Collecting among the Menomini

_Cultural Assault in Twentieth-Century Wisconsin_

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We do not want to have any disagreement with the American Museum people and yet we can not let them skin the state without making all possible effort to get ahead of them where it can be done. . . . I presume if they get wind of you they will try to jump ahead of where you are working in order to get first pickings.

Henry L. Ward, director of the Milwaukee Public Museum, to Samuel A. Barrett, curator of anthropology, July 12, 1910

Collectors and ethnologists launched an assault on the scale of an invasion in the cultural arena on the Menominee Reservation during the late nineteenth century. I began to consider the ways in which this assault has been incorporated into community memory in 1991, when I interviewed a distinguished tribal elder who vividly remembered a berry-picking outing with her sister and her mother decades earlier. On an otherwise beautiful day her mother returned from around the bend absolutely shocked and hurt because someone had opened graves and rifled them, scattering the remains. The person who told me this story did so when emphasizing to me what she referred to as “the _desecration_ by anthropologists.” She used the word _desecration_ very strongly in this context, and then she told me another story.

Frances Densmore, an ethnomusicologist who became renowned for her studies of American Indian music in its cultural role, interviewed this elder’s grandmother in 1925 to collect songs for a book she would publish in 1932, _Menominee Music_. When Densmore left she borrowed a family photograph, a portion of which she published in her book.
Densmore knew the photo had been lent to her, not given. She stated as much in a letter to Matthew Stirling, the chief of the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), when she requested he copy the photo and return the original to her. Stirling never returned the photo to the family from whom Densmore had taken it, and Densmore apparently never followed up. Instead of returning the original, which now sits in the museum files, the museum sent to the family a cheap print, which fell apart with age. That was the only picture the family owned of one of the family members depicted, and when Densmore published the picture, that individual was cropped out.

The elder asked whether I was returning to the Smithsonian, and when I said yes, she asked me to find out what had happened to the photograph. A copy of the photograph in the National Anthropological Archives with cryptic origin markings on the back and a series of correspondence within the institutional archives unraveled the answer related here, and I was able to purchase a new print and bring it back to the family.1

Though as my studies continued I would learn that the issues surrounding collection of material culture and knowledge are complex, with multiple power relationships between tribal members and various types of collectors, it was at this point that I began to think of the documentation I was coming across in museum records and archival collections as representing both assault and invasion in this community. This assault was remembered by elders who felt the emotional distress it caused their parents and grandparents. From the late nineteenth century through the early 1930s a succession of collectors, ethnologists, and other scholars scoured the Menominee Reservation for data and items of material culture, which they carted off to present to the American public through both publication and display. They did this with the cautious aid of Menominees they hired to provide interpretation skills and access to many of the tribe’s elderly and non-Catholic members.

Articles and books about various aspects of Menominee culture, from music to language to religion, resulted, as did a proliferation of museum collections. These form the bulk of the early-twentieth-century literature on Menominee history and culture as well as the basis for the Menominee holdings in such repositories as the Milwaukee Public Museum, the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, and the two great New York ethnological museums, the American Museum of Natural History
(AMNH) and the Museum of the American Indian—Heye Foundation, the latter of which has become part of the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian Institution.

The impetus behind this explosive scramble was the commonly held non-Indian belief that Indian cultures were rapidly dying. Collectors rushed to get these items and data before they disappeared entirely or before someone else got them. Some did so to bolster their institutions or careers; others viewed themselves as noble preservers of tribal culture. Their works ultimately defined Menominees to the outside world. Unfortunately, these works often were clouded by the collectors’ or scholars’ own culturally derived myopia, and though they contained much valuable material, the pictures they presented were inaccurate in an insidious way: they were based on a false definition of “aboriginal” life that was so boldly assumed that it was not even questioned. The effects not only extended to the outside world’s perception of Menominees but affected Menominee community life as well.

These works laid the foundation for later works on Menominee history and culture that in turn would both develop and perpetuate misconceptions. In the 1950s scholars again turned to the Menominee, once more presenting valuable information in their works but using culturally inappropriate constructs that did disservice to Menominee history and culture. It has become a habit among scholars to critically read old secondary sources and field notes to cull the accurate and valuable assessments and observations from those that were judgmentally impaired. The Menominee case well illustrates the value of doing so.

Before Walter J. Hoffman visited the tribe in the 1890s little scholarly attention had been paid to the Menominee. That changed within a forty-year period as museum collectors such as Alanson Skinner and Samuel Barrett and scholars such as Felix Keesing, the linguist Leonard Bloomfield, Frances Densmore, and ethnobotanist Huron Smith visited the tribe. All of these people collected information for studies or material objects for museums. In fact, all but Keesing and Bloomfield did both. For the most part they used the same Menominee collaborators or consultants and also for the most part they relied on the same “scientific” assumptions grounded heavily in social Darwinism or American or Western exceptionalism as their framework for understanding Menominee life. In the 1950s the work was done by James S. Slotkin and Louise and George Spindler. This article explores the actions and roles of these
people in shaping outside perceptions of the Menominee as well as some of the consequences of their work.

Hoffman first visited the Menominee Reservation in 1890 on a project for the BAE, which had been established in 1879 “to provide technical information on American Indian groups which could be used in assimilating them peacefully into the American milieu,” in Felix Keesing’s words.⁴ The accounts of how this transpired vary. All agree, however, that Hoffman originally intended to study the Menominee traditional religion, the Mitawin. He had recently done the same among the Ojibwa for the BAE in a study published in the 1885–86 annual report.

Hoffman said, in the opening pages of the volume he eventually published on the Menominee, that he began the project at the request of several Menominee elders, including Neopit. Knowing that he had recently studied the Ojibwa Mitawin, they asked him to be initiated into the Menominee Mitawin “in order that their version of the Traditions and dramatized forms of initiation could be studied and preserved ‘for the information of future generations of the Menomini.’” The elders believed these skills were being lost because younger members of the tribe lacked interest. Hoffman believed his work would help to preserve the rites for future generations.⁵ Smithsonian Institution annual reports, however, stated that he visited the Menominee for the purposes of making a comparative study of the Menominee and Ojibwa Mitawin.⁶ This would serve academic rather than Menominee purposes.

At a meeting of members of the religious society Hoffman apparently lobbied to be inducted as a member into the Mitawin. “I had considerable difficulty at first with regard to having a Medicine initiation performed,” he wrote from the reservation town of Keshena to a friend at the Smithsonian in August 1890. New members were not brought into the group except to replace members who had died. “Unfortunately there has been no death which would afford my being adopted by any of my friends,” he continued. A new member was inducted, however, through arrangements made a year previously when a member lost his son. Hoffman presented a request to Mitawin leaders that he be allowed to attend.⁷

He then laid plans for how to transcribe the day’s events. “As the government interpreter is blind,” Hoffman wrote, he “engaged two extra ones—the best to be found, to keep constantly at my back, so that I can take down the phraseology instantly—in English—, securing the origi-
inal afterwards from the persons who recite them.” Hoffman seemed more intent on transcribing his experiences than actually participating in the Mitawin.

In addition, his lack of understanding of Menominee language and culture limited the accuracy of his observations. Field notes describing the Mitawin, or the Mide Ceremony, as Hoffman called it, were descriptive of the actions of participants. They mentioned that talking was done but did not discuss the purposes of the ceremony or how it fit into the larger context of the participants’ lives, and they did not transcribe what was said.

In describing the Mitawin, Hoffman said, “As usual, everything was done with apparent premeditation and studied delay, to make it as impressive as possible to those not members of the society.” He also commented several times on the length of the ceremony and its “tedious pause[s].” At one point he said, “The monotony of the utterances and drumming became absolutely painful.” Then, as the ceremonies became more serious, the “jugglers” performed “tricks to impress the audience with the powers [they] possessed.” Hoffman then described these tricks with the purpose of proving they were not magical but were used to make those watching believe they were. In the book that resulted from this work—more than three hundred pages that served more as an ethnographic account of Menominee history and culture than as a study of the Mitawin—Hoffman tried to unmask what he saw as the visual “tricks” used in the ceremonies to fool unwitting Menominee and white observers.

Hoffman participated in the 1891 and 1892 Mitawin ceremonies as well and observed that he believed the Mitawin was dying. In 1893 he wrote that the “Menomini cult society, usually designated as the Grand Medicine Society, . . . days are numbered.” Though neither the government nor the church had succeeded in its attempts to “dissuade this tribe” from “holding such meetings and to adopt some creed of Christian faith, . . . the society will become extinct of its own accord, as the old men, the fanatical pagans, are rapidly dying off, while the young men take but little interest in the ceremonies, looking upon them as farcical and of no special consequence.” He gave three specific reasons for this decline: the improved “condition” of those who became Christian; the school education of the young men, who “began to observe the futility and uselessness of the various dances”; and the deaths of older members.
“as well as of shamans.” Even before this impending death, he argued, the religious ceremony had deteriorated because it was not written down but merely remembered.\textsuperscript{13}

It hardly seems likely that someone with so little understanding as Hoffman had of the sacred nature of the religion or the meaning of it would be able to preserve its essence in writing for future generations of Menominee. Although Hoffman said in the work that he was following the request of tribal elders to preserve the ceremony, he seems more likely to have used this request as an excuse to search for information and descriptions that would be useful to the scholarly world. He may have sincerely believed he could do both at once, but he failed to do so.

Clearly, Hoffman and the Menominee had different goals in mind regarding the outcome of this project. Hoffman viewed his role as prying secrets from the elders. Regarding information on another topic, for instance, he said, “After the usual amount of ceremony and delay, I have at last ‘wormed out’ of some Mide chiefs a short story relating to the origin of maple sugar.”\textsuperscript{14}

Incidental to his studying, Hoffman also collected thirteen pieces for the Smithsonian Institution’s museum, including woven mats and a medicine rattle. Before making the trip he had proposed to collect from various tribes throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota “at reasonable prices typical sets of articles of aboriginal workmanship, to illustrate the house life, dress, ornaments, weapons and utensils, as well as articles made for sale and exchange only.”\textsuperscript{15} No doubt this helped sway Hoffman’s superior in support of this trip, since he would not only gather data for publication but also augment the museum’s collections of physical specimens. This became a common practice: when Aleš Hrdlička, a physical anthropologist with the BAE, made a study of tuberculosis among five tribes, including the Menominee, in 1908, he brought back some twenty-five Menominee items for the museum collection. Frances Densmore in the 1930s also collected small amounts of material for the Smithsonian while on the reservation studying the tribe.\textsuperscript{16}

Soon after the Smithsonian Institution published Hoffman’s work in 1896, at about the time of Hrdlička’s visit, other museums entered the picture. While Smithsonian observers focused primarily on gathering data and collected Menominee artifacts on a small scale, these other museums, especially the Milwaukee Public Museum and New York’s AMNH and Museum of the American Indian, raided the reservation in a mad
scramble for Menominee artifacts, a scramble that lasted through the
decade of the 1910s.

The central figure in the ensuing drama was Alanson Buck Skinner. Born
in 1886, he made annual collection trips to Keshena and throughout
northern Wisconsin from 1910 through 1914 for the AMNH. He collected
throughout the upper Midwest and in the Dakotas, Iowa, and Oklahoma
until he died in an automobile accident in 1925. Skinner’s competitors
viewed him as unscrupulous, and his own writings, published and un-
published, reveal much truth in this perception. The Menominee knew
Skinner as “The Little Weasel,” a nickname in which he took pride, be-
cause of the way he gathered material objects and information from
people even when they did not want to give them to him. One Menomi-
née who knew him said, “He used to say, ‘I’ve got everything that Hoff-
man never got.’”17 From 1910 through 1914 Skinner collected hundreds of
Menominee objects for the AMNH and created one of its larger western
Great Lakes collections.18

In 1910, Skinner’s first summer on the Menominee Reservation, the
Milwaukee Public Museum decided it too would build collections of ar-
tifacts of Wisconsin’s tribes. Samuel A. Barrett, the museum’s curator of
anthropology (hired in 1909 while leading an expedition for George C.
Heye in Esmereldas, Ecuador), spent several weeks that summer travel-
ing throughout Wisconsin collecting data, photographing ceremonies,
and buying artifacts for the museum’s collection.19 In July Barrett ap-
parently informed his boss, Henry L. Ward, the Milwaukee museum’s
director, that Skinner and the AMNH were in the field trying to collect
the same things. Ward, angered, sought and gained emergency funding
at a meeting of the museum’s board of trustees so that Barrett could in-
tensify his efforts.

On July 12, 1910, Ward wrote to Barrett, who was on a Chippewa res-
ervation at Reserve, Wisconsin, telling him to expect a Wells Fargo ship-
ment containing more photographic plates and Barrett’s hunting coat.
Stuffed in the pockets of the coat Barrett would find $150—$50 in one-
and two-dollar bills, $35 in half dollars, $50 in quarters, $10 in dimes,
and $5 in nickels. Ward wrote that he feared there was not much In-
dian material culture left, since the AMNH “outfit” had already visited
the Stockbridge and Menominee Reservations. He believed it “a most
disgusting condition” that they had spent a month in the field without
informing anyone at the Milwaukee Public Museum of their excursions, yet he also feared offending them. He recognized that the New York museum could outman and outspend his own. He proposed, therefore, that Barrett avoid confrontation and keep ahead of them. “We do not want to have any disagreement with the American Museum people and yet we can not let them skin the state without making all possible effort to get ahead of them where it can be done,” he wrote. He added, “I presume if they get wind of you they will try to jump ahead of where you are working in order to get first pickings.”

The next week Ward wrote Barrett, still in Reserve, “I would suggest the advisability of when you have skinned this reservation” of moving on. “If there is no immediate danger of anybody coming in to the region where you are at work you can be more discriminating in what you acquire than if you feel that somebody is likely to jump your claim at any moment.” Otherwise, Barrett should buy as much as possible.

What made this especially urgent to Ward and Barrett was the ethnological and museum communities’ belief that Indian cultures were rapidly dying. This implied that only a finite amount of material culture remained, especially in the ceremonial realm, that no more would be created, and that whichever museum got to it first would gain the spoils. As Barrett wrote in an official report, “It was the endeavor to obtain as many as possible of ceremonial objects for the reason that the old ceremonial material is very much in demand, and when once it is picked up, it is gone forever since no more of these old objects be made.”

Although the New Yorkers had already collected among the Menominee, Barrett made a collecting trip to the reservation in August. There he observed the Dream Dance as well as making photographs and collecting data for publication. He collected approximately 550 Menominee items on this trip, including 200 of a ceremonial nature. The latter he considered especially rare and valuable. These included two war bundles, three complete medicine bags, and eight more medicine bags “without contents.” Barrett eventually earned the nickname “Medicine Bundle” from the Menominees.

During the following years the Milwaukee Public Museum and the AMNH carried on a war of words regarding their Menominee collections and collectors in correspondence between museum officials. Ward complained to Frederic Lucas, director of the AMNH, that “with our limited resources of money and collectors, [we] have had to stand off
and see any possibility of an excellent collection of this Wisconsin tribe pass beyond our reach.” He added possessively, “I have not been glad to see Mr. Skinner come into our Menominee reservation and with the great resources of the American Museum get the cream of the ethnological material of this reservation.”

Clark Wissler, curator of the Department of Anthropology at the AMNH and Skinner’s boss, jumped into the fray, telling Lucas that “the Indians reported a great deal that Barrett said to influence them against us.” Wissler also wrote that Skinner had told him that his Menominee employee, John V. Satterlee, “reports that the Milwaukee people are very angry because of my last season's haul, since they had expected to send Barrett in to clean up the stuff again when I was gone. They have complained to the agency people that the stuff ought to be in a Wisconsin museum.” Wissler suspected that Ward “must have had some detective on [Skinner’s] tail.” However, Wissler did not put much stock in Satterlee’s comments. He defended his department by observing that Skinner had collected at Menominee before Barrett had even been hired by Milwaukee and that the Menominee collections were part of the AMNH’s larger effort, begun by William A. Jones, to document “central Algonkin” culture. In the end, Ward denied intending to keep the New Yorkers out of the field, and Wissler observed that “they have done us no harm,” so “I do not regard it as serious.” Wissler had decided as early as the winter of 1909 that Skinner should collect Menominee material culture, since Hoffman had already collected the ethnographic information.

Barrett and Skinner were not the first to collect Menominee artifacts, but they were the first to do so with the intentions of filling large museum collections. In the mid-1910s the Museum of the American Indian hired Skinner. Over the years he collected nearly three hundred Menominee items for that museum, almost 60 percent of the Menominee material in its present collection. Of these, the museum cataloged approximately 260 in 1918 and 1919, the heyday of Skinner’s collecting there.

By 1919 Skinner and Barrett were cooperating on archaeological digs on the Menominee Reservation. They wrote a monograph about these digs, although it was not published until after Skinner’s death. In 1920 Barrett replaced Ward as director of the Milwaukee Public Museum and hired Skinner as his replacement. Barrett, as director of the Milwaukee Public Museum, gained a stature in his field that Skinner, whom he hired because no one else was available, never did. Of the three candidates
the museum sought, Skinner was the third choice. He was the only one, however, to accept Milwaukee’s offer.30

Although Barrett and Skinner became allies, and Barrett eventually hired Skinner, other collectors disliked and distrusted him. Arthur Kannenberg, director of the Oshkosh Public Museum, wrote to Barrett on February 25, 1925, that Skinner, who was by then back at the Museum of the American Indian in New York, was nosing around trying to get information on a war bundle that Kannenberg had collected. “I don’t quite get Skinner, I am wondering whether [sic] he is sneaking around a corner or what his object is in wanting to know full details about it.”31

Milford G. Chandler, a Chicago automotive engineer and Indian curiosity collector, had collected at the Menominee Reservation numerous times beginning in 1917 or 1918 and with a grant from Augusta and Julius Rosenwald for Chicago’s Field Museum of Natural History in 1925. He strongly disliked Skinner because of their differing styles of collecting and a specific conflict that grew out of those styles. If Chandler came across an artifact that someone was unwilling to sell, instead of trying to trick the person into giving it up, he either dropped the idea to test it later, dropped the idea for good, or himself made a replica of the item. Skinner once got word of Chandler’s knowledge of the location and ownership of a sacred pipe on a western reservation and somehow weaseled the pipe out of the woman, who had been uninterested in losing it. Chandler never forgave Skinner.32

Over his career Skinner collected items for three major museums, the Milwaukee Public Museum, the AMNH, and the Museum of the American Indian, which were apparently the only large museums that funded collecting expeditions to the Menominee Reservation.33 Other museums obtained Menominee items by purchase from individuals or private collectors and by trade with museums such as Milwaukee’s.34

Skinner also gathered enough data to publish more than a thousand pages of ethnographic material on the Menominee alone. He often boasted of his conquests in writing, both published and unpublished. He wrote a how-to article entitled “Collecting among the Menomini” for the Wisconsin Archaeologist but also explained his methods in numerous asides in his longer works.

Skinner’s first admonition to would-be collectors was to learn the culture of those from whom they collect. For the Menominee, he explained, four is a sacred number; if Skinner saw an item, he knew he could get hold of it if he offered a gift of tobacco, a signal of both spirituality and
friendship, for the item four times. “Once seen it is usually possible to obtain the specimen, if a price can be agreed upon,” he wrote. His favorite prey included the elderly, people with little money, religious converts, and heirs to family relics.

In “Collecting among the Menomini” Skinner described constantly being accosted by elderly acquaintances willing to exchange belongings for much-needed money. One “ancient crone” who was going blind said to him, “Look, here are many bags and bundles. I cannot see, but you open them and take out what you want. I am too old to need them now and the money you give me will buy me little comforts!”

People who changed religion included converts to both Catholicism and other Indian religions. Catholic priests insisted, often with encouragement from the local federal Indian agents, that the “old,” non-Christian ways be forsaken. To accomplish this, priests urged individuals to relinquish sacred objects. When the Native American Church entered the reservation in the late 1910s, one of Skinner’s acquaintances, the son of a wabano holy man, joined. He no longer considered his previous religious objects sacred and sold not only his own but those of his father, which had remained untouched in the elder’s cabin since his death. In one case, when a woman who had converted to this same church died at a young age, Skinner bought a sacred bundle from her husband.

In other cases Skinner persuaded individuals to sell their possessions so that they could be stored in the “sacred place” to which other Menominee sacred items had gone. Skinner bought a buffalo headdress bundle that was known “to bring relief in sickness and trouble,” according to Wā’sikwûnät, the man who sold it to him. When the bundle changed hands, Wā’sikwûnät made a “speech” to it. In Skinner’s words Wā’sikwûnät said:

You are my grandfather, I address you. You were for my purpose but you leave this place for the sacred place where all the rest of our sacred things are. I beg you to be friendly and not cause me or them trouble, for You will be kept there always, and you will not take it harmfully because I am willing to part with you. This is the last sacrifice that you will receive, and you too, oh stone [from the bundle], will partake of it.

He then told the story of the bundle, made from the neck skin of a buffalo shot in the Milwaukee area with an arrow and then killed with
the sacred stone, which became part of the bundle. He described its journey through time from the original owner to himself. He finished by describing how the bundle was maintained and used: “Plug tobacco has to be used to sacrifice to the bundle. It is renewed early in the spring and in the fall. The old tobacco may then be used. A small quantity of kinnikinnick is also mixed with the tobacco. At the same time a pipe of tobacco must be smoked for the buffalo to partake of.”

This bundle is now in the AMNH collection. The museum’s anthropology department has posted a photograph of it online. Skinner left no record of instructions to the museum regarding the necessary tobacco offerings described by the owner.

Skinner also purchased sacred information. For *Medicine Ceremony of the Menomini* he bought the “secrets” of the Mitawin from one of its priests in the summer of 1913. He described the transaction as follows:

They were given the writer only after a promise that the identity of the narrator should never be revealed; for these rites are jealously guarded, and their revelation by a member, no matter how great his influence and authority, would inevitably result in an attempt at his murder, either through violence or by magic, by his fellows in the society.

The information was given at intervals in the old man’s home, with every precaution to insure secrecy. . . . The price paid to him for the first part was the value of a pony; for the rest, the cost of several blankets for each separate section. . . . As it was taboo to reveal the rites to a white man, the writer was formally adopted by the old shaman, who made a special tobacco sacrifice to Mā’nābus and the gods, telling them that he had received the writer into his family as a nephew (a closer relationship than a son, to the Menomini mind), and thenceforth he referred to me as ninākwınā (“my sister’s son”), both during the instruction and at other times.

When money proved an unsuccessful tool of persuasion, Skinner resorted to other means. “People can easily learn the sacred medicine songs when medicinemen are drunk, for they will sing their secret songs to keep in harmony with their evil doings,” he wrote. In one instance a wabano holy man refused to allow Skinner to photograph his sacred items, which Skinner admitted should not be seen by “profane eyes” (this certainly would include most eyes seeing photographs published by a
museum). Nonetheless, Skinner secured pictures “by stealth” and published them in a Museum of the American Indian monograph entitled *Material Culture of the Menomini.*

In addition to his unethical collecting methods, Skinner suffered the same lack of religious understanding as had Hoffman. Regarding the same Mitawin ceremony he so cautiously recorded in 1913, he explained why he did not gather the songs related to it. It was not their sacred nature that made him hesitate but the facts that they were costly to purchase and that he did not understand them:

No attempt has yet been made to gather the numerous songs which are a part of the ritual, partly because they are considered as separate by those entitled to dispose of them, and are highly valued. Moreover, they are difficult to record, because the informant invariably insists on singing them to the accompaniment of a drum or a rattle in accordance with the prescribed method, since it is believed that any infraction of the rules will anger the gods. The recording of the songs is also hampered by the insertion of a refrain of gibberish, which renders them unintelligible even to a native, unless he has previously heard and analyzed them.

Skinner finished this discussion by explaining that extra syllables were inserted “to prolong the performance, to confuse all bystanders who are not members, to impress them with the wisdom of the priest, and to fill out the meter.” No doubt some of these observations contain morsels of accuracy, but the ethnocentrism of his descriptions renders them more useful for understanding Skinner than for understanding the Menominee. As ethnological observers Edwin James and Charles C. Trowbridge had learned already a century earlier, they could only obtain information on the Mitawin “from persons who were either converts or outsiders,” and “not even children could be prevailed upon to disclose any of the society’s mysteries.”

Skinner’s work could never have been accomplished without the help of Menominee consultants; to his credit, he acknowledged them in virtually every work he published. Chief among them was John V. Satterlee, ex-captain of the Menominee Tribal Police. The linguist Leonard Bloomfield described Satterlee as “a man of eminent charm and intellect, [who] was for many years the mediator between his people and
those who would study them.” Satterlee served as cultural broker for nearly every ethnologist and collector who visited the reservation between 1900 and the 1930s. These included private collectors such as Dr. W. C. Barnard of Seneca, Missouri, and professionals such as Barrett, Skinner, Densmore, Bloomfield, Truman Michelson (who studied the Menominee language), and Huron H. Smith (who studied Menominee ethnobotany for the Milwaukee Public Museum).

Satterlee appears as coauthor with Skinner on *Folklore of the Menomini Indians* not because he helped write the text of that monograph but because he collected many of the stories. Satterlee’s mother was Menominee, and his father was non-Indian. After his father’s death Satterlee and his mother moved to the reservation, where they lived with Satterlee’s grandparents until his mother married a Menominee. Satterlee thus knew his Indian relations well, but he was boarded by the government school teacher, Mrs. Rosalie Dousman, whom he credited with much of his education. As an adult he pursued various activities such as logging, interpreting, police work, school teaching (Satterlee taught in the West Branch Day School; his students became bilingual, learning in both the Menominee and the English languages), and assisting ethnologists and collectors.

For those collecting physical artifacts, Satterlee was their man on the spot; not only was he there to meet them when they arrived at the reservation, but also throughout the year he was ready to inform them of any opportunity to purchase valuable items. Satterlee would write to Skinner or others when he had made a contact or whenever a traditional Menominee died, discussing prices. On August 11, 1923, for instance, Satterlee wrote a two-page letter to Skinner in which he said, “I write to you about asking you to Buy all of the Medicine Effects or Relicks that Jim Pyashkuwitt had used when he was alive as a Member + Medicine Man.” The man’s daughter wanted to sell the objects to have money to move to the mill town, Neopit, to begin work by September 1. Satterlee therefore requested that Skinner send thirty or forty dollars to pay for these items. Skinner wrote back on September 8, sending money for other purchases and saying he was interested in those items but would need to see them himself.

When elders died, Skinner immediately sent instructions. On January 17, 1921, for example, he wrote the following to Satterlee: “Mr. Allen [the federal Indian agent stationed on the Menominee Reservation] has just
written of that Ksewatosa has died. Will you please find out right away what he has left in the way of relics that we could buy. I am enclosing a dollar to pay for your trouble.”

Archaeological expeditions were another of Satterlee’s specialties, most notably those of Barrett and Skinner, who dug up mounds that predated the creation of the reservation. Satterlee did much of the work, especially exploratory work, when the two museum men were in Milwaukee and New York. When Barrett and Skinner and Kannenberg and others dug up ancient mounds on the Menominee Reservation, they were interested in filling their museums’ display cases with everything from human remains to funerary objects to pottery. Satterlee and a couple of other Menominees helped, although Satterlee was the only Indian digger comfortable enough to work alone. The others felt the presence of the spirits they were violating.

Although his Menominee cultural background was important to him, Satterlee helped dig up these remains because he believed they were not of Menomines but of some other Indians who had moved into or invaded Menominee territory. Barrett and Skinner apparently believed the remains were of Menomines; thus, they had to know, had they considered the issue, that they were violating Menominee religious tenets by disturbing the graves. Archaeologists now side with Satterlee, saying the mound builders probably entered the Wolf River area from the south. Regardless of this debate, Menominee people who accidentally came across those open graves remembered the experience with shock and horror as they saw the freshly dug earth with human remains left exposed after the archaeologists had rushed off to another site or back to their museums with favorite artifacts or remains.

Satterlee was not the only Menominee consultant serving outsiders on the reservation, but he knew how to play that role better than anyone else. His willingness to aid ethnologists in collecting, seemingly without scruple, combined with his need to make a living, his knowledge of the reservation, his ethnological knowledge, and his ability to gain ethnological information made him a valuable ally for the intruders.

Meanwhile, another representative of the Smithsonian, Frances Densmore, visited the Menominee in 1925 to gather ethnological data and music in order to prepare her 1932 monograph, *Menominee Music*. Like Skinner and Barrett, Densmore was also interested in medicine bun-
Densmore—in her case, collecting the sacred songs associated with them. She had little trouble doing this because so many museums had already collected the bundles. She wrote to the Smithsonian Institution’s chief clerk, Dr. H. W. Dorsey, in 1925, “The interpreter [probably Satterlee] tells me that the old people have sold their ‘sacred bundles’ and medicine bags to Eastern Museums, and to the Milwaukee Mus. and so the songs are of no further use and they feel willing to record them for preservation.” From this material she submitted papers on Menominee songs related to sacred bundles. The recordings are now held in the Library of Congress.

Densmore collected and analyzed songs from the Dream Dance religion for her book and also wrote a description of it from her own perspective. She began by acknowledging Hoffman’s and others’ ethnological descriptions and then wrote her personal observations “of the events as witnessed without an interpreter.” As might be expected, she described what “appeared to” happen and what “was seen.” She apparently recorded the songs at another time from a consultant. Densmore said of one religious ceremony she attended that “it was not advisable to take photographs,” so she procured and published photos of the inside of the medicine lodge from a postcard manufacturer who had taken them. As Skinner had noted, some sights were not meant for “profane” eyes, and this was one such sight.

Densmore borrowed some of the items in conjunction with the songs, including the family photograph discussed at the outset of this essay. That and some of the other materials that Densmore “borrowed” became long lost by family members to the museum. Included on one list of articles for sale for fifty cents to the museum, for example, is one of the items “borrowed” from a Menominee woman. The BAE supported Densmore’s work with an annual grant of money to study music. Sometimes she bought artifacts for the museum collection as part of her work, other times she made a little extra money on the side by selling Indian artifacts to the Smithsonian.

Much of Densmore’s work, though in the field of music, followed in the same vein as Hoffman’s and Skinner’s. Like Hoffman, she tried to deconstruct Menominee spirituality by proving it to be mere trickery. In a 1932 published article she described the “tricks” used by Menominee “jugglers” to heal the ill. Like other ethnologists, she described the Mitawin primarily in terms of the drumbeat rather than its spiritual meaning.
Felix Keesing and Leonard Bloomfield also conducted fieldwork on the reservation in the 1920s. Bloomfield, a linguist, recorded the Menominee language in three major works based on 1920 and 1921 fieldwork. He continued correspondence with his Menominee consultants and friends and visited with Menominee people in his offices at the University of Chicago through the late 1930s. One of Bloomfield’s most frequent Menominee correspondents in the late 1930s was Amos Striker, who wrote him letters in both Menominee and English. Striker is still remembered as one of the best translators of the Menominee and English languages. Bloomfield, like Skinner (with whom he corresponded in the early 1920s) and Hoffman before him, believed that Menominee culture was dying, which he saw happening through the language.

The Menomini are being rapidly made over into the cultural type of the uneducated white American; of that European-American culture which, with its art and science, is worthy to stand beside their own and perhaps above it, they know nothing. They are suffering, therefore, what can be regarded only as a cultural loss, and they are fully aware of this, bearing it with a wistful resignation. The older Menomini are eloquent in their native speech, a very rich language which lends itself to elevated style and to the expressive refinements of a sensitive people. In addition, many of them are fluent in Ojibwa or Potawatomi or both. Today many Menomini children speak only the feeble English dialect, a thousand times bastardized by the standard language, which they receive from ignorant school-teachers and from the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside. The contrast is even more tragic in other respects, which lie beyond the scope of this book.

Bloomfield’s observations on the decline of the language seem valid in retrospect, but the Menominee were not “being made over into the cultural type of the uneducated white American.” In fact, for more than three centuries they had been adapting their culture successfully to new European-wrought conditions, only the most recent of which was a reservation with an economy based on commercial logging.

Felix Keesing, beginning his fieldwork in the summer of 1929, the year after Bloomfield published his observations, agreed that Menominee culture was rapidly dying. He lamented that the old ways and old knowledge were dying with the passing of the tribe’s elders and that his-
Tori
torians were not recording these for posterity. Keesing and his wife, Marie, studied the tribe and prepared a two-volume manuscript, which they originally titled “The Changing American Indian: A Study of the Menomini Tribe of Wisconsin.” Volume 1, a historical view of the results of Menominee-white contact, was published in 1939 as Felix Keesing’s The Menomini Indians of Wisconsin: A Study of Three Centuries of Culture Contact and Change. They never published the second volume, a sociological study entitled “The Present Day Menomini.” Felix Keesing’s career eventually took him to the anthropological hotbed in the South Seas. Though he originally intended to complete his study of the Menominee, he never did.

The Keesings viewed their purposes in studying the Menominee in much the same way as Felix viewed those of the BAE: to provide the dominant white society with the information necessary for peaceful assimilation of Indians.

Again questions in the public mind today such as whether the Indian is likely to die out or be assimilated into the dominant white life, and if the latter then how quickly it can be accomplished, can only be answered by examining the experience of this and that group with their differing environments and climatic conditions, the resistance of their Indian cultures to change, the varying degrees of white pressure, official and unofficial, which they are undergoing, and the response evoked by these policies.

They saw this issue as a larger one caused by “the impact of an expanding white or western world upon specialized and isolated peoples.” Since American Indians were among the first groups of people to be affected by such contacts, the Keesings believed them ideal groups to study. “The white man is taking the responsibility of refashioning according to more or less conscious policies and ideals the lives of what he chooses to call ‘backward’ races,” the Keesings said but with very little knowledge of how contact has truly affected Native peoples. To ease the process of assimilation, the Keesings believed, scientific studies such as theirs were necessary. Menominee contact with Europeans had lasted for three centuries already, the Keesings pointed out, and many observers viewed the tribe as a “contaminated” race because of biological and cultural mixing. Yet they had not fully assimilated into American society but retained a culture of their own. For purposes of understanding this process, the
Menominee were an ideal group for the Keesings to study. “For the purposes of such a study as this,” they observed, “the more the Indians have been ‘contaminated’ the better.” Because their purpose was to help the government and American society better understand the process of assimilation so as to make the process more peaceful, the Keesings believed that “as outsiders with a purely scientific interest in the facts [we] have no theory to prove, no policies to advocate and no evaluations to make.” They failed to recognize the inherently judgmental nature of their “science,” which posited its theories on the belief that full assimilation into American society was the best or only future for the Menominee.

Felix Keesing did recognize that without white acceptance of Indians assimilation would not be possible. He believed that Indians needed to remain on reservations until white society accepted them. He described the “special Menominee reservation culture” that the tribe had developed, based on the federal wardship system, as a crushing weight for the tribe to bear. The only way out from under this weight was assimilation and an end to the reservation system. One reason this would not work was that Americans did not understand Indians well enough; hence, the need for works like his.

Keesing was unable to envision alternative methods of relief from the weight of wardship. He could not envision a system in which Menominees controlled their own future distinct and separate from the surrounding white community in a reservation setting, something that during the years of his study they were pushing hard to accomplish. No doubt the serious blows that the federal system dealt to the tribe’s economic, political, and social systems helped color his views, but so too did his belief in the superiority of Western culture. Keesing took his conclusions one step beyond those of the ethnological collectors who had preceded him by preaching that salvation for the Menominee lay in adapting to the white man’s ways—as government officials had preached for generations.

These early museum collectors and ethnologists justified their collections and publications on two general grounds: they believed they were preserving the last vestiges of dying Indian cultures, and they were providing educational publications or displays that described these cultures to a larger American public. In the first instance they were wrong, and in the second they have provided us with false pictures.
The cultures, though under tremendous pressure with the losses of large portions of their economic bases that occurred during the nineteenth century and the continuous assaults of federal and church officials, did not die. They survived through this damaging period of siege, and many have been in the process of reinvigorating themselves. But, ironically, the work of scholars and museums stood in the way. They helped perpetuate the belief that the cultures were dying.

The collectors and scholars preferred to ignore the underlying fact that cultures are dynamic, not static. They believed that Indian cultures were not truly Indian if they adapted to new conditions and situations. Anything non-Indian that became incorporated into an Indian culture was viewed with disdain as a corruption of the culture. Skinner wrote to Bloomfield on this subject in relation to Menominee language in 1922: “Your vocabulary of new or modern terms is far more extensive than mine. Most of the words are quite new to me, as I never took the least interest in them, being always on the trail of Indian and not introduced customs, or things.” By doing this he ignored the dynamic nature of culture. The work of these early ethnologists and collectors, unfortunately, defined how both modern scholars and the larger public would view and understand the Menominee.

In the 1950s scholars again visited the Menominee. Their work evokes an eerie parallel with that of past scholars. James Sydney Slotkin of the University of Chicago came to record and preserve the traditional religion while at the same time pursuing scholarly interests, as Hoffman had done some sixty years previously. The husband-and-wife team of George and Louise Spindler, as had the husband-and-wife team of Felix and Marie Keesing, came to study how “Indian” the Menominee were and to what extent they had lost their culture.

Slotkin began his work with a “reconnaissance of the reservation” in September 1949. He studied the Menominee language in Chicago with a Menominee person and then visited the reservation community of Zoar twice, in the spring of 1950 and 1951. From these visits he wrote two major ethnological works in 1951 and 1952: one on the Native American Church, entitled Menomini Peyotism, and one on the Dream Dance or Drum Dance, or Menominee Powwow, which he subtitled A Study in Cultural Decay. He considered the people of these two religions to be the least acculturated Menominee people.
In both these cases Slotkin says he conducted his study and wrote these works at the request of elders who feared the religion was being lost. Those who requested he write about the Native American Church, for example, had two reasons: “to correct the erroneous impressions of non-members, and to instruct the younger members.” He took care to let these elders guide his studies and read his manuscripts, and he even included selections from his own journals at the request of his tribal consultants. Both works, he says, were written for the Menominee, but in both cases he also states that he took advantage of the opportunity to make anthropological observations. He used the study of peyotism to study “the psychic unity of mankind” through the structure of religious institutions and also to determine “the extent to which a simple society really has a homogeneous culture.” (He concluded that homogeneity of culture “is a relative matter at best,” but he continued to believe the Menominee society to be a “simple” one.)

Of his other work he says, “As an anthropologist, I have not resisted the temptation to make it a study of cultural decay.” He apparently was not testing the thesis that the religion exhibited cultural decay but began with this as an assumption and built his thesis from there. He said members “perform the important seasonal rite in a disorganized fashion,” for example. The younger members “have only a hazy notion of the ritual details,” he reported, “and are ignorant of their meanings.” Although one consultant vehemently insisted the old Indian ways were not being lost, Slotkin discounted her belief. He agreed instead with the “more realistic” consultant, who recognized the declining popularity of the religion and concluded it would be lost.

In both cases Slotkin wrote an anthropological study under the guise of carrying out tribal wishes. In trying to do two things at once, he succeeded in accomplishing only one: the anthropological work. In a passage reminiscent of Skinner one Drum Dance consultant told Slotkin:

I’m not supposed to talk about the . . . dances every day like this; I’m kind of afraid. We should talk about it only on certain times. It’s supposed to be a great thing, about the Drum. That’s what them Chippewas had told us; we ain’t supposed to talk about this all the time. But as long as you want to find out and put it on the papers, it’s all right. I’m not selfish to tell [for the sake of the younger members].
As was the man who sold the buffalo headdress to Skinner to send to the museum, this man was torn between his religious injunction not to share sacred material with profane eyes and ears and the need to preserve this material with the other sacred material that was being stored out of tribal hands.

Even Slotkin’s religious comparisons and descriptions seem superficial at best. He says, for example, of the Drum Dance, “The rite has a decided emotional impact. The participants are welded into a collective unity by means of the tremendous dominating drumbeat which makes everything vibrate to it.” As with previous ethnologists, Slotkin was so overwhelmed by the sound of drumming that he was unable to view it as part of the ceremony and instead understood it as the defining factor. These works are descriptive and tell us more about Slotkin’s perceptions of the world than Menominee perceptions.

George and Louise Spindler, working on the reservation in the 1950s and 1960s, studied and wrote prolifically on the Menominee. The Spindlers, who visited the reservation on a regular basis, studied the acculturation process of the tribe, attempting to scientifically define where people fit along a scale of adaptation ranging “away from a native base” of “real Indians” (“those who were regarded as most ‘Indian’ by members of the reservation community”) toward “Western culture.” In their first works George Spindler studied Menominee men and Louise Spindler studied Menominee women, but both used similar methodologies to answer similar questions. In 1971 they combined their observations in *Dreamers without Power: The Menomini Indians*, a book published in a series intended for college undergraduate classroom use.

In all these works the Spindlers studied a combination of sociocultural patterns together with personality definitions based on Rorschach tests. George Spindler pointed out that since the entire acculturation process was not amenable to scientific treatment, it needed to be broken into variables. His original sample included sixty-eight people, Louise’s sixty-one. All of these people responded to a questionnaire that tracked them socioculturally by asking eighteen or nineteen questions, from age to amount of Indian blood to church group affiliation to recreational activities to year and model of car they owned. All of these factors helped define how “Indian” the respondents were. All the respondents also reacted to ten inkblot samples, from which the Spindlers extracted twenty-one indices that they used to rank Menominee personalities.
George Spindler admitted that the use of Rorschachs were “eclectic,” but he believed them to be culturally unbiased and good indicators of “a person’s needs, drives, interests, emotional balance, etc.” Of course, the indicators he looked for were important within his cultural context, not necessarily within the Menominee cultural context. This is true also for the data sought in the sociocultural area.

The Spindlers based the description of Menominee history they used in their work on a reading of Keesing and their ethnographical reports on Hoffman, Skinner, and Bloomfield. The work of these past scholars, together with the Spindlers’ fieldwork, provided the basis for comparison to adaptations over time. George Spindler described the change to a lumber-based economy, for example, and pointed out that working members of the tribe would soon all be working on a wage basis. But he did not describe the particularly Menominee view of the forest and mill as a resource to provide for all tribal members. This may seem to be a minor issue, but when the Spindlers authored their work together they stated: “The study . . . is especially relevant for understanding the relationship between non-European minorities in the United States and the dominant population of European and Anglo-Saxon derivation, as these minorities are struggling for full participation in the economic, political, and social life of this country.” The Menominee have never struggled for full participation within American society but have struggled instead, since the reservation period began, for control of their resources so that they could shape their own future in a distinctly Menominee way.

This erroneous assumption led the Spindlers to assume that individual Menominees responded to the encroachment of Western culture by either striving to achieve a white middle-class norm or rejecting Western ways altogether. They assumed that people not in one category or the other were making their way from the Native category to the acculturated category. They created a five-part scale, which they clearly enunciated in all their works discussed here. They began by describing one group of people as the most “Indian,” ranking them at one end, and another group as the most acculturated. They then further subdivided both these groups. The “most Indian” groups included the “native-oriented group” and, next on the scale, those who followed the peyote “cult.” Both these groups lived at Zoar (and were subjects of Slotkin’s investigations). At the other end they found the “elite acculturated,” who most fit into white definitions of civilization. Just below them ranked the “lower
status acculturated,” who had adapted to white ways but had not attained middle-class status or leadership positions within the tribe. That left a final group somewhere in between, whom the Spindlers dubbed “transitionals.”

According to Louise Spindler, this neat segmentation along a continuum made the Menominee “an ideal group for the study of acculturation.” Having established this system, the Spindlers apparently never questioned it. Instead, they used it as the basis for their works. By the time they coauthored *Dreamers without Power* they assumed that “there are, in the Menomini community, five major cultural divisions.”

Two problems arise from these assumptions. First, they describe the Menominee community from an outside perspective. Nothing is wrong with this per se, but the authors do not acknowledge this. Readers are led to assume that this is an accurate portrayal of tribal life when it is instead merely an analysis of a problem within the context of Western sciences. This problem forms the basis of the second problem: once written, the work becomes accepted, indeed, becomes the basis of assumptions for future work.

Much as Keesing built his work on the foundations laid by Skinner and Hoffman and the Spindlers used Keesing and others for their base of scholarly information about the tribe’s past, later writers have accepted the Spindlers. Most conspicuous is Nicholas Peroff, whose political science dissertation became *Menominee DRUMS*. Peroff’s work has become a modern classic in the study of burgeoning self-determination, in which he depicts the tribe’s successful fight for Restoration. For background information not directly part of his study, Peroff relied heavily on the Spindlers’ work to describe Menominee society at the time of termination, as did Brian Hosmer in his groundbreaking work on the Menominee and Metlakahatlan wage economy. All scholars face the conundrum of how much to rely on previous work, especially when it is largely sound, and to what extent we should challenge previous assumptions when they are but indirectly related to the primary focus of the work at hand. Similarly, Jeanne Kay, in her landmark study of wildlife ecology in early Wisconsin, relied on an inaccurate description in Keesing that greatly reduced her description of Menominee aboriginal landholdings.

Hoffman visited the tribe just as elders of the first generation of reservation-based Menominee culture began to pass away. Not surprisingly, el-
ders’ fears and Hoffman’s observations saw the imminent destruction of Menominee culture. Keesing saw the same a generation later in the 1930s, and Slotkin yet a generation beyond that in the 1950s. Old structures of passing on knowledge, including the family, tribal education methods, and unencumbered ceremonial life, remained under assault during all of these periods. Indeed, only near the end of the twentieth century, as the Menominee began to retake control of political decision making and re-create their economic base, did it become clear that the Menominee were able to successfully meet the new millennium.

Attempts by museums and scholars to “preserve” Menominee culture in some cases have actually worked against the retention of those parts of the culture. The early works described here contain much valuable ethnological and historical information, and the argument presented here is not meant to diminish the recognition of their value. But the collectors and scholars pried into sacred business and carted off hundreds of items of material culture for display, and they imbued their conclusions with Western culture–based assumptions, not Menominee culture–based assumptions. Individual artifacts loaned to museums but never returned are still remembered, sometimes generations later. Artifacts that museums have bought, aboveboard or underhandedly, have been used in museum displays to define American Indians as peoples of the past, freezing their cultures at a moment in the past for the larger non-Indian society that views these displays. This excludes tribal members who cannot travel to Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Denver, Washington, and New York from retaining or even maintaining contact with these parts of their history.

Sacred items taken to museums were and sometimes still are displayed publicly, which is against their intended use. Ceremonial life on the reservation, furthermore, was altered by the loss of those items. Slotkin reports that the powwow ceremony was originally conducted using four drums, until 1931, when one drum “was sold . . . to the Oshkosh Public Museum . . . because its Drum organization had disintegrated.” Ever after, the ceremony was conducted using three drums.94 The Big Drum, a modern ceremony, more recently lost one of its four drums to a priest who worked for the Community Action Program and moved to the Northwest. Tribal members viewed this as a desecration.95

Both museums and scholars, by attempting to freeze Menominee (and other Indian) cultures in time, helped make true, in the eyes of
the public, their own dire warnings of the imminent death of American Indian cultures. Hoffman’s and Skinner’s studies were made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Menominee contact with Europeans began in 1634, and the “aboriginal” culture had been changing drastically for two and a half centuries before Hoffman ever visited the tribe. And before European arrival the cultures had changed continuously as well.

The works of scholars and collectors have also had long-lasting impacts within the Menominee community. People divulged information and sold or abandoned objects of material culture for a broad variety of reasons, ranging from a desire to perpetuate knowledge or to preserve the objects for future generations of Menominees, to the necessity of feeding their families from the proceeds of the sales, to belief that the objects were no longer useful to their lives. In some cases people believed that religiously used objects hindered their practice of their new religious ways. The loss of objects and even human remains has come to haunt modern tribal members in various ways.

The results of scholarly work and museum collections are often valued within the community, but Menominees have not always respected the way that outsiders have collected information. The Menominee have long been generous in opening their community to and sharing knowledge with outsiders. Those outsiders, however, have on occasion taken advantage of that generosity, which is a core value of the tribal culture. This point was driven home to me in a conversation I had with one tribal elder after I gave a historical talk on the reservation in the late 1990s. He told me that he wanted to tell me some stories. He had shared these stories with another scholar, who had asked to meet him at a site off the reservation. He had traveled at his own expense to share the knowledge and was upset that when they met over lunch, the scholar had not picked up the full tab. The elder had to pay for his own meal. In fact, this was his primary recollection of this transaction.

Another core value of Menominee culture is acting in “the right way,” as it was expressed to me. This translates into having good manners. Over the years the Menominee have time and again dealt with people from both the scholarly and collecting community who have exhibited bad manners. These are things that they—and their children and grandchildren—remember. The works that we do as scholars define the Menominee world to outsiders and the scholarly world to Menominees.
Hoffman’s and Skinner’s descriptions, colored by their own world-views and each made at a very specific time in Menominee history, were the accepted descriptions of aboriginal Menominee culture by authors like Keesing, just as Keesing’s work defined Menominee culture to future generations. Any change was defined as a loss of culture. Ironically, ethnological descriptions often lack insights into the meanings of what was observed. Hoffman and others who followed him for several generations delighted in deconstructing “tricks” used by medicine men. Their understandings of complex Menominee ceremonies, for instance, was either made from purely physical observation (how the drum beat felt to their ears, or how many people sat in the circle) or else learned through an interpreter. When things happened too fast, they had to be discussed afterward. It is absurd to pretend, therefore, that these ethnologists and museums have done any more than create pictures of particular moments in time. Pictures, it must be remembered, reflect the artist’s viewpoint and always leave out more than they include. But pictures also leave a permanent record by which we remember the past.

NOTES

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1. Interviews with Menominee people (when I interviewed Menominee people for my project beginning in 1990 I offered them anonymity); Frances Densmore, *Menominee Music* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1932); Densmore to Stirling, August 8, 1929, #10 Bureau of American Ethnology General Correspondence, Densmore, Frances—1925–1933, National Anthropological Archives—Smithsonian Institution (NAA-SI) (hereafter Densmore Correspondence); photo with Menominee Photographic Prints, NAA-SI. See also correspondence regarding accession no. 113412, from Frances Densmore, 1931, microfilm in registrar’s office, Smithsonian Institution.

2. The word “scramble” is borrowed from two sources: (1) the literature of imperialism, in which the late-nineteenth-century “scramble for Africa” describes the actions of European leaders bent on overseas expansion: Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa: The White Man’s Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876–1910* (New York: Random House, 1991) is an example; and
(2) Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage, The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), which describes the mid-to late-nineteenth-century rush of museums and collectors to the Northwest coast. The mad dash competition to collect artifacts that the word implies began at different times in different areas of the United States and the world.


7. W. J. Hoffman at Keshena Reservation to Mr. Henshaw, August 22, 1890, MSS 3765, NAA-SI.


9. Menominee and Chippewa Vocabularies, MSS 1829, NAA-SI.

10. Hoffman imputed them to be magical. They were part of a religious ceremony, so it cannot be imagined that the traditional Menominee viewed them as such. Hoffman, “The Menomini Indians,” 79, 86–92, 96–102, 137.

11. Hoffman based his ethnographic work on interviews and observations and included historical documents such as treaties and Jedidiah Morse, *A Report to the Secretary of War of the United States on Indian Affairs* (New Haven, CT: S. Converse, 1822) as sources on Menominee history. In this sense his work was ethnohistorical. Hoffman, “The Menomini Indians,” 60–67.


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15. W. J. Hoffman, Outline of Proposed Fieldwork, MSS 3802, NAA-SI.
16. All of this adds up to but little in the overall Smithsonian Collection. Of the 1.9 million North and South American Indian artifacts that the Smithsonian Institution holds, only 81 are specifically identified as Menominee. Some of these 81 artifacts came from army personnel stationed in the West and individual collectors. In most of these cases the Menominee pieces represented a minute fraction of the collections exchanged. The Smithsonian Institution provided the author with a computer-generated list of the 81 items identified as Menominee and access to card files with descriptive and accession information. Photocopies of these cards are in the author’s possession. No doubt numerous artifacts identified simply as Woodland at the Smithsonian are also Menominee in origin. The results of Hrdlička’s study, which forms at best a footnote in his professional career, were recorded in Aleš Hrdlička, Tuberculosis among Certain Indian Tribes of the United States, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 42 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909). His few brief journal entries describing his stay on the Menominee Reservation, dated July 15 through July 21, 1908, can be found in series 15, My Journals M. J. 10.61, 505–14, Box 10, Folder 10.61, Aleš Hrdlička Papers, NAA-SI.
17. Lawe interview, 7. Skinner referred to himself as the Weasel or the Little Weasel in both published writings and private letters.
20. Ward to Barrett, July 12, 1910, Letterbook 25, Milwaukee Public Museum (hereafter MPM) Correspondence, MPM Archives.


27. Wissler to Lucas, February 10, 1912, Central Archives, 10, AMNH Archives. In 1910 Wissler had also taken the precaution of making discretionary money available to outmaneuver “one of our rivals” who was “trying his hand in this field.” Wissler to Acting Director Charles H. Townsend, October 24, 1910; Wissler to Museum Director H. C. Bumpus, December 15, 1909, both in Central Archives, 10, AMNH Archives.

28. Altogether, Skinner collected approximately 60 percent of the museum’s 502 objects identified as Menominee. Dr. W. C. Barnard, a collector from Seneca, Missouri, provided the museum with more than 90 Menominee items. Printout prepared by museum officials for the author, September 1991. Photos of five Menominee items in this collection are available online at http://www.nmai.si.edu/searchcollections/peoplescultures.aspx, accessed September 11, 2009.


30. See correspondence of S. A. Barrett in 1920–21 Correspondence, Director (Barrett) S–Z, original Box #19, MPM Archives. Numerous anthropologists, including Clark Wissler, W. H. Holmes, and A. L. Kroeber, wrote to museum director Henry L. Ward that the sudden popularity of the South Seas as an area for study had drained the anthropological profession of its “top prospects.” Kroeber wrote on June 23, 1920: “There are more positions in anthropology than qualified men at the present time and the Polynesian expeditions are still further draining the supply.” Eligible women were available, but apparently the museum was not interested in hiring a woman for the position. The first two candidates were considered better anthropologists, although one, John Aldon Mason of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, was a stutterer, and the position required a fair amount of public speaking.

31. S. A. Barrett correspondence in 1925 Correspondence, Director (Barrett) I–Z, Box #28, MPM Archives.


33. Smaller museums, such as the Oshkosh Public Museum, also sponsored expeditions in the 1920s. Arthur Kannenberg, the Oshkosh Public Museum director, for example, traveled throughout the state on archaeological digs. When these brought him to Shawano County, he collected artifacts on the Menominee Reservation. The Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, however, using the Rosenwalds’ gift, commissioned Milford G. Chandler, who collected
approximately eighty-two Menominee items for the museum, although he collected others for himself, some of which were eventually purchased by the Detroit Institute of Arts. See biographical sketch of Chandler by Richard A. Pohrt, “A Collector’s Life: A Memoir of the Chandler-Pohrt Collection,” in David W. Penney, Art of the American Indian Frontier: The Chandler-Pohrt Collection (Seattle: University of Washington Press/Detroit Institute of Fine Arts, 1992), 299–309. The Chandler collection in Chicago was designated as Field Museum accession no. 1618. The Detroit information from DARIS(R) Detroit Art Registration and Information System printout, August 13, 1991. The Milwaukee Public Museum’s philosophy of collecting made museum-supported expeditions essential. Barrett wrote in official reports as early as 1910 that “to be a good collector, one must be a thoroughly trained anthropologist,” because the items collected were useless in a museum setting if unaccompanied by accurate ethnographic data, which the average collector fails to procure. Barrett, “Report of Work Done,” in Twenty-eighth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees. Ward, in a letter to Barrett dated August 18, 1910, stated that Lieutenant Emmons, a famous Northwest coast collector, wanted to sell him some specimens from Alaska, but that Ward was leery because “when I exchanged with him some years ago for a few specimens, I was shocked at the lack of data that he furnished with his.” Letter Book 25, MPM Archives.

34. For instance, in 1922 the Field Museum of Natural History obtained a Menominee item in a swap with the Milwaukee Museum. In 1923 the Field Museum apparently purchased about a dozen Menominee items from Alanson Skinner. In both 1931 and 1938 the Denver Art Museum and the Milwaukee Public Museum exchanged artifacts, Denver receiving a total of four Menominee items. A Denver Art Museum swap with the American Museum of Natural History in 1951 brought another Skinner-collected Menominee item. The rest of the Denver Art Museum’s approximately fifty Menominee items were bought from individuals, some of whom were professional collectors, others private collectors or their heirs. Another item, an otter fur medicine bag purchased from Albert G. Heath of Chicago, was traded to the Davenport Museum in 1956. See notecard Fmen-2-P. The rest of the Denver items are listed on notecards. The 1931 number is RMen-1-Ex.1931.46, A31-195; the 1938 accession is RMen-2-Ex.1938.408; and the 1951 item, marked as returned, is VMen-1-Ex. The Field Museum materials are accession nos. 1430 and 1464. Thus a few museums built their collections by systematic expeditions during which the purchasers also obtained ethnographic data about the items. The majority of museums chose the less time-consuming, more haphazard method of trading for or purchasing Menominee items without visiting the reservation itself.


37. Sacred items made their way into private hands in earlier years as well. Florimond Bonduel, a priest who served among the Menominee from 1846 to 1852, delivered several Menominee items to the pope in the 1850s. These included sacred bundles and other sacred objects acquired from converts to Catholicism. These ended up in a museum in Rome. Transcript of letter from Florimond Bonduel dated June 29, 1857, Bay Settlement, Wisconsin, printed in the Boston Pilot, August 1, 1857, reprinted in the Green Bay Register, July 19, 1957, copy in Folder 35, Bonduel, Florimond J., Menominee Tribal Archives, Keshena; Malcolm Rosholt and John Britten Gehl, Florimond J. Bonduel, Missionary to Wisconsin Territory (Amherst: Palmer Productions, 1976), 149–50.

38. Alanson Skinner, Material Culture of the Menomini, vol. 20 of Indian Notes and Monographs, ed. F. W. Hodge (New York: Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1921), 97–98; Skinner, “Collecting,” 139–40. People were also known to toss their old religious artifacts into the river upon conversion. Several sacred items brought into the Milwaukee Public Museum in 1916 are listed in the ledgers as “All found in the Wolf River at Keshena where they had been thrown by some ‘pagan’ who had probably changed his faith to the Peyote cult.” (The last four words are written in a different hand.) Accession nos. 18707 and 18708, Anthropology, Division of Ethnology Book 5, New Series 1914–1916, MPM Accession Books.

39. In traditional terms this particular piece should have been buried with the woman. Interviews with Menominee people.

40. Wä’sikwûnät continued:
When asking relief from sickness from the buffalo, a feast of corn soup is offered and the bundle is addressed. If one is not predestined to die, benefit will come as soon as the food and smoke are offered, if one is to die, it cannot save you. In war, a man wears or carries the buffalo headdress; he is helped to drive away the enemy and is not hurt. This bundle is not for use in hunting but is a family and individual guardian. It is not a medicine to bring gifts and material gains. (Alanson Skinner and John V. Satterlee, Folklore of the Menominee Indians, vol. 13, pt. 3 of Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History [New York: Published by Order of the Trustees, 1913], 479–81)


42. Alanson Skinner, Medicine Ceremony of the Menomini, Iowa, and Wahpeton Dakota, with Notes on the Ceremony among the Ponca, Bungi Ojibwa, and Potawatomi, vol. 4 of Indian Notes and Monographs, ed. F. W. Hodge (New

43. Skinner and Satterlee, Folklore, 497.
44. Skinner, Material Culture, 96, 332.
47. Bloomfield, Menomini Texts, xi.

48. Smith chose to work among the Menominee for two reasons: Barrett and Skinner had done a great deal of work before him, and “a good guide and interpreter was available” in Satterlee. Huron H. Smith, “Ethnobotany of the Menomini Indians,” Bulletin of the Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee 4, no. 1 (December 1923): 8.

49. Skinner acknowledged Satterlee’s help in print at a time when Indian consultants often did not get fair credit for their work. Clark Wissler, for example, published work written by Blackfeet tribal member David C. Duvall under Wissler’s name. Personal communication with Rosalyn LaPier.


51. Records of Logs Purchased from Indians (1888–1889), Record Group 75, Green Bay Agency, in Box: Bureau of Indian Affairs Field Office Records, Menominee Indian Mills, Neopit, Wisconsin: Records of Payments to Indians 1888–1890; Abstract of Disbursements 1879, National Archives and Records Administration, Great Lakes Branch; John V. Satterlee Police Diaries, 1899–1907, copy held by author; interviews with Menominee people.

52. Satterlee to Skinner, August 11, 1923, and Skinner to Satterlee, September 8, 1923, both in Folder 1923 M–Z, Skinner, Anthropology Correspondence, Skinner, McKern, 1921–1927, original Box 65, MPM Archives.

53. Skinner to Satterlee, January 17, 1921, in Folder 1921 A–Z, Anthro Barrett, original Box 65.

54. They were not the first to conduct digs on the reservation. Thomas Savage, the federal Indian agent there in the mid-1890s, systematically dug for relics on parts of the reservation (Barrett and Skinner, “Certain Mound and Village Sites,” 463).


56. Satterlee Police Diaries; interviews with Menominee people.


59. Interviews with Menominee people. In the early 1990s the Oshkosh
Public Museum finally closed a gruesome human skeleton of a Menominee that long had been on display. It was identified as a 1700s burial unearthed in present-day Marinette County. This burial occurred long after first European contact. The skeleton wore the metal jewelry with which she was buried. It was purportedly displayed to show advances in archaeological digging techniques. Correspondence between Oshkosh Public Museum officials and the author, in the author’s possession. This ancestor was returned to the tribe for reburial. See David J. Grignon (Nahwahquaw), “Historic Preservation” report, in Apesanahkwat, chairman, Menominee Nation, 2001 annual report, 34–35, http://www.menominee-nsn.gov/budgetFinance/administration/fiscalReports/2001annual.pdf, accessed December 10, 2007.


62. Densmore to Fewkes, November 7, 1925, Densmore Correspondence.

63. See correspondence regarding accession no. 113412 from Frances Densmore, 1931, microfilm in registrar’s office, Smithsonian Institution.


66. Amos Striker correspondence in Leonard Bloomfield Loose Leaves (Miner’s List) Box, Leonard Bloomfield Papers, NAA-SI; interviews with Menominee people.

67. Bloomfield, Menomini Texts, xii.

68. David R. M. Beck, Siege and Survival: History of the Menominee Indians, 1634–1856 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002); David R. M. Beck, The Struggle for Self-Determination: History of the Menominee Indians since 1854 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Brian C. Hosmer, American In-


72. Keesing, Menomini Indians, 244–48.

73. See the abstract to the 1939 edition of Keesing, Menomini Indians, ix–x (the abstract is not included in the 1987 reprint edition).

74. Huron H. Smith, for example, lamented “the passing of the olden times” but thought it unproductive to try to force the Menominee to adapt to white cultural norms (“Ethnobotany,” 82). Later, in his work in the South Seas, Keesing acted on his beliefs that “scientific” studies of native peoples should be used to further government ambitions. For example, the anthropologist Ralph Linton published The Science of Man in the World Crisis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945) as the victors in World War II set about the task of dividing the losers’ trust lands and colonies among themselves. Keesing’s contribution, “Applied Anthropology in Colonial Administration,” emphasized that the colonial administrator “should have at his fingertips all the relevant technical equipment of the trained anthropologist” (379–80). Then in 1949 Keesing apparently acted on this belief when he edited the navy’s Handbook of the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Washington, DC: Navy Department, 1949).

75. Skinner to Bloomfield, February 28, 1922, Leonard Bloomfield Loose Leaves (Miner’s List) Box, Leonard Bloomfield Papers, NAA-SI. Bloomfield, on the other hand, well understood this dynamism but still viewed change as loss.

77. Slotkin, _Menomini Peyotism_, 565–68.

78. Slotkin, _The Menomini Powwow_, 9–10, 15–16. Interestingly, the Big Drum religion is still strong in Zoar, although modern observers continue to make the same calamitous predictions: a newspaper article by Rogers Worthington entitled “Medicine Man’s Lore Is Lost on a New Generation” (Chicago Tribune, June 20, 1988, sec. 1, 10) makes the same prediction that as elderly religious leaders pass on, knowledge of the traditions and lore dies with them. The author specifically cites the Big Drum.

79. Slotkin, _The Menomini Powwow_, 10, brackets in text.


83. George Spindler and Louise Spindler, _Dreamers without Power: The Menomini Indians_ (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971). Incidentally, the Spindlers published _Dreamers without Power_ during the Termination period. The word “Dreamers” is a reference to the Dream Dance religion practiced by the group of Menominees least acculturated to the non-Indian world, but the title can also be viewed as a symbol for the entire tribe. The Restoration process forced the Spindlers to rethink their bleak assessment of the tribe’s future: they renamed the book _Dreamers with Power_ in a 1984 reprinting. The original title continues the long-time ethnological belief in a dying culture; the second title seems to repudiate this viewpoint, although the Spindlers changed none of the text after the preface in the second edition.

84. Spindler, _Sociocultural and Psychological Processes_, 4.


86. Spindler, _Sociocultural and Psychological Processes_, 16. A reviewer of Lou-
ise Spindler’s work pointed out that one problem with it lay in the fact that “we still lack a coherent theory of personality” (Eleanor Leacock, review of *Menomini Women and Culture Change, American Anthropologist* 65 [1963]: 942).


95. Interviews with Menominee people. A new drum has since been ceremonially brought into the religion.