

Fall 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures
Michael Forbes Wilcox
mfw@mfw.us

Plan for October 7 (week 3)

- (Abbreviated) Berkshire Land Acknowledgment
- Review of last week's discussion of race and racism
- Discussion of land management practices
- Preview of coming attractions

Fall 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures

- The role of language (it reveals and shapes our values)
- Social values embedded in mythology and other teachings
- **Land (mis)management:
contrasting American & Colonial practices**
- Colonial values, including racism and slavery
- The influence of Colonial observations on European thinking
- The highly developed system of private property and markets in Europe; unknown in the Americas

Fall 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures

Colonial values, including racism and slavery

The Origins of Race and Racism

Who said?

"I believe we will not end racism until we stop talking about races as if they exist.

"The idea of '*race*' as an identifying characteristic was invented in 15th century Europe as a way to justify slavery and the expropriation of native lands. If we talk about such things as '*racial equality*' we are simply supporting that myth."

Thanks to Jody:

<http://www.mfw.us/blog/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Black-Native-American-and-Fighting-for-Recognition-in-Indian-Country-The-New-York-Times.pdf>

Fall 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures

Colonial values, including racism and slavery

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-unlearn-racism/> (paywall)

Although biology has shown that there are no genetically distinct races, racial *identity* is very real. In a white-dominant society, white people tend to be unaware of their identity and may think of themselves as neutral, as nonracial.

Fall 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures

Colonial values, including racism and slavery

Remember, this is *before* Darwin (1793/1795):

- the **Caucasian** or white race. Blumenbach was the first to use this term for people of European, Middle Eastern, and North African origin.
- the **Mongolian** or yellow race, including all East Asians and some Central Asians.
- the **Malayan** or brown race, including Southeast Asian and Pacific Islanders.
- the **Ethiopian** or black race, including sub-Saharan Africans.
- the **American** or red race, including American Indians.

Fall 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures

Colonial values, including racism and slavery

From October 2020 SciAm:

"Racism is race prejudice plus power."

Differences are alarming (literally), an evolutionary survival thing.

The "science" of race began with

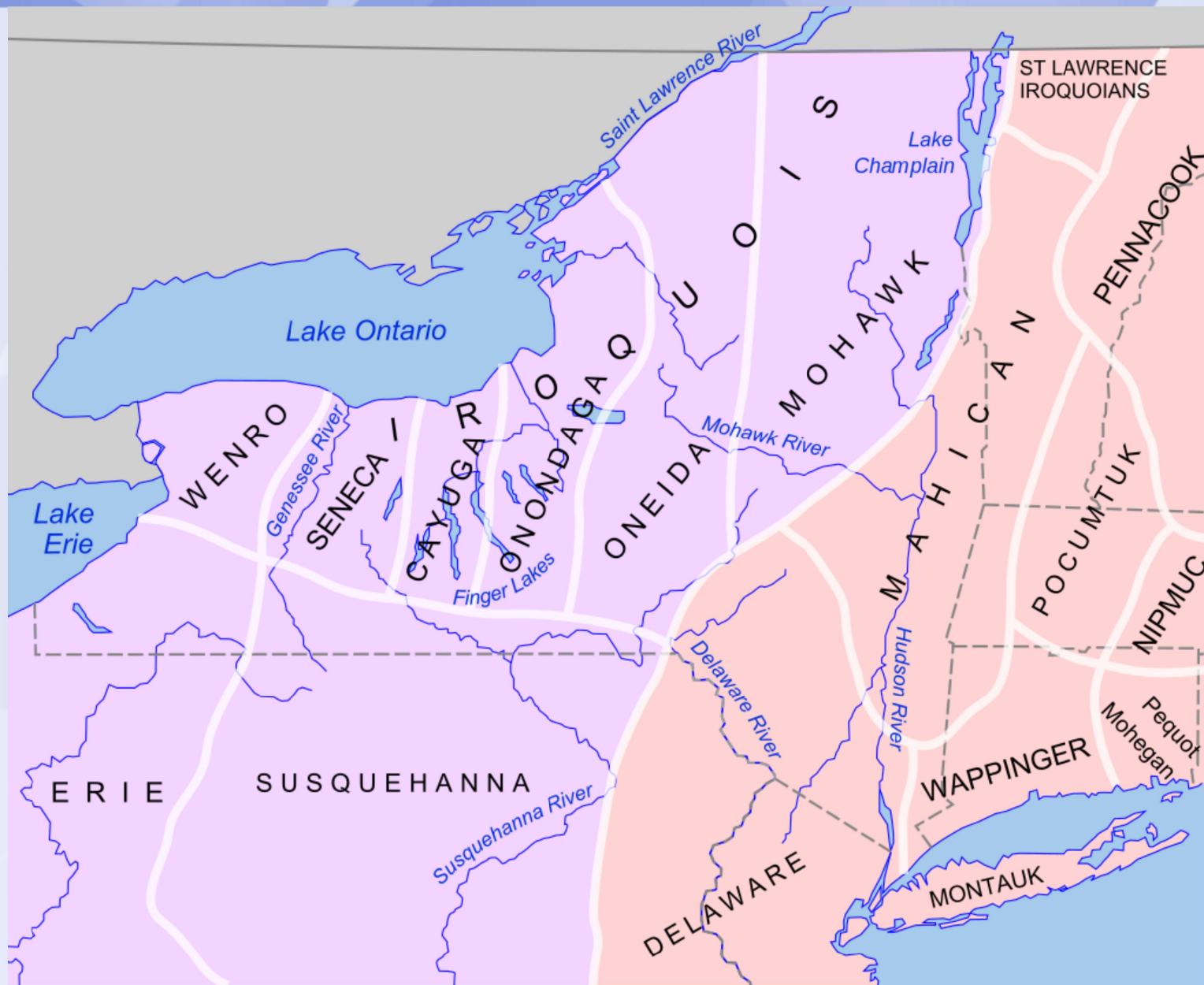
<https://embryo.asu.edu/pages/johann-friedrich-blumenbach-1752-1840>

Blumenbach argued that there are five distinct races of mankind within a single species, a conclusion he derived from detailed studies of skulls and human anatomy. Although Blumenbach recognized distinct races, he also believed in the unity of the human species, and he combated the use of anthropology as a means to promote discrimination.

Fall 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures

Origins of Colonial values, including racism & slavery

- 13th Century: expansion of commerce, use of coinage
- 14th Century Shift away from Aristotle into proto-scientific thinking
- 15th Century The Age of Discovery and the invention of race
- 16th Century
 - Henry VIII (1509-1547) land measurement and ownership
 - The Little Ice Age – peaked in 1570
 - Population collapse in the Americas, ending cultural progress
- 17th Century: King James Bible & Shakespeare, John Locke 1632-1704; Thomas Hobbes 1588-1679
- The Age of Enlightenment 1715-1789; Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778
- Might makes Right: to the Victor go the Spoils (cultural relativism)



10/7/20

Autumn 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures

Fall 2020 OLLI Indigenous Cultures

Land (mis)management
Contrasting American & Colonial practices

This all ties in with property ownership.

Not just land ownership, but also intellectual property
and other forms of private claims on public goods.

Also related is the concept of externalities.


An externality is often thought of as a cost not
imparted in the market price, but it can also be the
cost of loss opportunity.


With thanks to Rob Hoogs


Damnably Heresy

William Pynchon, the Indians, and the First Book Banned (and Burned) in Boston

By David M. Powers, David D. Hall · 2015

 Preview

 Search inside

 Add to my library



Berkshire Land Transactions (Frazier p. 52)

Several Indians began to build and furnish New England colonial houses and to fence their gardens, paying for the expenses with money they had earned, borrowed, or made on land transactions. Twenty Indian houses would go up in the next nine years.⁴¹ Konkapot and others signed a ninety-nine-year lease for land around Taconic Mountain to help defray their expenses.⁴² (By this means some of their clever new neighbors were able to get control of Indian land without violating Massachusetts law against purchase of it.) Umpachenee and another Indian went to Hartford to sell a strip of land near the Massachusetts-Connecticut border.⁴³ A few of the Stockbridge Indians apparently tried land speculation themselves. One deed records that for £12 Jehoiakim Yokun and another Indian bought all the unsold land between Stockbridge and Pittsfield from two fellow tribesmen. Yokun added this to the considerable territory that he and other principal families claimed throughout western and northwestern Massachusetts.⁴⁴

Indians were stuck in the hunter state

Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) shifted anthropology from anecdote to science; Franz Boas (1858-1942) later shifted it from race to culture

The “singular trait in the character of the red man” was, according to Morgan, that he “never felt the ‘power of gain.’” This power “is one of the earliest manifestations of the progressive mind.” It “clears the forest, rears the city, builds the merchantman—in a word, it has civilized our race.” Stuck in the “hunter state,” the Indian never felt this power. “The *auri sacra fames* of Virgil, the *studium lucri* of Horace, never penetrated his nature. This great passion of civilized man, in its use and abuse his blessing and his curse, never roused the Indian mind.”⁵⁷

“Communism in Living” as a barrier to social progress

traditional Iroquois antimarket attitude toward land. According to the wisdom of the prophet Handsome Lake, which Morgan heard: “The Great Spirit, when he made the earth, never intended that it should be made merchandise; but he willed that all his creatures should enjoy it equally. . . . Chiefs and aged men—you, as men, have no lands to sell.

the ownership of land. Both Morgan and Bentham believed one should be able to possess land and sell it as completely as one owns or sells a chair. The European class system, like the Iroquois kinship (tribal) system, tied individuals to a larger collectivity and discouraged individual initiative; neither system fairly rewarded individual initiative or productivity. Both hindered social progress and had to be dismantled for the success of the liberal experiment, which was itself spiritual in nature.

Who Said This?

"For the same reason that the water of rivers should be guarded against private appropriation . . . portions of natural scenery may therefore properly [be] guarded and cared for by government . . . [to be] laid open to the use of the people."

Who Said This:

"For the same reason that the water of rivers should be guarded against private appropriation . . . portions of natural scenery may therefore properly [be] guarded and cared for by government . . . [to be] laid open to the use of the people."

Frederick Law Olmsted

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2020-4-july-august/feature/public-lands-preservation-republic>

Jared Diamond (1992) page 337

"...it's always been hard for humans to know the rate at which they can safely harvest biological resources indefinitely, without depleting them.

... preindustrial peoples who couldn't sustain their resources were guilty not of moral sins, but of failures to solve a really difficult ecological problem. Those failures were tragic, because they caused a collapse in life-style for the people themselves.

Tragic failures become moral sins only if one should have known better from the outset. In that regard there are two big differences between us and [earlier people]: scientific understanding, and literacy. We know, and they didn't know..."

Ecology and Balance

A study that has received quite a bit of notice talks about the success of indigenous peoples at managing land for the benefit of biodiversity, especially for threatened species. A more detailed write-up about the same topic (and conclusion) can be found on the “preprint” service of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

<https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2020/06/by-paying-attention-tribes-in-the-northwoods-are-leading>

University of British Columbia. (2019, July 31). “Biodiversity highest on Indigenous-managed lands.” ScienceDaily. Retrieved January 20, 2020 from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/07/190731102157.htm

“The importance of Indigenous Peoples’ lands for the conservation of terrestrial vertebrates”

Christopher J. O’Bryan, Stephen T. Garnett, John E. Fa, Ian Leiper, Jose Rehbein, Álvaro Fernández-Llamazares, Micha V. Jackson, Harry D. Jonas, Eduardo S. Brondizio, Neil D. Burgess, Catherine J. Robinson, Kerstin K. Zander, Oscar Venter, James E.M. Watson

bioRxiv 2019.12.11.873695; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2019.12.11.873695>

Lisa Brooks on Balance

(from an online talk sponsored by the Bidwell House on June 13, 2020)

Speaking of King Philip's War, she described conflict (war) as striking native sensibilities **as** things being out of balance. "Peace is the restoration of balance."

She talked about how the concept of balance is built into the language. Moving versus stillness. The endings of words (locatives) differentiate: "bagw" is a lake, or stillness at the end of a flow. A river is "tegw" which means flowing.

-bagw (lake, stillness, the end of flow)

-tegw (river, flowing)

e.g. Pitawbagok (or Pitabagok or Pitabagw) means (probably) Double Lake(s)

and Kwenitegw or Kwnitekw means Long River, with Kwenitogok being the locative.

Pokw8mtegw = Pocumtuck (small/low/short/narrow river) = Deerfield River

pokwiwi = a short way (partly)

Pokwisaaazena (it makes a short cry) – Akwesasne = Abenaki name for Mohawks