demands of certain groups of people in the community...provides a unique opportunity for the local native community to establish its own interpretive unit at the Fort." One early planning document suggested that an "Institute of Native Canada" be built on the grounds to train Native staff for the site. That plan has recently been revived by Native advisors to the site, but for a Native purpose: they want a healing and cultural centre, designed by Native architect Douglas Cardinal. The question of "whose history" this site portrays is still very much part of the day-to-day operational politics at OFW.

The North West Company Fur Post, Pine City

Pine City is the smallest of the sites I visited. It is a reconstructed wintering post, used by Northwest Company trader John Sayer, his Ojibwa wife, and his staff during the winter of 1804-05. A log rowhouse of five rooms, with a small palisaded area around it, it is a far cry from the size of OFW. It has six seasonal staff and one manager. The site has no running water, and the staff take turns doing maintenance [doing the lunch dishes, cleaning the outhouse] in addition to their interpretive duties. The NWC post is a Minnesota Historical Society site, reconstructed in the 1970s and, because of its small size and visitor numbers [about 20,000 annually], perennially threatened with closure every time the state legislature cuts the MHS appropriation. A new visitor centre has been planned for the site, which would enable the site to be open year-round; it is uncertain at this time whether the MHS budget will allow it to be constructed.

This site does more with fewer resources than many other such places. MHS support researchers on whom NWC staff have drawn include Carolyn Gilman and Bruce White, who are cutting-edge ethnohistorians. Text panels and interpreters' spiels here build on their work, emphasizing Ojibwa perspectives on the trade and the lives of ordinary labourers as well as the workings of a wintering post. Staff use first-person interpretation [acting the role of a specific historical character, complete with accents], but also switch into third-person [informal lecturing and discussion] as needed. Every visitor is escorted through the site and given a customized tour. There are opportunities for visitors to participate in historic activities, such as scraping hides, making

decorative birch-bark bitings, or playing games.

Several years ago one of the staff members hired had theatrical training, and very carefully "dressed" each of the rooms, so that they really do look as if their occupants have just stepped out: something that other sites try to do but seldom achieve. Partly because the rooms are small, there is a denseness of furnishing and decoration here that seems very believable, helping visitors to enter into a state of "suspended disbelief." Beds are not always made; clothes are hung on pegs; rough shelves crammed with food and sewing items, candles, and personal objects contribute to the sense of life in a hastily-built, cramped post intended to be used for just one season. Rooms belonging to fur trade employees of different rank reflect these differences in their furnishings; the trading room overflows with furs and goods. Aesthetically, the site is very convincing.

Staff at Pine City includes a core of seasoned and highly talented interpreters. Audrey Wyman, who plays "Nokie," an Ojibwa grandmother, and her adult daughter Mary Vanderpoel who depicts a Métis/Ojibwa woman "Pinaykwe," are of Ojibwa descent, and have spent years learning about their heritage. The lone administrator of this site has been working hard to establish relations with local bands [this is an important part of plans for the larger visitor centre for the site] and in 1994 had a young man from the Grand Portage band working as an interpreter. Another Ojibwa woman has worked at the site as an interpreter in previous years, and has acted as a research consultant to refine and plan the site's portrayal of Ojibwa people and history. Ojibwa material culture is woven throughout the site, from the hide being scraped in

the yard to bark bitings stuck inside windows to baskets holding European objects: these things help tell the story of European reliance on Native people in the fur trade. The site also has a very carefully furnished wigwam and items in the trader's room representing his Ojibwa wife.

This site has little publicity and few "comfort" facilities for visitors [no snack bar, no gift shop, and only pit toilets]. It delivers a very high quality and very coherent experience for visitors, however, who receive much more contextual and integrating information about the things they see than self-guided visitors do at larger sites--and delivered in an appropriate manner to different kinds of visitors. With a new visitor centre, more participation by local Ojibwe bands, and an influx of financial and publicity support from the Minnesota Historical Society in the next few years, this site could become a model for others across the continent.

Colonial Michilimackinac

Fort St. Phillippe de Michilimackinac was built in 1715 on the south side of the Straits of Mackinac between lakes Huron and Michigan. Its central position in the Great Lakes and at the nexus of canoe routes from Montreal and to the far west made it a major depot for Montreal-based trading companies. Michilimackinac bought large quantities of corn grown in the nearby Odawa [Ottawa] villages to feed voyageurs, further enhancing its importance for the fur trade. Its position also made it a natural meeting place for the Native peoples of the Great Lakes. European and Métis traders based at Michilimackinac were thus well positioned between two worlds and

maintained far-flung webs of kin ties with Native people throughout the region which enabled them to control the trade. Hundreds of Native people came to the fort each summer from across the Great Lakes to visit kin, trade, and hold political councils to plan trade and warfare strategies. For decades, this community was the heart of the Great Lakes fur trade [Armour and Widder 1978, 1990:31-35; Peterson 1985].

After the French defeat at the Plains of Abraham, Michilimackinac was surrendered to the English in 1760. The transition was not smooth. The incoming English had few kin ties to Native people, were arrogant in their dealings with the chiefs, and insulted them when they reduced the ceremonial gifts traditionally given as good-will gestures during trade. In Native thought, ceasing to give these presents expressed distrust and the desire to end an alliance [White 1982, 1987; Armour and Widder 1990:35]. When Pontiac's rebellion broke out in the spring of 1763, news of Native attacks on English forts to the south gave the local Ojibwa resolve to act on their grievances. On 2 June 1763, chief Matchekewis and his men captured the fort, killed some British occupants and took others captive. The French and Métis inhabitants of the fort were not harmed. The fort was run by the remaining French and Métis until it was regarrisoned by the British in the fall of 1764 [Armour and Widder 1990:36].

Michilimackinac continued to be a crucial nexus in the fur trade right through the American Revolution. It was important politically as well, for continuous negotiations with the Odawa, Ojibwa, and other Native groups were vital to maintain their loyalty throughout the conflict. Large war parties were recruited through and left

from the fort throughout the Revolution to fight for Britain [Armour and Widder 1990:40-42]. In the late 1770s, the fort was moved to the more defensible site of Mackinac Island, on the north side of the straits.

The site of the old fort was turned over to the state in 1904 to become a state park, and archaeological excavations have proceeded since the 1930s, with an ongoing excavation since 1959. The reconstructed palisades and buildings are located in their original places and rebuilt according to archaeological evidence. The site has an active archival research program, and has published many works on the site's history and material culture. The current reconstruction was done in the 1960s and 1970s, and interprets the fort as it was in the 1770s [Armour and Widder 1990:42-43].

Approximately half of the original structures have been reconstructed.

Now managed by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, Colonial Michilimackinac attracts about 120,000 visitors a year [Armour, personal communication]. The site emphasizes the British military presence at the fort, along with elements of the remaining French community in the 1770s [the church is staffed by an interpreter portraying a French-speaking Jesuit, and Métis weddings are re-enacted each day] and the daily lives of Métis and Europeans within the fort. The reconstructed buildings include rowhouses, traders' storerooms, officers' quarters, the priest's house, and the church. The soldiers' barracks houses exhibits on the site's history and the 1763 attack of the fort, and another building houses archaeological displays. The site employs about twenty interpreters each summer, who portray soldiers, officers, voyageurs, Métis and European wives, the priest, and traders.

In the late 1980s, site administrators decided to add a Native American encampment to the reconstruction. Administrators had known it was important to include the roles of Native people in their interpretations of Michilimackinac's history, but were nervous that by doing so they would somehow offend local bands. In 1989, Dr. George Cornell, a Native American scholar, was hired as a consultant and reviewed the site. His report recommended that the site proceed with the encampment, and emphasize the presence of historic Native Americans at the site and their roles in the trade and in politics. A waginogan (a substantial winter dwelling), a summer nasaogan, and several work shelters were built in 1991-92, and the encampment was officially launched in 1992. Phil Porter, Curator of Interpretation for the site and a professional historian, compiled a basic training manual for the encampment which brought together historical sources and information about the Ojibwa and Odawa of the region and their roles at the site. This information is supplemented by traditional knowledge and perspectives of the two Native American interpreters [both Odawa] at the encampment.

Because of the small size of the Native American staff, only one lodge is properly furnished, and this has to be closed periodically [if, for instance, one interpreter is on break and the other must leave the camp to do a walking tour]. Staff work in 1770s costume [shaved heads, multiple earrings, trade silver nose rings and all], and have been enthusiastic about researching eighteenth-century life and material culture. Interpretive activities include finger-weaving of sashes, making hominy corn, making bark containers, and making plant-fibre cord. Staff have introduced trade items

into the lodge [a tin lantern, a carrot of tobacco, a musket, blankets] and make a point of talking to visitors about the incorporation of European material culture into Native life. Despite their enthusiasm and their acknowledgement that the encampment is still young, the Native American staff express frustration that so few structures have been built when summer encampments at the fort were so large, and are concerned that the site may not wish to fund continued development of the encampment. The small size of the Native staff also limits the proper management and interpretation of the area and is frustrating.

Colonial Michilimackinac received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1989 to plan a new exhibition exploring relations among Native Americans, French, and British during the site's history. Native American consultants [George Cornell and Wesley Andrews], along with ethnohistorian Jacqueline Peterson, emphasized the need to focus on the Native perspective on the site and opened up a broader conception of an interpretive storyline for the entire site. The initial title for the proposed exhibition, "Enemies to Allies," was rejected by the Native consultants [Andrews 1995] and eventually the planning team proposed a much more ambitious exhibition that would examine the coming together of cultures as a window on the whole site. This new proposal will require a new building, however, and it remains to be seen whether this can be funded [Armour 1995].

The development of the Native encampment may also be affected by relationships with local bands which are still emerging. One local band has only recently been recognized [given official status] by the federal government, and has

ambitious plans for economic and cultural development in the region. While the tribal council has stated that researching and presenting their history is an important priority, they are also concerned that Native Americans are currently hired only as summer staff and for little more than minimum wage at the fort [Ettawageshik, personal communication].

Finally, Native American consultants and staff at the site expressed concern that relations between the site and local bands were being hampered by the continuation of an annual re-enactment [by townspeople, not the Fort] of the 1763 attack on the fort [Andrews 1995]. This event, which is held after a parade and in front of large local crowds, involves non-Native people dressed as Ojibwa "warriors," tomahawking and scalping others dressed as British soldiers; the whole thing is rather cartoon-like ["scalping" involves lifting wigs, and there is much joking and pantomiming]. The site administration is not involved with the event, apart from permitting it to occur at the fort. However, a detailed and gory diorama of the same event is part of the site's permanent displays, and its text focuses on the "savagery" of the attack, without giving sufficient explanation of Native motives for it. Both the diorama and the pageant are very offensive to Native Americans, and further development of the site's encampment and desire to incorporate a Native American perspective depend very much on whether site administrators are willing to deal with these issues.

Sainte-Marie among the Hurons

Sainte-Marie was a Jesuit mission within Huron territory on the edge of

Georgian Bay [present-day Midland, ON], which served as a respite for priests posted to remoter communities and where Huron converts came for further instruction in Christianity. Construction began in 1639. At its height, the palisaded community housed some 60 Europeans [priests, donnés, lay brothers, and engagés]; in 1648-9 about 3,000 Huron visited the site [there were no permanent Native residents] [Tummon and Saddy 1993:5].

Sainte-Marie was also a pivotal point in the expansion of French civilization, trade, and religion into the continent's interior. The Huron found themselves embroiled in warfare with their traditional enemies the Iroquois, who were supported by the English and Dutch, enemies of the French. The Iroquois launched a war of destruction against the Huron in a bid to capture furs and fur-rich territory, and the Huron, decimated by epidemic disease and politically split between Christian and Traditional factions, were unable to resist. As the 1640s wore on, priests were killed as well as Hurons: the remains of Jean de Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalement were buried in the church at Sainte-Marie in the spring of 1649. Shortly afterward, the remaining Jesuits made the painful decision to burn Sainte-Marie to prevent its capture by enemy Iroquois. The Jesuits and some of their converts spent the rest of the year, including a winter of terrible starvation, on a nearby island in Georgian Bay. In the spring of 1650, those left alive returned to Quebec [Trigger 1987(1976)].

Sainte-Marie is a sad place: the end of Jesuit dreams of conversion, of French dreams of colonial expansion, of the Huron confederacy; a symbol of Native conversion, of intertribal warfare fuelled by imperial rivalry, of epidemic disease and

starvation touched off by European contact. The site was excavated between 1940-60, with further work done since, and was reconstructed in the 1960s as a Centennial project with funding from the Society of Jesus, the University of Western Ontario, and the Ontario government [Hawkes 1974:23]. The site itself is on a 100-year lease from the Jesuits, and is run by the Ontario government.

The reconstructed palisade [to which another layer was added for security when the Pope visited in the 1980s] encloses two longhouses, the Jesuits' quarters, two chapels, and workbuildings. Interpreters portray Jesuits, *donnés*, traders, and Huron--except that the latter are represented by local Ojibwa, who moved into the area after the Huron left. Severe budget cuts in the 1990s have reduced the numbers of interpreters, leading to reductions in building furnishings [which tend to be stolen by visitors when there is inadequate supervision]. Remaining interpretive activities include food preparation and cooking, animal care, log squaring, and craft work: the site transforms European colonialism into a French-influenced, very early "pioneer" setting. Its interpreters also attempt the difficult task of communicating the goals and world views of both the Jesuits and the Hurons. The Native interpretation program was begun in 1982 with a grant from the Georgian Bay Tribal Council to hire ten costumed Native staff. Funding was later assumed by the site, but this early grant worked well to establish relations between Sainte-Marie and local bands [Lunman 1995:19; Lefaive, Brunel: personal communication]. Levels of Native staff have been maintained recently despite budget cuts: staff have been cut in administrative and other interpretive positions.

The site has faced staffing challenges in addition to the lack of Hurons. There were no European women present at Sainte-Marie in the seventeenth century, and women were initially hired at the reconstruction to work as tour guides wearing "park ranger"-style uniforms. When they demanded to wear costumes, equity laws enforced it, and the site has since put women in men's costumes. Administrators are dreading the day that a woman asks to portray a Jesuit, especially as Ste. Marie is a Catholic pilgrimage site and has generally good relations with the Martyrs' Shrine which looms down from a nearby hillside. As well, to cope with requests by Native staff that they not be "ghettoized" by being assigned only to the longhouse area, all staff are now rotated through all buildings. Visitors are as likely to find an Ojibwa women in a European building as a white woman dressed as a *donné* in the longhouse. This leads to a good deal of confusion amongst visitors, who ask if the Jesuits "kept women" or why there are no Native people in the longhouse.

Sainte-Marie is concerned about its financial survival and has considered many strategies to maintain funding and visitation rates. An historical dinner theatre now takes place at the site, and a Friends of Sainte-Marie group has begun fundraising. The site updated its introductory video in 1986 [the original portrayed Iroquois as marauding savages and the Huron as primitive, and resulted in complaints by Native groups to the Human Rights Commission]. The Jesuits themselves have received the new video well, but many Catholic visitors seem to be offended by its pro-Native perspective [Lunman 1995:20-22]. Given the political furor of the 1990s over European missionization of Native peoples, this site is going to continue to be very

difficult to manage; given the continuing budget cuts, it will have to cope very creatively indeed.

Waswagoning

I spent only half a day at Waswagoning, and I refer to it only a few places in this dissertation, but it is an important site because it is such a contrast to the others. Founded by Nick and Charlotte Hockings [members of the Lac du Flambeau Ojibwa band], and privately funded, the site opened in the summer of 1994. The Hockings are both teachers: she works for a local school, and Nick does cultural presentations around Wisconsin. They were inspired to create Waswagoning after visiting OFW, where they were surprised at how small the Native encampment seemed compared to what they knew about the large size of the historic Native population [in fact, the OFW encampment is the largest and most developed of the government-operated sites]. The Hockings obtained a property on the Lac du Flambeau Reservation and, with help from local college students and volunteers, built a series of camps all over their land: the brochure invites the visitor to "walk through 20 acres of Ojibwe culture." Guides usually wear street clothes, although Nick wears a beaded vest and his wife was in a fringed leather dress the day I was there.

Waswagoning is set in the late pre-contact era, but without reference to standard archaeological displays of rows of projectile points or excavations in progress. Instead, it depicts artifacts in camps for each season as well as a moon lodge [place for puberty fasts] and a teaching [ceremonial] lodge. The range of activities and artifacts displayed

here is far more diverse than at other sites, encompassing seasonal lodge construction; making maple sugar using precontact implements; fish traps; several snares; canoe-making; fish and meat processing [drying and smoking]; wild rice processing; ceremonial cycles and artifacts; and a visit to the teaching lodge, during which the guide burns sacred plants, prays, and then lectures visitors on Ojibwa beliefs. The tour takes about an hour and a half minimum; mine was nearly three hours. Visitors are taken on a walk through the entire property, from camp to camp, and given detailed explanations of seasonal life at each camp.

Waswagoning does not refer to specific dates in its interpretation of Ojibwa life, and the guides weave archaeological and historical data together with the present. When we got to the puberty fasting area, Nick described his own daughter's initial embarrassment at being singled out at her first period, and then her feelings of specialness and emotional strength when she finished the seclusion and teachings. At the canoe-making area, which overlooks a lake, Nick described the making and maintenance of a bark canoe in detail, and then described how local men had historically fished by spear and torchlight from such canoes--and how they still were, and were being threatened by non-Natives for doing so. Past and present seemed to flow into each other as heritage should: this was "living history" in a way that none of the other, period-specific sites dealt with. The Hockings have done their own research, and there are a few academically dubious artifacts and explanations [which they were aware of, and hoped to replace as their funds allowed in the future], but the few problems of accuracy pale before the force of pride in heritage that the guides express.

This is the only site I know of that focuses solely on Native life, and visitor responses seem somewhat different here than at sites where encampments have been tacked on to European forts. From my own reactions and those of others on my tour, the difference is that instead of thinking "oh, there is a wigwam; look at the Indians," which is a standard reaction at other sites, there was a sense of wonder and appreciation that was begun by walking through the liminal space of the forest and which increased as we moved from camp to camp to camp. Visitors began long conversations with the guide and each other about Native culture that I never heard go on for so long at other sites, and there was less of the giggling and fewer dumb questions [less photography, too]. People asked if they could touch objects, and when we came to lodges with ceremonial objects in them, they prevented their children from touching them [without being asked] and expressed great respect. No-one objected to going into the teaching lodge or sitting through Nick's prayers and lectures. When we came to a small trailer and cook-house at the tour's end [where one can buy wild rice soup, bannock, and lemonade], people still moved quietly as if waking up.

I think that some of this behaviour has to do with the obvious Native control of the whole site, from the parking lot [lined with flags with Native symbols] to the wild-rice refreshment booth. [If visitors feel they are "surrounded," they do not--at least in my brief observation--respond by translating this Hollywood image into an expectation that their Ojibwe guides will be hostile or threatening.] The forest also plays a role as liminal space, and it's a beautiful site. The prolonged and total focus on Native culture, and the absence of the question of the effects of European contact, also help

the visitor to think about Ojibwa life. It's a fascinating site, and I hope that it continues to operate.

Waswagoning is so different in so many ways from the other, government-operated sites, that I want to emphasize that I generally do not refer to it in my analysis [as, for instance, in the pages following, of messages communicated by physical reconstructions]. I will bring it into discussions as an example of an alternative approach to living history, but unless I mention it by name I am not referring to it.

Site Messages: What Does a Wigwam Mean?

As Edward Bruner reminds us, these sites "must construct and hence invent what they display" [Bruner 1993a:6]. They are creations which evoke the past, but which do not reproduce it exactly. Despite the painstaking historical research that goes into ensuring that building locations, construction styles, and furnishings are accurate, ideological biases about the nature of the past as well as practical considerations in the present make these places very different in their second incarnations than they were historically. I find that in the portrayal of Native life and Native-White relations, these sites show patterned, consistent differences between the roles that Native people are known to have fulfilled in the past, and those portrayed at the sites, as well as the nature of Native-White relations at the sites in the past and those shown in the present. Furthermore, despite the differences in the histories they represent, their size, their

funding levels and affiliation with different heritage organizations, all of these sites communicate the same messages about Native people in the fur trade and they tend to do so from the same dominant class perspective in their presentations about Native people.

The sites have arrived at this patterned portrayal of history because they were intended to show episodes in the history of the dominant members of North American society. Despite recent revisions, they still emphasize the actions and importance of Whites in the fur trade, and minimize the roles and perspectives of Native people. When sites "select from a vast array of potential objects and events to valorize some as worthy of exhibition" [Bruner 1993a:6], they initially selected buildings, artifacts and activities that depicted the everyday life and material culture of Europeans at the sites. Today, the palisades and European buildings still dominate the site; the Native areas are much smaller and less fully developed; and the two areas are separated. All of these physical elements of the sites communicate negative messages and reinforce popular stereotypes about the cultural importance of Native people vis-a-vis the Europeans at the site.

Native interpreters at these sites tend to be shown outside the palisades or walls of the inner, European compound. [At Pine City, Native and Métis interpreters do work inside the palisades, rather than remaining in the wigwam.] The Native encampments are further distanced from the rest of the site by being located on the margins of the site: at LFG, the encampment is on the riverbank; at OFW, in dense woods along the path leading to the fort; at Pine City, on the edge of the woods near

one of the main paths to the fort. The exception is SMAH, where the Native areas are located inside the palisade but are farthest away from the orientation centre where the visitor enters the site.

The Native encampments are located in these areas for good reasons: either the camp was historically known to be in that location, or because site staff wished to be certain that the Native camp would be the first thing that visitors encountered on site, in order to maximize the area's impact on visitors. [The location of the camps has generally been determined by site administrators, usually with input from Native interpreters.] Without some basic information on why the camps are placed in such locations, though, this bit of authenticity is readily misinterpreted by visitors. Site administrators and interpreters have this kind of information and do not always see what the visitor sees when they look at this aspect of a site's layout. The visitor, on the other hand, generally approaches the site with the dynamics and ideology of the mythologized Frontier in mind, so that the physical separation between peoples, and the physical marginalization of the encampment placements, reinforces several problematic aspects of Native-White historic relations.

Firstly, having the encampments outside the walls gives the impression that they are secondary in importance to the "real" part of the site, which is inside the elaborate walls: a kind of sideshow to the more important, European-oriented part of the site. Secondly, the separation reinforces ideas about the differences between Native and European societies: somehow the Native encampments suggest "traditional," pre-modern life, the Other who exists outside time and history, while the world inside the

walls suggests history, civilization, and progress. In their analysis of a Maasai performance at a Kenyan ranch, Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett [1994:453-454] note that, like much of cultural tourism, it is built on a series of such binary or oppositional categories: culture/nature, European/Native, cultivated/wild. These deeply ingrained, very Western notions are especially obvious at OFW, where the Native encampment and its bark lodges and shelters is literally in the forest, while the fort itself, with its squared-log and frame buildings and farm area, is in a clearing. Physically, these sites suggest to the uninformed visitor the old dichotomy between the related concepts of European-civilization-history and Native-savagery-wilderness that is the root of so much North American historiography. While visitors may not consciously think of such things when they look at the encampments, these ideas fit in with and strengthen the expectations of finding frontier dynamics at the site--and as I shall discuss in subsequent chapters, visitors' comments and behaviour expresses these expectations very strongly.

Such spatial and racial separations are sometimes paralleled and reinforced by the site's overall physical set-up. Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett have noted the manner in which the colonial control of Native peoples in the past is reproduced in the Mayers Ranch performance. In moving through this site, tourists assemble on the English-garden lawn, then parade down the hill to the Native area, watch the performance, and then return

to the Mayers' verdant lawn, to a sea of white faces, to a cultivated and familiar place, to tea and cookies, with a sense of relief. The blacks are servants again, in their proper place, and the Mayers, their British hosts, are in firm control [1994:455].

Similarly, at most North American reconstructions, the visitor passes through an initial area which establishes the non-Native, dominant-society perspective [an orientation area, a ticket booth, static displays or video], moves through the site [including the Native area] and returns to another part of the first area that is familiarly non-Native [the gift shop and cafeteria]. Native people feature in this gateway space either as servants [in the ticket booth, cafeteria, or gift shop] or captured as iconic images on postcards [Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994:453] or by stereotyped objects such as dream-catchers and moccasins. Such arrangements communicate subtly, but their messages about race and power are very important. Not all the sites I worked at had this kind of gateway, but most did. At LFG, OFW, CM, and SMAH, gateway areas were staffed largely by non-Native people. SMAH has recently revised its orientation film to communicate a Native perspective on the site, but at LFG Native people are barely mentioned in the opening slide show and in 1994 the encampment was not marked on the site map; CM's opening video, as well, is done from a non-Native perspective.

The messages communicated by such elements of a site are further reinforced by a patterned minimization of the Native encampments. Despite the fact that all of these sites were, in their respective historic incarnations, small islands of a European presence surrounded and visited by large Native populations, the Native areas at these sites are all very small compared with the reconstructed European areas. SMAH certainly has the largest area, with its two longhouses taking up about a third of the total area inside the palisades. Elsewhere, OFW has four lodges and two lean-tos; LFG

has two tipis and a pole shelter; CM one waginogan [a dome-shaped winter lodge], a summer shelter, and several incomplete pole frames; Pine City a single furnished wigwam. Historically, all of these sites were visited seasonally by local Native populations ranging from several dozen to hundreds of people. At CM, hundreds of Native people from around the Great Lakes camped every summer, creating a temporary village of lodges on the beach near the fort. The European areas of these sites, on the other hand, are reconstructed as completely as possible based on archaeological and archival evidence: Pine City, SMAH and CM were rebuilt on the original foundations.

Such disparities are largely caused by the lag time between the "era of the big project" [Taylor 1990:169-190]--and big budgets--during which the palisaded areas of these sites were reconstructed, and the era of cutbacks during which the Native areas were reconstructed: they are not simply the result of some racist design perpetrated by government or site administrators. Indeed, most site administrators are saying that the Native areas are currently the most important ones on their site, and some are backing this up by fighting for money to hire researchers or people to gather raw materials for lodge construction and crafts; by maintaining Native staff when cutbacks force overall staff reduction; or by approving budget requests for development of the encampments when budgets for other parts of the site have to be cut [Robert Andrews, LFG; Armin Webber, OFW; Del Taylor, Pierre Lefaive, SMAH, personal communication 1994].

The problem is that nowhere are such processes communicated to the visitor on site. Like museum exhibits, historic reconstructions are silent about the curatorial

decisions that affect their production, and they silence many of the questions and perspectives involved in such creations. The implication is that the reconstruction is a transparent representation of "the way it really was"--except, of course, that it isn't. By allowing the visitor to believe that the reconstruction is an exact replica of what the site really looked like at a given moment in history, sites give visitors free rein to interpret what they actually see--which they do in light of popular discourses about the past and especially about the frontier, rather than discourses about the creation of historic sites or the politics and constraints of representing the past.

While interpreters and some orientation displays, videos, and brochures do their best to communicate accurate information about the actual size of Native and European populations, and the nature of the relationships between them, it is hard to contradict the compelling physical messages suggested by the reconstructions. Edward Bruner has also commented on this effect of the New Salem site, noting that interpreters' spiels are often "less effective than the more physical and visual way that New Salem is experienced" [1993b:22, 17]. The nature of reconstructions invites tourists to play with stories: just as one begins to tell what is going on in a dollhouse, or a diorama, these sites come across as fascinatingly-detailed full size playhouses, demanding that we engage with them, place ourselves in them--at least in the role of the narrator. The accurate construction details and furnishings thus become stage sets for the stories that visitors associate with the past. At pioneer villages these stories tend to be nostalgic, but at sites with Native encampments located outside the palisade, the story that visitors tend to play with is the one about the frontier.

In this story, the palisade or wall, bastions, and cannon juxtaposed with the Native encampment outside the wall becomes the racially antagonistic American Wild West in an instant. ["Out of every four persons I take through in a tour group, there's at least one person who asks, 'What is the wall for? To keep out Indians?": interpreter Mary Vanderpoel, PC, cited in Goodsky 1993:122.] The small numbers of the Native interpreters compared to those portraying other historic characters suggests that Native people were unimportant and powerless in the real history of the nation. Such narratives already hold a secure place in popular culture and in the minds of most visitors; again, I say this because visitors' comments when they are in the encampment which suggest that these narratives are, indeed, uppermost in their minds [see Visitors chapter].

These narratives are further reinforced and legitimized by the perceived links between historic sites, academic research, and the state, as well as by the attention to detail in the reconstruction and the obviously costly ["valuable"] nature of such reconstructions [Lutz and Collins 1993:7]. In a way, the rich detail of these sites functions to keep the stories they tell [and visitors' involvement with them] at the surface level and to prevent visitors from asking deeper questions about the role of the site and its inhabitants in history [and see Lutz and Collins 1993:276, and Canizzo 1987:1, quoting a Fort York administrator: "It's very difficult...to communicate themes and ideas in a living history museum"]. When crowds gather to watch musket drills or cannons being fired, they do not ask why the military was at the site, who it was serving, who it was there to control, or what its relationship was to local Native

populations. When room settings from colonial or pioneer eras are recreated in meticulous detail, one does not ask what the effects of this European presence was on local Native people, or indeed whether Europeans were welcomed, were hated, or were kin to local Native people. In my observation, visitors do not tend to ask these kinds of questions.

Given this focus on the details of material culture, given the accepting perspective on the European presence, given the minimisation and separation of the Native areas, these sites use colonial situations as a hook for tourism without exploring the dynamics of these situations [and see Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994:435, 456]. This is not intentional. The accurate reconstruction of a palisade, the difficult choices during budget cuts, and the incomplete nature of the Native areas can combine to send messages to visitors which differ radically from those that site administrators intend to give.

These sites are intended to communicate through their physical fabric: as well as the costumed animators, their real draw is the fascination of period rooms and furnishings. Here again, however, the disparity between the objects in the Native areas and those inside the walls can communicate unfortunate messages. In the Native areas, furnishings include items of Native manufacture as well as basic trade items: tanned hides, pole beds, bark baskets and plates, moccasins, cloth, blankets, guns, knives, and kettles. Inside the walls, one sees primarily manufactured items, generally of fancier decoration and finer construction than the trade goods in the encampment: wooden beds with turned posts, pewter plate, banqueting tables, Windsor armchairs. Much of

what visitors see within the walls is familiar to them and imbued with very positive values: these objects trigger thoughts about Colonial history, about antiques and country decorating magazines, about Grandma's thing like that. Much of the furnishing in the Native area, on the other hand, is either unfamiliar [visitors ask more "what is that?" questions in the encampments than elsewhere] or vaguely wild and threatening, and less obviously sophisticated [prompting assertions of European technological superiority from visitors]. It takes a very skilled interpreter to interrupt the narrative about relative cultural worth and advancement on an evolutionary scale that such contrasts evoke in most visitors, and to contradict it with information about the precise adaptation of Native technology and material culture to local climate and needs.

The objects displayed at these sites are crucial, for they tell stories about what life in the past was like. Many of the messages that the sites communicate begin with the objects: as one interpreter noted, visitors' real interaction with the sites begins with questions about an object and its use and then turn, or may be turned, toward life in the past and the site's historic themes [Cieszceki 1994: personal communication]. Within this kind of historical cultural performance, furnishings and costumes--like theatrical props--fulfil the critical function of keeping "all parties [visitors, interpreters] engaged with each other during the duration of communication" [Beeman 1993:386].

And yet, other than ensuring that the objects displayed are appropriate to the site and the period to which the site is interpreted, site administrators give little thought to the communicative function of site furnishings. If an object is documented for the site and if a replica of it is available and affordable, it may be acquired for the site,

without further consideration of how [or whether] it contributes to the communication of the site's themes and messages [Schifferdecker 1994:personal communication]. As A.J.B. Johnston has noted in his review of Native representation at Heritage Canada sites, "if enough appropriate items can be presented--so the thinking goes--visitors will be convinced of the veracity of a given site. History is seen, essentially, as an **objectifying process**" [1994:6-7]. Sites can be distracted from their communicative goals, and visitors from asking about the broader processes of history, by the fascinating details of these reconstructions.

In Native encampments, distortion about the roles of Native people is introduced by the insistent use of furs as props in the encampments. At most of the sites I worked at, furs were scarce around the site by the year the sites now depict, and it was food--meat, wild rice, corn, and fish--and labour which comprised the most crucial items of trade. Even at NWC, a typical wintering post, furs were traded along with food, roots and pitch for repairing canoes, maple sugar, and other items that were vital to the trader's well-being. However, food items are very seldom seen as props in these reconstructions [CM's encampment does include a very small amount of dried food, intended (but insufficient) to suggest the trading of foodstuffs to Europeans: Porter 1992:43]. Where food is seen, it is in small quantities such as a single household might have used: the amount of food traded, and the traders' reliance on these goods, is never communicated. What we see instead is fur, which suggests that traders were only commercially reliant on Native people.

The problem of providing authentic artifacts without sufficient contextual

information for them is exemplified by the reconstruction of the war post in the encampment at CM. This was done after a decision by site administrators and before the Native encampment at CM began operating. The interpreters' manual for the encampment notes that war posts were used by Great Lakes warriors in pre-departure ceremonies, but does not note whether there actually was one at the fort [Porter 1992: 38-39]. The manual states that the war post is meant to symbolize "the participation of the upper Great Lakes Indians in the American Revolution...[and] to explain how Michilimackinac functioned as a recruitment and staging center for Indian warriors in the 1770s" [Porter 1992:38]. With the appropriate background knowledge about Native American participation in the Revolution, such a prop would be fine. Most visitors do not have this knowledge, however, and when interpreters say what the post was used for, visitors make comments indicating that they associate the war post with stereotypes about savages, scalping, and the warpath--and with the 1763 Ojibwa attack on the fort. Given that interpreting the war post raises these assumptions, and makes it difficult for interpreters to convince visitors that Native people were generally allies of the Europeans at the fort, and were integral to their survival and to that of the Great Lakes fur trade, interpreters have taken the line of least resistance and simply ignore the war post, giving as little information about it as possible when visitors ask [which is seldom].

If the main message of the encampment at CM is supposed to be alliance and cross-cultural support, it might be more appropriate to have a hundred sacks of corn ready to be traded than the war post. I am reminded of Alexander Wilson's [1992:212]

caveat that

while authenticity is often a goal for the designers of historical museums, it is a notion irrelevant to a discussion of cultural history. Contemporary culture and ideologies always intervene between people and historical objects.

Some sites have deliberately placed objects in rooms to facilitate the communication of ideas about women, class relations, and relations with Native people. Thus, Native-made splint baskets, or articles of craft-work typically made for sale to tourists, have been added to European and Métis rooms to suggest interaction with local Native people; articles of women's clothing or jewellery, or items such as spinning wheels, are placed to suggest the presence of Native or Métis wives; dried corn is hung from the ceiling or stored in bark mokuks to suggest reliance on local foods and their Native producers.

Very little of this challenges the basically European point of view of the history being told by the sites: the presence of Native people is suggested in these rooms as helpers in the European expansion into and process of taking control of the continent. An exception to this is the waginogan at CM, where in the summer of 1995 the Native interpreters deliberately introduced several items of European manufacture, such as a tin-and-glass candle lantern, that the public did not immediately associate with Native people. The interpreters used these items to upset visitors' preconceptions of Native people as pre-historic and to communicate ideas about Native adaptability in the fur trade. Interpreters do not always get to furnish areas, however; at some sites, curators do that, and interpreters' requests for specific items to use as points of communication [or the removal of same] must be approved by administrators, budgeted for, and

acquired, which can take a year or more from the time the request is made.

The stories told by artifacts are crucial, but it is dangerous to let them remain implicit, for--as with the war post--they can be "read" by visitors as easily within stereotyped, misinformed, and ethnocentric narratives as they can within narratives emphasizing cultural continuity and mutual dependence. The placement of a tin-and-glass lantern or a pair of scissors in a wigwam can say much about the adoption of European technology into an Ojibwa way of life, with the right interpretation to go along with such objects. Without such prompting, visitors are prone to read a less positive interpretation: to assume that Native material technology was inferior to manufactured goods, or that in adopting European technology, Native people became acculturated.

To the casual visitor, these sites display--in their elaborate, "authentic," reconstructed stage-sets--ideas about race and power that are central to North American social structure and identity. Depicting Native people as less numerous and politically powerful as Europeans; as peripheral to the main emphasis of the sites [and, by implication, of history] within the palisaded, larger European areas; as living separately from Europeans, in the woods [or, at least, outside the pale], implies certain assumptions about Native history and Native-White relations. Most of these assumptions are based on deeply-ingrained, popular ideas about "race, progress, and evolution" [Lutz and Collins 1993:219] that come straight out of Victorian thought. The messages these sites too easily communicate [or risk having visitors project onto them] are based on a comparison between Native, primitive, pre-modern "savages" and

White, cultured, modern technologies in which the latter is the assumed and approved standard.

I fear that despite our best intentions, our best scholarship, and our best abilities, these sites reinforce in visitors "an image of the stability of the colonial order, in which Europeans like themselves are in charge, and everything about the site speaks to their entrepreneurship, managerial abilities, affluence, and good taste" [Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994:457]: an oddly British version of the Western frontier, where the Natives are certainly exotic, but rather helpful, and thriving under paternal guidance. These sites do not communicate the passion of contact or conflict between cultures, and despite the presence of the encampments now, they seldom communicate a Native perspective on the history depicted. I find it intriguing that Waswagoning, which is the only Native-run site, is also the only site to powerfully show Native people as having been in charge of their lives, and as having been the majority of the population in the area. It is also the site which goes most into detail about the seasonal adaptations of Ojibwa culture to the environment, and which communicates most clearly the sense that the Ojibwa had full, rich lives. The other sites may wish to communicate these things, but the limited size of their encampment areas and staffs makes it clear that Europeans [and European contributions to history] are really the main focus.

As we will see in the chapters on staff and visitors at these sites, however, site themes and meanings--whether imposed and implemented by administrators and staff, or implicit and expected by visitors--are hardly uniform or one-sided. Native staff

invert many of the messages of these sites and challenge visitor expectations; visitors add to and revise their ideas about Native people and the past as they move through a site. Historic sites are, above all, constantly constructing, producing, and [re]inventing the past, imbuing it with new meanings, and participating in "the processual, active nature of culture, history, tradition, and heritage" as it has existed both past and present [Bruner 1993b:14].

Despite their problematic aspects, I wish to underline the positive aspects of the addition of Native areas to existing historic reconstructions. These areas offer additional information and perspectives than those communicated by the palisaded areas alone. By their very presence and by teaching about the dignity and lives of Native peoples, these areas begin to challenge national history narratives which presume Manifest Destiny. While I have emphasized the fact that the relationship between the encampments and the palisaded areas suggests ethnocentric assumptions about the frontier, it could also be seen in a radically different way: as a colonial relationship, as embodying misunderstanding and resistance--or even a relationship of kinship. I think of James Clifford's response to tribal history museums in British Columbia:

For outsiders...the exhibit tells our history, too. It is a history of colonization and exploitation for which we, to the extent we participate in the dominant culture and an ongoing history of inequality, bear responsibility. We encounter an informing and a shaming discourse... [Clifford 1991:240].

Could these sites be used to explore the struggles and relationships involved in the frontier, to turn audience expectations on end, to replace standard narratives about savage or vanishing "Indians" on the frontier with "stories of revival, remembrance,

and struggle" [Clifford 1991:214]? Imagine a visitor standing in a Native encampment, having enjoyed and learned from that area, looking toward the palisade as she is about to walk toward it. Can we get that visitor to see the fort as an intrusion into Native lives, as a strange place, as a place where some of her kin live? These sites don't do that, but I think they could; the "Other Half" tour at Colonial Williamsburg suggests many possibilities for portraying these sites in a new light.

Like the "Other Half" tour, though, the communication of such alternative information and perspectives depends on staff to interpret the physical fabric of reconstructions. Palisades, trading shops, and encampments are stage sets for interaction between visitors and interpreters, and it is in this interaction that staff voice other ideas and ways of seeing the past. In the next two chapters, I will examine the backgrounds and interaction of staff and visitors.

Chapter Three: "Playing Ourselves": Native Interpreters and Native-White Relations on Staff

Audrey Wyman, who is of Ojibwa descent, has received awards for her standard of interpretation at the North West Company Fur Post. She wears a leather dress, moccasins, wispy braids, a head scarf full of trade silver brooches; she looks like a grandma. Her tour of the post is done in first-person, in an accent somewhere between Ojibwa and voyageur French. Her tour, in part, goes like this:

"My name is Nokie, it means Grandmother in Ojibwa. You can call me Granny if you like; lots of people do...now, if you have any questions, you just ask me; I'm so old and wise that I have all the answers!

...Now, here is where the voyageurs lived. Now, I know what you are going to say: Nokie, you told us that Mr. Sayer had sixteen men, and some with families--all living in two little rooms?? No, no, no. The men who are lucky are the men who are married, and they will live in a nice Ojibwa wigwam outside of the walls, which the wife will build, and [he] has a better life. Every year as part of his wages he gets two shirts and two pairs of pants--but by fall his elbows and knees are coming out of them, but if he has a good wife she'll go to the trader and get good wool cloth and make him new clothes for the winter...and he won't have to walk around with holes in his moccasins. She's going to make sure that he has everything just fine, because--well, she doesn't want those old women who get together and talk about everybody to say, "Oh, that poor man--she doesn't take very good care of him!"

And he will eat better, too, than the voyageur. Everyone goes to the boss every day to get the rations: deer and bear meat that the hired Indian hunters bring in; wild rice, bought from the Indians. The men have to cook it themselves, and most of them are lousy cooks. But the Indian woman, she knows every berry bush within a mile and a half, and she picks them and dries them for winter. She digs the cattail roots, which are like the potato. She raises the garden with corn and beans and squash; she knows the good vegetables from the woods which are going to make the food taste better...

Well, you want to have a wife. You don't just walk down to the Indian encampment and buy a wife the way you buy a dog for pulling the sled. You

have to do things the right way, so it's smart to talk to the old people and find out what the proper etiquette is...Now the last thing an Indian mother and father need is a lazy son-in-law lying around the wigwam. If it were a young Indian man, he would have been bringing deer meat and bear meat...for months to show what a good provider he is, somebody you would really like to have as a member of your family. But Pierre, he has no time to hunt. But he has credit at the company store. He goes to the boss and the boss says, "Pierre! Take for the father this fine NWC trade musket. And for the mother, a big kettle for making maple sugar, and blankets for all the relatives...Pierre says, "But boss, I can't afford it!" "Ah, no problem, Pierre; just sign on to work for the NWC for three more years."...Maybe Pierre will never go home to Montreal now; maybe he will stay here and become the ancestor of people who live here in your time. But most of all, now this young voyageur is related to everybody within twenty miles of here, and they'll come to this fur post to trade...

[Moving to Mr. Sayer's room]: Well, you know, Mr. Sayer is lucky to be married to the wife that he has. She's an Ojibwa woman ...[who] comes from a very distinguished family. Her father and two brothers did a great deal for their people, and it raised Mr. Sayer's status to become a member of such a respected family. She has been a great help to him. When they are here, they have been married nearly twenty years, they have children...and he sends to Montreal and gets her a fine dress such as the ladies wear...When Mr. Sayer leaves here, he goes back to Montreal eventually, and she chooses not to go with him. I don't blame her: I wouldn't go!...you know, in Montreal in 1804, the Indian woman and the métis woman like myself, they are not always accepted among high society. Oh, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Harmon, they take their wives back with them, but they weren't trying to mix with what you might call the upper crust; they had nice little estates in the country....You know, those women from across the ocean, they're treated like dogs! She can't vote, she can't hold property. The Indian woman has a better life. She owns the lodge because she built it...

The physical reconstructions at historic sites serve as stage sets for the performance of history and culture. It is the staff who enact history, who communicate the official themes of each place, who introduce visitors to the past. Most importantly, at the sites I researched, it was the costumed interpreters who contradicted traditional hegemonic historical narratives, by portraying nontraditional characters and by voicing alternative narratives and perspectives. Native interpreters, in particular, infuse their performances with highly charged, personal meaning which challenges on several levels the expected stereotypes and sociopolitical position assumed by the dominant society. Many non-Native staff also challenge such stereotypes by communicating revisionist scholarship and by facilitating the input of Native staff to interpretation throughout the sites. These efforts are necessary because the sites are part of a hegemonic system that, to a certain extent, does use history to reinforce relations of power. The expectations that visitors arrive with, the messages given by the physical cues of the sites, the information given in [usually dated] orientation videos, brochures, and displays, and the messages suggested by placing Native people on display for a mostly non-Native audience in a "frontier" setting, all provide the colonial and hegemonic context that staff work against.

In this chapter I will examine the work of interpreters at historic sites. I emphasise the special nature of the work of Native interpreters, and examine the historical precedents for Native interpretation to establish that these people are working in a tradition of cultural performance which is intended to fight prejudice and hegemony and to fulfil the goals of Native communities. I explore relations between

interpreters and administrators, to understand how the addition of Native interpreters and themes has challenged the traditional mandates of these sites. The messages communicated by both Native and non-Native interpreters are examined, and in the next chapter, I will analyze interactions between interpreters and visitors.

How to be a Gentleman (Voyageur, Maid, Indian, Trader)

Interpreters tend to be university students, hired for the summer season; a few are retirees, homemakers, or artists. Skilled artisanal positions such as coopering are often filled year after year by older individuals, although this depends on exactly who applies for the positions each year. In some years far fewer men apply than women, and then the activities that are interpreted shift to accommodate the applicants and their skills: dairying, baking, and laundering suddenly assume greater prominence on site. In the last few years, no Native men have applied at LFG, so the group of women who staff the encampment have told visitors that their "husbands" are all off fishing or hunting. Despite claims of strict historical authenticity on these sites, "history" very much depends on the personalities, gender and skills of the interpreters in a given year.

As Gable and Handler note [1993:28], "there is an elaborate process for the training of [front-line] personnel" which involves the translation of the site's official themes into characters and scenarios to be portrayed by interpretive staff. Interpreters are given a crash course at the beginning of the season on the history of the site, on the function of each building and the biographies of people who worked there, and on material culture and daily activities of the era. Most of this information is derived

from academic works that are often synthesized by site supervisors, presented in binders organized by building and historic theme: "The Big House," "Women at LFG," "Native Women," "Voyageurs," and so forth. In recent years, site administrators have added revisionist information and perspectives to these manuals as well as to the historical lectures they give to interpreters during the training period. The labour and foods provided by Native people at the sites, the practical and diplomatic roles of Native wives, and the everyday relations between Europeans and Native peoples at the site, are all topics which have assumed great importance during training sessions and in the materials which interpreters are given to read.

Interpreters are also given biographical information on the person or people they represent or who are incorporated into the historic character that they portray [at some sites, interpreters select from basic personae and then do research to create their own characters]. They do some practice role-playing, read the manuals, perhaps watch videos made on site in previous years showing interpreters at work, and then, with an average of two to five days' training, begin interacting with the public.

Interpretation is a form of communication that has evolved within the heritage industry. While broadly defined as "any communication process designed to reveal meanings and relationships of our cultural and natural heritage to the public through first-hand involvement with an object, artifact, landscape, or site" [Association of Canadian Interpreters, cited in OFW Interpretive Manual n.d.:1], interpretation at historic sites generally involves staff in period costume representing either a specific or typical person from the past who engages in period activities and in conversations with

visitors, answering questions and imparting information. Interpretation has always walked an uneasy line between acting and the recitation of historical "facts." The history discipline as a whole has traditionally emphasised its use of "facts" and been leery of fictional treatments of the past. Historic reconstructions have similarly downplayed the notion that their interpreters act because of a sense that acting connotes falsity and inauthenticity [Snow 1993:132-4; Schechner 1985:96-97]. Interpretive staff at these sites are not given acting lessons, but a set of historical facts and notes. Furthermore, most sites use third-person interpretation [in which they represent a specific or typical character, but do not address visitors as if they were that person]. Pine City uses modified first-person interpretation [interpreters act their characters, but may break frame to answer visitor questions].

The kind of information communicated by interpreters is intended to do several things: to lay a factual grid about the site and its context; to describe the nature of the European presence and Native-White relations on site; and to suggest that the Native peoples there historically were not primitive or savage, but were crucial allies of the Europeans, and that both peoples were interdependent. These themes are shared by all the sites I worked at. Each site also has special themes, and the shared themes differ in the historical details. I find, however, that there are significant differences between Native and non-Native interpreters that lead to different styles of interpretation, different emphases in their messages, and a different sense of the past.

Non-Native interpreters tend to stick to an academic framework both for learning and for communicating with visitors. They accept the academically-based

historic themes of the site, and gear their messages toward these. They emphasize authenticity in material culture and strict adherence to the site's time-period and its properly-documented accoutrements. Their perspective on the history they portray tends to match the site's very closely: their point of view is essentially that of the dominant society, with an overlay of revisionist scholarship that points up how important Native people, labourers, and women were in the past. Most of these interpreters support the implementation of such revisionist perspectives on site, because they see such changes as being more historically accurate. They feel that their work is important because it teaches visitors what it was like to live in the past; they also readily acknowledge the recreational aspect of visitors' tours of the site. Finally, when they refer to the characters they portray, non-Native interpreters use the third person: "they," "them," "he," "she."

This is what historic site interpretation is supposed to be: a person in period costume performing period tasks and imparting information about the past. And if these interpreters burn out from mid-summer heat, long hours spent baking or squaring logs, and too many dumb questions from tourists, they remind themselves that they get to take off their costumes and leave the site and its visitors behind at closing time. Native people, as we shall see, do not feel that they have this option. There is an extra layer of stress on Native interpreters that stems from their different approach to interpretation, their different goals, and their different history and uses of cultural performance.

Native staff use the same revisionist information and academic sources as their

counterparts. They are knowledgeable about period detail and historic culture. What they do differently is give a personal spin to the imparting of this information: "our people," they say; "we did it this way." They portray history from the perspective of the colonized, such as "Nokie's" tour spiel which emphasizes a Native and labouring-class perspective of the fur trade. Despite their disparate tribal and personal backgrounds, as a group they identify far more closely with their work than non-Native interpreters do: as they told me repeatedly, "we are playing ourselves." And they have different goals than their non-Native counterparts, being focused on fighting prejudice as well as entertaining and educating visitors.

Native Interpreters: Cultural Performances, Colonial Contexts, Intimate Meanings

Native interpreters who work at historic sites today are not simply being forced into a non-Native mode of cultural performance. They come from communities that have long histories of performances for non-Native audiences. One of these traditions developed in the most colonial of contexts, in which Native people were forced to perform as symbols of exoticism for the entertainment of non-Native audiences. The other is controlled by Native people, who use the symbols and sometimes the forms of these colonial performances to communicate their own agendas and fulfil their own goals. It is this latter tradition in which Native interpreters work at historic sites, and understanding this tradition helps us to understand how Native interpreters have developed a distinct approach to their work and how they infuse their work with deep and intimate meaning that transcends the hegemonic settings of historic sites.

Native people have been showing elements of their cultures to Europeans since first contact. Within the increasing sphere of control that Europeans gained in North America, however, such performances quickly came to be scripted by Europeans, for the entertainment of Europeans. Columbus himself returned from his first voyage to the New World with six Natives [Dickason 1984:205], the first of thousands who were brought to Europe to be exhibited as proof of discovery and as curios. Native captives throughout Europe performed exhibitions of such cultural skills as how to make a fire with two dry sticks, canoemanship [on the lake at Versailles with Louis XIV], and bow-hunting [for Elizabeth I, with the royal swans on the Thames as targets] [Dickason 1984:208-212].

Over the centuries, captives gave way to delegations of Native chiefs on diplomatic missions. "Four Huron [chiefs] who visited London in 1825 to obtain redress over land claims" were asked to perform after a state dinner. They sang Huron songs, danced "the war dance, and gave the war whoop" [King 1991:36]. There were also efforts to market Native performances to the European public. As Jonathan King observes, "the exhibition of non-Europeans and freaks was an ancient tradition extending back to the middle ages," and by the 1820s, several circus sideshow acts with Native people were touring English fairs. These early displays became full-fledged "Indian shows" by the 1830s, with Native people who performed programs scripted by their managers. One such performance in London in 1835 featured "real Indian warriors...furious combat with tomahawk & scalping knife...[and a] complete picture of American Indian life and habits" [cited in King 1991:36]. While these

performances were billed in part as educational, they were primarily meant to appeal to their "civilized" audiences as displays of exotic, pagan savagery. Shows such as these culminated in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and its imitators.

Native peoples were also displayed at World's Fairs in the second half of the nineteenth century. Beginning with the Crystal Palace exhibition of 1851, Native peoples and their artifacts were displayed at these fairs alongside the raw materials [lumber, fur, minerals] in the Colonial areas [King 1991:38], and in separate tableaux and village settings that emphasized their savage, uncivilized traits. Similarly, a group of Sicangu Sioux lived for a season at the Cincinnati Zoo in tipis during the summer of 1896. The zoo's annual report for that year stated that "the exhibition of wild people is in line with zoology, and so, when we exhibit Indians...or any wild or strange people now in existence, we are simply keeping within our province as a zoological institution" [Meyn 1992:21].

By the end of the nineteenth century, Native people and their dances, "war whoops," and the actual battles displayed on stage [as in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show] began to be perceived as being things of the past. In some cases they were: the hostile frontier and the battles in Buffalo Bill's show were decades past by the 1890s. In a larger way, though, audiences at these performances came to see Native peoples themselves as figures from the past. This perception served a useful purpose, "for it allowed them to see Native people as "authentic" and yet ineffectual and unthreatening at the same time" [Jasen 1995:17]. By relegating Native people to the past, members of the dominant society refused to take them seriously in the present: another aspect of

the colonial control of such performances. Not only were Native people and their traditions assumed to be anachronisms, worthy only of nostalgia, but they were then incorporated into the history of the dominant society [as in the acts of Buffalo Bill's show], becoming episodes in the conquest of North America. In their performances, they were forced to play roles in a script devised by the colonial mind [and see Doxtator 1988:16-24 on this relationship].

In this light, Daniel Francis [1992:102] has claimed that Native people who participated in such performances were, in effect, caged by a dominant culture that controlled both what they performed and how they were perceived:

The Performing Indian was a tame Indian, one who had lost the power to frighten anyone. Fairs and exhibitions represented a manipulation of nostalgia. They allowed non-Natives to admire aspects of aboriginal culture, safely located in the past, without confronting the problems of contemporary Native people. Frozen as they were in an historical stereotype, Performing Indians invoked a bygone era. By implication, they celebrated the triumph of White civilization.

However, this perspective fails to look for the motivations and agency of the Native performers themselves. For even within the colonial context of these performances, exoticised and controlled, Native people saw elements of their performances quite differently: there were aspects of such work that held important economic and social opportunities and deep, positive meanings for them. And even the most controlled performances gave rise to another tradition of Native-controlled ones.

While Native people were forced to perform certain kinds of dances and wear certain kinds of costumes in these early shows, one has to recognize that few of them were coerced into performing: many chose to. There were pragmatic reasons for doing

so during the late nineteenth century. For one thing, the pay and the living conditions were often better than anything on the reserves [Beauvais 1985:136; McClurken 1991:94]. Jasen [1995:98] notes that in 1881, Ojibwa men who guided tourists through the St. Mary's rapids at the Sault were paid two cents a pound for the fish they caught, and five dollars each time they guided a tourist down the rapids. Blanchard [1984:113] similarly notes that "Kahnawake Mohawk were most active in the entertainment business during the Depression" when other work was scarce.

Performing also offered a chance to escape some of the most restrictive aspects of reserve life. One could wear recognizably Native clothing and perform Native dances, both of which were at times either illegal or discouraged by Indian agents. One could also speak one's own language with other performers, at a time when Native people were being forced to learn English in schools. Sometimes whole families went on tour, offering parents the opportunity to pass on traditional skills and knowledge to their children in their own language. Perhaps most of all, one could travel: it was a chance to see the world. Black Elk, the Lakota holy man, joined Buffalo Bill's show because he "wanted to see the great water, the great world and the ways of the white men...If the white man's ways were better, why I would like to see my people live that way" [DeMallie 1984:245].

This determination to use to Native advantage the opportunities provided by performances has gradually developed into a whole genre of Native-controlled cultural performance. Despite being shaped to meet the stereotyped expectations of non-Native audiences, these performances have allowed Native people to communicate basic

information about their cultures to foreign audiences, to express pride in their heritage and traditions, to make a living, and to survive emotionally and culturally within a colonial context by turning stereotyped and constrained images of themselves to their own purposes. These Native-run performances fall roughly into two related categories: theatrical-style performances, such as versions of Wild West shows, vaudeville shows, travelling "medicine" shows, and Native community pageants which re-enact history [or romantic White mytho-history about Native people]; and Native family craft businesses, in which performance was part of the sales pitch. There were many such performances across the continent [see also Blanchard 1984 for others]; the ones I use here as examples are from the Northeast and Great Lakes, and are simply intended to suggest the existence of this tradition for Native interpreters.

Sioux, Mohawk, and other Native performers who had worked in P.T. Barnum's, Wild Bill Hickok's, and other early "Wild West" shows began organizing their own such shows in the last quarter of the nineteenth century [Beauvais 1985:136; Blanchard 1984:104-6]. After the success of Buffalo Bill's show during the 1893 Columbian Exposition, many imitators sprang up, some of which were organized by seasoned Native performers. These continued for several generations. One such show was begun by Howard Sky, a respected Six Nations elder, who created a performing troupe that probably began working in the 1940s and toured widely. Howard Sky's nephew Jim Sky purchased the show's regalia when Howard retired. Since the 1960s, Jim Sky and his extended family have been performing for both Native and non-Native audiences [see Heth 1992: figs. 33, 35]. Having grown up in the business, Sky

understands what non-Native audiences expect from Native performers, and he gives it to them as a hook so that they will listen while he achieves his goal, which is to educate non-Native people about real Native cultures, lives, and histories [Sky, personal communication 1993]. The men's costumes and many of the acts are Wild West in style, so that if the audience wants a "real Indian," Sky will give them one [Fig. 3, postcard of Sky as a "Native Indian Chief"]; but having thus gotten the audience's attention, he will have a nephew recite the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address, talk about the Iroquois ceremonial cycle and spirituality himself, and even discuss some political and cultural problems facing Native people today. The costumes act as a hook and as reassurance for the audience [look, it's a real Indian!], leaving Sky free to transmit his own messages. "Some people don't like to hear what I tell them," he says.

Similar dynamics can be seen in the many pageants organized by Native communities. These were most often presented to tourists, such as the commercial Hiawatha pageants at Conway, Michigan, which began in 1905 and continued until the 1950s [McClurken 1991:94]. Others also attracted Native audiences, such as the summer festival begun in 1935 by the Michigan Indian Defense Association at Harbor Springs. Both the festival and the MIDA were founded expressly "to continue Odawa customs and cultural knowledge [and] to promote the growth of their political association" in the wider local community. The festival included the lighting of a ceremonial fire, traditional dances, and the giving of Indian names to young Odawa people [McClurken 1991:94-95]. Heirloom clothing, drums and pipes were brought out

[to follow p.141]



Figure 3: Jim Sky as a "Native Indian Chief" on postcards. Postcard reproduced courtesy of Ms. Mary Stainrod, The Postcard Factory.

for this festival and worn proudly; people camped together and spoke Odawa. Other events involved public naming ceremonies for non-Native people; one of these had to be held in a stadium to house the large audiences [McClurken 1991:95, 98]. Some of the costumes and props for these performances were Wild West in nature, but the scripts were written by Odawa people, the dances were traditional, and the events were clearly important to the Odawa community. Like Jim Sky's performances, these were intended to educate non-Native audiences about Native culture and to combat the prejudice that Native people faced in North American society.

All of these performances and events dealt with the relationship between history and identity; all made use of symbols of Native identity; all were public proclamations of pride in a Native heritage at times when Native people were being pressured to acculturate; all brought Native communities together to plan, profit, and socialise. Some of the history enacted in these events might be romanticised and twisted [the Conway pageants enacted Longfellow's "Hiawatha"], but even these incorporated traditional "songs, dances, and ceremonial objects" into new, secular contexts which met the needs of the times [McClurken 1991:94]. Others used stereotypes [the "real" Plains Indian brave, the Princess] to get the audience's attention and then talk about the reality of Native cultures and lives, or to convince non-Native audiences that Native people were human beings, or to make a living.

Native crafts became closely linked with these performances, for crafts and souvenirs were sold at many of these events. Several Native families who ran large tourist craft business in Michigan also used performance to boost sales; photos of the

Ettawageshik business show two generations of proprietors dressed in Native-style costumes and posing [or, in a term used by Native performers, "chiefing"] for the camera with bows and drums [McClurken 1991:109-110; Ettawageshik 1993]. [Fig. 4, Ettawageshik family at store.] On the Kahnawake Reserve, "Chief Poking Fire's Village" was constructed in the 1930s to bring tourists into craft booths set up on the grounds; performances were also offered for tourists. As well as tipis and totem poles, it featured costumed performers, some of whom had also or would work in professional Wild West shows [Beauvais 1985:137; Nicks at press].

A single photograph convinced me of the importance of the link between Native cultural performances, craft sales, and heritage interpretation at contemporary historic sites. [Fig. 5, Samuels family.] The image shows the Samuels family demonstrating and selling crafts to tourists on Mackinac Island in the 1950s. All eight people in the photo are dressed in leather garments; the women and girls also wear headbands and the men and boys Plains-style war bonnets. Behind them is a bark-covered lodge. Nearly everyone is making something, and they are surrounded by exquisite pieces of completed handiwork. The image looks like many others taken at Earl's Court in England in the 1860s or the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893: a camp, people in costume, performers selling crafts on the side after the show. Aside from the fact that the costumes owe more to tourist expectations about Hollywood Indians than historical fact, the scene could be the Native encampment in the 1990s at Colonial Michilimackinac, just across the Straits from Mackinac Island. The photograph reminded me how important craft demonstrations are today at such reconstructions to

[to follow p.143]

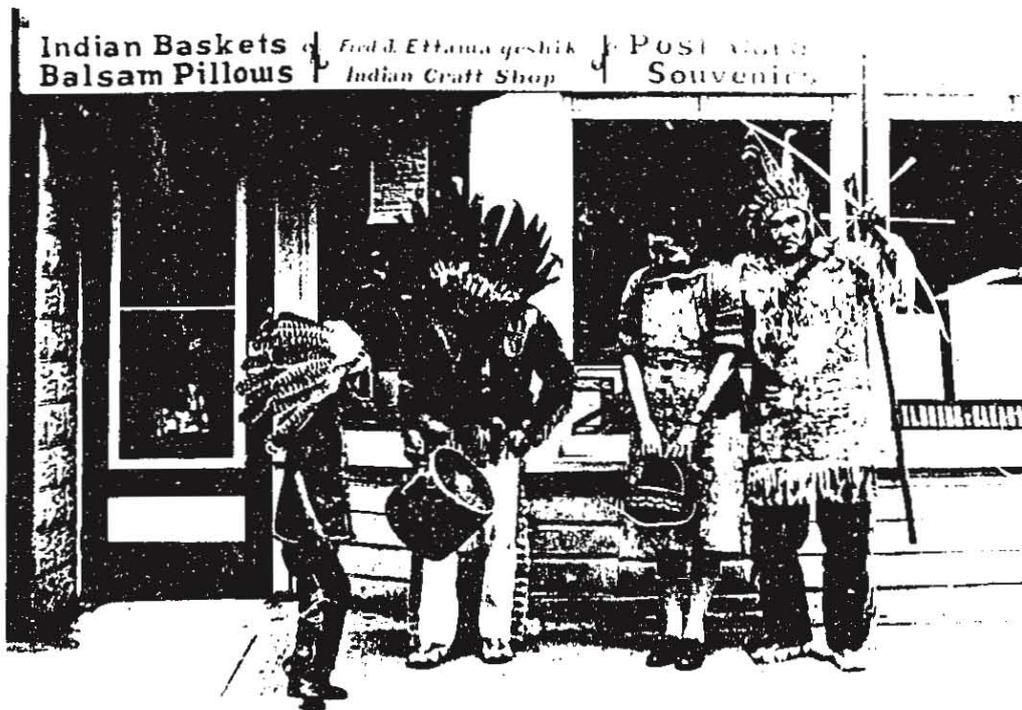


Figure 4: Ettawageshik family at craft store
Photograph reproduced courtesy of Mr. Frank Ettawageshik, Chief.
Little Traverse Bay Bands, Michigan.

[to follow p.143]



Figure 5: Samuels family demonstrating crafts, ca. 1950
Photograph reproduced courtesy of Mr. Frank Ettawageshik, Chief,
Little Traverse Bay Bands, Michigan.

communicate a sense of Native culture, history, and identity, and to provide a link between non-Native tourists and Native interpreters. Many of the interpreters are aware of this tradition of cultural display, and several with whom I spoke are artisans who sell crafts in the off-season.

All of these performances occurred in and were shaped by colonial contexts. The need to obtain tourist dollars from ticket and craft sales; the wearing of Plains costumes by Great Lakes and eastern Woodlands peoples to satisfy the expectations of non-Native audiences; the use of songs and dances out of their original ceremonial context as secular performances to non-Native audiences; the enactment of non-Native accounts of Native history [the Hiawatha pageants]: viewed in this manner, one could conclude that Native performers were controlled, "caged," in Francis' term, truly dominated by the dominant society.

They also managed to turn the performances, their overt meanings, and their contexts inside out, to use them for their own political and social and cultural purposes, and to imbue them with deep inner meanings that went far beyond the overt and overtly-controlled ones that the non-Native audiences saw. A performer might don a spurious war bonnet and do a fake dance for tourists; what mattered to him was that he was earning a wage and selling his family's crafts. An extended family might don leather clothes and sit making baskets in front of a wigwam, to be stared at and photographed all day; what mattered was that they were together, expressing pride in their heritage, teaching their children to make things, and educating tourists--as well as selling crafts [and see Nicks at press]. They may have been portraying aspects of life

in the past, but that was only partly to go along with the era that tourists assigned them. Heritage was also the thing most precious to them, the source and wellspring of their identity, and they made constant use of it to sustain them during an unsatisfactory present and provide children with a reference point for pride to carry them into the future.

These performers knew what outsiders expected, and they gave it to them--quite deliberately. If White audiences were seeing nostalgia, if the "traditional" elements of these performances "allowed non-Natives to admire aspects of aboriginal culture, safely located in the past, without confronting the problems of contemporary Native people," the Native people themselves were using the performances to address their own contemporary problems. For White audiences, such performances may have "invoked a bygone era [and,] by implication, [suggested]...the triumph of White civilization"; Native performers were invoking a bygone era to bolster their identity in the present and thus to challenge the supposed triumph of White civilization [Francis 1992:102]. In Fred Myers' terms,

In contrast to stances that might render the Aboriginal participants too simply as passive victims of the subjectivity, or "gaze," of others, one needs a more complex approach to articulating the powers and processes through which discursive formations operate and are realized in people's lives. Far from being the condition of their subjection, the audience's gaze is crucial to the Aboriginal performers as an authentication of their experience [Myers 1994:694].

Native interpreters who work at historic sites today thus draw on a long tradition of demonstrating and performing elements of their cultures for tourists; of understanding tourist expectations of "Indians", and responding to these; of imbuing

such performance with deep meanings about identity. When Native interpreters tell me, "We're playing ourselves, the real First Nations people" [Littlewolf-Walker, personal communication 1994], they mean that they are expressing their contemporary identity as persons rooted in their heritage, using the past to validate the present--and vice versa.

I should note that these meanings differ greatly from those expressed by Buffalo Bill's Native performers, who also "played themselves" -- but in shows in which their image, actions, and messages were carefully choreographed and controlled by Cody. Sitting Bull and his fellow performers represented themselves, but were made to conform to non-Native stereotypes at the same time, supporting a dominant-society version of history and Native-White relations [White 1994:35]. This is no longer the case: the Native interpreters at historic sites communicate messages that they themselves determine, which are sometimes quite different from the official themes of the sites, and they use their work to pursue their own agendas.

This is an important point, for much of the literature on ethnic tourism has claimed that Native peoples who perform for tourists are forced to present costumes, images, and stereotyped cultural elements which conform to tourists' expectations of "authentic" Native culture. The validation that performance provides elevates these things to the status of "authentic" within the performers' culture, thus artificially "freezing" or "museumizing" crucial aspects of Native cultures [e.g. MacCannell 1984]. Furthermore, the literature claims, this process enters into the ongoing construction of identity in Native societies. MacCannell [1984], Van den Berghe and Keyes [1984]

and others have examined the notion of "reconstructed ethnicity," which they define as "the maintenance and preservation of ethnic forms for the entertainment of ethnically different others" [MacCannell 1984:385]. MacCannell claims that "when an ethnic group begins to sell itself, or is forced to sell itself, as an ethnic attraction, it ceases to evolve naturally. The group members begin to think of themselves not merely as people but as living representatives of an authentic way of life" [1984:388]. Finally, these authors see few benefits to Native groups from ethnic tourism. Tourists spend little money at performance sites or on souvenirs, and the approval that performers receive from tourists translates dignity into false, frozen cultures [MacCannell 1984:386, 388].

I think that I have made it clear that while some performance situations have been controlled by outsiders, and while Native performers have sometimes chosen to present stereotyped images to tourists, there are other factors at work. MacCannell fails to consider Native agency in cultural performance, and his conclusion that Native people receive few economic benefits from tourism and that it is culturally distorting is simply not true for the tradition of North American Native performance or crafts. While the notion of reconstructed ethnicity may be true to some extent, it fails to consider that Native performers are quite capable of knowing and keeping separate traditional practices from what they perform [Jim Sky would not wear his Wild West outfit into the Longhouse]. The concept also privileges a "truly authentic" culture which once "evolved naturally" [free of contact with Whites? with tourists? with other tribes?]: something which has probably never existed. Blanchard [1984:103] has

documented an historical example of Native people representing themselves to other Native peoples through exhibitions of song and dance, something which has probably been part of Native trade fairs which have taken place across North America for thousands of years. The concept of cultures "evolving naturally" seems to imply lack of contact with any other cultures, which seems extreme, and an ahistorical kind of analysis.

As for the question of performance elements becoming frozen as "authentic" and for the development of self-reflexivity among performers as "living representatives of an authentic way of life," I think this happens to some extent [although MacCannell's phrase sounds like something quoted from a tourism brochure], but not uniformly across a culture. Not all members of a culture perform, and not all elements of culture that are performed are deemed authentic by all members of a group. What is defined as "authentic" will also change over time and as the authority of those doing the defining shifts within a society. Finally, the literature on ethnic tourism does not consider the distinction between performance as an expression of pride in one's heritage and performance as a contributing to the stunting or freezing of heritage and culture. In short, this literature does not consider how Native performers themselves regard their work and its implications, or indeed, who these performers are within their societies.

Native interpreters at historic sites come from both inside and outside the local Native communities and represent only some of the voices of these communities. The kind of Native people who are interested in this work are those interested in history

and traditional crafts. These range from elders such as Freda McDonald, widely respected for her traditional knowledge, to adults who are rediscovering their heritage, to young people who have either been taught to value traditional activities or who are activist-oriented. These are also people who are [or can become] comfortable in the role of culture brokers: in many ways, these people are, literally, interpreters, ones who translate meanings [and see Nuryanti 1996:254]. They participate in the long tradition of "people in between" cultures, such as the Métis and Native people who have functioned as liaisons in the fur trade and diplomacy since contact.

This does not necessarily mean that these people are marginal to their Native communities: many are closely connected to [or, in fact, are] the keepers of traditional knowledge within these communities. While some members of Native communities may be suspicious of other kinds of cultural performers, thinking them "fake" or "money-grubbing" or resenting performers who claim knowledge and power to non-Native audiences that Native communities have not accorded them [see Blanchard 1984:113-115], I heard nothing but mutual respect between Native people who worked at historic sites and those who did not. Indeed, the research that Native interpreters do in the course of their work, and the skills and knowledge they acquire, are looked on approvingly by elders.

I disagree with MacCannell [1984:388] and his colleagues on ethnic tourism. Native communities have not "cease[d] to evolve naturally" as the result of cultural performances to tourists. While some Native people may think of themselves or others within their groups as "living representatives of an authentic way of life," they have

not stopped seeing themselves as simply people, and they live fully in the present while retaining cultural elements from the past. The fact that interpreters at historic sites perform documented activities from the past [which might be considered more "authentically traditional" than other cultural elements] does not automatically make them "representatives of an authentic way of life" in the eyes of elders or other authorities within Native communities. Interpreters work within and between cultures which are constantly changing. Native interpreters are not "sel[ling] themselves...as an ethnic attraction," and they are not simply exhibiting what tourists want to see or expect "real Indians" to do. They are exploring and teaching about their cultures and histories, they are confronting stereotypes, and they are fostering new relationships with non-Natives and increased self-determination amongst Native peoples.

Native Interpreters and Historic Sites

As Gable and Handler have observed, although "a great deal of bureaucratic effort goes into controlling what the front line says, that is, into making sure that the officially sanctioned stories, and not others, are told to visitors," those stories are often not the ones that the visitor hears [Gable and Handler 1993:28]. While Native interpreters do communicate information related to the official themes of the sites and to revisionist scholarship, they have evolved a unique kind and content of communication which relates far more to their own self-image and goals.

They have had to do this because of the special relationship that they have with their work, combined with the negative stereotypes about Native people that they

encounter--and counter--from the public every day. As the Native interpreters explained, they do not get to "dress up and play history," and then take off their costumes at the end of the day and go home as different people. They are themselves in historic costume, and still themselves when they take off that costume: as Del Taylor, a Native staff member at SMAH, told me, "What a great job--a chance to dress up and be ourselves!" The "playing" they do, however, is not of such a ludic nature as that by non-Native interpreters. These people are ambassadors, not actors; they represent their communities, past and present, not dead people. Keith Knecht expressed the complicated nature of this kind of representation by initially denying that was what he did: "We don't represent Native people; we are Native people! and we want our public to know that we're still alive and living here." The kind of representation that these interpreters do involves both "acting for" and "standing for" [Mitchell 1990:11]; at the same time, it also involves simply being themselves and not representing others.

Native interpreters also have very personal and real connections with the pasts they portray: they are haunted by their histories, the legacies of which affect their daily lives. For Nick Hocking to describe the historic practice of spear-fishing by torchlight at Waaswagoning on the Lac du Flambeau Reservation--both of which take their names from this practice--is to do so within the modern context in which Native people have been shot at, threatened, and physically and verbally assaulted by non-Native commercial and sport fishermen when they have asserted their treaty rights to this ancient fishing method. Interpreters who were forcibly acculturated through

adoption or in Christian residential schools earlier in their lives now portray historic Native ways of life in full knowledge of what happened to the people who lived that way: they have had the same first-hand knowledge of the effects of a paternalistic and colonial government on Native culture and Native lives as the ancestors they portray. "Playing ourselves" gives a whole new meaning to the idea of "living history." Very, very few non-Native interpreters feel this intermingling of the past and the present in their work and in their personal lives.

And Native interpreters do portray their ancestors, some more directly than others. Ruth Christie at LFG portrays her great-grandmother, Isabella Monkman, and says, "Having the experience of portraying a Native elder at LFG has really been positive for me. Because I'm not only able to be myself there, I get to be an ancestor." A young Ojibwa man who worked at the Pine City site stated that the composite character that he portrayed was much like him because the person had the same ancestry, including a European grandfather. Some interpreters feel uneasy portraying specific, deceased ancestors, so they create composite characters from typical historic life experiences. Audrey Wyman advised me that interpreters should base their characters on people they admire "because you will become those people"; she based "Nokie" on all the wise old Ojibwa people she could think of. Still other interpreters choose not to portray specific characters [composite or not] at all, but are simply themselves. These people communicate information to visitors in the second person plural ["oh yes, you'd see us here in the summertime, come to trade" or "our people never did that" or "we were the backbone of the fur trade, we helped the traders

survive"]. Staff portraying European characters, in contrast, have no personal compunction about playing specific individuals and deliver information in either the first or the third person ["I am Simon McGillivray, let me tell you about my life," or "The Native people came here to trade"].

These feelings of closeness to the past make it difficult to deal with visitors' common assumption that Native people were and are inferior to people of European descent. I will deal with such preconceptions in more detail in the next chapter, but I wished to make the point here that Native interpreters have a good deal of work to do in overcoming such attitudes before they can communicate the site's designated themes or officially-approved information; non-Native staff are not faced with this extra work. Furthermore, such attitudes make the work that Native interpreters do far more personal--and emotionally draining--than it is for most non-Native staff, especially because many visitors' questions are about contemporary Native life and about their personal situations. A few examples of the kinds of questions that visitors ask Native interpreters make it clear that these staff members do far more than the usual "emotional work" [Jrry 1990:70] of being friendly with visitors that tourism normally demands:

-Marie Brunel, who helped to initiate and lead the Native interpretation program at SMAH, once had a White tourist ask her, "Are you an alcoholic?"; the visitor assumed that all Native people were, and are.

-Annette Naganashe, who comes from a respected Odawa family and formerly worked at an Odawa museum, came to CM with her public school class as a child. She was one of the few Native students in the class. The class viewed a diorama about the capture of the fort by Native people in 1763; the diorama features nearly-naked,

painted warriors bloodily scalping fallen British officers. As her class filed out the door of the building, one of Annette's classmates turned to her and said, "So you're an Indian"--with all the negative connotations that word could imply. In 1994, Annette worked as an interpreter at CM; the diorama was still there.

-comments heard daily at every encampment:

- "Go stand with the squaws and I'll take your picture."¹

- "Are you an Indian Princess?"; "Are you Pocahantas?" "Are you a Chief?"

- "Watch out, they'll scalp you!"

- "Whose scalp is that?" [pointing to a fur or a bison tail]

- "Woo-woo-woo-woo-woo...."

- "Do you speak your language?" [most Native interpreters were raised speaking English]

- "Are you a real Indian?"

- "Are there any real Indians anymore?"

Not only do visitors say these things, they say them over and over again, making the irritatingly repetitive monotony of interpretation described by Valene Smith into a potentially degrading situation for the interpreters:

...catering to guests is a repetitive, monotonous business, and although questions posed by each visitor are "new" to him, hosts can come to feel that they have simply turned on a cassette. Especially late in "the season," it becomes progressively harder to rekindle the spontaneity and enthusiasm that bids guests truly welcome...Guests become dehumanized objects to be tolerated for economic gain, and tourists are left with little alternative other than to look upon their hosts with curiosity, as objects [Smith 1978:6].

At large sites where interpreters average 500 to 1000 verbal contacts with visitors each day, Native staff face a very difficult job indeed.

In response to these pressures, Native interpreters make use of a shared set of

¹ The phrase "squaw" probably derives originally from the Cree word for woman, iskwe [Ojibwa ikwe]. It became widely used by people of European descent to refer to Native women across the continent, usually in a derogatory way which implies "savage" and "whore." The popular image of a "squaw" is of a slovenly drudge of loose morals. See Wiest 1983, Francis 1992:121-122.

attitudes and emphases in their work. Whatever their differences in age or tribal background, they are all motivated by a commitment to removing prejudice and discrimination against Native people by educating non-Native tourists. Freda McDonald said that she is able to forgive a great deal by reminding herself that the tourists she sees have been raised in ignorance, on the wrong version of history, and that she takes great satisfaction in teaching those people. Marie Brunel similarly said that "If we can just reach one person, teach one person that we are real human beings, then it's all worth it."

For these people, the educational function of historic sites is primary. They are aware that tourists come with the intention of having fun, but they work because it gives them an opportunity to teach a large audience of non-Native people. Freda McDonald's response to rude comments about "Indians" reinforces this: she marches up to the visitor and says, "Are you here to learn or to make fun of people?" [McDonald, personal communication 1994; Wilkins 1994:70]. [This is also an indication of the political power that Native interpreters can have within historic sites today: non-Native interpreters telling paying visitors to leave would not be tolerated by site administration!] Every Native interpreter with whom I spoke has had to develop a similar response to rude comments, and all of the responses focused on providing accurate information, correcting misconceptions, and challenging stereotypes.

They do this in a number of ways. Firstly, they use several strategies to establish bridges between themselves and visitors. A number of the encampments are or have been headed by older women [Freda McDonald, Audrey Wyman, Ruth

Christie, Marie Brunel], all of whom use a grandmother persona. Nokie's "You can call me Granny, lots of people do" is echoed in Ruth Christie's statement that "one family came to visit me four times this year! the kids would say, "let's go visit Kokum!" Younger women talk or make jokes about their "husbands" or "sweethearts" with visitors. In the all-woman fishing encampment at LFG, questions by visitors about "where are your husbands? where are your men?" are answered first with jokes ["are you kidding? the fish are being brought in just now--they left so they wouldn't have to clean them!"] and then with serious comments on gender roles in Ojibwa and Swampy Cree society ["actually, at this time of year, they'd be on the plains hunting bison or off up the lake working as tripmen for the Company"]. Such approaches allow visitors to see interpreters as people like them, and pull down the barriers that stereotypes erect. Native staff also greet visitors with big smiles, "welcome to our camp! have you paddled far today?" and often an immediate introduction to life in the camp ["can you clean fish? if you help us with the fish maybe you can stay for dinner! You see, we are catching fish and trading it to the HBC for goods that our families need..."].

Secondly, the interpreters' responses establish Native control over the encampment areas and let visitors know that they are in a Native-run area. After putting her question to errant visitors, Freda McDonald offers: "if you're here to learn, sit down and let me tell you about my culture." Interpreters frequently say "My people" or "we would...", and to visitors' frequent opening question, "What tribe do you represent?" they reply "I am Ojibwa/Ottawa/Cree." At LFG, visitors entering the

tipi are instructed to "turn to your left and follow the circle of the sun and the path of life." In the face of prejudice and assumptions that their ancestors were barbaric, Native interpreters also assert a sense of moral superiority by the tone and content of some of their responses. This is most frequently expressed as claims that Native people used only what is needed from nature and never wasted what nature provided. It is also expressed in statements about the relative freedoms of Native and European women, as in Nokie's "those women from across the ocean, they're treated like dogs! She can't vote, she can't hold property. The Indian woman has a better life. She owns the lodge because she built it..."

Thirdly, Native interpreters explain many aspects of their cultures and of daily life for Native peoples in the past, in order to counteract visitors' typical ignorance about these subjects as well as to respond to visitors who tend to be "more interested in the culture than in history," as several senior Native interpreters told me [Freda McDonald, Marie Brunel]. Much of the discussion about customs and values, however, begins with responses to questions about specific objects, followed by leaps to information about some broader aspect of culture. Unfamiliar objects such as ricing sticks, tikinagans, carrots of tobacco, pelt stretchers, and various furs lead to information on spiritual beliefs, gender roles, subsistence patterns, the mechanics of the fur trade in both Native and European worlds. A question about an interpreter's face paint turned into a discussion of Odawa-European relations and alliance; a question about a tikinagan turned into information about women's identity and roles, birth control and child rearing. Interpreters work hard to supply information that visitors

lack, both about props and about culture. This is also a way of asserting the worth and dignity of Native cultures to prejudiced non-Native tourists.

Fourthly, interpreters assert the technological competence and adaptability of their ancestors. Visitors commonly come into the lodge where the interpreter is and say, "It must have been cold in here in winter!"; interpreters always reply that it is much warmer in the lodge in winter than in the European buildings, and explain why.

The following is a very typical exchange on this topic, here between Keith Knecht

("K") at CM and a middle-aged female visitor ("FV"):

- K: You know, the soldiers don't like me to say this, but this is the warmest building in the fort in winter.
- FV: Really?
- K: Well, it's got a low ceiling, and it's pretty small. And the thing is, the house is the chimney. The heat as well as the smoke has to pass through the house, and it warms everything up. With a fireplace, you're sending all the good stuff up the chimney: the smoke goes up, but it takes [woman joins in] all the heat with it. So you actually got to get the hearth hot, and then it radiates the heat.
- FV: Yeah, but aren't you breathin' in all that smoke?
- K: No, it's not too bad--not too bad.
- FV: You gotta be smelling pretty good by the time you leave here!
- K: Oh, yeah--I smell like a smoked ham! But once the fire's going good, I can usually control and regulate the smoke by using the smoke flap up top and regulating the height of the door off the ground. So you're actually making the house into a flue.
- FV: Yeah, I see. What is that thing over there?

In response to questions such as "Did Indians really have scissors/cloth/beads back then?" interpreters say, "Oh yes, we traded for them" and then explain that these items were much easier to use or prepare than stone knives, hides, or porcupine quills. Some interpreters, such as Larry Young at CM, emphasize their point by saying, "You

might be just as likely to walk in here in the 1770s and see Native people eating off fine china! They could get anything they wanted that was brought in here for trade."² Interpreters also emphasize the fact that Europeans depended upon Native people for food as well as furs, and that the two peoples were interdependent, such as Nokie's line that "The men who are lucky are the men who are married, and they will live in a nice Ojibwa wigwam outside of the walls, which the wife will build, and [he] has a better life."

Finally, interpreters make statements which are intended to counter other prejudices that visitors commonly express. Sandra Goodsky, an Anishinabe interpreter and historical consultant who has worked at Pine City, included in her report for the site a list of points that should be made in all tours at the post. These included: the fact that Europeans were a minority at the site; the fact that Native people still exist; the fact that the palisade was not for defense; statements about the role of Native women in the fur trade [and that they were not whores]; information about the use of alcohol in the fur trade; and the perspective that the fur trade was just part of life for the Ojibwa [Goodsky 1993:121]. The trading session held at the Ojibwa encampment at OFW also made clear the fact that the Ojibwa were not "dupes" of European fur traders, and that they had a good deal of control over certain aspects of the trade:

² Some staff members, however, are clearly challenged by the implications of such objects for the stories they tell about Native people. One administrator was upset when I told Native interpreters that the women they portrayed might well have learned to knit from their Métis and European neighbours. The administrator wanted "her Indians" to do beadwork.

"En Derouine" Trading Session, Old Fort William

[Featuring the TRADER, in top hat and green velvet cutaway coat; his assistant, a VOYAGEUR with sash, carrying trade items; a TOURIST CHILD who helps the trader to decide on prices; KOKUM, an older Ojibwa woman in chemise, strap dress, leggings, and moccasins; and a YOUNG OJIBWA MAN (YM) in gartered trousers and voyageur shirt who translates for KOKUM. Action takes place in the Ojibwa encampment.]³

TRADER: [greetings and bowings and doffings of hat] ...the NWC does indeed spare no expenses in providing trade goods for our trade. Now, Kokum, as a sign of trust and respect, I offer to you a gift--a gift of beads, and a gift of tobacco, as I know how important tobacco is to you

Freda: MEEGWITCH! meegwitch! [Thank you, thank you]

YM: Kokum says thank you for the gift you have given us.

Trader: You are quite welcome, quite welcome indeed! Now I brought with me today, as I have mentioned, quite a number of trade goods, goods from all over the world...

Freda: [puts beads on, in paying no attention to trader:] MEEGWITCH! ...

YM: Kokum says thank you for these nice beads!

[Freda speaks in Ojibwa as she pokes at goods]

Trader: ...Fine ribbons, ribbons from England, excellent for decorating clothing...

[Freda points out something on a piece of cloth and talks in Ojibwa]

YM: She says it's dark on that side [points out large stain]

Trader: Well, it's a rather long journey some of these trade goods take from Montreal to Fort William, 6 weeks by canoe...

[Freda says something emphatically in Ojibwa]

YM: She says these [furs] come from far away too [i.e. and they're not stained!]

Trader: Yes, I know, gathering the peltries of the animals is no easy task!

[Freda, rather wheedling, in Ojibwa]

YM: She says, I work more than you people do, I trap and skin these furs-- it's a lot harder

Trader: Your hard work and toils are very much appreciated indeed!

[Freda pokes goods and talks in Ojibwa]

YM: How much for this?

Trader: A pitcher like that, valued at 2 beaver pelts [YM translates]

[Freda exclaims in Ojibwa]

³ Women did trade historically, both in camp and at posts, and there are accounts of female trading captains: see, for example, the sections on Ojibwa women's roles in Peers 1994.

YM: She says that's a little too much!

Trader: Two is too much. Well, what do you think would be reasonable?

Freda/YM: One beaver pelt.

Trader: One beaver pelt for the tin pitcher. [asks visitor girl: what do you think? one beaver pelt? she says YES] DONE!

Freda holds up ribbon and one finger: BEZHIG?

Trader: One? [checks with girl: one beaver pelt for that? she nods] Yes, one beaver pelt for that as well.

Freda/YM: One beaver pelt for BOTH! [audience laughs]

Trader: ohh...ohh...[checks with girl: what do you think?]

Freda/YM: These are very fine furs!

Trader: Yes, yes...these are quality pelts here [inspects Freda's furs]

[Freda in Ojibwa, gestures]

Trader: How many beaver are equal to one otter pelt? [Consults with girl] Each otter will be equal in value to one beaver pelt!

Freda: Kaawin! [Young man: Kokum says No.] FREDa gestures...

Trader: [watching Freda] Each pelt worth three beaver?! Oh, no!

[Freda stomps over to trader and snatches back her furs, starts walking away, says something in disgusted tone in Ojibwa.]

Trader: Upon further consideration, these are excellent quality otter pelts. I think we could settle upon a value of two beaver pelts for each otter. Does that sound reasonable?

[Consultation; trader repeats offer; they come to an agreement]

Trader: Are there any other wares here you would be interested in?

[Further bartering ensues over a blanket. Trader asks 12 beaver for it initially, received with amazement and an offer of 6 from Freda]

Trader: Oh, no. Eight!

Freda: [Sharp "Kaawin!"; long sentence with "Hudson's Bay Company" in English; moves to reclaim her furs again; crowd laughs]

YM: She says she's going to trade with those other people up-river.

Trader: Well, now, let's not be hasty...how about seven?

[Freda gets it for six in the end.]

This drama was not simply a hostile encounter; there were also acknowledgements of mutual dependencies. The drama kept a crowd of nearly a hundred transfixed for nearly twenty minutes, and conveyed a great deal about the autonomy of Native people in the trade, about their sense of self-worth, about their competence, about European dependence on Native people, and about real people and

human relationships in the trade.

The information that is communicated about Native people at these sites, therefore, asserts in various ways the worth and importance and humanness of Native people in the past. This is a new spin on the narrative shift noted by Edward Bruner, who states that prior to the 1960s the standard narrative about Native Americans was that the past was glorious, the present culturally disorganized, and the future a time of assimilation, and that after 1960 this narrative shifted to say that the past was a time of exploitation, the present was a resistance movement, and the future promised cultural revitalization [Bruner 1986:139]. At these sites we see a narrative in which the distant past was glorious, the recent past damaged by the effects of alcohol and government, and the present a time of cultural preservation and resurgence of traditions. There are reasons for these assertions at historic sites, as I will explore below, and I have no quarrel with the information that is presented at these sites. I do have some reservations about the information that is not presented.

Firstly, all of these sites emphasize alliance and interdependence between Native peoples and Europeans. While this was frequently true, it suggests that Native people acted as helpers in a dominant-society history of conquest and progress: the most important characters in this story are still Europeans. Also, this theme is intended to spread the message that Native people did not just randomly burn wagons and scalp, which is needed, but it avoids saying anything about Native resistance to colonization, or about their rejection of certain elements of European culture. SMAH has a drama in which Christian and traditional members of a Huron family debate whether to baptize

a dying child, but this is the only real suggestion of the darker sides of Native-White relations at any of the sites I studied. Portraying the more painful elements of one's history has traditionally been avoided by historic sites [Wallace 1985; Schlereth 1990:347-75]. Colonial Williamsburg's "Other Half" tour and a controversial re-enactment of a slave auction there are the most important of a handful of attempts around the continent to do so. Even when sites are willing to show these sides of history, it is difficult to find ways of doing so without creating degrading work environments for interpreters. Now that sites have established Native interpretation programs, though, they are beginning to consider these issues, and it will be interesting to see what sort of creative ideas they come up with.

My second reservation is that despite the messages about alliance [and, at fur trade sites, kinship] between Natives and Whites, these sites do not show interaction between peoples. The Native staff work at their stations outside the walls, and the other staff work at theirs inside the walls, and other than the trading dramas, they do not portray cross-cultural interaction. There is nothing to suggest kinship relations, which historically constituted a major reason for Native visits to such sites. Nor is there anything to suggest the understanding that some of these people acquired of each other's cultures, or the learning of each other's languages. Both the fur trade and missionization were meetings of minds and hearts as well as exchanges of commodities and ideas, and many Europeans learned to respect the Native people with whom they lived and worked. If sites do not show Natives and Europeans together, it is impossible to convey this to the public.

The information that Native interpreters communicate departs at certain points from that which a non-Native historian might provide. The trading session above is clearly being "hammed up" for the audience; furs were not, in fact, what Native people generally traded at OFW in 1815 [they worked as labourers and traded food, hides, canoes, and other country produce]; Native people did not use every single part of every single animal they killed; frybread was not made at OFW in 1815 [it would have been bannock]; and the bulk of the information conveys a pretty happy version of history: little mention is made of the injurious effects that contact with Europeans had on Native cultures.

The set of information used by Native interpreters has, however, evolved for a reason, which is not simply to communicate "authentic" period life and history, but to function as "historical "ammunition" ...to destroy [visitors'] preconceptions" [Gable and Handler 1993:29]. If visitors assume that Native technology was primitive and incompetent, Native interpreters assert that it worked better than European technology of the time in the North American environment. If visitors assume that Native people always live in the past, Native interpreters stress trade and adaptation as well as the notion of heritage as a living tradition which extends into the present. If visitors assume that Native people played unimportant roles in history, Native interpreters emphasize alliance and interdependence as the foundation for North American history. Such skirmishes are not only "about" the past, but also relate to Native-White relations in the present: Native interpreters are educating visitors to respect Native people. Their work involves challenging stereotypes which affect them in the present. From this

perspective, the use of elements of the living heritages of Native culture--including frybread and an ecologically-oriented spirituality--seems quite justified.

Gable and Handler criticise the use of such "historical ammunition" as producing discourse which was "a surreal pastiche rather than a sustained discussion," and because the narratives underlying the information were not discussed with visitors [1993:28]. I would argue that since visitors experience these sites in an uncontrolled and multisensory way, fragments of information are a useful form of communication; furthermore, I have seen many conversations in the encampments which I would certainly qualify as "sustained discussion." These sites simply do not lend themselves to traditional text- or lecture-based scholarly forms of communication. Furthermore, while the underlying narratives such as Native competence are not overtly mentioned, the conflict between tourist and Native discourses certainly brings them to the fore--and Native interpreters are quite aware of what the tourists' narratives are.

I am not simply condoning presentism here, or the use of inauthentic, simplistic, or heroic narratives about Native people in the past. Rather, I am acknowledging that my standards for history differ from those of many Native interpreters: the importance I place upon documentation and chronology and the fine, changing details of material culture is not always shared by those who are waging rather larger battles against ignorance, prejudice, and racism. We come at this work from very different cultural and personal positions; our stakes and our goals are by no means the same. As Alexander Wilson so aptly comments, "While authenticity is often a goal for the designers of historical museums, it is a notion irrelevant to a discussion of cultural

history. Contemporary culture and ideologies always intervene between people and historical objects" [1992:212]. A.J.B. Johnston, who has been interviewing First Nations scholars as part of his research on Parks Canada's portrayal of their histories, concludes that

language, customs and values are the stuff of First Nations history, not the particular changing details over time of clothing, housing or weaponry. The implication for sites which wish to interpret the history of a particular Native group is that the group may well want to talk more about their world view and less about the "things" to which its culture has often been reduced. "We are more than arrowheads," is how Marie Battiste [Mi'kmaq] put it." [Johnston 1994:7]

I confess that I did not understand this until I spent some time, in and out of costume, working with and observing Native interpreters on the sites. After being appalled by visitors' misinformed questions and astounded at the uniformly stereotyped goggles through which visitors view Native interpreters, my quibbles with costume details and house forms began to seem like arrogance. They are not, of course, and Native interpreters do understand the importance of correct historical detail [I can hear Freda McDonald reciting an early Standard of Trade; I can see Ruth Christie's face when, after a visit to the archives, I was able to give her her great-great-grandmother's first name]. But neither are they the alpha and omega of these sites that non-Native researchers often think they are.

Some interpreters--just like some non-Native interpreters--are keener historians than others, and have turned to archival documents and museum collections as well as seeking out elders for oral history and craft techniques. These people have a double educational mission: as well as educating non-Native people, they are dedicated to

educating themselves and other tribal people about the details of tribal history and material culture, which often get lost in today's more recent traditions of dress and belief [e.g. Carlson and McHalsie 1995]. They are also aware that their research and work are known to the traditional Native community, and their respect for the knowledge of elders motivates them to continue this work and to "get it right." Interpreters all make use of research conducted by the site and of scholarly sources provided by the site's library and handbooks; there has been relatively little dissent between oral history and written history in the encampments.

No matter how they derive their information, though, Native interpreters themselves largely determine what facts they will communicate to site visitors. They have very much taken ownership of the encampments, and so some of what they say to the public is not just the officially-sanctioned stories and information, but relates very much to a contemporary Native perspective on culture, heritage, and empowerment. I think that this is very important, and needs to be acknowledged and respected. Not everything that occurs at these sites has to do with the past, and the very different discourses of tourists and Native interpreters about Native people have a great deal to do with the present. People who are considered to have been inferior in the past are generally considered to be inferior in the present. By affirming the strength and worth of their cultures in the past, Native interpreters do so in the present. Native interpreters also deliberately "break frame," speak as contemporary individuals, to make the point that they still exist and that they demand to be dealt with on their own terms: these are not the performing noble savages, imagined and controlled by

non-Natives, of dominant society mytho-history as seen in Buffalo Bill's show [or the Mayers Ranch performance: see Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994:435]. And if "living history" is going to continue to be a viable form of communication, these sites are going to have to deal with the meanings of that phrase for the Native and minority peoples they depict.

Control thus becomes a crucial issue for Native interpreters and historic sites. As Kirsten Hastrup and Peter Elsass note, cultural survival "implies not the conservation of a preconceived identity anchored once and for all in an objectively existing (reified) culture but continuing control by the agents of a particular culture over the shaping of local history" [1990:306]. History only becomes frozen in amber through processes of social and political hegemony which deny other versions and the continuing impact of the past on the present. That Native interpreters have developed a distinctive style of interpretation and give sometimes oppositional versions of their sites' histories suggests that they have claimed--and have been accorded by non-Native site administrators--the authority to do so. In his study of the historic reconstruction at New Salem, Edward Bruner has focused on the relationship between authority and authenticity in representations of the past:

The concept of authority serves as a corrective to misuses of the term authenticity, because in raising the issue of who authenticates, the nature of the discussion is changed. No longer is authenticity a property inherent in an object, forever fixed in time; it is seen as a struggle, a social process, in which competing interests argue for their own interpretation of history [Bruner 1994:408].

The stakes in such struggles are crucial: heritage, David Lowenthal reminds us, is "essential to autonomy and identity" [1990:302]. Jonathan Friedman [1992:845-6]

notes, in a similar vein, that

populations have been known to mysteriously eradicate themselves from the face of the earth after losing their ontological foundations. So this is not a question of...truth-value and museological authenticity. It is, rather, a question of the existential authenticity of the subject's engagement in a self-defining project. The authentically constituted past is always about the transition from today to tomorrow.⁴

Native interpreters are using their personal, family, and community histories to challenge too-simple, exclusive, linear national histories; they are struggling to replace popular narratives about primitive and vanishing Indians with "stories of revival, remembrance, and struggle" [Clifford 1991:214]: ideas about competence, adaptability, dignity, even superiority. "We are playing ourselves," they tell us: "we are still here."

These people have to be deeply dedicated to their work to come back day after day after each barrage of ignorant comments. Their work involves facing, on a daily basis, the kind of prejudice that has haunted their ancestors for centuries. Their commitment is such that they are also prepared to face such attitudes off-site. At CM, Keith Knecht shaved his head except for his scalplock, and Annette Naganashe had her ears pierced with a whole row of holes, in the interest of historical authenticity, knowing full well that they would be subject to some harassment from the public in their off-duty lives. What keeps them going is pride in their heritage and identity, and a sense that fighting prejudice is part of the larger battle for self-determination.

For some Native interpreters, "self-determination" has had a literal meaning. Some of the senior interpreters with whom I spoke were adopted as young children

⁴ And see Doxtator 1988:66-68 on the implications and dynamics of being forced--or refusing--to live up to non-Native expectations of "Indians."

and raised in a non-Native environment, or spent much of their lives exiled from their communities. Working at historic sites has been crucial to these individuals in discovering [or regaining] and accepting their Native identities. Freda McDonald, who had lost her status and been forced to leave the reserve and her family when she married a white man, "took one look at [the OFW encampment] and knew that this was where I wanted to work. It was as if, after all those years in exile, I'd come home. A few days later, I started work as an Indian" [quoted in Wilkins 1994:70].

The Politics of Site Administration

Freda McDonald "started work as an Indian" in a bureaucratic institution that is run by the dominant society and which still, to a degree, reflects in its messages and its organizational structure the traditional relations of power between Europeans and Native peoples. And, as Gable and Handler have observed, representations of the past at historic sites are created--and should be analyzed--within the politics of site administration [1993:26]. These politics have changed remarkably in the last few decades, and while there are pockets of what one might regard as administrative hegemony, it is very interesting to see how attitudes have evolved on staff, and how Native staff have been both incorporated into an existing administrative structure and have changed these institutions.

Native interpreters are a recent addition to historic sites, and their presence reflects the shifting politics of contemporary Native-White relations and the shifting interpretations of North American history. Many heritage agencies, particularly in

Canada, have been mandated in the past decade to establish partnerships with Native peoples and procedures through which Native advisors review policy guiding the interpretation at historic sites. Heritage Canada's current guidelines state that "Parks will involve First Peoples in the presentation and interpretation of places, objects and historical information to which they are traditionally related" [Parks Canada 1995:3; see also the "National Historic Sites Systems Plan Review," Heritage Canada 1992]. OFW has a Native Advisory Board, and other sites are working to establish similar groups to link the site and the local Native community.

Such initiatives have not all come from "head office"; they have often been developed by site administrators. In the past six years, most of these sites have commissioned reports or solicited input from Native consultants on the themes, interpretive messages, and operation of the sites. Pine City commissioned a report on the fur trade from an Ojibwa perspective from Sandra Goodsky, a Native interpreter and consultant; LFG put together an oral history project; CM hired Anishinabe consultant Wes Andrews to provide input for exhibition planning. There are many non-Native administrators at these sites who sincerely want to increase Native perspectives in their programming, because they embrace recent revisionist scholarship and believe the time has come to do this. On the other hand, there have been some "bumps" in the process of incorporating Native staff and perspectives at historic sites.

To begin with, recruiting Native people has been difficult. Native people are suspicious of these sites because the sites have traditionally ignored their perspectives and given a European-oriented view of history. They also still tend to look on the

government with suspicion, and these sites are government-funded. To overcome such attitudes, sites have taken measures to create relationships with Native communities and inform them of their changing perspectives. Thus, OFW hosts a summer festival called "Ojibway Keeshigan," which brings in hundreds of Native people for a pow-wow, craft demonstrations, and other heritage-oriented activities, and LFG has begun to host a major Native art show. While these events are extraneous to a historic site's primary purposes, they serve very well to establish new ties with a politicized, critical Native community and to make contacts with potential employees.

Administrators have also had to develop new methods to recruit Native people. Traditional means of advertising for jobs--in major papers or on university bulletin boards--reach only a tiny percentage of Native people, and site administrators have typically not had much knowledge about working with Native communities. One administrator responded to my suggestion that in order to find suitable Native applicants it was necessary to forge general links with Native communities by attending pow-wows, inviting elders and band council leaders for special tours of the site, and so forth, by saying simply that these activities were not in his job description. They certainly were not part of his concept of "hiring procedures." Other administrators made it clear that they had developed special recruitment schemes that used pow-wows, cultural centres, and kinship networks to advertise positions.

Once hired, Native interpreters are usually a minority on staff at historic sites. Sites have between two and fifteen Native staff who constitute from one-tenth to one-third of the total summer interpretive staff. Historically, the proportions were always

reversed: these places were small islands of Europeans in a sea of Native people. Native interpreters are keenly aware of this patterned minimization in the representation of their cultures and of the history depicted at their sites. They know it is historically inaccurate, and they interpret the situation as a lack of real commitment on the part of site administration. They say that because Native history is "in" academically and politically, administrators will say that they support Native interpretation to funding agencies, government heritage departments, and Native political activists in the community, but then fail to follow up by hiring Native staff or by funding the Native areas of the site sufficiently. This has become the greatest source of frustration for Native interpreters at historic sites. Some are openly calling it tokenism, and clearly feel, as Ivan Karp has expressed it, that

in exhibitions that celebrate cultural achievement, the very fact that the achievements of people of color are ignored introduces implicit messages about their worth. A hierarchy of cultures is erected, in which those worth examining are separated from those that deserve to be ignored. Racial imagery and ethnocentrism can be communicated by what is not exhibited as well as by what is [Karp 1992:24].

At each site, interpreters grilled me about the state of other Native encampments at other sites, and all of them asked me if the other encampments were as small [in the phrase of one interpreter, "skimpy"] as theirs.

Such frustrations are not true at all sites. They are greatly influenced by the specific personalities and overall processes of development involved at each site. At CM, the two interpreters with their few structures are truly frustrated by what they see as tokenism, and I see little evidence that the situation is going to change there soon. At another site, there was a political tempest caused by the site spending millions of

dollars on physical revamps to the European areas, but not a penny on the Native encampment. This was not intentional; there was a gap in communication between the encampment staff and administration, and administrators failed to notice either the gap or the encampment's needs. After complaints from visitors the following spring, money was found to revamp the encampment and hire artisans to produce furnishings and display items. The incident suggests that cultural differences can contribute to such problems, perhaps by producing suspicion or uncertainty about the intentions of administrative channels and frustrations with bureaucratic process.

Interpreters' frustration also has to do with their lack of control over the budget for their areas, which is in turn related to a division at these sites between Native staff, who are generally hired as summer interpreters, and non-Native staff, who include virtually all supervisory and full-time positions. This is beginning to change, though slowly [all staffing is limited right now because of cutbacks] and with some pushing on the part of Native staff. One Native interpreter's application for a different position on site was initially refused because, in administration's words, his appearance was too valuable to lose on site. While even he agreed that he made "a great Indian" in historic costume, it took some insistence for administrators to take his request seriously. This was an isolated incident, however; most sites would welcome the opportunity to fulfil their mandates and equal-opportunity laws if a Native staff member applied for such a position. Three of the sites that I studied now include one Native or Métis supervisor or administrator. This has an effect on the Native summer staff, for they need a representative with power within the administration to argue for their priorities when

budgets are drawn up. Again, this is beginning to happen, but Native interpreters feel frustrated that while they do submit wish lists and argue for priorities, it is non-Native senior site managers who finalize grant requests and budget allocations.

At a few sites, there are special tensions in the relationship between Native staff and non-Native supervisors. When Native staff really take ownership of their areas, they are sometimes reluctant to accept efforts by supervisors to control the content of their interpretation. The corollary of this is that supervisors are sometimes reluctant to insist that inaccuracies in Native interpretation be ironed out, or that Native interpreters' messages conform to those of the non-Native interpreters, for fear that the Native staff will take this as a usurpation of their authority and create political waves through the local Native community. These conflicts are not generally between documentary and oral sources for period details or activities, although there have been a few instances of that. Rather, they have been over Native versus non-Native authority to determine the content of Native interpretation. When challenged with such discrepancies, Native staff are quick to point out that they are telling their own history, that they will tell it in their own way, and that while they appreciate guidance and research, they will not be told what to say. Some administrators are endeavouring to deal with this by creating management partnerships which involve members of the local community and senior Native interpreters. These are in their infancy, however, and largely an informal management technique rather than something plotted out in a chain of command.

Other tensions are expressed in negatively-phrased comments which indicate that

there is a less than perfect fit between a heritage bureaucracy and Native staff. Non-Native staff with whom I spoke were all aware that there were "cultural differences" between Native and non-Native staff, and that these resulted in a rather different kind of interpretation in the Native encampments, but still tended to describe these differences in negative terms. Native interpreters, I was told, did not stick to the historic themes of the site which interpreters were supposed to impart; did not work "in character"; never lasted at sites where first-person interpretation was used; had to be disciplined because they sometimes wore or used items that were not in period; and disobeyed site rules [based on provincial or state health regulations] about feeding period cooking to visitors. I was also told that Native staff could be difficult to deal with because they often refused to be bound by official bureaucratic structures and demanded to deal with top-level management, or demanded changes immediately rather than making proposals through ordinary channels to plan and then implement change over several seasons, in accordance with budget planning and allocation. These differences were not concentrated at any one site; a few people at each site expressed one or more of these ideas. There seems still to be a low-key but widespread perception at historic sites that Native staff do not "fit in."

This lack of fit was also expressed by Native staff. At one site, non-Native women have been hired every summer to portray Métis and Native wives of fur trade employees who worked within the palisades. Native staff told me that real Métis and Native people should be hired for those positions. Others felt that some non-Native staff did not know [or care] "what history was really like, what really happened," that

they were happy to learn and pass on a sanitized, European-oriented view of the past. Some of these tensions were certainly due to the lack of knowledge on the part of non-Native interpreters who had never worked with Native people or studied Native history before. Staff training might take this into account, and make use of exercises designed to build relationships among staff--which might then extend to the portrayal of historic relationships between Natives and Europeans. As well, staff training still does not acknowledge the special nature of the work that Native interpreters do, or their need to respond to racist comments--nor does it mention that these are made daily by visitors.

These tensions certainly did not hold true for all sites: several showed a remarkable sense of teamwork and mutual trust, and one site administrator said that he had worked hard to rid non-Native staff of what he called an "office folklore" that held that Native people were clannish, aloof, and difficult to work with. At one site, where non-Native interpreters portray Native people, there is respect between Native and non-Natives inside the encampment and throughout the staff. Also, relations between Native and non-Native interpreters are generally excellent. Debbie Keeper, a Native interpreter at LFG, said that "the other people in the fort stick up for us, you know. Like when people refer to us as squaws...some of the other characters, like the people in the fur loft, will say "Well that's not the term that we use." Indeed, non-Native interpreters constantly backed up the basic information and perspectives communicated by Native interpreters, such as in this exchange in the Great Hall at OFW:

Male visitor: Did the men here "take advantage" of the Native women?

Interpreter: Oh no, without them we'd be nothing: they taught us how to make canoes, and survive.

Here the non-Native interpreter has ignored the stereotype raised by the visitor, and reinforced information that the visitor may already have received in the encampment. This goodwill is also present at sites which have made the difficult decision when facing deep budgetary cuts, to maintain the level of Native staff while decreasing non-Native interpretive and administrative positions.

Most challenging of all the changes that the incorporation of Native staff has involved has been the establishment of relationships between local Native communities and historic sites. I alluded to this above regarding hiring practices, but it goes much farther than that. Where once these sites served the dominant society by presenting a version of history that reinforced the self-image and power structures of that society, some sites are now making a conscious effort to serve Native communities as well. Again, this has much to do with the specific personalities and conjuncture of events and wider politics at each site. A comparison of two sites gives a sense of how these relationships are changing.

At CM, local White townspeople have held a pageant each year for some twenty-five years which re-enacts the capture of the fort by Native people in 1763. The pageant, which features local Whites dressed up in red coats or Hallowe'en-style "Indian wigs," turns the very painful conflict into a caricature, including getting the audience to laugh when someone is "scalped" and has his wig pulled off. When the

site commissioned a report from a Native American consultant on how to develop working relations with local bands and how the site might approach the representation of Native perspectives on the past, the consultant noted in his report that:

Some Anishnawbek stated that they will not go to any of the exhibits, facilities or activities of the MISPC [Mackinac Island State Park Commission] because of the negative attitude generated in the past and from the continued policy by MISPC in regard to the exhibits and activities, especially the reenactment of the 1763 capture...The continuation of the reenactment by the non-Anishinawbek community at the fort is an issue that will sustain negative tensions on the MISPC's relationship with most of the conservative element of the Anishinawbek in northern Michigan. Also the exhibit within the fort which has several panels that focus on the capture of the fort in 1763...should be removed and redesigned to inform the viewing public of the Anishinawbek context for that event. Until something is done about this issue, the Anishinawbek believe that the MISPC is not taking their concerns seriously [Andrews 1995:n.p.].

The site realizes how offensive the pageant is to Native people, but is unwilling to broach the subject to the organizers. Nor is it willing to close down the offensive exhibition or to find money to add panels explaining Native motivations for the 1763 attack. This position undermines both the morale of CM's Native staff members, and the site's verbal commitment to incorporating Native perspectives.

In contrast to this, Armin Webber, the former director of OFW, told me that he "would like to see that people are aware that 50% of the Native encampment is to serve the needs of the Native community, and 50% is to serve the [site's] needs" [1994: personal communication]. Webber was extremely proud of the fact that Native staff had really taken ownership of the encampment and were starting to bring visiting friends and family to see it, and that Native people came to the Ojibwa Keeshigan festival to learn about historic cultural practices that they could not see at pow-wows or other kinds of gatherings. Webber's comment on the encampment is very powerful:

it began, he says, as

a well-researched display, just like any other place [in the fort], and we hired Natives to man the display. And the display was operated... dramatized...And [then] 3 or 4 years ago...Natives took ownership of that encampment in a different way than had ever happened before. And they all of a sudden wanted to bring their friends out like the white people do to see the fort when the visitors are in town...and share with them their encampment, their heritage. And if that [the encampment] didn't look like it was comfy, like your home would be--do you know the difference between your home and a display? Well, that's what happened. They said, "I don't want a display. I want [it to look like] a home.

And that's what happened. And I stepped back and said, "the Native development in Canada is so important right now, it's [the community] going through so many convulsions, we are not here to fight that trend.

Webber and some of his colleagues are at least beginning to talk about using these sites to support Native self-determination, as their Native interpreters are, and allow their Native staff a great degree of autonomy in developing encampments and interpretive messages. In a related vein, the Sto:lo First Nation sees Fort Langley National Historic Site in B.C. as a resource to learn and teach about historic culture before twentieth-century pan-Indian influences, and is establishing special tours and training workshops at the fort for Sto:lo people; they also see the site as an important place to raise awareness about the importance of Native people in local history [Carlson and McHalsie 1995].

This is a real shift in intent for these places, and signals drastic changes in conceptualizing and operating historic sites. Armin Webber and other administrators at these places who are encouraging such developments are not, as Gable and Handler [1993:27] found at Williamsburg, "interested mainly in managing an image of openness and debate rather than participating in discussions they could not control."

They are slowly--and sometimes painfully, with many false starts and misunderstandings--feeling their way into a new way of thinking about these places. Other administrators still find it easier to deal with the politics of heritage agencies and government departments than to venture far along the unfamiliar and less controllable road of creating relationships with Native communities.

These issues are very much in process and sometimes quite painful for staff members at these sites, who care very much about their work and form tight friendships as well as productive professional relations. I have deliberately avoided giving names of people and sites when describing the sharpest examples of contention. These sites are places of constant change, revision, and negotiation between staff members and their various versions of the past and their goals. There are simply too many agendas at too many levels for me to believe whole-heartedly in the single truth of the notion of some single, hegemonic plan at these sites, designed to reinforce the power of non-Native dominant society and maintain the sociopolitical status quo of Native life and Native-White relations: neither history nor its re-creation has ever been so simple.

Conclusion

While there are some holdovers of older power relations on these sites [the small numbers of Native interpreters and administrators, the lack of control by Native staff over budgets and other areas of the sites], they show a remarkable willingness to allow Native staff to communicate information and messages that are important to

them, and to develop links with local Native communities. Sites are beginning to move away from their traditional portrayal of history from the perspective of the dominant society. The work that Native interpreters do in challenging such perspectives and stereotypes is extremely important in this process; it adds a personal and immediate dimension to more distanced revisionist scholarship. But how are these new perspectives received by visitors? Who comes to these sites, and what happens to them as they walk through? Most importantly, what happens during the encounters between Native interpreters and visitors? I will explore these questions in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: "Go stand with the squaw and I'll take your picture": Visitors and Native Encampments

There are three images that stand out when I recall my fieldwork for this project. The first is of a young child, probably about five years old, leaning out of the window at a historic site. It is an upstairs window of a European building, with split shutters to each side; the child framed in the open window looks absurdly like a puppet in a puppet theatre. The child is wearing a dyed-turkey-feather headdress and is waving a plastic tomahawk. Angelic blonde hair, cute features--and already steeped in the stereotypes that pervade North American society about "Indians." He is playing Indian. All of the authentically reconstructed buildings, all of the costumed interpreters who enact "real" history, become stage set and supporting cast for this child, who is so confident of his lines, his role, and the play.

The second image is of an older, probably pre-teen boy, in the wagon at the Native encampment of another historic site. The boy is in T-shirt, jeans, sneakers, baseball cap: he is eagerly questioning the Native interpreter, who is in period costume. The boy is intense, asking question after question: he is seeking something here. All of his questions are misinformed, as if he has read much but has had access only to second-rate information, or Hollywood movies. As the interpreter corrects him, point by point, the kid doesn't back off, doesn't retreat into sulks or defensive hostility at being told he's wrong. He keeps asking questions; he wants to know. Shards of stereotypes pile up around their feet. The kid stays for at least twenty minutes; it's an amazing encounter. When he finally thanks the interpreter and leaves, the interpreter

[to follow p. 183]



Figure 6: Keith Knecht. Interpreter. Colonial Michilimackinac
Photograph by Drew Davey; reproduced with permission.

turns to me and says. "That is why I keep working here!"

The final image is of a group of Mennonite visitors walking through the gates of a palisade and staring at the Native interpreter who happened to be the first thing they saw. The Mennonites were all in plain dress, the men with long beards and distinctive hats, the women in bonnets and without buttons on their dresses. They themselves were being stared at by other, non-Mennonite families. The Mennonites were staring--as at a Martian--at Keith Knecht, an Odawa interpreter who sports a shaven head and scalplock, nose-ring, multiple earrings, breechclout, ruffled 18th-century shirt, moccasins, and face paint. The Mennonites literally stopped in their tracks for a good minute to take in this sight; as they looked, mothers unconsciously reached down and grabbed their children's hands. Finally, as a group, they walked on, the adults' faces pointedly turned to the next part of the site, the children all with their heads turned toward the interpreter as their mothers dragged them along.

These scenes express what goes on at historic sites that feature Native history: the confirmation and challenging of standard historical narratives, myths, and stereotypes about Native people and Native-White relations in the past. I have suggested in earlier chapters that these sites act as stage sets for the performance of a dominant-society history and of the "proper" relations between Native people and Europeans. I have also noted that Native staff challenge such narratives by asserting their own and their ancestors' humanity, worth, dignity, and importance. What happens when visitors enter these sites and experience both the reconstructed "stage sets" which

evoke standard historical narratives and the Native staff who refute these?

Tourism has generated a huge literature on visitor motivations and behaviour, covering a range of phenomena from the average distance visitors travel to get to a site and the amount they spend while there, to more analytical studies which treat tourism as a special kind of ethnic relations or which examine the relations of power or the cultural expectations inherent in tourist encounters. The dynamics of visitor responses at historic sites to Native interpreters seem to fall between much of this work, and I accordingly draw on studies covering ethnic tourism, heritage tourism, tourist behaviour, and case studies of specific tourism environments to create a framework within which to analyze my field data.

Some of the literature on tourism claims that tourists desire authenticity from their activities, that tourists attempt "to overcome the discontinuity of modernity" [MacCannell 1976:13; see also MacCannell 1984] by viewing historic sites that seem storied, coherent, and whole [Handler and Saxton 1988]. Other than serious collectors, historians, and anthropologists, however, I do not believe that the majority of visitors to historic sites really seek carefully documented authenticity, either of self or of historic furnishings; nor do they want the storied whole. They are content with vignettes and what Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994:449 call "tourist realism," which is simply what tourists consider to be "authentic" elements of Native cultures. The notion of "tourist realism" is a helpful one, though, and leads to the question of why tourists see certain things as real or authentic. What are tourists looking for when they look at tourist sights? What most people come to historic sites for is

entertainment and the opportunity of a wholesome [i.e. educational, patriotic], family-oriented activity. Visitors also, as Bruner notes, and as I will discuss below, indulge in nostalgia and the utopian values they associate with the past, and reinforce historical narratives which support their identities. As Bruner concludes, "These experiences go well beyond a search for authenticity" [1994:398].

One concept from the literature on the anthropology of tourism that I have found useful is the notion of the "tourist gaze"--although in the end I find this idea, like that of a uniform and wholly hegemonic public memory, only partially true. The "tourist gaze" [Urry 1990] is a manner of looking at sights by a privileged and powerful tourist class. The tourist gaze involves differential relations of power between the gazer and that which is gazed upon, and it is informed and shaped by a discourse about the object of the gaze: as John Urry says, drawing on Foucault, the tourist gaze is "socially organised and systematised" [1990:1]. This is especially true of the Western gaze on non-Western people. When a white tourist looks at a Native interpreter, a member of the dominant class looks at a member of a less privileged and powerful minority group, and what the white tourist sees is not just a person dressed in costume but "an Indian," an example of an exotic category that has long existed as a discourse within the Western world [and see Urry 1990:3: "The gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs"]. As with Orientalism, the Western discourse on Native people has much to do with domination and maintaining control over Others [Said 1978:3].

The concept of "the tourist gaze" and its particular importance in inter-ethnic

looking becomes very relevant to this study when we realize that the vast majority of visitors to historic sites are white, middle-class individuals with more education and higher pay than the North American average: members of the Western elite. A tourist, in fact, is defined as "a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change" [Smith 1978:2]--and "leisured" implies "monied": wealth and vacations go together [Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994:436; Prentice 1990:54-58]. In a 1995 visitor study done at CM, 94.3% of the visitors were white [Korn 1995]. This figure is backed up by figures from Colonial Williamsburg [Gable, Handler and Lawson 1992:792, 803], which suggested that visitors there were "overwhelmingly white." My own field observations also support this. Furthermore, these visitors are more highly-educated than the average person [CM: 34% have some post-secondary education, 24.5% have postsecondary degree; Williamsburg: 60% had college degree]. They are also wealthier than most people. At Williamsburg, 58% had a household income of \$50,000 or more, and in surveys done within the British heritage tourism industry, researchers found that "heritage users are almost always disproportionately likely to be from non-manual worker households than from manual households, and within the non-manuals, to be from professional or senior managerial households" [Prentice 1993:227, 54-58]. The British study concluded that "heritage users" were distinguished by the uniformity of their social class [1990:227]. These places are largely visited by members of the dominant society.

Minority groups do visit these sites, but seldom as regular visitors. Mennonites are among the largest regular visitors from minority groups; it is fairly common to see

people in plain dress on site. The sites appeal to such religious groups because they are perceived as wholesome family entertainment and because they suggest some of the religious, cohesive communities of the frontier past that resonate with these people. Middle-class African-Americans sometimes visit these sites; one family I spoke with at CM indicated that they wished their children to see a site of national historic importance and that they felt it was an appropriate family activity. Most minority visitors, however, come on special tours and programs and are given specially-prepared tours by senior interpreters: the sites try their best to accommodate nontraditional audiences. LFG hosts a new-citizen swearing-in ceremony because of the fort's importance as a national historic site, and people who participate in this ceremony often bring their families and visitors to the site afterwards. A group of Buddhist monks, resplendent in saffron robes and matching Birkenstock sandals, also toured LFG during my stay there; again, they were being shown a "national history" site.

Native people seldom visit these sites. Of the tens of thousands of visitors I observed, I saw three families who were obviously Native. Native interpreters confirmed this; they uniformly said that they had very few such visitors. Native people visit the sites on either special tours [such as Native school children on class trips: LFG gets many of these]; or because they are related to a Native interpreter and have personally been invited to visit the interpreter at work. These patterns seemed to be true even at Waswagoning, the Native-run site on the Lac du Flambeau reservation. On the day I visited, the only Native visitors were the Chief and a few Band Councillors, who were showing some non-Native officials around the reservation. The owners of

Waswagoning expressed the hope that the site would become a place for Native people to learn about their past.

These patterns of Native visitation should not be surprising. Museums and historic sites have always been associated with the dominant society and with its point of view [and see Meeker 1984:132-33]. These places have been, from their inception, deliberately intended to reinforce or inculcate the values, beliefs, and norms of that society: indeed, groups such as schoolchildren, recent immigrants, visitors from foreign countries are often brought to these sites to "teach them about Canada/America," our past and our way of life [and see Bruner 1994:409]. Why should Native people visit these places if the message they receive is that their people were savage, or unimportant in history? Living history arose out of a desire to celebrate the victory of non-Native, dominant society in achieving control over the continent; why would it appeal to the descendants of those who were dispossessed as the result of the events depicted at these sites?

Furthermore, some of the history depicted at these places is very painful for Native people [Larry Young, personal communication, CM]. Every summer at SMAH, a few Huron--whose ancestors fled the site and vicinity with the Jesuits in 1649, ending up as refugees in Quebec where they live today--visit the site "as a sort of pilgrimage," in the words of one Native interpreter. They tend to identify themselves as Huron to the Native interpreters, and it is clearly important to them to be there, but it is a distressing site to them. What would have been their fate had they not accepted the presence of the Jesuits in order to gain access to French trade goods? Would the

epidemics have been as devastating? Would they have been able to resist the Iroquois? Would they still be living in their homeland? "You can often tell they're Huron before they tell you," said one interpreter; "they just have this look in their eyes."

The majority of visitors to these sites, then, are members of the dominant society. Given the patterned diminution of the representation of Native people at these sites, and the messages this pattern projects about the relative power and importance of Europeans over Native people in the past, one could easily conclude that these sites merely reflect and reinforce social structure, including the domination of Native peoples by peoples of European descent [Norkunas 1993:8,26; Horne 1984:2]. In this reading, tourists who visit these sites "effectively consent to this symbolic domination" and enact it in their behaviour, comments, and gazing [Norkunas 1993:8]. As we shall see, this does happen to some extent. However, visitors' assumptions about Native people and the relations of power between Native peoples and Europeans are directly challenged by interpreters at these sites: there are opportunities for revision and learning here as well.

The literature on tourism and the tourist gaze fails to consider the gaze of exiled Huron, or the other responses by both minority and dominant-society visitors to these sites. The gaze of the Mennonites at Keith Knecht, and the gaze of the fascinated pre-teen child, are very different. This literature similarly fails to consider that the gaze may be returned by those who are gazed upon. If the tourist gaze is informed and shaped by a discourse about the object of the gaze, Native staff refute the discourse, refuse to be the symbols that tourists assume they are, and gaze--and talk--right back.

In the following sections, I wish to examine how visitors respond to these sites, and to challenging encounters with Native interpreters.

Tourists at historic sites

Huron pilgrims returning to a lost homeland; Budweiser-shirted, videocam-toting dads; Mennonites in family and community groups; schoolchildren; guests from Europe and Japan: there are many reasons that people come to these sites, and they bring many expectations and desires with them. They may be scholars of history, or have learned what they know about the past from movies or novels. They may be basically disinterested in the past, or look to it for answers to crucial questions in their lives.

Visitors come to these sites for a number of reasons which are remarkably consistent. Prentice [1990:78-83] states that in Britain, people visit heritage sites because they are seen as suitable activities for children on family holidays; because visitors are interested in local history; because they are curious about the place/lifestyle/early technology shown on site; because they have an appreciation of architecture/period furnishings; or because they have a general interest in castles/historic sites. I would add to this a large number of visitors who become interested in a place or period through novels and movies: hundreds of Europeans visit North American sites every summer expecting to see the characters of Karl May's novels, and many North American visitors read romances or thrillers set on various frontiers.

Prentice dismisses the notion that general nostalgia is an important hook for "heritage users," saying that this is too broad a category [1990:81]. I think he is too quick to do this, though, and I also think that North American historic reconstructions do attract visitors for this reason. Edward Bruner's work on New Salem has led him to conclude that the majority of tourists seek certain experiences and kinds of knowledge, some of which act as confirmations of their identity and way of life. Bruner states that most visitors to New Salem learn about the past, play with the juxtaposition of time frames involved in visiting the site and interacting with costumed interpreters; "consume nostalgia for a simpler bygone era"; reaffirm their sense of progress by comparing past ways of life with their own; and celebrate what they see as "the values and virtues of small-town America": "honest values, good neighbors, hard work, virtue and generosity, the success ideology, and the sense of community in small-town America" [1994:411]. I found these reasons to be true for many visitors. Visitors expressed the nostalgic attraction of these sites to me quite directly:

me [at CM]: Did you stop at the Native encampment? what did you see there that was particularly interesting?

male visitor: I liked the skins and that, that they slept on, I found that interesting

female companion: I just liked it all, I liked the fireplaces, I just like the old-fashioned fires burning, smells good, nature...

me [at LFG]: Can you tell me what this place was?

visitor [European couple, heavy Italian? or Spanish? accent]: "Museo! I like!

woman: I like because I remember something...

man: Old-fashioned...

woman: Old, old, old-- I think of grandma, my great-grandma, all the times, you know--that's why I like it!

Visitors' preconceptions and the sites' presentation of themselves leads many visitors to view these places quite nostalgically. They locate a utopian society in the pioneer past that they visit at these sites [and see Wilson 1992:205]: a place when life was simpler, the pace slower, communities were closely-knit and supportive, when the family was whole, when children were innocent, when hard work could make one a financial success, when the air was cleaner and streams safe to drink from. [They seldom question whether this place and time existed.] In this view, log cabins are cozy symbols of our ancestors' determination, piety, and family values; blacksmiths and spinners represent the rural, home-based artisan before control over production passed to industrialized factories and urban settings. So popular and important are these symbols that you will find a log cabin, a blacksmith, and someone using a spinning wheel at virtually every North American historic reconstruction. Of "spectacle" generally and the fact that it is often deeply symbolic and meaningful to the public, William Beeman notes: "It is almost as if the mere event of displaying these symbolic representative elements in a special framed context is enough to elicit strong positive emotional responses from the observing public" [Beeman 1993:380]. Judging from visitors' enthusiastic and sometimes emotional responses to such elements of historic sites, I would say this is true.

But what are the meanings of Native people and Native encampments for visitors? If these, too, are "symbolic representative elements," what do they represent? If visitors see the reconstruction of their ancestors' ways of life through nostalgic and utopian lenses, how do they view the reconstruction of Native ways of life? I would

say that at sites where there are Native people and palisades, "pioneer" takes on the connotations of "frontier," and the lenses through which non-Native people regard Native interpreters are coloured by the frontier's symbolic contrasts between Native and non-Native cultures; by expectations and stereotypes about the exoticism of Native people [either their savagery and primitive nature, or their noble and mystical nature]; and by the dominant society's view of the frontier as a rightful extension of control over the wilderness and its Native peoples. These perceptions are reflected in the 1995 visitor survey at CM, where visitors stated that when they entered the fort they expected to see: "firing of cannons," 28%; "history," 38.5%; "soldiers," 25%, "Indians," 19.8%; "invasions of Fort/war," 33% [Korn 1995:4-6].

Visitors also make statements to both Native and non-Native interpreters expressing their assumptions of frontier dynamics. Some of these have been quoted in the chapter on staff. Many of these comments are clearly derived from an American, Hollywood-Western kind of "knowledge" about Native people and historic Native-White relations. [German tourists wanting to enact Karl May novels fall into this category too.] These include:

-the child with the plastic tomahawk, described at the beginning of this chapter. In an incident at another site, a child wearing a fringed vest, beaded belt, and bolo tie peered in to the lodge and said, "Hey, this is neat!" to which his mom replied, "Just like in the movies!"

-statements expressing the assumption of hostile relations between Natives and Europeans at the site [visitor comment, semi-joking tone: "Aren't you afraid of those Indians?" or "you don't let them in here, I hope?"; most simply ask what the walls were for, or if the company "had a fight with the Indians"] [and see Goodsky 1993:122]

-interpreter dresses visitor in capot, tells him, "There, now you're dressed like an Indian!"; he gives war whoop [also commonly seen and heard: adults as well as children breaking into war whoops as they approach encampment. Interpreters call it "that white kid noise."]

-child showing fear in response to male Native interpreter in costume

-visitors make comments indicating that they assume that the Native women worked as whores for the white men inside the palisade [variant, especially when Native women interpreters are rotated to work as "maids" inside the walls: visitors assume they were "slaves." At Pine City, I asked a visitor, "What about the women in the strap dresses here? who are they supposed to be?" and he answered, "[laughs] the wenches!...they were basically here to cook and clean and sew...you know."

-visitor approaches lodge, telling boy that interpreter "would scalp him...Indians scalped all the time!"

-questions to Native interpreters: are you a[n Indian] princess? or, Are you Pocahantas? where's your braves/chief?

-visitor to wife: go stand with the squaw and I'll take your picture

What visitors do on site, though, both confirms and challenges such beliefs.

Visitors see, touch, and hear things which brings their prior knowledge [however incorrect this may be] into play, but they also encounter new objects and new information. In the Introduction, I used the "Betty and Bob" sketch to suggest the ways in which visitors experience historic sites. I would now like to examine those processes in greater detail, and then explore interaction between visitors and Native interpreters.

Visitors interact with historic sites in different ways, just as they seek different kinds of knowledge, affirmation, and experiences from their visits. Stephen Snow's [1993:162] description of three basic kinds of visitors to historic sites rings true with my experiences. Most visitors, he suggests, come for the entertainment value, for

diversion; they express most of all a sense of "fun, pleasure, play, relaxation, joking." The "best" visitors [from an interpreter's perspective] are what he calls experiential, motivated by a desire to learn and by aesthetic appreciation of the reconstruction; they are inspired by what they see and learn. A few visitors fall into a category that Snow calls "modern Pilgrims": visiting the site is a pilgrimage for them, and they feel a profound sense of personal, religious and cultural identification with the inner lives of the historic people represented at the site.

The visitor's journey through the site begins on the final approach to the site, on the far side of the gateway. Some reconstructions are surrounded by urban streets named after historical figures commemorated at the site, or by businesses offering souvenirs related to the site. At CM, the street opposite the fort includes a shop offering postcards, t-shirts, and the local specialty, fudge. The shop has a mock palisade facade, complete with fake bastions: "Fort Fudge," a metaphor for what happens all too frequently at and around these sites: the reduction of real historical information at the sites into stock, cartoon-like characters and stereotypes [and see Snow 1993:81-83]. Other sites feature less blatant framing. After passing the Voyageur Bottle [Liquor] Shop in Pine City, one swings off the highway and drives along a country lane, then parks in a dirt lot surrounded by trees and the river. One has a choice of two routes to approach the NWC post: one is a path that winds through a pine grove, while the other is a more wheelchair-accessible path through a little meadow. There are no stores or even houses immediately adjacent to this site, and the quietness of the trees and the river "frame" the site in a powerful way that suggests

what John Sayer saw when he pulled his canoe onto this bank in the fall of 1804. By the time they walk through the gates of these sites, visitors are already being conditioned to think in certain ways.

This process continues in the orientation centre. The decoration of the gateway areas usually features illustrations of the "characters" that visitors will find on the sites. Sometimes, as at SMAH, these illustrations are cartoon-like, and prompt visitors to think in terms of stereotypes. At other sites, gateway areas feature rough-hewn stone and log construction, again prompting visitors to think in terms of the rugged, heroic past and the typical stories we tell about it.

At most sites the majority of visitors [94.6% at CM] do not view the orientation video or slide sequence [Korn 1995:11]. Those that do, however, are powerfully influenced in the overall way they perceive the site. Although these areas are in the process of being revised at all the sites I worked at, they still tend to present a single perspective on the past, usually that of the non-Native group who occupied at the site and through the eyes of the dominant society of the present. LFG's slide show emphasizes the fur trade's operation from the perspective of the HBC and downplays Native contributions to the trade. Other shows mention the ways of life of local Native people and some information on how Native people were affected by the presence of Europeans. A few sites [SMAH, and the planned centre for NWC] place great emphasis on the Native perspective and in fact introduce the site through this perspective. At SMAH, though, where the introductory video was re-shot in the mid-1980s to shift this perspective [the old video featured Iroquois torturing Jesuits and

screams of hapless victims of Indian savagery over the crackling of the burning fort], visitors have complained that the new video leans too far this way and is, in the words of one visitor, "watered down." Other visitors object to the lack of emphasis on historic figures they see as heroic; at SMAH, this complaint focuses on what is seen as the "neglect" of the Jesuit martyrs, in honour of whom many people come to the site [SMAH visitor survey cards August 1-7 1994].

After passing through the gateway, visitors make a number of interest stops throughout the site: the encampment, a house, perhaps a work area or barn, the store or blacksmith's shop. Few visitors go into every building, so what people do see depends on what is staffed that day or which doors are locked, and what catches visitors' eyes or interests. Some sites make use of this selectivity: at OFW, for instance, the Native encampment was deliberately moved to one side of the main path so that visitors would have to choose whether or not they wanted to enter that area, in hopes that those who did so would already be predisposed to appreciate and learn from the encampment and its staff.

As they move through a site, visitors look at the period room furnishings, listen to costumed interpreters explain what went on at the site, touch reproduction artifacts made available for that purpose, ask questions of interpreters about artifacts and life at the site, and engage interpreters in conversations. They may taste period cooking, smell the tang of metalworking or the reek of rotting hair being slipped from hides, put stitches in a quilt or string beads, sit on deerhides or rough wooden benches. In the sales shop or trader's store, visitors "shop": they ask how much things cost, what it

took to earn that much money, what things are, how they got there. In my observation, visitors constantly touched everything they could. Furs and hides hung out for them to stroke have to be replaced each season or so because they wear out. The corn pounder at CM was in constant use. Anything not tied down in or around a lodge gets picked up, poked at, looked inside. Interpreters easily engage visitors in games, hide scraping, writing with quill pens, and tasting fresh bannock and bread. One group of visitors I saw--who seemed to me unlikely to appreciate the site, given their biker-gang attire--stayed for at least three hours, and I saw them all over the site, touching everything everywhere and often talking with interpreters. It is quite normal for children to have to be dragged off the site, protesting, when their parents are ready to leave. People enjoy these places, and experience them thoroughly.

Visitors' interaction with the Native parts of these sites begins as they approach the encampment while walking along the path from the gateway. I was fascinated to notice that many visitors slowed down as they saw the Native houses and interpreters, moved to the far side of the pathway away from the entrance to the encampment, and/or attempted to move right past the encampment area itself. Interpreters work hard to coax these reticent visitors into the encampment area with big smiles, greetings, and invitations to "come and visit!" As they told me when they left the area, these visitors are often meeting Native people face-to-face for the first time in their lives. When they first see the encampment, their assumptions and stereotyped knowledge about Native people are aroused: as Deirdre Evans-Pritchard has noted of encounters between tourists and Native people in the American Southwest, "when individuals cross

boundaries through face-to-face encounters, they naturally tend to rely on stereotypical conceptions of each other to frame and structure the interactions" [1989:102]. The content of these stereotypes make them hesitant to enter the encampments, though [what if they really are savages? are they sober?], and visitors are unsure of what will happen or how to interact with Native interpreters. This uncertainty and misinformation on the part of many visitors is a crucial factor in shaping their interactions with the Native staff: it initially raises stereotypes and narratives in which they presume themselves to be superior, but as I will later show, it also makes them vulnerable.

As well as stereotypes and assumptions of racial hostility, primitivism, and inferiority cited above, visitors also ask many questions about exotic, unfamiliar objects that they encounter in the Native encampments. As I suggested in the Staff chapter, interpreters work hard to answer these questions and make Native material culture more familiar, as well as to get visitors to appreciate the ingenuity of Native technology. "What's that?" questions that I recorded concerned: turtle shells, a feather fan, ricing sticks, twining loom, pitch on bark cracks ["did Indians have glue?], the scent in the lodge [NWC]; pelt stretchers, the corn pounder, a carrot of tobacco, a drum [CM]; furs, a fish smoking rack, and a tikinagan [construction, use] [LFG, OFW].

Visitors also make comments expressing their assumptions of Native technological inferiority and "primitive" way of life. Statements such as "this place must be hard to heat in winter" in the lodges, and "did they really have

scissors/needles/candles?" are asked dozens of times a day in every encampment. In one incident I witnessed at SMAH, a Native interpreter making a bark container was asked if Native people had scissors in the seventeenth century. The interpreter said yes, that scissors were a common trade item and found very useful by people back then. On being asked the question for the third time in 20 minutes, however, the interpreter responded to what the non-Native visitors expected: he reached around to his knife sheath and pulled out an antler-handled stone blade. Visitors are often clearly discomfited to find Native interpreters using European tools, and expect them to be using "stone-age" items: they cast Native people very much in the past, even when looking at them in a recreated past.

One of the things that Western audiences tend to do when faced with images of non-Western or tribal peoples, either in the pages of a magazine such as National Geographic or at an historic reconstruction, is to make comparisons between their own lives and what they see before them, and between the worth and quality of life in their own and tribal society. They often bring into these comparisons the idea of progress, of how far we have advanced since the point in time depicted by the site [Bruner 1994:398]. One of the most common questions interpreters ask visitors is whether the visitor thinks s/he would have liked to live back then. This is generally asked in the context of some aspect of historic technology that has changed greatly in the intervening years, such as heating systems or health care [most of the sites I worked at emphasized the early 19th century European use of "bleeding" as a cure-all]. Despite visitors' longing for the utopian aspects of the past, the implied answer to this question

is "no": there are aspects of these sites that affirm the rightness of the way we live now, and confirm the notion that we have "made progress" since then [and see Lutz and Collins 1993:266-7]. When one factors in the Native encampment and the way that most visitors view Native people, one gets an extra spin on this: not only is the Native encampment a place to compare then and now, but it is also a place to compare Us and Them. The encampments thus imply an evolutionary continuum that is predicated on the norm, and pinnacle, of cultural and racial existence as being that of white, middle- and upper-class Western civilization: the dominant society.

[LFG] Me: Did you stop at the encampment? What did you think?
 Female visitor, British accent, 50-ish: Oh, very interesting! --I can't imagine people living like that, but they obviously did.

These sites thus provide visitors with a high degree of reaffirmation of the meaning, worth and rightness of their own lives, identities, and way of life. In doing so, visitors reassure themselves that the domination of Native peoples by majority society is justified. This is how these sites "enact an ideology" [Bruner 1994:411], and it is a remarkably coherent ideology. In response to the literal enactment of the 1763 capture of CM, in which the Native captors are made to look warlike and "savage," one older local couple to whom I spoke--who had attended the pageant annually for years--said that it was "very meaningful" for them. I suspect that many aspects of these sites which reinforce visitors' self-image and world view [and sense of history] are equally meaningful for many dominant-society visitors.

As well as looking at these sites, experiencing them with all their senses, and

talking to interpreters, visitors interact with these places in one more, very important way: they photograph the sites. What they photograph most frequently is the Native encampment and Native interpreters. Dorothea Lange, the famous photographer, once wrote that "The camera is an instrument that teaches people to see without a camera" [quoted in Meltzer 1978:frontispiece]. To me, this says much about how tourists taking pictures of sites are bringing "the gaze" into play. What is seen as "a good picture," a "Kodak moment," or a "photo op" has much to do with unconscious assumptions about what is right, properly organized, and fits into an aesthetic of history: such moments involve the recognition of an image, a symbol, which refers to standard narratives that tourists tell, and believe, about the world, and especially about the places that white tourists and non-white Others occupy in the world and the relationship between them: "the imaginative spaces that non-Western peoples occupy and the tropes and stories that organize their existence in Western minds" [Lutz and Collins 1993:2, see also 196].

Within the Native encampments, visitors tend to photograph the house structures, the costumed interpreters at work, and, to a lesser extent, specific objects that look Native or "exotic" [e.g. furs and cradleboards]. Costumed interpreters who are especially "Indian looking" [have long hair or braids, distinctive facial features, are wearing face paint] tend to be photographed most often: one Native interpreter once counted over 450 pictures taken of him in a day. All costumed staff get photographed at these sites, but even non-Native interpreters agreed that Native staff are photographed more often. The tropes are pretty thick here: "braves," "warriors,"

"squaws." "papooses." "tipis." bead- and leather-working. In isolating these images and signs, tourists signal--as they do with their questions and comments to Native interpreters--the stories that these people feature in for them, and the imaginative spaces they occupy in the tourists' minds. They are photographing what they so often say as they enter the encampment: "Look!" they say: "Real Indians!"

Visitors also express this desire to see symbols in the comments they leave on survey cards. At SMAH, visitors have said things like, "We met Chris [a long-haired Ojibwa interpreter] in the foyer, but we would have preferred to see him in the longhouse and have our pictures taken with him" [Lefaive, personal communication 1994]. When planning special tours, visitors often request that the longhouse be staffed by Native interpreters so that they can take pictures.

As visitors look through their lenses, they see the full spectrum of incarnations of the Noble Savage and the Evil Savage, who have played such an important role in the Western consciousness as Other for so very long. They see exotic "squaws" and "braves" in skin and trade-cloth clothing, very picturesque, often beautiful or handsome. Older male European visitors have so often attempted to touch, or have sexually harassed female Native interpreters, that at SMAH the women watch for visitors carrying blue [German-language] site brochures and when they see a group carrying these, crowd behind a demonstration table to protect each other. This harassment happens at other sites, too--not all the time, and it depends on such variables as whether there are male interpreters around, which tends to limit it--but probably several times a summer most Native women interpreters get patted or cuddled

when they haven't been paying sufficient attention to who is standing around them. I think that this behaviour stems from the sexually alluring aspect of exotic, darker-skinned women for Western men: the Whore side of the "squaw" stereotype [and see Lutz and Collins 1993:93]. Both the beauty of these people and the rather intimidating visages of some of the male interpreters [especially Keith, with scalplock and face paint] is also read as "primitive," at once a term of denigration and admiration: these are people not of civilization, but of Nature. [This is reinforced, of course, by the location of the Native encampments outside the pales of European civilization at these sites.]

The exoticism of these sights both attracts and repels. The beautiful, fascinating, exotic Other makes a compelling photo-op. On the other hand, this way of viewing Native people marks them as different--truly Other. Many scholars have explored the fascinating links between photography and the colonial control of non-Western peoples [Lutz and Collins 1993; Smith 1995; Geary 1988; Banta and Hinsley 1986; Albers and James 1988; Urry 1990; and the essays by First Nations scholars on photography of North American Native people in Lippard 1992]; Leslie Marmon Silko, in the introduction to Lippard 1992, calls colonial photographers such as Curtis "voyeurs/vampires." Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett [1994:455] claim that in photographing Maasai performers, "tourists make the Maasai safe for their own purposes by enclosing them within the white borders of a photograph or within a video frame...all by sophisticated Western technology." Western technology, of course, is one of the crucial points by which [it has been popularly believed] Western peoples have

been superior to tribal peoples, and have thus achieved domination over them. Photography also functions as a controlling gaze by triggering "an active signifying practice" which utilises symbols, so that every tourist photographer becomes "an amateur semiotician" referring to cultural discourses on the Others s/he photographs [Urry 1990:138-9]. Tourists take pictures of "Indian warriors wearing war paint," not Keith Knecht. Photography thus involves the tourist gaze and the discourses and relations of power involved in colonial relations world-wide.

The final story that tourist photographers enact in their picture-taking involves themselves. One of the most frequent photo compositions involves a group of tourists posing in the doorway of a Native house structure. Sometimes they hold artifacts found around the doorway: a paddle or cradleboard that was leaning against the wall. Sometimes they actually wrap themselves in the hides or blankets that cover the floor, and adopt stereotypical Hollywood Indian facial expressions and stances: arms folded across the chest, or one folded and the other palm raised in a "How!" gesture. Occasionally they ask a Native interpreter to pose with them.

There are several meanings of this standard shot. One involves the interest generated by seeing the familiar [themselves] within an exotic setting. Related to this is the play of "trying on" identities, which visitors are in fact constantly invited to do at these sites: "Do you think you would have liked to live back then?", they are constantly asked. In a superficial way, such poses suggest play with this idea--and with the traditional desire of whites to "play Indian." This is similar to Lutz and Collins' finding that when many people look at the photos of non-Western peoples in National

Geographic magazine, they compare their own lives with those portrayed, sometimes by "imaginatively enter[ing] the picture and [speculating] about what they would do if actually at the photographic spot [or were the person in the photo]" [1993:265]. I think this is partly what is happening in these tourist self-portraits: it may not just be "look at me being an Indian," but also "what if I was an Indian?" I am not certain that this latter process involves questioning the stereotypes and ethnocentrism with which visitors approach these encampments, but it suggests the possibility of doing so.

All of these messages, ideas, and discourses are reiterated one last time as visitors leave these sites, in the stock and images they find and purchase in the gift shop. Postcards of "Native Chiefs" [one of these, found all over Ontario, features Jim Sky in his Wild West gear, but he is not named], voyageurs, blackrobed priests, the palisaded and bastioned fort, cannon being fired, and Native people harvesting corn or holding furs, repeat the stock figures often found in the gateway area. Beaded jewellery, moccasins, dream catchers, and braided leather headbands feature prominently in the stock, as do key chains, T-shirts, pens, and other objects with such images on them. Some shops have tried to get away from the more obviously stereotyped merchandise, focusing on [more expensive] reproductions of stoneware, textiles, and metalwork from the European areas along with books and a few items such as are used in the Native areas [bark containers, trade silver jewelry]. In response to this, one visitor at SMAH requested "More touristy stuff in shop. Cheaper keyrings, badges and dolls of Indians" [SMAH visitor survey cards August 1-7 1994]. As Edward Bruner has noted, the gift shop is one of the places on site, like the brochure

and the orientation area, where key messages and themes are presented quite forcefully [1993b:15]. If visitors "consume" history and nostalgia at these places, they do so most literally in the gift shops, and the images and ideas they take home with them are those which fit quite comfortably with traditional historical narratives and the stereotyped ways in which Native people feature within these.

Encounters

There is, of course, no single tourist gaze: "each individual looks with his or her own personal, cultural, and political background or set of interests" [Lutz and Collins 1993:196]. And while visitors to historic sites draw on stereotyped images and narratives about Native people in their verbal and photographic responses to Native interpreters, these are also places where such assumptions are challenged and revised.

Bruner reminds us that "people are not monolithic or constant, as their reactions to the site shift historically, and even within the time frame of a single visit" [1993b:23]. As they move through these sites, visitors interpret--make sense of--what they see and feel in terms of their own lives, experiences, and knowledge. Conversely, they may learn or experience new things at the site which expand their existing knowledge. The meanings that visitors find in a site are thus produced by what Bruner [1994:410] calls a process of "dialogic interaction." While Bruner characterizes this as specifically verbal interaction between visitors and interpreters, I would expand the concept to include the processing of physical stimuli and information gleaned from the site itself, as well as the later re-evaluation of this information in light of further

stimuli and knowledge from television programs, museum exhibitions, books, and other media. While at the site, meanings are constructed and revised "as visitors move through the village...Experiencing the site gives rise to meanings that might not have been predicted before the visit, so that the site in this sense is generative" [Bruner 1994:409].

The following transcripts of conversations that I had with visitors at OFW suggest the ways in which visitors process information they receive at these sites. Note that these visitors have excellent recall and are integrating new information into their existing knowledge:

me [in visitor centre]: did you stop at the Native camp?
 visitors [2 teenage girls]: yes.
 me: what did you see there?
 vis: we saw bannock, and beading, and wigwams, and stuff...
 vis2: and those baby carriages! [vis 1: that they carry on their backs -me: tikinagans!]
 vis: yeah, and they were building a sled and a drum.
 me: did you learn anything new there?
 vis: I didn't know how they lived there in winter...the woman said that it's not smoky at all and they keep pretty warm in winter. I don't think I would, but...
 me: did you get a sense of why they would have been camped there?
 vis: I don't know. Well, I know they weren't allowed near [in?] the fort; it was sort of separated from the English...
 me: were they allowed inside the palisades?
 vis: well, they were talking about the dinner thing in the fort [Hall?] and how after dinner they would invite the Native people in.
 me: did you learn anything about what Native people did in the fur trade, what their jobs were in the fur trade?
 vis: well, basically I think they were just the workers ...you know how now there's the top person in business, and then there's the workers...they were the workers!
 me: wow, I like the analogy! thank you!

me, on wharf:

Did you stop in the Native encampment? [oh yes!] was it buggy? [it was!] what kinds of things did you notice there? what activities were going on, did you talk with anybody?

fv [middle-aged couple]:

we listened to one [person] explain the winter encampment. It was interesting to hear how they made the tipi and insulated it and how they got the bark off the tree, and the youngsters were trained with different games to become good hunters; that was real interesting.

me: did you get a sense of why they would have been camped there?

mv: yeah, didn't she say it was because...well, I don't know.

fv: well, she talked about the trading they did with the Northwest Fur company and then what goods they got from them, and then how many beavers it would take to trade for them

mv: it was kind of a rip-off!

fv: [laughs] yeah, she said it was 8 beavers for a blanket.

me: she was explaining about the point blanket?

mv: yeah, each line was worth two beavers...

fv: and we had stopped at the one [fort] in Grand Portage, so it kinda reinforced some of the things they said, like he had a table [of goods] and he asked what we thought would be most valuable to the Indians, and it was the cloth and the metal pots, so they didn't have to cook in birch pots [me: um hum], and you could see [here] she was dressed in the cloth that they had traded for

me: and did you get a sense of what jobs Native people did in the fur trade?

[both v]: well, I don't know--we plan to go back when we leave--

fv: other than providing furs, I guess I'm not really sure...

me: ok, thanks very much for your help!

These visitors had gone to some effort to learn, to watch, to pick things up, to ask questions, and were beginning to think about what they had learned and to incorporate this information into their existing knowledge about Native people. One of the things that struck me about visitor behaviour in the Native encampments was this eagerness to learn. Visitors tend to be fascinated with everything in the Native encampments. They constantly touched all the available props: stroked furs, picked up tikinagans, handled bark baskets, ran their hands through dried corn and rice; sat down with interpreters to get a closer look at beading and leather sewing techniques;

watched interpreters cooking for ten minutes at a stretch; watched interpreters scraping hides and making bitten birch bark designs, and eagerly tried these activities when offered; went into lodges and sat on the floor. At OFW, one woman visitor expressed this fascination when I asked her to describe what she had seen in the encampment that was new to her: "...a birch container, and I would have stayed all day to learn how to make that. I was just enchanted with it--what the process was--they were very, very advanced in many things."

Visitors tend to spend longer in the encampments than in other specific areas of the sites, and they tend to ask more questions there and to express interest more readily than elsewhere on site. This intrigued me, because it goes against the unfamiliarity and the stereotyped goggles that many visitors approach these areas with. Again, many visitors admitted that it was the first time they had ever had an opportunity to speak with a Native person: most of them stated that that they did not personally know any Native people, and did not have Native friends, neighbours, or co-workers. Apart from very occasional or long-ago visits to museums, it was the first time they had ever been in such close contact with Native culture.

I am speculating here, but I think that this sense of wonder and interest stems both from the allure of the exotic, mysterious Other and from a growing popular desire to understand Native people and to acknowledge them as members of North American society. Increased media attention to Native issues, along with other factors, have awakened in some segments of the North American and European population the desire to make Native peoples more powerful members of North American society and

to foster the maintenance of cultural traditions amongst them. Some of this attitude stems from what one might cynically call "white liberal guilt," but not all: there is, I think, a growing acceptance of Native cultures as a distinct part of North American society. This was particularly evident in the attitudes and comments of families with children, who sometimes come to these sites especially to show the Native encampments to their children, and to young and middle-aged people without children. There were certainly lots of exceptions to these general trends--I met some prejudiced parents and children [including one mother who got her young child to "war-whoop" into the camp at CM and refused to stop when interpreters confronted her] and some enlightened seniors--but these seemed to be the general patterns. Many visitors are fascinated by the Native areas and staff at these sites.

This fascination leads them into interesting discussions with interpreters. Bruner [1994:410] has described the process by which visitors learn at these sites:

What encourages the local production of meaning is the format of dialogic interaction between the interpreter and small groups of tourists who move from house to house...Although the tourists have received the main message of the museum professionals...their relationship to the interpreters has a more personal and immediate quality. The interpreters, too, have received the official messages of the site...but they frequently depart from the official scripts and move off in their own directions...The result is a very open format, more like a discussion than a lecture, one that allows for improvisation and that facilitates the constructivist process.

I agree with both Bruner and Snow [1993:172] that the most important kind of interaction between historic sites and their visitors occurs in conversations between visitors and costumed interpreters. There is, however, an extra dynamic in these conversations when Native interpreters are involved. Snow notes that, "a well-defined

code of etiquette [exists] for the encounter between interpreters and visitors that is essentially based on the polite and willing suspension of disbelief" [Snow 1993:170].

The "most fundamental rule" for these encounters is that visitors will accept interpreters at face value: that is, as "real" Pilgrims, voyageurs, fur traders--and Indians. As Snow goes on to say,

The optimal situation occurs when both performers and spectators recognize the contradictions but agree to maintain the play frame anyway. The audience member signals the actor/historian: "I know you're not really a Pilgrim, but I'm going to play along with you, regardless." The interpreter signals back: "I know you know I'm not really a Pilgrim, but I'm going to perform as if I were, for your education and enjoyment." This kind of interaction ritual can be extremely entertaining; the frequent laughter in the village...is proof of this [Snow 1993:181].

While this acceptance of multiple, layered reality may work well in the rest of the site, where interpreters "play" characters, it often fails in the Native encampment, where Native interpreters are themselves [although there is still a certain amount of joking, as when interpreters ask visitors, "Have you paddled far today?"]. Visitors who have entered into a playful frame of mind are often discomfited by the sight of a "real Indian" [as they often say on entering the encampments] who really is an Indian. They may be further discomfited by being face to face with a Native person for the first time in their lives; by feeling uncomfortable because they are unfamiliar with Native culture; and by being afraid that they will say something to offend the Native interpreters.¹ Suddenly, there are a lot of "real" things going on in this playful,

¹ And see Evans-Pritchard 1989: "Discomfort is often in the air when Indians and tourists meet. The Indians are experienced but often equivocal, and the tourists are frequently uncertain, temporarily in what they perceive to be an alien world."

imaginary place.

The combination of visitors' fascination and uncertainty and interpreters' assertion of Native control over the encampments and these encounters combines to produce situations in which visitors are vulnerable to the "historical ammunition" that I described in the Staff chapter. The fascination helps to create teachable moments; the uncertainty brings visitors' stereotypes to the fore; and the ammunition is designed to refute the stereotypes. While Gable and Handler criticise the fact that "guides' spiels never seemed to add up to a coherent narrative" [1993:28] and that "staff members typically threw out--as historical "ammunition"--seemingly fragmentary and isolated "facts" which they thought had the power to destroy preconceptions," so that "the resulting discourse was a surreal pastiche rather than a sustained discussion" [1993:29], I think we need to remember that with the exception of site tours, the communication of information at historic sites is not supposed to work like a lecture or a narrated mini-drama. Visitor contacts with interpreters are uncontrolled, and range from walk-pasts with no conversation to twenty-minute discussions. The format is question-and-answer, initiated by the visitor and guided by the interpreter. Furthermore, interpreters converse with an audience of visitors that is constantly changing, as the following discussion between Keith Knecht and several visitors in the lodge at CM demonstrates:

Female visitor (fv): what's that?

K: it's a drum, it's a small personal drum

fv: what's it made out of?

K: hide [fv: from...] K: from a deer...the way the rawhide is made is you scrape the inside of the hide...then you soak it in wood ash and water, and that causes the hair to slip. And then you take it back out and you scrape all the hair off. And now you have what is called raw hide, unfinished, untanned hide, and

- when you put it on a frame and you sew it down tightly, it stretches...
- fv: as it dries it shrinks?
- K: yes, and then of course it makes it nice and tight. I don't know how tight it is now [takes the drum down and beats it]
- fv: sounds like it's right
- K: pretty close! and if you listen, you can actually get different tones depending on where you hit it [taps all around the drum]
- fv: wow!... [drum stops] Are you painted for war, or would that be ceremonial?
- K: no, this is just decorative paint [fv: oh, okay]
- new male visitor: how far are you from being chief [laughs]?
- K: oh, actually, quite a ways! Today the tribal chairman is elected. And I try to stay out of politics! Both within the Native community and the white community. [mv still chuckles at own "joke"] Back in the 18th century as well, most people are under the impression that it was something that was handed from father to son. And it wasn't; they were elected back then as well.
- fv: oh, really
- K: and there's a neat little thing called a recall election that we have today? it existed too! [visitors laugh]
- new fv: oh, this is your sleeping cot, then?
- K: yeah
- new fv: and the storage is underneath
- K: yup, that's right. I keep some firewood under there so it's dry
- new fv: and the smokehole looks like it closes up
- K: yes, there's a flap that goes over it
- fv: what are these?

During this brief exchange, two new visitors entered the lodge separately and initiated new conversations without joining in the ongoing one. This is a very typical sort of exchange, and shows why interpreters have adopted this "salvo" approach to dealing with visitors, and why interpretation "is a very open format, more like a discussion than a lecture, one that allows for improvisation" [Bruner 1994:410].

This exchange also involves an interpreter challenging a visitor's stereotype: the new male visitor enters the lodge saying, "how far are you from being chief?" This visitor looked to be in his late 60s, and the way that he continued to laugh at his own "joke" suggests that Keith's response was not sufficiently quelling. When interpreters

challenged stereotyped remarks made by younger visitors, however, and especially women visitors, the majority of those challenged acknowledged the incorrectness of their knowledge/stereotypes about Native people, readily acknowledged new information provided them, and thanked interpreters for teaching them. I found this behaviour surprising given visitors' general lack of knowledge about Native people, and the strength of the stereotypes that they expressed.

The fact that visitors recognize that the "real Indian" interpreters really are Indian seems to contribute to the changed tone and tenor of these encounters. Despite all the stereotypes with which visitors approach Native interpreters, they acknowledge that these are real people. Even more than with non-Native costumed interpreters who "play" or represent historic characters, visitors' relationships with Native interpreters often have a very "personal and immediate quality" [Bruner 1994:410]. Visitors are clearly taken aback--some very embarrassed--when interpreters tell them that "squaw" is an offensive term, or that "our people never said that" [to a greeting of "How!"]. Most visitors immediately apologize, thus losing their "superior tourist" status. Interpreters are now in the position of power. In the best of these exchanges, the interpreter then informs the visitor why the phrase or behaviour is offensive; how it came to be in popular usage; and what the correct phrase or actual behaviour was, or what phrase First Nations people prefer today.

The following are examples of these confrontations. I seldom had my tape recorder running when such events occurred, so they are pieced together from notes taken during the incidents. A few are reconstructed from interpreters' information.

[At CM: composite of several incidents]

MV: How! [raises palm]

K: Hello! My people never did that, you know. The word that we used to greet each other with was AHNEEN or BOOZH0.

MV: Oh really! I didn't know that. What was that word again?

K: AHNEEN

Visitor repeats: Ahneen. What tribe would you be?

K: I'm Ottawa. Historically we had villages near here, and we came here in summer to trade and have councils...

[At CM: single incident, child war-whooping]

K: well, that's a white person's way of pretending to be Indian, but we never actually did that, and we find it offensive. If you had done that, all your enemies would know where you were! [Child stopped, looked abashed]

[K went on to tell child what life would have been like for him as an Ottawa child in the 18th century.]

[At CM: incident reported by interpreter]

Visitor: I guess you guys came here [to the fort] to get drunk

K: No. Alcohol did play a role in the fur trade, of course, but we came here to do business. Now, you know, the tribes are going dry--for young Native people, alcohol and drugs are uncool--and at powwows, you're removed if you're under the influence.

[Interpreter did not relate rest of conversation.]

[At LFG: composite of several incidents]

Visitor: Hey look, here's the squaws

Interp: Actually, we don't use that word: it's really rude in our language! We're just women.

Visitor: Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't know that!

Interp: Well, the traders and the early settlers, too, you know, they used that word in a nasty way to call Native women sluts. So we don't like to use it.

Visitor: What is the word for woman in your language?

Interp: ikwe [visitor repeats word] You know, white men used to think that our women were real drudges because they did a lot of the heavy work like pulling sleds when families were moving camp, but actually the men had to be unburdened to defend their families. And unlike your women, ours were proud of being strong! [They go on to discuss gender roles].

[Observed incident, child visitor, class trip, LFG]:

Interp: UGH! HOW! OOGEMAGOOGEMA! ---how does a real Indian talk?
Well, they said "Ahneen"-- and you're being RUDE! [Launches into
spiel about encampment for whole group, ignores child.]

Some good discussions ensue from these confrontations. The meanings of "squaw" and "how" are discussed most often, and lead to topics ranging from historic Native gender roles and the relative autonomy Native women had vis-a-vis European women, to the occasions and nature of Native-White interaction around the forts. Interpreters use these events as opportunities to discuss the historical realities and agendas behind the stereotypes, and visitors appeared to be fascinated by these discussions.

These confrontation-induced discussions frequently ended either with questions or volunteered information about the interpreter's own life and about Native peoples in the present. This is significant, for these conversations, brief as they might be, draw visitors past the rich sensory detail of these reconstructions to explore the impact and legacy of the past on the peoples depicted by the interpreters. This shifts the focus away from the meticulously reconstructed period furnishings and the musket drills back to people's lives. When Annette Naganashe spoke to visitors about her involvement in traditional cultural activities at home, she communicated pride in her heritage as well as the vitality of contemporary Odawa culture. When Nick Hockings at Waswagoning has visitors sit down in the teaching lodge, he burns cedar, talks about the medicine wheel, the four races of man, and the necessity for mutual respect, heritage and the pre-contact world shown at the site merge with the present--and

suddenly it is not the exotic-looking pipes or drums or feathers in the lodge that are most interesting, but the dignity and truth of Nick's message, and the wondering one does about the importance of what he is saying for his own life and that of other Native peoples. Through such encounters, visitors are jolted out of their initial perception of Native interpreters as symbols, and begin to see them as people.

When I spoke with visitors after confrontations, the majority were excited and positive rather than embarrassed and negative. They stressed that they had not known what they had been told, and said things like, "I didn't know they actually married" or "well, why wouldn't they have had tin lamps if they could get them? I just never thought about it before." They were also actively trying to fit the new information into their framework of reference about Native people, and sometimes that framework was being revised pretty drastically. The boy whose earnest questioning of Keith Knecht was described at the beginning of this chapter was asking such a range of questions and being given such different information that pretty much everything he thought he knew about Native people was being debunked--and yet he kept asking, and asking. A woman I talked to at Pine City who read romance novels about the frontier had me explain some things in the wigwam, and commented in a thoughtful tone that the novels focused on certain aspects of Native life [the image of the noble, mystic Indian] that were quite different from reality. At their best, both confrontations and the more ordinary conversations between interpreters and visitors provoke visitors into beginning to think critically about what they have been told about Native peoples by popular media, and to rethink their opinions of Native peoples and their roles in history. To

me, these conversations involved the most significant work that these sites do: challenging, engaging, teaching.

The way that these encounters shift perceptions and the power relations between interpreter and visitor goes far beyond the finding of Lutz and Collins that readers of National Geographic may interpret photographs of non-Western people in several ways within an interview. Lutz and Collins concluded that when asked to describe the meaning of these images, interviewees "sometimes express[ed] two apparently contradictory ideas with equal conviction. Or they express[ed] contradictions in more experimental or ambivalent ways; they [tried] out sometimes conflicting ideas, with tentative or self-assured tones, hoping for one thing and settling on another, seeing how things sound[ed]" [Lutz and Collins 1993:226]. I did not get the sense that visitors were apologizing to interpreters merely to smooth over an awkward face-to-face encounter: if they just wanted to avoid a scene, they could have left the encampments immediately after being confronted. Instead, they tended to stay around and ask questions, which I interpret as a genuine desire to hear the interpreter's perspective and information.

A certain number of visitors who are challenged by interpreters do not back down: the gentleman who continued to chuckle at his "joke" to Keith, and the woman who continued to war whoop with her child after being asked to stop, are two such examples. Male visitors tend not to back down as often when confronted by a male interpreter. From the way that interpreters described such incidents to me, and from my own observations, though, I would say that these people are very much in the

minority. Even European visitors who arrive with expectations of seeing Karl May's characters or the Sioux camp from the movie "Dances with Wolves" seem to accept reality pretty well:

- [LFG] Me: I'm in the Big House basement with some of the interpreters and one is telling me about an encounter she had with a European tourist today:
 Interp: Well, they came here expecting to see a cowboys and Indians kind of fort where wars had taken place, so I was able to tell them a little bit about the cooperation that took place and how most of the people living here were at least part Native, and set their minds straight!
 Me: so they didn't know much about the Hudson's Bay Company.
 Interp: no, they didn't...so I talked about...how we had a really good rapport with them [Indians]. They [tourists] were a little bit disappointed, actually!
 Me: And how did they take the information you gave them?
 Interp: they were really good, they asked a lot of questions, they were quite interested.

What I never figured out a way to gauge, but would very much like to know, is how visitors reconcile such information with long-held and often cherished stereotypes. While I believe that the confrontations over stereotypes are effective against the particular beliefs and behaviours involved, I am not sure how well such salvos work against the larger body of beliefs most visitors carry with them about the superiority of the dominant society and the rightness of presenting history from its perspective. Finally, how well do these encounters serve to present revisionist scholarly perspectives to the public? If we wish to communicate the ideas that Native people were allies of Europeans, for instance, or that these these peoples were more often interdependent than mutually hostile, are these ideas in fact being communicated to the public?

Judging from visitors' responses to my questions, sites are still not doing

enough to communicate such ideas and themes. Visitors still tend to interpret the palisades as evidence of hostility between Natives and Whites, and in answer to my question "what was this place for? what happened at this place?" often said that the site was for protection [in an interesting twist on this, some visitors interpret the function of SMAH as providing protection for Native people from other Native groups, and CM as providing protection for Native people from the elements]. If sites are not careful, I think that it is quite possible that visitors not only receive messages about utopian pioneer life but add to them the notion "and we were friends with the Indians too": a whitewashing and gross simplification not only of European life at these places but of Native-White relations and Native histories. Sites need to find ways of explicitly demonstrating their messages about Native people and Native-White relations, of talking about some of the specifics of culture contact, and of tackling such misinterpretations head-on.

On the other hand, it was also clear from visitors' responses that their interaction with Native interpreters and the encampments, as well as with other areas of the sites, was providing them with specific, personal, oppositional information to which they could refer when next they were confronted by references to Native people. Lisa Craig, Assistant Educator at CM, commented to me that "I don't think a lot of visitors realize that they've learned anything while they're here," and that it took the next historic site they visited, the next TV program they watched, the next news article they found to trigger a sense of knowledge and to get them to begin comparing what they knew from having talked with a Native interpreter with what they were then

being told. While many of the visitors with whom I spoke were integrating new information right away, I think Craig's observation is important for the long-term implications of these Native encampments, for what they have to teach society in general. In particular, the experience of meeting and conversing with a knowledgeable, articulate, and personable Native interpreter--and of being challenged and taught by such a person--was clearly causing some visitors to re-evaluate their sense of social distance from Native people within the larger society. These encounters are important in creating bridges between people and peoples, and thereby encouraging other such connections and learning.

Finally, I believe that interaction between visitors and Native interpreters does effectively challenge the conventions that surround these places so closely, and jolts many visitors out of "the conspiracy of their own illusions" [Denning 1993:74] that the physical sets of the sites bring into play. If visitors do break into war-whoops and make jokes about scalping when they arrive at the encampments, Freda McDonald, Keith Knecht, and other Native interpreters challenge these stereotypes [and, by implication, larger issues of social relations and the narrating of history]. If tourists gaze on these interpreters and see "Indians," "braves," and "squaws," the interpreters insist on their own identities, and gaze--and speak--right back to the tourists, refusing to be symbols.

CM, family with little girl

me: have you ever been in an Indian lodge before?

them: no

me: so this is a new thing for you. what kinds of things did you see in there that

- were interesting to you?
- fv: I just think that the way that they traded, and the different values that they put on furs..I had read about it. but it's neat when you see it all written out, and the value of a blanket...
- me to girl: what did you see?
- girl: the baskets, the pot over the fire, ...and the toys!
- me: did you get a sense of why the Native people would have camped here?
- fv: I would think they would do it for a sense of security, being friends with them, being protected
- me: did they have relationships with people inside?
- mv: well some did they traded with them
- fv: now, I just trying to think...they didn't say a whole lot about the Indians that camped on the outside
- me: did you get a sense of why the fort was built?
- mv: uh...well, it was built as a trading post, right on the lake, stuff was brought here from Canada...
- girl: I like the different kinds of furs
- me: do you know any Native people yourself?
- mv: no
- me: No? so this is kind of a new thing for you...

Reflections, Lessons, Conclusions

When I began this study, I expected to find a close fit between the dominant-society perspective on history that historic sites have traditionally communicated and the visitor "gaze" or perspective on the past, especially on Native people and Native-White relations in history. Even so, I was startled by the overwhelming numbers of visitors who clearly looked at the Native staff and areas through stereotyped goggles, who had no other way of seeing these people, past or present. On the other hand, it was also apparent that from the time that visitors enter these sites, their ideas and knowledge, comparisons and conclusions slip and shift constantly. When they enter the encampment areas at these sites, visitors are often going into lodges and talking with

Native people for the first time in their lives. And despite the stereotypes with which visitors initially approach these parts of historic sites, they often leave statements such as "Show more of the native side of the story. The effects to their existence not the struggle of the Jesuits" [SMAH visitor survey cards August 1-7 1994] in visitor registers when they leave.

At present, Native interpreters provide the most effective challenge to visitors' preconceptions, although they are reinforced by many of their non-Native interpretive colleagues. The Native presence on sites is critical: it is the one thing that can powerfully bring visitors face to face with real lives, real histories, real legacies of the past instead of stereotypes, the one place where visitors can confront their prejudices about both past and present. Freda McDonald's "Are you here to make fun of us or to learn from us?" is an extraordinary challenge--and offer--within the larger context of these sites and the tourist gaze. These people offer themselves, their knowledge, and their perspectives to foster increased understanding and respect, new histories, and new relationships between Natives and non-Natives in the present. If tourists come to these sites to be entertained, if they expect to gaze upon familiar symbols that affirm their own place in the world, they are often surprised to find other things happening instead, and the "symbols" being people who insist on respect.

And if tourists come to these sites seeking "a discourse that enables them to better reflect on their lives in the 1990s" [Bruner 1994:411], if these sites provide visitors with "a sense of identity, meaning, and attachment" [Bruner 1994:398] by enacting an ideology and recreating an origin myth [Bruner 1994:411], and if these

sites act as spectacle, a form of cultural performance, displaying "key elements in the public's cultural and emotional life" which are "deeply meaningful" [Beeman 1993:380] to visitors--such as ideology, social structure, relations of power, and origin myths--then what does it mean when the public is so mesmerized by these Native encampments and their staff? What implications do the confrontations and discussions between Native interpreters and visitors have for these performances of culture?

The attraction of Native staff and encampments for tourists at these sites goes far beyond Nelson Graburn's description of the attractions of cultural tourism:

Another way to get close to Nature's bosom is through her children, the people of Nature, once labelled Peasant and Primitive peoples and considered creatures of instinct. Interaction with them is possible and their naturalness and simplicity exemplifies all that is good in Nature herself. What more exciting and uplifting experience could one imagine than to share a few words, or, even better, a meal and a bed with such delightful people? [Graburn 1977:27]

To some extent, Native staff are interesting because they are exotic and unfamiliar and seen as spiritual and in touch with Nature [and see van den Berghe and Keyes 1984:344-5]. However, their prominent inclusion at these sites, the changed messages that sites seek to communicate about the past, and the Native interpreters' success at challenging stereotypes suggests to me that there is a widespread acceptance that Native people are a valid segment of North American society, that Native histories have generally been ignored, and that, at least to some extent, the dominant society is willing to accept shifts in relations of power with Native peoples. If these things sound tentative and limited in scope, that is often the way with first face-to-face encounters between peoples, which is often what is happening at these sites. And if tourists continue to "construct a past that is meaningful to them and that relates to their lives

and experiences, and this is the way that meanings are constructed at historic sites" [Bruner 1994:410], then I would point out that they are also being challenged to rethink aspects of past and present by Native interpreters, and there is considerable scope for meanings to be upset, changed, and discarded altogether.

One must also remember, of course, that at these sites, the representation of the past has multiple meanings or interpretations to multiple audiences, and that visitors are a varied group who range from university students to new immigrants to groups of plainly-dressed Mennonites and Buddhist monks. At these places, representations always have multiple interpretations; nor are they ever finalized, either in their creation or in their reception. One cannot control the way all visitors will assign meaning to any aspect of these sites [or how meanings will change once visitors leave the sites], and the constant revisions to sites further complicates the communication of desired messages. Having seen interpreters interacting with a wide spectrum of visitors, however, I am left with the image of Keith and the boy who wanted to know, and Keith turning to me at the end of the encounter and saying, "That is why I work here!"

"Angelique" is about eight; her mother is an interpreter at the Pine City site and brings the child with her to work sometimes. She wears a miniature version of her mother's costume: Great Lakes cloth strap dress, moccasins, head scarf, suggesting a Métis character. Wisps of reddish-blond hair escape her head scarf; she has enchanting freckles. She is standing at a rough wooden table under an even rougher canvas awning inside the palisade, mixing bannock, when a visiting girl of her own age approaches. "Angelique" continues to stir as the other child stands beside her and touches the iron baking kettle, the pitcher, the wooden spoon, and "Angelique's" head scarf. "Angelique" keeps up a sweet patter; they sound like two little girls playing house in the woods. "Angelique" finishes the dough and gives it to the older woman who will bake it, and then takes the visiting girl by the hand and says, "Come on! I'll show you the wigwam!" Together they skip hand-in-hand out of the palisade and along the path; the visiting child's mother and I tag along.

When we catch up to them, they are seated in the wigwam. The visitor is holding the tikinagan, and "Angelique" is saying to her: this is where my grandma sits; this is where grampa sits; this moss is the baby's diapers; this is what grandma uses to hit the rice with so it falls off; here's a game grampa made for me... Race, which is discussed in the tour within the palisades, ceases to be an issue, as does the fact that the absent "owners" of the wigwam were [are?] Native. We are all playing house; it could be our families, everything is in the present tense, and it all seems perfectly appropriate. The visitors eventually leave, and as she enters the path that goes through the pine grove to the parking lot, the little girl turns and waves to "Angelique," who waves back.

Conclusion

"This is all very well for you academics, but I have a program to run on Monday!" [Patrick Schifferdecker, site manager, North West Company Fur Post, in response to paper critiquing representation of history at Canadian Heritage sites, Rupert's Land Colloquium, 1992]

Historic sites have traditionally reiterated the historical narratives of the dominant society, reinforcing the power structures of North American society by enacting stories about how the continent was conquered, and emphasizing wealthy, politically powerful Europeans and their descendants. These representations justified and naturalized the power of that class over Native people. Native people were mentioned only as friends or foes of the colonization process, and their virtually invisible presence in historical narratives and at historic sites mirrored popular notions that they were unimportant in the past and vanishing in the present.

We write the history of the past in the context of the present, however, and both historiography and living history sites--and the attitude of Native peoples toward these representations--have changed greatly over the past few decades. The turn of scholarship towards the inclusion of minorities, and the increasing demands by Native people to control representations of their cultures and histories, has resulted in historic sites adding Native staff and Native perspectives on the past to their interpretation. Traditionally, when Native people were represented on site, they were intended to enhance the existing themes and narratives by suggesting exotic, primitive "Others," sidekicks to Europeans who were the real makers of history. Now, Native staff and

revisionist scholarship challenge such hegemonic functions by asserting that Native people played central roles in history, that Europeans were often dependent on Natives, that Native cultures adapted and survived. At the NWC site, manager Patrick Schifferdecker told me that he and his staff want visitors to leave

with the impression that this was a mutual enterprise between the Europeans who came out here and the Ojibwa...we're trying to dispel a lot of the myths of the savage, and [to communicate] that these were living, breathing, thinking, feeling people and [had] hopes, dreams, aspirations... [personal communication, 1994].

This is a radical shift in the messages that historic sites communicate, and it is made even more radical by the work of Native interpreters. Native staff challenge historical myths and stereotypes, revising visitors' perspectives and the perspectives and functions of historic sites. They see themselves as contributing a "corrected," or oppositional, view of the past to these sites, and have different agendas for and a different approach to their work than do most non-Native interpreters. Native interpreters stressed that they feel they "play themselves": that is, they are not acting or representing long-dead historical characters, but are themselves in costume and out of it, and represent their communities as ambassadors. They speak for themselves and their communities as much as for the historic site they work at. At the same time, they feel very much affected by the history they portray: much of the change, adaptation, and continuity they communicate about past Native life remains active in their own lives.

Native interpreters have an agenda of their own which involves educating non-Native people about the important historical roles, worth, and dignity of Native people.

This agenda derives from a tradition of cultural performances which are intended to educate non-Native audiences; it is also a response to the obviously ignorant and stereotyped manner in which many site visitors view them. Marie Brunel, a former interpreter at SMAH, expressed this goal by saying, "If we can just reach one person, teach one person that we are real human beings, then it's all worth it." As well as imparting historical themes and site-sanctioned information, Native interpreters use "historical ammunition" to challenge stereotypes and the negative images of Native people conjured up by the frontier connotations of historic reconstructions.

Clearly, when they first come to these sites and view the Native encampments, most visitors see the stereotypes and the relations of power that have always been embedded in Western discourses about Native peoples. Visitors' comments and behaviour in the encampments reveals their assumptions that Native people lived "primitive" lives, that Native technology and material culture were inferior to that of Europeans, that the frontier involved hostile relations between Natives and whites. Hollywood Westerns have greatly affected how most visitors view Native interpreters, as the references to "squaws," "chiefs," "braves," "princesses," war whoops, and scalping demonstrate.

Despite the certainty of these stereotypes, there is also an element of uncertainty in the encounters between visitors and Native interpreters, for most visitors are meeting Native people for the first time in their lives. Native interpreters make use of this uncertainty as they assert control over the encampment areas and challenge visitors' stereotypes. Virtually all communication in the encampments, from answering

visitors' questions about artifacts to confrontations over stereotypes, involves educating visitors about the worth and dignity of Native peoples and cultures.

Native interpreters at historic reconstructions are thus very different from performers in other cultural tourism situations. Consider again Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's [1994:467] cynical conclusions about the Maasai performers at Mayers Ranch in Kenya, which I cited in the Introduction:

[they] are merely players in a show written by international tourist discourse...The story line of the show, the colonial drama of the primitive Maasai and the genteel British, of resistance and containment, of the wild and the civilized, was in place long before the Maasai or the Mayers mounted their production...Tourism is unyielding in its demands. It insists on recidivism, atavism, and anachronism. It insists on true tribesmen and archetypal colonialists. But the Maasai and the Mayers are not powerless pawns. They do not have to perform for tourists. If they choose to do so, however, they must follow the script.

Although Native interpreters are costumed, and appear in settings imbued with colonialism, they refuse to "follow the script": they refuse to appear dominated, they insist that the Europeans were dependent on them, and they make explicit and attack the standard plot and characters of the "colonial drama." Unlike the Maasai, who [according to these scholars] can avoid being pawns only by refusing to perform at all, or the Ojibwa whom Harold Hickerson assumed were "pawns in the [fur] trade, exploited, despoiled, and finally extinguished" [Hickerson 1988(1970):119], the Native interpreters at these sites are not pawns at all [nor are they by any means exploited or extinguished]. These people are pursuing their own agendas of educating non-Native people and exploring their own histories. Keith Knecht shaved his head, and Annette Naganashe had her ears pierced, for their own satisfaction at being historically

accurate, not to look like "savages" for the tourists. None of these people are powerless pawns, and they challenge tourists' preconceptions most forcefully.

Examining the agency, agendas, and impact of Native staff at these places reveals that they have come to be sites of opposition to the traditional narratives and enactments of dominant-society power and perspectives, opportunities to voice Native perspectives to site visitors and administrators. This study thus challenges literature on the hegemonic functions of public history and tourism. Clearly, public history sites have undergone great changes in the past few decades. These changes have been effected by many forces within and outside these institutions, and have involved many voices and many perspectives on the past. Examining the manner in which these sites have changed shows that these places are not simply hegemonic voices of the state imposing an organized and controlling set of images of the past on the public. Public history involves continual negotiation and contestation between people and institutions with very different versions of the past. The power structures, historical narratives, and creation myths of the dominant society can be reflected in historic sites, but can also be challenged at them. As with museums, historic sites have become places where Native and non-Native peoples confront the different stories they have been telling about Native histories: these places can act as forums for discourse between people who hold different views on the past [Ames 1991:14]. Similarly, while the literature on tourism suggests that Western tourists force non-Western "tourees" to conform to their expectations, and that the "tourist gaze" is a controlling one, the behaviour of

Native interpreters demonstrates that they can return this gaze and speak about tourists' expectations and their own realities. Interactions between visitors, staff, and historic sites are more complex and less hegemonic than much of the literature suggests.

So are the implications of these encounters. Much of what really goes on at these sites has very little to do with the past. The politics of incorporating Native staff into a site, of developing relations with local bands, and of allocating budgets to respond to historiographic trends, involve actions that take place very much in the present. Interactions between tourists and staff at these sites also involve contemporary visitors meeting contemporary Native people in the present. While referring to the past, these encounters have serious implications for the present and future.

If all forms of theatre evoke and solidify "a network of social and cognitive relationships existing in a triangular relationship between performer, spectator, and the world at large" [Beeman 1993:386], then enacting a revised past, as these sites are now trying to do, involves at least suggesting new relationships between peoples, both past [in the content of the drama] and present [in the actual acting, and the relationship between performers and audience]. If we change the stories in history, we suggest new paths from then to now, and, ultimately, new ways of understanding the present as well as the past. Suggesting that Native people were part of "a mutual enterprise" between Europeans and the peoples of North America, suggesting that Native peoples were "living, breathing, thinking, feeling people and [had] hopes, dreams, aspirations," suggesting that Europeans were in many ways dependent on Native people, suggesting that Native peoples had choices in the past and made them wisely--replacing, as James

Clifford has suggested, "narratives of cultural disappearance and salvage...[with] stories of revival, remembrance, and struggle" [1991:214]: these concepts do not justify the marginalization of Native peoples as the old historical narratives did. They lead, instead, to the very contemporary concept of self-determination, and this is reinforced by the assertive behaviour of the interpreters themselves.

This process of revision is especially important to Native peoples, for whom regaining control over their pasts and their identities is necessary for survival:

Native survival was and remains a contest over life, humanity, land, systems of knowledge, memory, and representations. Native memories and representations are persistently pushed aside to make way for constructed Western myths and their representations of Native people. [Harlan 1995:20]

That these sites have begun to encourage the representation of Native perspectives on the past, to challenge "Western myths and their representations of Native people," and that some of them are actively seeking Native visitors and advisors as well as to serve the needs of the Native community, signals the beginning of a major change in heritage administration, in the concept of historic sites and their functions, and in the "social process, in which competing interests argue for their own interpretation of history" [Bruner 1994:408]. These changes are potentially very important for both the self-determination of Native communities and the development of increased acceptance and respect of Native peoples by non-Native society.

While it is difficult to measure the success of the work of Native interpreters in challenging stereotypes and counteracting the hegemonic processes that historical narratives --and historic sites-- have traditionally served, I believe that the encounters between visitors and Native staff, and the new information and perspectives that Native

staff present to visitors, are important in fostering increased respect and understanding between peoples. These encounters and confrontations, which are often first contacts with Native people for visitors, are not happening anywhere else in visitors' lives: face-to-face communication is far more powerful than television dramas, news stories, books, or other forms of media. Freda, Keith, and the other Native interpreters at these sites provide a vivid contradiction to visitors' stereotypes and assumptions of superiority, and can change the way that visitors feel about Native peoples today and in the past. They open doors to re-evaluation and further contacts, and prompt questions of other images of Native people that visitors encounter after these meetings. Lutz and Collins [1993:272] similarly conclude of the photographs in National Geographic that "The most we can ask of an image is that it leave us with questions, with an aroused interest in the subject, a desire to know more fully the conditions surrounding the representation." From the behaviour of visitors when they are confronted by interpreters, and their comments afterward, I believe that these encounters provoke such interest.

Historic sites and heritage agencies have not traditionally identified such work as part of their official themes, messages, or mandates, and I fear that they will balk at doing so. This aspect of the addition of Native perspectives to historic sites goes far beyond the communication of information about life in the past. However, I would point out that heritage agencies and sites have had no such qualms about using the presentation of history to reinforce relations of power in the present when those favoured the non-Native, dominant society, and the many forces which are now

prompting us to revise our presentation of the past are operating very much in the present as well. If we are going to acknowledge the right of Native peoples to control the representations of their pasts, then we must also acknowledge the links between this process and self-determination in the present. There are several ways in which historic sites can both contribute to such growth and fulfil their mandates to portray and communicate more balanced views of history.

Firstly, site administrators need to acknowledge the stereotypes and preconceptions with which visitors arrive, as well as the fact that the physical reconstructions at these sites tend to conjure these up. A.J.B. Johnston has also made this plea, but I do not feel he goes far enough:

It is of fundamental importance that Parks Canada managers and front-line interpreters recognize the false preconceptions many visitors have about First Nations as being peoples of the past...Programs and publications have to avoid descriptions, headings and illustrations which suggest the clichéd, static view [of Native people] [Johnston 1994:9].

Rather than just avoiding such concepts, I think it would be useful to deal with them head-on in brochure texts, orientation videos, gift shop material, and interpretation. Sites need to actively acknowledge the existence of stereotypes and provide information and images which counteract these. Gateway-area images could include Native people in the present; orientation displays could discuss Native technology and its adoption by Europeans at the site, as well as the dynamics of Native-White relations; brochures could mention that the palisade was to define a European space rather than for defence. Native staff do an excellent job of attacking stereotypes, but they could communicate other information about the site if they had some

reinforcement in dealing with these most basic messages.

Secondly, it is necessary to demonstrate, physically and graphically, desired messages about alliances, relationships, and interdependence between Native peoples and non-Native peoples. Despite the vivid words of Native interpreters, historic reconstructions communicate most powerfully on a physical level: simply saying information is much less effective than showing it. The trading of food and essential country produce needs to be emphasized, as does the creation of political relations with Native people and the existence of marriages and friendships between Native peoples and Europeans. This needs to be a regular part of interpretation. Interaction between peoples needs to be shown, and it may be necessary to create special dramas or find funds for a "floating" interpreter to roam the site interacting with others to do so. And, if historic sites are serious about accuracy, they need to re-evaluate the ratio of Native staff to non-Native staff and arrive at ways of graphically portraying their historic demographics at the site. Was wild rice or corn the most important trade item? Then show that in quantity, and being traded, rather than just furs. Did Native people labour inside the palisade? Then make it clear who is Native inside the palisade, and who does what on both sides of the walls.

At present, these sites tend to talk about revisionist historical messages in official documents more often than they show them to visitors. The ideas that are actually communicated by the site, by the physical juxtaposition and relative sizes of the Native and non-Native areas, by brochures and orientation areas, by activities demonstrated and props seen, are often very traditional ones which suggest, at best,

"the master narrative of tribal resistance and colonial containment" [Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994:435]. Traditional historical narratives in which Native histories are incorporated into the non-Native histories of the site, and occupy marginalized positions in the past, are still what many visitors are "getting" from these places. It is unfair to expect interpreters to communicate new messages if what visitors are actually seeing are the old ones.

Finally, sites should acknowledge the special nature of the work that Native interpreters do, and its value and implications for both Native and non-Native society. Staff training should include information about the origins and functions of stereotypes, typical visitor expectations and preconceptions, and the need for all interpreters to work together to deal with these. Obviously, Native and non-Native staff need to get to know each other: interpretive positions may be the first time that many non-Native staff members have worked with Native people. Sites also need to reaffirm their commitment to Native interpretations by increasing the numbers of Native interpreters and encouraging the development of their programs through the allocation of budgets and by permitting opportunities for research, the development of craft skills, and the acquisition of traditional cultural knowledge. I wish to point out that visitors' comments and behaviour indicate that costumed interpreters are the most important parts of these sites: the reconstructions act as backdrops for them, and they and their interaction with visitors can never be replaced by other forms of communication, including interactive computer applications. For a majority of tourists, the interpreters are what make these sites worth visiting, and sites must make every

effort to maintain interpreter numbers and training in the face of budget cuts.

I am not making these comments as a neutral observer. Like Gable and Handler [1993:30], I have learned that it is impossible to do so. I write as an ethnohistorian with an archivally-based sense of the physical texture and human activities at these sites; as someone who believes that what we say about the past is not only shaped by, but can shape, the present; as someone who believes in the communicative possibilities of historic interpretation and who admires the work [and the stamina] of both Native and non-Native interpreters. I write as someone outside heritage administrations, who is unaffected by drastic budget cuts and the institutional climate of frustration and stagnation these cause. I write as someone who cares intensely whether the Pine City site's budget will be approved this year and whether certain interpreters will be re-hired at other sites. I write as someone who hopes very much that my work will have consequences at these sites.

I also write as someone who is excited by the changes that are taking place at historic sites, and at the implications of these changes for Native and non-Native society. While I agree with Jean Friesen that the combination of heritage and tourism marketing strategies can indeed lead

not to a greater understanding of each community's past but to the Golden Arches of theme park history, where pseudo-events replace real emotion and where the community's critical evaluation of itself is replaced by costume drama against a backdrop of historical facades [Friesen 1990:197],

I do not see this happening at the sites I studied. Yes, most sites have wagon rides and trappings of nostalgia, but they also have interpreters who are certainly not doing

"theme park history," who expose and challenge such complacent masks, who provoke and facilitate critical evaluation of stereotypes. Freda McDonald's challenge ["Are you here to make fun of us or learn about us? If you're here to make fun of us, you can go right back up that path..."], and the challenges and examples of her colleagues, have no place in theme park history. These sites are moving in a different direction altogether.

Historic sites will, presumably, continue to shift directions in the future.

Bruner's statement that "to construct, produce, invent, and market are verbs which highlight the processual, active nature of culture, history, tradition, and heritage" [Bruner 1993b:14] reminds us that these places will continue to move with the tides of contemporary Native-White relations, the influences of Native peoples, the self-images of Native and non-Native societies, and historiography, amongst other forces. How will we envision, and enact, these pasts in the future?

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

A. Questions asked of Site Visitors:

Did you see the Native encampment? What did you see in it that caught your eye? What did you recognize; what was familiar to you? What was new to you?

Did the interpreters tell you anything that you found new or surprising?

How many Indians do you suppose would have been camped here during the summer?

Why would the Indians have come here? What jobs did they do here? Were they important to the Europeans?

Why was the fort here? Can you tell me the story of this place?

Did you see the [reference to drama, if one has occurred recently]? Can you tell me what happened?

What did Indians and Europeans have to do with each other here? What were the relationships between them like? Were they on good terms, or were things pretty tense? Why?

Who were the Métis? Were there any at this site? What did they do?

Would you describe this site as European or Native? When you look at the site as you enter it, what does it remind you of?

Do you know any Native Americans/First Nations people? Have you ever spoken with a Native person before?

How have you learned about Native people? [prompt: movies? museums? powwows? books?]

Why did you come to this site? Do you visit historic sites often?

B. Questions for Site Administrators:

How long have you been working at this site? What is your current job description? Have you worked in other capacities at this site?

Can you tell me a little about how the site was reconstructed and how it has developed since then?

What are the greatest challenges facing this site right now? What are the site's strengths?

How was the Native interpretation program developed? When and why was it added?

How has the addition of the Native program changed the site?

What challenges have arisen among staff with the addition of the Native program? Are there cross-cultural issues which need to be addressed on staff? What are Native-White relations like on this site today?

What is the site's relationship with local bands and descendants of the historic Native population of the site? How is this evolving?

How have you and your staff dealt with "touchy" historical issues such as the role of alcohol in the fur trade and visitor misconceptions about the presence of Native women on site?

Who is responsible for hiring Native staff? For setting and implementing goals for the Native interpretation program? How does this differ for the rest of the site?

What percentage of the site's budget is spent on the Native program? How is the budget broken down over the site as a whole?

Do you have a sense of what visitors bring to and take away from this site? How they respond to the Native encampment and the other areas of the site?

Has your orientation area been revamped recently? What changes were made?

What changes do you have planned for the site as a whole in the next few years? What are your goals?

C. Questions to Interpreters [*indicates Q to Native interpreter]:

How long have you worked here? Why have you chosen to do this work? If you are a "veteran," what keeps you coming back?

Who developed the character you play? What is s/he like? How has your enactment evolved? Do you have a usual spiel that you give to visitors?

How were you trained as an interpreter? What historical material did you read? Where else did you get information about the site's history, life in the past, the character you represent?

What do you try to communicate to visitors? What do you think the most important ideas are to communicate to visitors? If you could ensure that all visitors would leave here with two ideas, what would they be?

What do you think visitors want from this site? are they interested at all in historical process/themes, or the textures and life in the past? Do they come here to learn, or for pure entertainment?

What questions do visitors ask you most frequently?

What are the special problems and strengths of 1st and 3rd person animation?

How seriously do you think the interpretation of Native history is taken by the site?

*If you were doing a tour of the site, how would it be different if you were to give a Native perspective on the site?

*How does the story that the site claims to tell fit with your own/elders' sense of history?

Are there many Native visitors to the site? *How do they respond to the Native area and staff? What do they say about the rest of the site?

*Do you talk about changes to Native cultures as a result of the fur trade or contact? Do visitors ask about cultural change?

*What assumptions do visitors often make about Native people, both in the past and in the present? Can you give me some examples of encounters in which visitors expressed these assumptions?

*How do you respond when visitors make war-whoops or stereotyped comments?

*What frustrations do you experience in your work at this site? What are the politics of the Native encampment vis-a-vis the rest of the site?

*Do you feel that you have ever been discriminated against in your work on this site because you are Native?

*What does your family think of your working here? If you're from a local band, how do fellow band members tend to see this site and your work? What do the elders think of this place?

*What relationship exists between the site and local bands? What would local bands like the site to show/do?

Are Native schoolchildren brought here for tours? How do you gear your presentation to them?

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