

Introduction

Defining Indian Identity

I wouldn't change for anything in the world. I'd rather be a dead Indian than no Indian at all. – Reuben R. Lewis (Meherrin)

To most Americans, and many historians, Native American history ended in 1890 at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, where federal soldiers shot more than 150 Sioux men, women, and children, a tragic event that symbolically marked the end of the Plains Wars. Consequently, for most of the twentieth century, both scholars and laypersons have traditionally viewed American Indians as relics of the past rather than contemporary survivors. Native American history, of course, did not stop at Wounded Knee. But, in many ways, the popular and scholarly image of Indian culture remains based on late-nineteenth-century stereotypes such as the brave warrior, the stoic chief, and the mystical shaman, epitomized by historical figures like Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Geronimo. As a result, modern Native Americans continue to be overshadowed by their more famous ancestors.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, some scholars attempted to correct this historical oversight by reinserting the original Americans into American history. At first, historians concentrated on federal Indian policy and official efforts to “civilize the savages,” a process that demanded both acculturation, the adoption of European culture, and assimilation, the loss of a separate tribal identity. In the late 1900s authors adopting more of a “bottom-up” technique focused on how Native Americans reacted to these civilization campaigns, emphasizing their tenacity and persistence. Most recently, Indian identity has become a popular subtopic within the broader field of Native American studies, with some authors tackling a series of difficult questions regarding Native American

identity, such as who is an Indian, and what exactly does that mean. Most everyone agrees that Native Americans are still living in the United States, but just who they are is a very difficult and controversial question made even more complicated by a variety of economic and political factors, such as the recent spread of reservation gambling.

Traditionally, Americans of European descent defined Indians primarily in racial terms. That is, Native Americans were biologically characterized as a subgroup within the human species. This was also true for other minority groups, such as African Americans and Asian Americans. To Indians, this race-based system of social classification often made little sense. Native Americans did not see themselves as part of a single group or people, whether it was defined biologically or not. Prior to contact with Europeans, there was no such thing as an “Indian,” but rather hundreds of peoples living in North and South America with a variety of different cultures. Nevertheless, first Europeans and later white Americans categorized Indians as a single racial group.

This racial definition of Indianness reached its peak in the early twentieth century. During the first few decades of the 1900s, Social Darwinism dominated thought in America. In the late 1800s the British philosopher Herbert Spencer applied Charles Darwin’s theories on evolution to human societies, arguing that only the fittest of these societies would survive. The American William Graham Sumner imported Spencer’s ideas and applied them to laissez-faire capitalism in the United States. According to Sumner, the rich prospered because they were more highly evolved, while the poor suffered because they could not compete. Sumner and others also believed that races could be ranked from highest evolved, Caucasian, to lowest, Negroid; all others, including American Indians, fell somewhere in between. Furthermore, Social Darwinists argued that races carried certain traits in their blood that determined various characteristics, such as intelligence and personality. Sumner’s theories flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a time of rapid industrialization, American imperial expansion, and widespread poverty among the immigrants and lower classes in the exploding cities of the Northeast. At the same time, Social Darwinism also dovetailed nicely with the establishment of Jim Crow segregation in the mostly rural and agrarian South. In fact, Sumner’s theories not only justified but also demanded separation of the races.¹

A few academics dared to criticize these theories of racial essentialism. The anthropologist Franz Boas challenged the philosophy behind Social Darwinism as early as the 1890s. Boas revolutionized the science of anthropology, advocating extensive fieldwork, observation, the study and use of indigenous languages, and the collection of life histories. From 1888 to 1903 Boas coordinated the

accumulation of statistical information from more than eighteen thousand Native Americans, a data bank that scholars continue to mine for raw material. Based on his research, Boas argued that biology and culture were different, and that cultures should be analyzed on their own merits, not ranked from most civilized to least. Building on Boas's work, members of the "Chicago School of Sociology," led by Robert E. Park, also questioned Social Darwinism in the 1920s.²

Despite these noteworthy challenges, Spencer and Sumner, not Boas and Park, dominated the argument during the first few decades of the twentieth century. The consequences of this debate were not limited to the halls of academia; these theories on race and identity trickled down from the intelligentsia into popular culture and affected the way that groups defined themselves. Therefore, some Native Americans and members of other minority groups also defined their own identity in racial and biological terms. For many Indians, this was new and controversial. In many Indian societies, kinship defined tribal or community identity. Traditionally, kinship was not limited to one's "blood" relatives, but rather was based on a more complex system of social responsibilities and obligations. It also included those who married into the society, as well as others who became members of the community in various ways, such as adoption. Thus, it was quite possible to be fully considered a member of the community or tribe, and therefore an Indian, without being biologically related to others. Moreover, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the federal government began to require that tribes maintain official rolls in order to determine who was eligible for benefits from previous land treaties. This led to the use of blood quantum, which is a measurement of Native American ancestry expressed as a fraction, to determine Indianness. For example, someone who has one Indian parent and one non-Indian parent would be considered "one-half" Indian.

World War II, however, marked a major turning point in the way that Americans thought about and wrote about racial identity. The defeat of Nazi Germany compelled many Americans to question the racist assumptions that had dominated mainstream thought since the late 1800s. In the 1940s and 1950s, scholars such as Gunnar Myrdal, Horace Kallen, and Frederik Barth, building on the earlier work of Boas and Park, attacked the last vestiges of Social Darwinism by contending that race was constructed socially rather than biologically. Because of the constant interaction of humans over the previous few centuries, the concept of race was becoming meaningless as an analytical tool for examining group formation and social interaction. Consequently, ethnicity replaced race as the best technique for studying group formation. A racial group was simply a group of people who shared a common biological lineage. An ethnic group, by

contrast, was a self-conscious group of people who shared a common identity that was based on, among other factors, history, culture, religion, and language.

In subsequent years scholars began to build on these new ideas. In doing so, they challenged Americans' fundamental assumptions regarding identity. Before World War II America was often described as a "melting pot," wherein separate racial and ethnic groups would eventually assimilate into a homogeneous American society. The millions of immigrants who entered the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s would eventually blend in with other Americans and lose their cultural or ethnic identity. But in the 1950s and 1960s, authors questioned the accuracy of this metaphor. For example, Horace Kallen, a social psychologist, argued in *Cultural Pluralism and the American Ideal* that ethnicity was a basic feature of self-identity and that distinct ethnic cultures could survive in a liberal democracy. The anthropologist Frederik Barth took Kallen's argument even further. Barth contended that distinct ethnic groups could maintain their separate identities despite frequent interaction with other groups. In fact, interaction actually cultivated and encouraged the preservation of ethnicity. According to Barth, ethnic groups that lived in multicultural states developed markers, or signs of distinctiveness, to separate themselves from others. Barth found that members of ethnic groups regarded some features of their culture as vital to maintaining a separate identity, while they rejected other less meaningful elements. Some groups, for example, might deem religion an important component of their distinctiveness but reject the need or significance of a common language or traditional dress. In other groups, the opposite might be true, with language and dress more culturally significant than religion. Barth labeled these markers "boundaries" and argued that they kept ethnic groups from fully assimilating and losing their identity. Boundaries did not have to be physical or geographical; they could be cultural, material, or even ideological. Therefore, ethnic groups, even if rather small, could maintain their identity in large multiethnic nation-states. In essence, Barth replaced the analogy of the melting pot with the jigsaw puzzle, where boundaries defined the individual pieces that ultimately fit together, creating a unique cultural landscape that more accurately pictured American society.³

These new theories influenced all Americans, not just academics. According to the authors Michael Omi and Howard Winant, for the first time in American history, scholars in the postwar years adopted and sustained the notion of racial equality. The new social science filtered down through all levels of society and eventually altered the way that most Americans thought about race and ethnicity. But there was also an interesting side effect. Prior to the war, identity was defined exclusively by biology. After the war, however, Americans began to

define identity by ethnicity and culture. Black and Indian, which were previously racial categories, essentially became ethnic categories. But African Americans and Native Americans were as ethnically and culturally diverse as European Americans. There was just as much cultural difference between Cherokees and Navajos, for example, as between Italians and Irish, perhaps even more. Nevertheless, Native American and African American became, in essence, ethnicities, which, according to stereotypes, carried certain common cultural characteristics. All Indians and blacks, therefore, were supposedly members of the same ethnic group and thus shared basic cultural characteristics. There was, of course, no historical basis for this. According to Omi and Winant, “There [was], in fact, a subtly racist element in this substitution—in which whites are seen as variegated in terms for group identities, but blacks [and Indians] ‘all look alike.’”⁴

These changes influenced the way that Native Americans maintained and exhibited their unique identity. One consequence was an emerging pan-Indian or supratribal ethnic identity. Previously most Indians defined themselves solely in tribal terms. For example, one was a Cherokee or a Navajo; but few saw themselves as part of a larger ethnic group. In the postwar years, however, this changed as Indians began to form multitribal groups, which led to the development of a broader ethnic consciousness, a move partly designed to increase their political power to effect change within the American democratic system. Most Indians still defined themselves tribally, especially when dealing with other Indians, but they also embraced this broader identity as “Native Americans,” particularly when dealing with outsiders.

The emergence of a broader pan-Indian ethnic identity subsequently led to a political renaissance. In the post-World War II era, Native Americans pooled their political and economic capital to agitate for reform. From the fish-ins in the Pacific Northwest to the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs office building in Washington DC, Native American activism spread across the country in the 1960s and 1970s. Almost acting as a political action committee, Indians pressured politicians in local, state, and federal offices to address their needs. In *Return of the Native*, Stephen Cornell analyzed this explosion in Indian political activity. Cornell argued that a variety of factors, including New Deal legislation and the threat of tribal termination in the 1950s, sowed the seeds for the flowering of a broader supratribal Indian identity, which in turn led to the protests and demonstrations of the 1960s and 1970s. This activism continued into the 1990s. Fergus Bordewich noted the changes in his book *Killing the White Man's Indian*. To Bordewich, it became clear that a “revolution was underway in Indian country . . . an upheaval of epic proportions that encompassed almost every aspect of Indian life, from the

resuscitation of moribund tribal cultures and the resurgence of traditional religions, to the development of aggressive tribal governments determined to remake the entire relationship between Indians and the United States.”⁵

Because of these changes, the definition, or definitions, of Indian identity evolved in the second half of the twentieth century into a complex mishmash of biological and cultural ideas. By the turn of the century, there were numerous definitions of Indianness. For example, according to the U.S. Census, anyone who claimed to be an Indian was an Indian, at least when determining population. But in order to qualify for government programs and benefits, Indians must be enrolled members of federally recognized tribes. Native Americans themselves are also divided regarding definitions of identity. Some define Indianness in cultural terms; others base it on genealogy. Today each tribe sets its own guidelines for defining membership. Some continue to carry biological components, partly basing identity on blood quantum, whereas others rely on behavioral characteristics or kinship when defining Indianness.

With so many different definitions of Indianness, an obvious problem emerges: just who gets to decide who is an Indian, and what criteria do they use? The short answer is everyone and no one. Anyone can claim to be a Native American when the census taker comes to the door. But, in the end, there is no final arbiter of Indian identity. For the government, Native American identity is a legal issue. Federal acknowledgment of an Indian tribe is based on a historical relationship between the tribe and the government. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many Indian tribes signed treaties with the federal government regarding land ownership. These treaties were based on language in the Constitution that characterized Indians as dependent domestic nations within the United States. Therefore, treaties established a government-to-government relationship between Native American tribes and the federal government. Ostensibly, official federal recognition continued that tradition. The reality, however, became much more complex, especially in the late twentieth century. Today, recognition is partly about cultural pride and political sovereignty, though tribal governments actually have very little real power, but it is also about economic benefits, such as aid for housing and education. To Indian tribes and communities mired in poverty, this money is very attractive. In the late twentieth century, consequently, several Native American communities organized and pursued acknowledgment.

Federal recognition, however, also carries certain negatives that somewhat offset the economic benefits. Tribes seeking acknowledgment have to conform to government definitions of Indianness. In other words, they define themselves according to government-imposed definitions that are often complex and based

on outdated stereotypes of Native Americans. Moreover, some critics contend that by participating in certain federal programs, American Indians are becoming just another minority group within American society. Some Indians resist this process by continuing to define their own identity internally while trying to exist outside of the system established by the government, a very difficult proposition given the poor economic situation in many Indian communities.

As Native Americans debated their own conceptions of identity, the new postwar theories on Native American race, ethnicity, and culture generated disagreement and controversy among academics. Some authors criticized scholars and federal policy makers for inventing modern Indians based on cultural fictions. As the federal government passed Indian legislation in the postwar era to redress past grievances, and as the interest in Indian culture increased in the 1960s and 1970s, critics contended that many individuals merely pretended to be American Indians to reap financial benefits or to appear socially fashionable; and even worse, some critics challenged the authenticity of whole tribes.

Cultural pluralists countered these criticisms by arguing that American Indians were the only people required to prove, often with detailed documentation, who they were. The invention of culture and identity, pluralists further contended, was natural and promoted social cohesion by establishing a set of common values. Other groups, not just Native Americans, have historically redefined their identity. Most current ethnicities evolved over centuries, as separate groups often coalesced to form new ethnic groups and nations, and therefore also constituted cultural inventions. Furthermore, they contended that ethnicity, by its very nature, was constantly evolving. In other words, identity was a process, not a constant.

But to many Americans, Indians were not supposed to change or evolve. The sociologist Angela Gonzales argued that in the late twentieth century, Indian identity was still primarily based on a handful of outdated cultural stereotypes. “Real” Indians lived on reservations, were enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe, had long straight black hair and dark eyes, wore leather moccasins and beads, spoke a tribal language, and practiced “traditional” Indian spirituality. To many twentieth-century Americans, nineteenth-century Plains Indian culture, a lifestyle limited to a specific place and time, still defined Native American identity. Furthermore, other groups were allowed to evolve—few whites lived in log cabins, grew their own food, or wore powdered wigs in the 1990s—while Indians were required to stay trapped in time or risk losing their authenticity. According to Fergus Bordewich, “To see change as failure, as some kind of cultural corruption, is to condemn Indians to solitary confinement in a prison of myth that whites invented for them in the first place.”⁶

Southeastern Indians

The concept of modern Native American identity becomes even more complex when applied to the American South, a region where three races have intermingled for the past four hundred years. During the seventeenth century European settlers and Indians regularly interacted—sometimes peacefully, sometimes violently—in what would later become “the South.” Colonials often traded with Native Americans, exchanging manufactured goods for deerskins, a mutually beneficial practice. Some white traders married Indian women to facilitate their business, thus establishing closer relationships between Indians and Europeans. Unfortunately, the less scrupulous ones also enslaved Native Americans, sending many to the West Indies to work on the sugar plantations; other Indian slaves labored on tobacco plantations in Virginia and the Carolinas. When Native Americans proved to be a poor source of labor—they were highly susceptible to disease and could easily run away and hide—European colonists began importing African slaves, adding a third ingredient to the region’s flavorful cultural stew.

After American independence, the new U.S. government tried to deal with “the Indian question.” At first federal officials attempted to “civilize” Native Americans by trying to turn them into small independent farmers and landowners. Many southern Native Americans adopted elements of European material culture but, at the same time, chose to maintain their Indianness. For the most part, this “civilization campaign” failed, as Indians continued to live on communal land under tribal governments. With the massive immigration of new European settlers in the early 1800s, the friction between white farmers and Native Americans in the South intensified, especially regarding the ownership of farmlands. Whites argued that Indians underutilized their land, and therefore it should be opened up for settlement. Indians countered that whites illegally poached on land guaranteed them through federal treaties. After Eli Whitney’s cotton gin rejuvenated the sagging textile market, white farmers with newfound dreams of getting rich pushed westward looking for fertile soil in order to plant “king cotton.” Native Americans resented the arrival of the new farmers, and tension increased and occasionally led to violence.

In the 1830s President Andrew Jackson decided to solve the problem by removing southern Indians to lands in the West where they could reside peacefully until “civilized” enough to assimilate into American culture. What followed was one of the saddest chapters in U.S. history, as the federal army rounded up thousands of Indians and forced them down the Trail of Tears, an appropriately

named death march. For some tribes, one-fourth of the population died on the undersupplied and poorly planned journey. In many American history textbooks, Indian history in the southeastern United States ended with the removal of the “Five Civilized Tribes” (Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles) from the South. But not all Indians relocated to the West; some remained, hiding out in the mountains, swamps, and other undesirable areas of the region. These holdouts can be broadly divided into two categories: small “remnant” communities, such as the Eastern Band of Cherokees, who managed to resist removal by hiding in isolated areas; and “unremoved” communities, or the dozens of small Indian settlements that managed to avoid removal altogether, mostly because they lived on remote and infertile land. These Indian communities persevered relatively isolated from their neighbors throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.

In the early twentieth century, southern Native Americans reemerged, once again attracting attention from non-Indians. Railroads, automobiles, paved highways, and telephones decreased the physical and symbolic space between the previously isolated Indian communities and their neighbors. The dramatic post–World War II shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy in the South pushed Native Americans further into mainstream America. According to the anthropologist J. Anthony Paredes, the twentieth-century South became a testing ground for defining contemporary Indianness. After all, many Native Americans in the region lived very much like their non-Indian neighbors. Still, they retained a distinctive racial and social identity. Jim Crow legislation in the 1800s had tried to divide all Southerners into either whites or “coloreds.” Because of this biracial social system, many experts predicted that Native Americans in the region would eventually “disappear” by integrating into society either as whites or blacks. In 1945 the scholar Julian H. Steward, echoing the thoughts of many others, argued that “the Indian is virtually extinct in the eastern United States . . . it is solely a question of a few years before the last survivors will disappear without leaving any important cultural or racial mark on the national population.”⁷

But Steward, like so many before him, underestimated Native American persistence and resolve. Indians in the southeastern United States, as well as those in the Northeast, refused to disappear. As Walter L. Williams has noted, cultural persistence and survival, rather than assimilation and absorption, better characterized southern Native American history in the twentieth century. Moreover, the American Indian experience constituted a vital component of Southern history and merited more investigation. According to Williams, “The

South, an area of three cultural and racial groups, cannot really be understood without a knowledge of the Indian experience in the region. Southern Indians are not on a 'road to disappearance,' and it is time to ask if they ever were."⁸

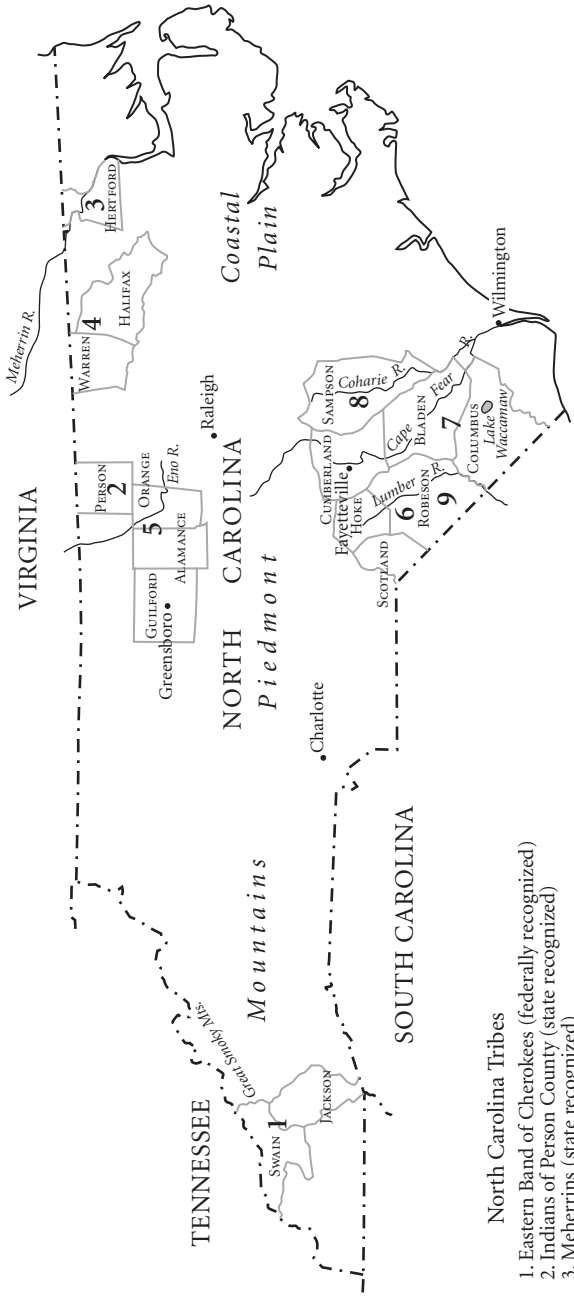
In the South, as well as elsewhere, modern Indian identity is based on both environmental and biological factors. Therefore, one's identity is not completely ascribed at birth but is, at least partially, a matter of choice. Yet, at the same time, one's choices are certainly limited by biological factors. American Indian identity is usually transferred from parent or guardian to progeny during early childhood. One is Native American, therefore, because one is raised Native American by a Native American. In a letter to Senator Daniel Inouye of the Select Committee on Indian Affairs, the anthropologist Karen Blu summarized this definition, arguing that "Indian identity . . . is profoundly cultural, a piece of a moral universe for those who hold it. It is not carried on a gene, it is not lost when Indians change their ways of making a living or use a different language. It is a way of seeing, a mode of understanding, a way of being in the world."⁹

The Indians of Eastern North Carolina

At more than one hundred thousand, North Carolina has the largest Native American population of any state in the South, and one of the largest in the country. Although Indians live throughout the state, their population is concentrated in three regions: a federal reservation in the western mountains, a cluster of several counties in the southeastern coastal plain, and a smaller area in the northeastern and central portion of the state along the Virginia border. About ten thousand of the thirteen thousand members of the Eastern Band of Cherokees reside in the Great Smoky Mountains on the fifty-six-thousand-acre Qualla reservation. The other ninety thousand North Carolina Indians, the focus of this book, live mostly in small rural communities that dot the Piedmont and coastal regions of the state, though a growing number reside in urban areas, such as Raleigh, Greensboro, Fayetteville, and Charlotte.

Surprisingly, North Carolina Indians have seldom attracted scholarly attention, especially when compared to tribes in the West. Those who have written about them have usually concentrated on the colonial era, when Native Americans and Europeans clashed over land and the deerskin trade. Authors examining more recent history have often focused on the Eastern Band of Cherokees, the most well known group in the state. Today, however, the Cherokees account for only about 13 percent of the state's Indian population. Moreover, because the Cherokees are federally recognized, their story is somewhat different.

By comparison, the other North Carolina Indians, who reside mostly in the



North Carolina Tribes

- 1. Eastern Band of Cherokees (federally recognized)
- 2. Indians of Person County (state recognized)
- 3. Meherrins (state recognized)
- 4. Haliwa-Saponis (state recognized)
- 5. Occaneechi-Saponis (state recognized)
- 6. Lumbees (state recognized)
- 7. Waccamaw-Siouans (state recognized)
- 8. Coharics (state recognized)
- 9. Tuscaroras (unrecognized)

Indians currently living in North Carolina. The map shows the location of Indian tribes currently residing in North Carolina, counties with significant Indian populations, and notable geographic features of the state. Urban Indian organizations are found in Charlotte, Greensboro, Fayetteville, and Raleigh.

eastern half of the state, remain relatively unexplored. Despite their relative obscurity, all of these communities have maintained a strong Indian identity. At the core of that identity is the belief that they are the descendants of the original inhabitants of what is today eastern North Carolina. Just exactly who is and who is not an actual descendant of the indigenous peoples of the region remains a controversial question. But to Indians in the eastern part of the state, this connection is very important. Most Native Americans, including those in North Carolina, place tremendous importance on a sense of place—they came from here, whereas everyone else came from somewhere else. Therefore, their identity is intertwined with the local geography. In Frederik Barth's terms, this belief is the primary boundary that separates Indians from others in North Carolina. Moreover, this conviction of common origin unites Indians in the state.

At the same time, this unity regarding their common origin masks a constant tension both within and between these communities over the specific components of Indian identity. Belief in common origins may create a bond, but North Carolina Native Americans have continuously debated what specific characteristics define them as Indians. Other than a common ancestry, just exactly what constitutes Indianness? Is it biological or is it cultural? All ethnic groups, not just Indians, define themselves by employing boundaries, whether real or symbolic, that distinguish them from others. And those boundaries can change over time, as they did in eastern North Carolina from the late 1800s to the present. Moreover, the evolution of group identity is not simply an insular process—it does not occur in a vacuum. Consequently, the formation of Indian identity is also a dialectical process, a combination of internal assertions of identity (who Indians think they are) with external expectations of identity (who others think they are). Therefore, conceptions of identity are also partially affected by broader trends in society, even for Native Americans living in rural North Carolina in the late 1800s. This, of course, is not unique to Native Americans but applies to all groups. In short, defining identity is a continual process, and Indians in eastern North Carolina have continuously reshaped and redefined their identity in the twentieth century in response to changes around them. Ultimately, this process would lead to the formation—or perhaps more accurately reformation—of eight Native American tribes: the Coharies, the Haliwa-Saponis, the Lumbees, the Meherrins, the Occaneechi-Saponis, the Person County Indians, the Tuscaroras, and the Waccamaw-Siouans. With the exception of the Tuscaroras, who are related to the Lumbees but claim a separate identity, all of these tribes are recognized by the North Carolina state government. This book is partly the story of the formation of these tribes. But, I hope,

it is also something more. For the past 120 years, Native Americans in eastern North Carolina have struggled to survive as a separate people. Despite pressure to give up this fight and assimilate, they have thus far succeeded in maintaining their identity as the descendants of North Carolina's indigenous population. This is a truly remarkable achievement. How they accomplished such a feat is the real focus of this book.

The use of several terms in this work may offend some readers. Throughout the text, I have tried to be as specific as possible when using names—it is always preferable to refer to someone as a Coharie or a Haliwa rather than simply an Indian. In a work such as this, however, general statements are necessary. The terms Native American, American Indian, and Indian are used interchangeably, mostly to avoid repetition. American Indian is probably the best choice of the three, and the one that most Indians currently prefer, at least in North Carolina. Native American can be confusing, as it also defines anyone born in the United States, and Indian alone can also be misleading, referring to citizens of the Asian country. Of course, prior to Columbus's geographical blunder, there was no such thing as an Indian; and prior to the twentieth century, most Native Americans referred to themselves as Cherokees, Cheyennes, or Tuscaroras, rather than as Indians. But in the last few decades, many have openly adopted a more general pantribal identity, proudly calling themselves Indians or Native Americans. In fact, they have used it to their advantage, as have other minority groups. Readers will also find troublesome terms such as "mixed-blood" and "blood quantum." I use them hesitantly, understanding the problems associated with such loaded and culturally biased jargon. I also refer to the organized Native American groups in North Carolina as tribes. Recently scholars have argued that the concept of "tribe" is mostly a product of the postcontact period and actually the creation of Europeans. Of course, for that matter, so were "blood quantum" and "Indian." But Native Americans have taken these European terms and concepts and tried to use them to their advantage. Hence my decision to use them, as do many North Carolina Indians.