

**GREATER JEFFERSONTOWN**  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

October 2018

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**October Meeting -- 1:30 P.M., Monday, October 1, 2018.**

**NEW TIME FOR THIS MEETING – 1:30 P.M.** We have a room conflict.

The meeting is held at the Jeffersontown Branch Library, 10635 Watterson Trail. The Greater Jeffersontown Historical Society meetings are held on the first Monday of the even numbered months of the year. Everyone is encouraged to attend to help guide and grow the Society.

**October Meeting - Remember 1:30 P.M.**

Jim Homberg, Archives Curator for the Filson History Society, will be with us again. His presentation will be “Half Horse – Half Alligator: Kentuckians in the War of 1812.” A lot of people don’t know that Kentucky provided more fighters to the conflict than any other state.

**August Meeting**

**Kentucky’s Native History - Persistent Myths and Stereotypes.** The many cultural contributions Native Americans have made throughout Kentucky’s history, as well as the impact of lingering stereotypes.

The program was presented by Tressa Brown, the coordinator for the Kentucky Native American Heritage Commission and the Kentucky African American Heritage Commission. She has worked for the past 25 years providing Native American educational programming for schools and the public, both in her current position as well as in her previous position as Curator at the Salato Wildlife Education Center.

Her primary focus has been to identify the stereotypes and myths about Native Americans in general and Kentucky’s Native people in particular. Her position at Kentucky Heritage Commission is to provide accurate information to educators and the public about the diversity of Native cultures as well as the issues affecting Native people in contemporary society.

When we think about American Indians or Native Americans, both terms are used, the Federal government uses American Indian and the tribes will use American Indian. But the people Tressa deals with on a daily basis usually use Indian or their tribal name. If they are dealing with people with little or no knowledge of Indian culture, they will use Native American.

When the terms American Indian or Native American are used is when stereotypes come into play, especially for the younger folks, images such as Disney’s Pocahontas character, a picture of a scalping, and sports mascots come to mind. The stereotypes the older generation remember are the scalping sketches or a picture of a noble looking chief. What is still even seen in many history textbooks is totally wrong.

Tressa asked the audience what their images of Indians were. The responses were from the actual experience of seeing Indians selling jewelry and souvenirs off a blanket in an Arizona airport with a copy of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* on a stool behind them, and seeing despondent and depressed looking Native Americans riding public transportation. The younger generation with no personal experience from out West, Tressa said, respond with thinking of people with dark hair, dark skin, dark eyes, face paint and feathers, leather breeches, riding horses, war cries, stinking, living in teepees, drunken and lazy. All the stereotypes today can be traced back to writings of George Catlin and Prince Maximilian, and the art work of Catlin and Karl Bodmer, the Plains Indian War of 1860 – 1890, the Wild West shows starting in 1883. All these were

events that helped form the opinions and ideas of Americans and Europeans of the time. Catlin, a self-taught American artist and Bodmer, a European landscape artist who came to America with Prince Maximilian were both out west at the same time in the 1830s to record the Indian life, because they knew that the Indian was a dying tradition and they wanted to record the Indian lifestyle before it disappeared.

Traveling the state with the Chair of the Heritage Commission, Tressa says she is frequently asked what kind of Indian are you, or how much of an Indian are you? These are not questions any other people get. Black



people aren't generally asked how black are you or how Indian are you? She says that when you put those things in perspective, you begin to wonder about the language we use and the questions we are asking. But when we have these images from media and other sources in our heads, and we meet people who pretty much look like us with different cultural traditions, it jars our way of thinking. That is where these stereotypes come in.

Maximilian hired Karl Bodmer to paint portraits of only the indigenous peoples of the west, not any of the white traders or trappers that were out there. Prince Maximilian actually stopped Bodmer from finishing some paintings he had started of white men in flatboats on the Missouri River.

They spent almost all of their time with the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara tribes of the upper Missouri. Bodmer's paintings are very detailed and he could finish one in two or three days. The tribes are now going back to Bodmer's paintings as a resource to learn exactly how their ancestors looked in the 1830s. The paintings Catlin and Bodmer made show exactly how a particular Indian in a particular tribe dressed themselves and their horse. The two artists had different styles, Catlin's works were not as detailed. Some of their works look almost identical because at times both were at the same event or place painting the same event. The painting above



is by Bodmer. Almost all of their paintings are of men and their activities. Few works are of lone women. It was more acceptable for a man to be painting a man than a woman, especially a lone woman.

Maximilian hired Bodmer, so some of his works became part of a planned publication by Maximilian in Europe on the American West. Bodmer and Catlin took their paintings back east to publish their portfolios for profit and recognition. They eventually took their paintings through Britain and the European continent. The picture to the left is Catlin's painting of Mandan Chief Ten Bears.



So these paintings were the first images of the American Indian seen by the people in the eastern United States, and almost worldwide at the time, noble looking in full regalia.

Then came the Indian wars and soldiers went out west for a tour or tours of duty, many taking their families with them. When they returned east both the soldier and his wife would go on the lecture circuit talking to usually an audience of their sex. Both would greatly embellish the experiences they had. And the more hair-raising their talks, the better, after all the idea was to sell seats. This was in the 1860s.

The more problematic your time was out west; were you in dire peril and fear of your life most of the time, were you in fear of being scalped in the night, that's what packed the house. These oral histories, however accurate they were, were added on top of the images in people's minds from the paintings. So within 20 years, 30 years at most, you had the images of the people that were there, accurate images, and then you had the over

running of the oral histories, however accurate they were, from the people that had been there, on top of the images in the paintings.

About the same time, or even earlier, there was the appearance of printed stories depicting events or just novelization of things that happened out west. Wild west pulp fiction, with sketches of an Indian savage, dressed in his buckskins, a feather or two stuck in a rawhide headband, weapon in hand, lurking behind an interior cabin door, about to attack a woman looking out of the cabin. Tressa had such a sketch supposedly from a story about the killing of Abraham Lincoln's grandfather, Captain Abraham Lincoln, while working on his farm near Hughes Station, now Long Run, in eastern Jefferson County. It never happened that way; Lincoln was shot by an Indian while clearing trees on his farm.

In the 1870s Wild West shows started appearing in the eastern US, the most famous being William "Buffalo Bill" Cody's Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows – America's National Entertainment. The shows had started in the Midwest, grew and moved east, up and down the eastern seaboard and across into Britain and across Europe. So they hit the same places that Catlin and Bodmer went to with their paintings. Cody's shows all started when dime novelist, Ned Buntline wrote a novel about the buffalo hunter, U.S. Army scout and guide called, *Buffalo Bill, the King of Border Men*, after the two met on a train from California to Nebraska. Buntline's novel was made into a theatrical production named *The Scouts of the Prairie* that opened in Chicago. After Buntline left the show Cody, started his own production, the Buffalo Bill Combination, in which he performed for part of the year, while scouting on the prairies the rest of the year.



In 1883, Cody founded Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. His was the real deal; he paid Chief Sitting Bull to appear in his shows (1880s) as he did with many of the tribal peoples he knew, with all their actual regalia that was accurate and authentic to them. The Wild West shows had wild animals, gun and bow and arrow trick performances, reenactments of actual events – Custer's Last Stand, a Buffalo hunt, and all sorts of characters from the frontier were all incorporated into the show's program. Shooting exhibitions were also in the lineup with extensive shooting displays and trick shots, such as Annie Oakley (1880s). The stagecoach would come into the big arena go round and round, the screeching Indians would chase it, then over the hill would come the US Calvary to save the day. Of course, all the Indians would be wiped out. The early shows had actual Indians performing their ceremonial dances. Geronimo and Nez Perce, Chief Joseph, were also in the shows.

As time went on the original performers tired of the grind and many left. That left Cody and other show-owners in a pinch. They would go into an area and get indigenous Indians if possible, not necessarily Plains Indians, to be performers and many times they would get anyone they could and dress them in costumes, not authentic regalia. This was especially true of the low budget show companies. So parts of the programs like the dances and village life scenes may or may not be true for the Plains peoples they were supposed to be portraying. The shows were still being staged up into the 1920s. People like Will Rogers, Tom Mix, and Bill Pickett performed in the later shows.



From all this was how the public was forming their image of the Indian – the paintings, stories the wild west shows, and from the ten-cent novels that always showed the Indian, always dressed with feathers, sometimes

in fancy, flowing headdresses, being chased on horseback at full speed by Kit Carson, fighting Buffalo Bill on horseback in the water, with sharks (May, 1915), always being subdued and killed by the likes of Carson, Cody, and Wild Bill Hickok.

During WWI the Indians had the largest population of any other group serving in the US military. They were not US citizens, and serving in the military was one way they could become a naturalized citizen. It wasn't until 1927 that a person born in the United States was recognized as a US citizen. So if an Indian soldier came home in 1915, one of the first things he might have seen passing through a train station was the cover of the *Buffalo Bill Weekly* magazine cover showing Buffalo Bill fighting the Indians in the water with the sharks.

Tressa had a chart she titled Persistent Stereotypical Images and Languages listing various areas and some examples:

TV and Films - *The Lone Ranger, Dancing With Wolves, F-Troop, The Last of the Mohicans*

Books - Good sources for education but full of misinformation, even textbooks.

Common Expressions - Sit Indian style, (sitting with your legs crossed), Indian giver, Have a pow-wow.

Native Indians Who Pander to the Expectations of Tourists

School Projects and Activities

Web-Sites

Advertising and Media

Teacher Resource Materials

Through all of these we have been sensitized to the stereotypical language and images of almost every other group, African-Americans, LGBTQ, Spanish-Americans, especially after WWII and the 1970s you don't hear Japs, spic, kike, N-word, greaser, you don't hear any of those terms, except for the American Indian – redskin or squaw. There is absolutely no hitch in people's thought process when they hear those terms. We haven't been sensitized to it. This is a group of people that are completely invisible until recently with regard to their equality, teaching about bias and stereotypes, figuring where the myths are, especially in Kentucky, and about how we talk about American Indian cultural history.

When Tressa goes into schools around a holiday like Thanksgiving and sees the teacher having the little kids do a project making headbands with feathers, she asks if the teacher doesn't realize she is disrespecting the Indian and their culture. The teacher responds that the kids are just having fun. Then Tressa asks that when Black History Month and Martin Luther King Day comes around, is the teacher going to have the kids dress up in black face? And of course, the teacher gasps in fear. What's the difference?" Tressa asks. There is not an understanding that both actions are the same thing. You're not being respectful of another person's culture.

Another problem is seen when actions are taken to pander to public's expectations. And it is done so you can put your kid through school or pay off that new truck. You would do whatever it takes. When you go to Cherokee, North Carolina, to see real Indians in their regalia, you don't want to see some guy with a turban on his head with an ostrich feather. But that was their real, original regalia. But when you go to Cherokee you see Indians in feathered headdresses standing in front of a teepee. But that is not the real Cherokee, but that is what the public thinks is correct and that is what they want and expect. That is what they pay for. They don't want a picture taken standing next to a guy in basically a suit with a turban on his head.

Websites are full of incorrect materials and images, as is what you see in advertising. The commission is working with schools in the state to correct and upgrade teacher resources. Early books for children had images of Indians attacking young kids, as in Laura Ingalls Wilder *House on the Prairie* series set in the 1880s. Not that scalping ever happened, it did, especially when the French and English started paying the Indians for them. And scalping was not new. It goes back to prehistoric periods. A medal named after Ingalls Wilder for excellence in writing children's book was changed when the criticism reached a crescendo because of the

Indian images in her books. These books were first published in the 1930s, but similar images persisted until recently. If depictions of women were used they were either old hags or sexy young things, think Disney's Pocahontas. There were never just ordinary family home scenes.

Paperbacks and comics are still using the same covers today – cowboy fighting an Indian. Tressa had a 1945 example similar to this box that offered Indian War medals inside, calling them “Frontier Hero Medals.”



Indians were told they were the children of the Great White Father in Washington that had to be taken care. There are now children's books that show the Indians as children of savages, animals, and nature, that can hear messages in the wind and can communicate with animals; all of one tribe are good and all of one tribe are bad, Again think of Disney's tale of Pocahontas which is pure fabrication, but a nice children's story.

Indians as sports team mascots were always a big thing and is disappearing today. There are still nine high schools in Kentucky that have Indian imagery as their school symbol, with a tomahawk, a spear, feathers, and almost always portrayed screaming. And there is a boatload of elementary schools across the state with Indian imagery. Some of the schools are changing; others are fighting it saying we are honoring you. There is a disconnect, because the Indian community is saying no you aren't. You are totally disrespecting us.



There was a photo of a 2002 billboard with a very mad, scowling Indian reaching out with the phrase “Bedlam in the Boro” advertising a Halloween hayride that Tressa just didn't get, she said. She had a slide of a sexy white girl in a bikini in a fashion show dressed in a large, more than floor length feathered headdress that Tressa noted was exceedingly disrespectful. Such a headdress is nothing less than a military honor; it shows that your community is honoring you for what you have done for them, for your military exploits and your place in the community. Wearing it as the model is shown is disrespect taken to the extreme, Depicting Indian women in a sexual context is a problem. Indian women today are four times more likely to be a victim of sexual assault or human trafficking.

There was a 2007 ad photo showing two young girls, one as an Indian in a sexy, fringed buckskin dress with one of her legs exposed, and a pilgrim girl in a long, dark pilgrim dress, down to her shoes, hawking tanning spray. This photo and the photo of the model in the headdress was “blown out of the water” with complaints by the Indian community, criticizing the extreme sexuality of the photos.

Cleveland baseball's mascot, Chief Wahoo, the Washington Redskins symbol, and Florida State's Seminole symbol have their own problems. Florida State says they have the Seminole tribe's permission. But which one? There are several local Seminole tribes, and all but one has not given permission. And that “Indian” racing around on the horse, tossing the spear in the ground – he is dressed wrong for a Seminole Indian.

Until images of a doll with an exaggerated smile, one in blackface and, one and Indian with a feather on the back of his head, are put side-by-side, people don't get it. Especially in Kentucky where in Louisville there is the largest American Indian population in the state representing 200 different tribes. There are more than 40,000 American Indians living in the state.

So the problem of stereotyping the Indian has its roots in many historic events. Indian imagery has been used to increase the popularity of products and the recognition of products through the years, and until the early 2000s none of those actors posing as Indians in the television and print ads were real American Indians.

Remember the Indian shedding a tear while looking at all the pollution and trash people just dumped on the ground? He was an Italian as were others portraying Indians. The female Indians in ads were mostly Hispanic or white women made up to look like an Indian.

### **Question and Comments**

What about the myth that Kentucky was just the “Dark and Bloody Ground” and a hunting ground or did Indians actually populate Kentucky?

Indians had lived in the state for thousands of years. In western Kentucky and along the Ohio and other rivers there were large villages with populations in the hundreds, but the villages were few and far between. By early colonial times the area had been decimated by warfare, but mostly by disease. It is estimated the Indian population in Kentucky was down by over 80%, so the Indian population was sparse. The Shawnee had been in the area for thousands of years. The Cherokee came up from Georgia and there were disputes. Eventually the two tribes mostly settled their disputes, but the Shawnee had been pushed north across the Ohio River and the Cherokee stayed mostly in Tennessee and North Carolina. When the long hunters, Walker, Boone, and others, came in and didn't find any villages they assumed Kentucky was just an Indian hunting ground.

For years the Boy Scouts could earn a merit badge for completing a walk along what is called the Massacre Trail at Long Run in Middletown. The place where Abraham Lincoln's grandfather was killed. Then the Indians and others started protesting the so called massacre. No violence occurred.

Tressa recounted that a few years back someone in Mercer County got the idea that they would “celebrate” an event that supposedly happened. A young boy was working in a field outside the fort when he was discovered by a Shawnee Indian party. The young boy took off, outran them, and reached the safety of the fort.

The promoters held a race to commemorate the feat. The runners went off, and without asking or telling the organizers, someone got the idea he would dress up like an Indian and chase after them with a tomahawk. Wow, they thought, we'll add this to the run next year. The organizers advertised the race, with the costumed chasers, in the paper the next year and when it hit social media it went viral, causing people to go ballistic. No one had given a thought to how it would look. The promoters were asked if they were also going to have people in KKK garb chasing the African-American runners. Sponsors dropped out and where the first year there were hundreds of runners, the next year only about a hundred showed up. It was a stereotyping teaching point at its best, showing until things are put side-by-side, people just don't see or get what is going on.

What about Indian fighting and politics over Kentucky in the 1700s?

There was plenty of conflict between the Shawnee and Cherokee. The Shawnee claimed Kentucky and by the 1700s the Cherokee had moved north and about taken it over. Other tribal groups like the Iroquois and Mohawks, that didn't even live here, said they had claim over Kentucky. There was a lot of Indian politics with regard to Kentucky that the British and Europeans knew nothing about. None of the parties wanted any white settlers in Kentucky, resulting armed conflict and raiding between the Shawnee and Cherokee, with both tribes attacking the settlers, who then retaliated against the Indians.

Which is the correct term to use, are they Indian tribes or nations, and how many are there? What about casinos?

You can use either term, both nation and tribe is used in their legal documents. There are thousands of Indian tribes, but as of January 2017, there are 567 Native American tribes legally recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the United States.

To have a casino they have to be federally recognized, but not all those recognized have casinos. Other tribes gain income from natural resources like lumber, livestock, and oil; some are looking at straight tourism and ecotourism. A comment was made that Oklahoma, a deeply religious conservative state, is full of Indian

casinos. To get a cut of the profits a person has to prove genealogically that they are Indian. To prove your ancestry there is genealogy center where one can research their relatives. At one time you had to prove you percentage of Indian blood (quantum blood percentage), but now you have to prove by ancestry. Blood quantum laws, or Indian blood laws, was legislation enacted in the United States to define membership in Native American tribes or nations, describing the degree of ancestry for an individual of a specific racial or ethnic group. Each tribe defines what that percentage is for full tribal membership.

The Kentucky Heritage Commission has a process with stringent requirements for an Indian tribe to be recognized by the state. But as soon as the legislature hears the term American Indian it immediately thinks gambling and shuts down. The commission is not asking for recognition for a tribe, only for the legislature to approve the process by which the tribe can apply for recognition and the commission can determine if the tribe meets the criteria for approval. It has to be done by legislation; it can't be done by gubernatorial action. What happens is that people equate Indian tribal recognition with gambling, which wouldn't happen anyhow, because the tribe has to be federally recognized, have federally recognized land, and then the tribe would have to go before the state legislature to have a gambling casino approved. None of that will happen in Kentucky, but the legislature refuses to understand the facts. The commission cannot get the legislators to accept the definitions the Census Bureau uses for Kentucky. They have gotten many county governments to accept the proposed application process, and when the commission gets a majority of the counties approval, they plan to go back to the legislators and tell them you are behind the times and you need to open your minds.

The tribes understand things are done in small steps when it comes to Indian affairs, and realize results for an effort are actually for the seventh generation out. They are not working for themselves or even for their children.

The commission is very frustrated with legislators-they are just dumb! The commission has had a legislator tell them in session that there were no Indians living in Kentucky! Remember 40,000 Indians live in Kentucky.

Tressa stressed – please never use or call a female Indian a squaw. It is a very derogatory term. It is worse than using the N-word in reference to an African-American.

### **GJHS on Facebook**

Thanks to Anne Bader GJHS is now on Facebook and Facebook .com. Please look at all the pictures of Jeffersontown she has put on it.

### **Contact Us**

The telephone contact is your newsletter editor, John Ulmer, 491-6463. Our e-mail address is **[jtownhistsociety@aol.com](mailto:jtownhistsociety@aol.com)**.

