

"I AM A RED-SKIN": The Adoption of a Native American Expression (1769–1826)

Redskin 'Indian, Native American' has been a contentious word in recent years. In 1999 the United States Trade-mark Trial and Appeal Board ordered the cancellation of the trademarks of the Washington Redskins football team after finding that the use of the word *redskin* was "scandalous" and "may ... disparage" Native Americans or "bring them into contempt, or disrepute." Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia reversed this decision on 30 September 2003, granting summary judgment for Pro-Football, Inc., against Cheyenne-Creek Indian activist Suzan Shown Harjo and others. The court found that "the

TTAB's finding of disparagement is not supported by substantial evidence" and that "the doctrine of laches precludes consideration of the case."¹ One need not accept Harjo's unfounded claim that the word *redskin* "had its origins in the practice of presenting bloody red skins and scalps as proof of Indian kill for bounty payments"² to accept that many find the word objectionable in current use. But the actual origin of the word is entirely benign and reflects more positive aspects of relations between Indians and whites. It emerged at a specific time in history among a small group of men linked by joint activities that provided the context that brought it forth. Before its documented history can be traced, however, the false history given for it in standard reference books must be expunged.

Samuel Smith's Letter

Dictionaries give the first occurrences of the expression *redskin* as being in a letter of reminiscences written by Samuel Smith of Hadley, Massachusetts, on 1 January 1699 (Mathews 1951: 1368; OED). This has "ye Red Skin Men" in one place and three occurrences of "ye Red Skins." Two of these are in the following passage, where Smith writes of his father that

"he did helpe to rear bothe our owne House & ye Firste Meetinge House of Weathersfield, ... Ye firste Meetinge House was solid mayde to withstande ye wicked onslaughts of ye Red Skins. Its Foundations was laide in ye feare of ye Lord, but its Walls was truly laide in ye feare of ye Indians, for many & grate was ye Terrors of em. ... I do not myself remember any of ye Attacks mayde by large bodeys of Indians whilst we did remayne in Weathersfield, but did ofttimes hear of em. Several Families wch did live back a ways from ye River was either Murderd or Captivated in my Boyhood & we all did live in constant feare of ye like. My Father ever declardt there would not be so much to feare iff ye Red Skins was treated with suche mixture of Justice & Authority as they cld understand, but iff he was living now he must see that wee can do naught but *fight* em & that right heavily" (Smith 1900: 49–50).

There are obvious problems with this source, however. For one thing, the original letter has never been found. It is quoted from a book published in 1900 with the title *Colonial Days & Ways as Gathered From Family Papers* (Smith 1900).³ The

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¹ Pro-Football, Inc., Plaintiff, v. Suzan Shown Harjo, 284 F. Supp. 2d 96 (2003), pp. 4, 83 (= United States District Court for the District of Columbia, Memorandum Opinion (September 30, 2003), Civil Action No. 99-1385 (CKK)). Posted at www.dcd.courts.gov/99-1385a.pdf.

² "Some facts on squaw and similar words," posted by Suzan Harjo (15 August 2003) at poynteronline.org under "Article Feedback." Harjo made the same assertions in an interview on the Oprah Winfrey Show in 1992; the program, called *Racism in 1992: Native Americans*, was no. 8 in a series on racism. (I am grateful to Jim Rementer for a transcription of her remarks, made from a video.) Two years later a *Washington Post* reporter, after interviewing Harjo, led a lengthy article with this claim, stating that it was true "according to the custodians of Native American history" ("Bury My Heart at RFK," *Washington Post*, 6 November 1994, pp. F1, F4–F5). The claim also appears in Harjo's published account of the trademark case (Harjo 2001: 190); it was not, however, part of the submission to the trademark board, and no supporting evidence for it has ever been cited. For the aboriginal roots of scalping and other trophy taking, the role of scalp bounties in promoting the practice, and the rise of the modern myth that Europeans introduced it, see Axtell and Sturtevant (1980).

³ The copyright suggests that one or more chapters may have originally appeared in the *New York Evening Post*. It was reprinted in 1901. An early manuscript outline has the title "Colonial Family Life from Family Papers" with an earlier "Colonial Home Life Pictures" crossed out. (Ledger of submitted articles and accounts p. 128, unnumbered box, Helen Evertson Smith papers, New-York Historical Society.)

author of this, Helen Evertson Smith, describes the letter as known from a copy made by Samuel Smith's great-great-granddaughter Juliana Smith in a diary she kept from 1779–1781 that was among a trove of documents preserved in the ancestral family house in Sharon, Connecticut. The stone Georgian house that the Smith family called "Weatherstone" is real, but according to Elizabeth G. Shapiro, the Director of the Sharon Historical Society, none of the documents referred to in Helen Evertson Smith's book, including Juliana Smith's diary, have ever been located (pers. com., 6 October 2004; 10 November 2004; 28 January 2005).

There is, however, a document that sheds light on the published letter among Helen Evertson Smith's papers in the New-York Historical Society. In this collection there are two notebooks labeled "Colonial" and "Colonial and other Material," which contain excerpts from various sources. And in one of these is the following passage in Helen Evertson Smith's hand:⁴

"Samuel Smith (first) in a letter written soon after the great Indian attack upon Hadley, Mass., in 1676, at which time he was then living, says that am'g his first recollections were "[of] the Indian Alarms in Wethersfield, Ct., where the foundations of my father's meeting house were laid in the fear of the Lord, & its walls were reared in the terror of the Indians. I do not remember any attacks made by large parties there, but several families, which lived back a ways from the River were either murdered or captivated during my boyhood, and we all lived in constant fear of the like. My father ever declared there would not be so much to fear if the Indians were treated with such [a] mixture of [firmness &] [Justice & Authority] as they could comprehend, but if he was living now he must think that we can do naught, but fight them & that right heavily." Copied by Julian Smith in their family news paper the "Clio" in 1781.⁵

It is evident that this passage allegedly from a Samuel Smith letter of 1676 is an earlier version of the section of his purported letter of 1699 that is quoted in extenso above. For example, there are two places in the handwritten passage where Helen Evertson Smith changed wording that is inside her quotation marks to the wording that appears in her book. What was first written as

his first recollections were "of
was changed to
am(on)g his first recollections were
"the

in the book, and "firmness & justice" became "Justice & Authority". The notebook entry appears to be a sort of dress rehearsal, an earlier attempt at fabricating a letter from the Colonial Period, complete with a somewhat different family source. And most significantly in the present context, what is in the published letter as "iff ye Red Skins was treated" is in Helen Evertson Smith's notebook as "if the Indians were treated."⁶

The excerpt in Helen Evertson Smith's notebook contains no non-standard spellings and only mild attempts at archaic vocabulary and diction, but the published letter has been relentlessly antiqued. Many words are printed with the addition of a word-final silent -e, but the frequency and distribution of this feature are inconsistent with late seventeenth-century usage.⁷ In the book, "ye" has been substituted everywhere the notebook has *the*, and the non-emphatic auxiliary verb *did* is used with unidiomatic frequency, as in the two places where "did live" has replaced *lived*.⁸ The words Helen Evertson Smith had entered in her notebook as *murdered* and *declared* she had her publisher print as "murderdt" and "declardt," spellings that, like her word "onsaults" (for *onslaughts*), appear to be unknown outside her book.

There are other anachronistic or unidiomatic usages in the published Smith letter outside the section that

was rewritten from what is in the notebook. For example, there is a reference to "Catamounts," a word not otherwise known to have been applied to the North American mountain lion before 1794, though later used by both Ralph Waldo Emerson and Oliver Wendell Holmes (OED). The letter has "till they got Married," but the expression *to get married* was not used in the seventeenth century, and *get* with any passive participle is rare before the nineteenth century (OED: *get*, v., 34b).⁹ The expanded description of the meeting house in the book records that it "was solid mayde"; this adverbial and preverbal use of *solid* is not found in the seventeenth century, but the expression in the letter has close parallels in poems by Alfred Tennyson: "But like a statue solid-set" (*In Memoriam A. H. H.*, 1850); "Enoch stronger-made Was master" (*Enoch Arden*, 1864). The word *boyhood* is not found by the OED before about 1745 and did not at first have the meaning it has in the phrase "during my boyhood" that appears in the letter ("the period of one's life when one is, or especially was, a boy").

Helen Evertson Smith's other literary work and the times in which she wrote provide context for her evident fabrication of the Samuel Smith letter. She also used the hoary literary device of the found letter in an apparently unpublished story that is headed: "A forgotten National Crime[.] Bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807. Told in letters from an English lady married to a member of the Royal Council of Denmark, to her father a member of the British House of Commons[.] Edited by Helen Evertson Smith". On the outside of the folded typescript is written: "This account is based on a few fragments of letters & the narrative many times heard in my childhood, from the lips of the old lady whom I have called Mrs. Castenskjöld, & carefully verified by comparison with the best printed authorities. H.E.S."¹⁰

⁴ In printing this excerpt and another one below two editorial conventions have been used to indicate changes made in the manuscript in the writer's hand: underlining marks additions, and double brackets ([. . .]) are added to enclose deletions. Parentheses mark the expansion of an abbreviation.

⁵ Notebook "Colonial and Other Material" p. 20, in box "Scrap books, note books, & misc.," Helen Evertson Smith papers, New-York Historical Society. The passage ends at the end of a page, with no punctuation.

⁶ The passages with the other occurrences of "Red Skin(s)" in the published letter have no counterparts in the notebook.

⁷ I am grateful for the observations of Richard W. Bailey on this and other aspects of the language of the published letter (pers. comm., 3 January 2005).

⁸ English and French words cited in italics are in the present standard orthographies. Double quotes are used for direct quotations, including citations of specific non-standard forms in the sources; single quotes mark glosses and longer translations of cited materials. The spellings *redskin* and *white-skin* are those of the OED lemmata.

⁹ Richard W. Bailey (pers. comm., 3 January 2005); Bailey observes that the only seventeenth-century use of *get* with a passive participle in the OED (in the expression *got acquainted with*) is arguably not really a passive.

¹⁰ Box "Miscellaneous Mss," Helen Evertson Smith papers, New-York Historical Society. In the title, the word *National* was added later. Presumably historians will want to re-evaluate the assumed authenticity of the excerpts from Juliana Smith's manuscript newspaper that have made their way into the biography of Noah Webster (Warfel 1966: 41–43). Another publication in

Although the Samuel Smith letter has many features inconsistent with its purported date of 1699, it is very much at home among the sort of writings that were popular as part of the Colonial Revival at the time of its publication in 1900. This cultural movement, which came into full force with the national centennial celebrations, influenced architecture, furniture, decorative arts, and popular history with a nostalgia for Colonial times, which were viewed as a Golden Age for household arts and domestic life. And in fact, other writers with these interests are known to have created fictional diaries and memoirs as a way of vividly evoking the Colonial Period, in some cases innocently and in some cases not (Norton 1998).¹¹

Red and White As Racial Terms

The only one of the linguistic oddities in Samuel Smith's letter that has made it into the *Oxford English Dictionary* is the expression "Red Skins" (and attributive "Red Skin"), but in 1699, when the letter was purportedly written, American Indians had, in fact, not yet been racially characterized as *red*. In two lengthy studies of the use of color terminology for races in America, the historians Alden T. Vaughan (1982) and Nancy Shoemaker (1997) have not found any use of the adjective *red* to distinguish American Indians as a separate race before the 1720s.¹² Vaughan (1982: 948) singled

out the apparent first use of *redskin* in the 1699 Smith letter as "an isolated example" from such an early date, and he concluded from this that "its authenticity is slightly suspect" and astutely suggested that "it may reflect a later editorial hand." With the discovery that the purported 1699 letter has not merely suffered from editorial intervention but was the fictional creation of a late nineteenth-century writer, the fact that the myriad of references to Indians in English documents of the Colonial Period never use the term *redskin* makes sense, which would not be the case if *redskin* really had been already in use by the end of the seventeenth century.

Eighteenth-century records do, however, attest the emergence of the use of the color terms *red* and *white* by Native Americans as racial designations, and the adoption of these terms by Europeans in eastern North America. The first uses of the term *red* as a racial label that Shoemaker (1997: 627) found are from 1725. In that year a Taensa chief talking to a French Capuchin priest in Mobile recounted an origin story about a "white man," a "red man," and a "black man" (Rowland and Sanders 1927–1932, 2: 485–486), and a Chickasaw chief meeting with the English Commissioner for Indian Affairs at Savanna Town referred to "White people" and "red people" (George Chicken in Mereness 1916: 169). As Shoemaker (1997: 628) documents, this use of "red" was soon adopted in both French and English and was conventional by the 1750s. Although Europeans sometimes used such expressions among themselves, however, they remained aware of the fact that this was originally and particularly a Native American usage.¹³

their skin—red and tanned—should not come close to that of the French, which was white" (McWilliams 1953: 24). ("M. d'Iberville, en leur montrant sa main, leur fit comprendre que leur peau rouge et bazanée ne devoit point s'approcher de celle des François, qui estoit blanche." [Margry 1876–1886, 5: 394].) This is not evidence that the French used the adjective *rouge* 'red' in a racial sense in 1700, however, given that Iberville was using gestures supplemented by Mobilian Jargon, and that Pénigault's account, which has details inconsistent with Iberville's journal (McWilliams 1981: 119), was written up, at least in the form that survives, after its author had returned to France in 1721.

For red paint or Carl Linnaeus as assumed factors in describing Indians as *red*, see Vaughan (1982: 922, 945–946) and Shoemaker (1997: 625–626).

The French account from 1725 says explicitly of the Taensa that "they call themselves in their language 'Red Men'" (Rowland and Sanders 1927–1932, 2: 486).¹⁴ Since the Taensa spoke the same language as the Natchez (Swanton 1911: 22), the Taensa expression was presumably the same as the Natchez designation ⟨*tmh-hakup*⟩ 'Indian' (Ann Eliza Worcester Robertson in Brinton 1873: 488), which in phonemic transcription is *toM* 'man' (or in its earlier shape **taM*) plus *haakup* 'red' (Geoffrey A. Kimball, pers. com., 17 November 2004).¹⁵ Similarly, the Chickasaws in 1725 were

¹³ As an example Robert Vézina (pers. comm., 20 February 2005) cites Jean-Bernard Bossu (1768: 60), who quotes a Natchez elder as referring to "tous les hommes rouges," explaining that, "C'est ainsi que ces Sauvages s'appellent pour se distinguer des Européens qui sont blancs, & des Africains qui sont noirs." In the translation of Seymour Feiler (Bossu 1962: 39) this is "all the red men," with a note: "This is what the Indians call themselves to distinguish themselves from the Europeans who are white and the Africans who are black." Shoemaker (1997: 632) suggests that the racial use of "red" and "white" might owe something to the use of these colors for opposing moieties among tribes in the Southeast, but there is no necessary connection. The same colors can stand for different things in different contexts. For example, both James Madison and Black Thunder, who used *red* and *white* as racial terms (see below), also used *red* (or *bloody*) and *white* to symbolize war and peace, clearly intending no linkage between the two idioms (Stagg et al. 2004: 175–177; Boilvin 1816).

¹⁴ The document has been published only in English translation.

¹⁵ The shallow-pointed brackets (⟨...⟩) enclose an exact transliteration of a pre-modern transcription. Italics is used for phonemic transcriptions, but for accessibility and typographical convenience these have been rewritten to use ordinary letters as much as possible. Technical phonetic symbols have been replaced as follows: double vowels (instead of vowel + raised dot) are written for long vowels (pronounced as in German or Finnish), and double consonants are written for long consonants (as in Italian); a superscript ⁿ (rather than a Polish nasal hook) marks the preceding vowel as nasalized (as in French); *sh* and *ch* are unit phonemes pronounced as in English (except in Mohawk; see n. 34); *zh* has the sound of the *s* in English *pleasure*; *x* is a voiceless velar fricative (German *ch* or Spanish *j*); *gh* is a voiced velar fricative (like Modern Greek gamma); *M* is a voiceless *m* (an *m* whispered through the nose); and an apostrophe is used for glottal stop (the sound between the two syllables of the English exclamation *Uh-Oh!*).

the same genre is the account by Smith (1894) of a debate between Alexander Hamilton and William Livingston "(Edited from Unpublished Papers of the Late Governor John Cotton Smith, of Connecticut)."

¹¹ A second purported excerpt from Juliana Smith's diary in Smith (1900), a description of a family dinner on Thanksgiving Day, 1779 (Smith 1900: 291–297, esp. 291), also shows evidence of being a later fabrication. The Harvard University social historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has stated that it is obvious from the anachronistic language and descriptions in this account that "it is a 19th century fiction ... a colonial revival invention" (pers. comm., 6 October 2004; quoted with permission).

¹² Shoemaker (1997: 633) cites a rare early use of "red" to refer the skin of Indians in André Pénigault's narrative of Mobile during the years 1699–1721. Pénigault reports that in 1700 Pierre Le Moine d'Iberville, when he first visited the Bayogoula village on the Mississippi, had rejected the chief's offer of women for his men "by showing his hand to them [and] mak[ing] them understand that

probably already using the expression with the same basic meaning that was attested later as Chickasaw *Hattak Api' Homma* 'Indian', which is *hattak* 'person' + *api* 'stalk' + *homma* 'red' (Munro and Willmond 1994: 32, 101, 342); Pamela Munro, pers. com., 22 November 2004).¹⁶ Creek (which, like Chickasaw, is a Muskogean language) was using the expression *isti-chaáti* ('person' + 'red') for 'Indian' as early as 1738, when it appeared in a vocabulary beside *isti-lásti* ('person' + 'black') for 'Negro' and *isti-hátki* ('person' + 'white') for 'white person'.¹⁷

There is also evidence for the early use of the label 'white' to refer to Europeans in Native American languages. David Zeisberger's eighteenth-century compilation of Delaware words gives for 'European' both <schwonnac> and <Wápsit Lennape> (Zeisberger 1887: 69). The first of these is the equivalent of Unami (modern Oklahoma Delaware) *shuwánakw*, the usual word for 'whiteman' in the twentieth century. The second expression is *waápsiit lənaáppe* 'white person', apparently from the Northern Unami dialect used by the Moravian missionaries; *waápsiit* is '(that, animate,) which is white', and *lənaáppe* is otherwise the Unami word for 'Indian' (analytically 'ordinary man') but here appears in what is evidently an earlier and more general meaning. Actually, the word *shuwánakw* was felt to be uncomplimentary (Heckewelder 1819: 131), even in the twentieth century, being based on a root *shuw-* 'sour, salty'. Northern Unami *waápsiit lənaáppe* would have been the formal expression used in high-register discourse, corresponding to modern Unami *weeyoópsiit* 'white person, white people', formed from the same stem.¹⁸ Heckewelder (1819: 130) reports the belief that this was the first name given to the Europeans, and there is indirect evidence that a Delaware expression referring to Europeans as white was in fact in use already by the middle of the seventeenth century. A Dutch document of 1652 refers

to people telling the Indians things about the "Dutch or Whites" (Vaughan 1982: 931). The phrase "or Whites" cannot be an explanation of "Dutch," as the Dutch did not then use this term for themselves and would hardly have needed to add a synonym for "Dutch" anyway. The intended meaning of "or Whites" must be 'or, as they call us, Whites', reflecting the terminology used by interpreters and partial bilinguals. Vaughan (1982: 932) gives other early uses of *white* applied to Europeans by Indians or used by Europeans in dealing with Indians.¹⁹

The First Known Uses of *Redskin*

It was from the use of *red* as a conventional iconic reference to North American Indians, both by Native Americans and by representatives of the Colonial European powers, that the word *redskin* emerged. This development took place among a small group of people in a limited area, part of what was historically called the Illinois Country. There, after France gave up her territories on the North American continent in 1762 and 1763, French communities remained behind at Saint Joseph (Niles, Michigan), Ouiatenon (Lafayette, Indiana), Vincennes, and Peoria, and from Cahokia (East St. Louis) to Kaskaskia on the Mississippi and across the river in Spanish territory at St. Louis and St. Genevieve. The Indians in and around this region spoke languages of three separate linguistic families. Sauk-Meskwaki (a language spoken by the Sauks and the Meskwakis, or Fox, in two very similar dialects), Miami-Illinois (also spoken in several dialects), and Potawatomi were Algonquian languages. Santee (or Dakota), the eastern dialect of Sioux, was a Siouan language. Iowa-Otoe-Missouri (also called Chiwere) was another Siouan language, with three tribal varieties, and Omaha-Ponca, Kansa, and Osage were very

close varieties of Dhegiha Siouan. Pawnee, spoken just up-river from the Dhegiha-speakers, was a Caddoan language. The first Europeans to have extended contacts with these peoples were speakers of French, and the first English-speakers in the area relied on French-speakers in their dealings with the Indians. The restricted context of origin makes it possible to describe very precisely the occasions when the word *redskin* was first used, and the identities and backgrounds of those who were the first to use it are an integral part of this account. It is extremely unusual to be able to document the emergence of a vernacular expression in such exact and elucidative detail.

The earliest examples of *redskin* to be found so far are emblematic of the process of its adoption in English. In 1769 three chiefs of the Piankashaws, a Miami-speaking people then living on the lower Wabash River, sent to Lt. Col. John Wilkins four talks, written out for them in French, which were forwarded to London with translations and explanations in August of that year. Wilkins, the British commander in Illinois, had his headquarters at Fort Cavendish (the former Fort de Chartres), about 18 miles above Kaskaskia on the east bank of the Mississippi. He had the task of eliciting loyalty or at least peaceful behavior from the Illinois tribes, who were still strongly attached to the French four years after their surrender and departure, a disposition that had led to the assassination of the Ottawa war chief Pontiac by Peorias further up-river in Cahokia some months earlier (Kelsey 1979; Chevrete 1974). The "Old Sachem" Mosquito (French *Maringouin*) ended his first talk with an invitation:

"je serai flatté que tu Vienne parler toimeme pour avoir pitie De nos femmes et De nos enfans, et si quelques peaux Rouges te font Du mal je Scaurai soutenir tes Interests au peril De ma Vie" (Johnson 1921–1965, 7: 133).

This was translated as:

"I shall be pleased to have you come to speak to me yourself if you pity our women and our children; and, if any redskins do you harm, I shall be able to look out for you even at the peril of my life" (Johnson 1921–1965, 7: 137–138).

The more "severe" speech of the war chief and village chief called Hannanas (evidently a French nickname *Ananas* 'Pineapple') included these words:

¹⁶ The expression is at least as old as the mid-nineteenth century, when it was recorded for Choctaw by Byington (1915:137), who glossed it "a man of a red trunk or stalk."

¹⁷ The Creek terms are phonemized from the transcription in Greek letters used by Johann Martin Bolzius and Israel Christian Gronau (Jack B. Martin, pers. comm. 12 January 2005; Martin 2004: 74).

¹⁸ Unami *weeyoópsiit* (from **weewaápsiit*) was back-formed from a plural in which the reduplication would be normal.

¹⁹ In 1796 Jean-Baptiste Truteau, describing the tribes of the upper Missouri, wrote: "Ils ne scavent point faire la distinction des nations policées, anglaise, française, Espagnoles &c. qu'ils nomment tous indifferemment hommes Blanc ou Esprits." Annie H. Abel (1921: 178) gives both the French text and her translation: "They do not know how to distinguish among civilized nations, English, French, Spanish, et cetera, whom they call indifferently white men or spirits." The English alone is reprinted by Nasatir (1952: 282), who has further notes.

"aparament que tu crois que je ne serai pas capable De rien Lorsque tu me privera de poudre et De balles, tu dois scavoit que je scais me servir de Bois pour faire mes armes et que avec ce meme bois ye tue Des hommes, ...

"... tu Crois que je suis Orphelin, mes tous les Gens De ces rivieres et tout les peaux rouges apprendront ma mort" (Johnson 1921–1965, 7: 135).

This was translated as:

"Apparently you think that I shall not be capable of anything when you deprive me of powder and ball. You must know that I know how to use wood to make my weapons and that with this same wood I kill men

"... You think that I am an orphan; but all the people of these rivers and all the redskins will learn of my death" (Johnson 1921–1965, 7: 139).

The French texts were described as "an Exact Copy" of what the chiefs' French interpreter had written. The first has "si quelques peaux Rouges" translated as "if any redskins," and the second has "tout les peaux rouges" translated as "all the redskins." The first appearances of *redskin* in English are thus as literal translations of what would be in standard French *Peau-Rouge* (in both cases the plural *Peaux-Rouges*), which is itself in a translation from a dialect of the Miami-Illinois language.²⁰

The first recorded public uses of the English word *redskin* were nearly half a century later, on 22 August 1812.²¹ The occasion was a reception in the President's House in Washington for an Indian delegation representing several western tribes: the Osages, Sauks, Meskwakis, Shawnees, Santees, Iowas, and Winnebagos. The chiefs had come to Washington in two groups, accompanied by William Clark, the famed explorer, who had been appointed Agent of Indian Affairs for most of Louisiana Territory in 1807, and Nicolas Boilvin, the agent for the upper Mississippi tribes. War had just broken out with Great Britain, and the president, James Madison, was concerned about the threat to national security posed by the activi-

ties of British agents among the Indians (Clark 1812; Carter 1934–1969, 14: 109; Brant 1961: 68–70; Foley 2004: 191–192; Stagg et al. 2004: 175–186).

Madison's speech to the chiefs offers a fine illustration from the early years of the American republic of the use of the color word *red* as a sustained metaphor for race. Madison urged the chiefs to stay out of the fight between Britain and the United States, affecting a high rhetorical style that made liberal use of conventional Native American diplomatic language and metaphor.

"My red children: You have come thro' a long path to see your father, ... I thank the great spirit that he has brought you in health through the long journey; ...

"The red people who live on the same great Island with the white people of the 18 fires, are made by the great spirit of the same earth, from parts of it differing in colour only" (Stagg et al. 2004: 175–176).²² Throughout his speech, Madison referred to "red people," and used such expressions as "all my red children," "all the red tribes," "their red brethren," and "between one red tribe and another."

After Madison finished his address to the chiefs they replied in turn. No Ears (Sans-Oreilles), listed by Clark (1812) as one of the second chiefs of the Little Osages, expressed satisfaction with the American administration, adding (Stagg et al. 2004: 181): "I know the manners of the whites and the red skins." No Ears was a son of White Hair, who had usurped the role of principal chief of the Osages as part of an intrigue with the trader Pierre Chouteau and had died in 1808 (James B. Wilkinson in Pike 1966, 2: 16–17, 32; Donald Jackson in Pike 1966, 1: 288, n. 2).²³ He had asked to be taken to see the president in a letter to the Indian agent Auguste Chouteau, a resident of St. Louis long involved in the fur trade, which he dic-

tated to the trader Sylvestre Labbadie, Chouteau's nephew (Carter 1934–1969, 14: 466–468). Zebulon Pike, who gives his Osage name as Tetobasi, met him in 1806 (Pike 1966, 1: 296, 301, 304–305, 310–314, 2: 31). The Indian agent for the Osages, George C. Sibley, referred to him as the head warrior of his band in 1813 (Carter 1934–1969, 14: 713).²⁴

French Crow, the principal chief of the Wahpekute band of Santee Sioux, pledged obedience and peace and said:

"I am a red-skin, but what I say is the truth, and notwithstanding I came a long way I am content, but wish to return from here" (Stagg et al. 2004: 182).

French Crow signed the treaties that were entered into by the Eastern Sioux bands in 1816, 1825, and 1830 (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 129, 254, 309).²⁵

The fifth attestation of *redskin* to come to light is also in the translation of an Indian speech. In 1813 Maurice Blondeau traveled up the Mississippi River from St. Louis to the village of the Sauk chief known as Blue, which was at the mouth of the Des Moines River. Blondeau had a Meskwaki mother and had been promoted from interpreter to sub-agent for the Sauks while with the delegation in Washington the previous August (Eustis 1812).²⁶ His mission was to persuade the Sauks and Meskwakis to move away from the Rock River in western Illinois, where they were subject to the malign influence of British agents, and settle on the Des Moines River, and to send fifteen chiefs to meet with Clark in St. Louis. Arriving at the village on

²⁴ The same information in Sibley (1927: 197) cannot be dated; see n. 21.

²⁵ In the treaties of 1825 and 1830 French Crow (*k'a'ghi washichu'*) is identified specifically as a Wahpekute; Clark appears to have been mistaken in calling him a Yankton (Clark 1812).

²⁶ For Maurice Blondeau see Reuben Gold Thwaites (in Forsyth 1911: 356–357). There are several contemporary references to his half-Meskwaki parentage (Carter 1934–1969, 17: 385, 402; Forsyth 1830). He was trading with the Meskwakis by 1801. British Lt. Col. Robert McDouall (1895: 109–110) was told that he was "a very clever fellow" and hoped to entice him to the British side and make him a Lieutenant in the Indian Department. He could sign his name, but the letters of his that survive do not appear to be written by him and Ninian Edwards asserted that, among other failings, he was "incapable of making out any reports" (Carter 1934–1969, 17: 199). There is no evidence that he spoke English.

²⁰ I am indebted to John Ludwickson for pointing out these examples.

²¹ *Redskins* was ostensibly used by George C. Sibley in a letter of 11 August 1811, but the extant copies of this were rewritten with apparent additions in 1860 (Sibley 1927: 204, Sibley 1965: 185; George R. Brooks in Sibley 1965: 185, n. 27).

²² Madison's speech was earlier published in the *National Journal* in 1825 and reprinted in *Niles' Register* for 14 May 1825 (vol. 28, pp. 175–176). It and two copies of the chiefs' responses are also on microfilm (Library of Congress, Presidential Papers Microfilm, James Madison Papers, Series 1, reel 14 [1812 Apr 21–1813 Jan]).

²³ No Ears was not the Osage principal chief who was called "White hair's son," as Stagg et al. (2004: 186, n. 1) state; Clark (1812) wrote the name of this chief as "Kehagartongar."

21 April, he held a council the same day. There Blue reported that eight days earlier the British agent Robert Dickson had held a council with the upstart war leader Black Hawk and other pro-British Sauks, ten lodges of whom had moved the previous fall to the upper Rock River, away from the village of the principal chiefs near the Mississippi. Dickson had asked that they move north to Prairie du Chien, at the mouth of the Wisconsin River, and that their leaders go to parley at Ft. Malden, the main western outpost of the British just south of Detroit at Amherstburg, Ontario.

On 23 April Dickson's agents delivered the same invitations to the camp of the Sauk chiefs Leggin and Nomwait at the mouth of the Iowa River.²⁷ Nomwait, the principal Sauk war chief,²⁸ responded with a question, which Blondeau translated into French on the basis of the account he had received:

"votre pere anglois vous a-t-il dit de quelle maniere il va supporter les peaux rouges a faire la guerre aux américains? pour ma part je ne vois de quelle maniere il pourra supporter la guerre" (Blondeau 1813a).

A contemporary translation of Blondeau's report gives this as follows:

"Did your English father tell you in what manner he would support the red skins to make war against the Americans, as for my part, I do not see in what manner he will be able to support the war" (Blondeau 1813b).

The translation that contains this passage was sent by Nicolas Boilvin, Blondeau's boss, to John Armstrong, the Secretary of War (Blondeau 1813b). A copy of Blondeau's report in French, probably originally dictated rather than written by him, was sent to Governor Ninian Edwards of Illinois (Blondeau 1813a), and in the translation that was made for Edwards "les peaux rouges" (lit. 'the redskins') is

translated "the red people." The fact that in 1813 a translation made in St. Louis used "red skins," but one made just across the river did not, reflects how new and restricted the use of this expression then was.

The First Appearances of *Redskin* in Print

Although the earliest recorded public uses of the word *redskin* that have come to light were in a very public place indeed, before James Madison in the President's House in Washington, there is no evidence that this expression was picked up and spread abroad by any of those that heard it on that occasion. The speeches that contained it were written down and survive, but they were not printed until 2004, when the mammoth project to publish the James Madison papers brought out the final set from the year 1812. It was apparently not until 1815 that the word began to show up in print.

The first two known occurrences of *redskin* that were published contemporaneously are in translations of speeches by two Indian chiefs of different tribes that were made within a few days of each other in July 1815 and in almost the same place. The occasion was the series of councils held with representatives of the tribes of the upper Mississippi and lower Missouri rivers by three "commissioners plenipotentiary" appointed by President Madison and headed by William Clark, who had become Governor of Missouri Territory on 16 June 1813. The other commissioners were Governor Edwards of Illinois and Auguste Chouteau. The commissioners were to negotiate and sign peace treaties with the Indians in accordance with the ninth article of the Treaty of Ghent, which had been ratified in February, ending the War of 1812. The treaties were signed at Portage des Sioux, on the west bank of the Mississippi in Missouri, and there were other gatherings in St. Louis, about twenty miles to the southeast, both before and after (Carter 1934–1969, 14: 679, 15: 68, n. 18; Fisher 1933; Foley 2004: 202–207).

The first of these published uses of *redskin* (as "red skins") is in the translation of a speech delivered by the Meskwaki chief Black Thunder at Portage des Sioux on 20 July 1815. The atmosphere was tense. During the opening ceremonies on 10 July the brother of the Sauk war chief

Nomwait had maintained the Sauk refusal to yield the land between the Wisconsin and Illinois rivers that the United States claimed had been ceded by the treaty of 1804, and in his response Clark had chastised the Sauks and Kickapoos for not sending chiefs who had the authority to sign treaties. After public expressions of hostility from Indians of other tribes and, later, rumors of planned "mischief," the Meskwakis, Sauks, and Kickapoos had left Portage des Sioux to return home under cover of darkness that very night (*Missouri Gazette*, 15 July 1815; Clark, Edwards, and Chouteau 1834; A.H. Bulger 1890: 194–195).

There is neither an official nor a private account of the daily activities at the treaty councils, and the only event recorded for 20 July in an official record is the signing of the treaty with the Omahas (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 115–116). The newspaper report of Black Thunder's speech, however, indicates that the commissioners also had a confrontational meeting with representatives of the Meskwakis and of another tribe on that day. (The other tribe is unidentified but was most likely the Iowas, who were also tardy in sending an acceptable delegation.) As the report does not refer to the Omaha treaty but does mention treaties that were signed on 18 and 19 July, the meeting with the Meskwakis most likely took place before the signing of the Omaha treaty. A letter written to a different newspaper on 20 July reported that thirty Meskwakis had arrived at the council grounds from Rock River without their principal chiefs (*Missouri Gazette*, 22 July 1815). But if these Meskwakis, who doubtless included Black Thunder, had come from Rock River, they were probably coming from a council at which all the chiefs had been present. At the meeting on 20 July Clark must have chastised the representatives of the Meskwakis and the other tribe for not sending delegations with the proper authority to negotiate with the commissioners, just as he had done with the Sauks and the Kickapoos on 10 July. The first Indian speaker to respond, the representative of the unnamed tribe, had "trembled like an aspin leaf" and was "scarcely ... able to articulate" (Niles 1815b: 113).

Then Black Thunder, who had kept to the American side throughout the war, rose and addressed Clark.

"My Father—Restrain your feelings, and hear ca[ll]mly what I shall say. I shall tell it to you plainly, I shall not

²⁷ The location of this camp on the Iowa River is specified in a second letter (Blondeau 1813d).

²⁸ Nomwait's name appears also as Namoitte, Namirto, Neomite, Mamotte, Lamoite, la Moite, Amoite, Lemoite, LeMoite, and Leettoite. Nomwait is a shortening of a full form given in an English spelling of Blondeau's pronunciation as Namoitissort (Carter 1934–1969, 14: 662). The optional pronunciation of /n/ as [l] was a feature of Sauk-Meskwaki in the nineteenth century, and the sounds were no longer distinct phonemes. Variant forms of Nomwait's name have sometimes been taken to refer to different men (Fisher 1933: 500, 502; Foley 2004: 200, 206).

speak with fear and trembling. I feel no fear. I have no cause to fear. I have never injured you, and innocence can feel no fear. I turn to all, red skins and white skins, and challenge an accusation against me" (Niles 1815b: 113).

Black Thunder went on to affirm friendship with the United States while also asserting: "My lands can never be surrendered. I was cheated." He had, as he said, moved his village above Prairie du Chien, thus putting it outside the disputed area between the Wisconsin and Illinois rivers (Niles 1815b: 113; Anderson 1882: 207). Most Sauks and Meskwakis, however, considered the treaty of 1804 to be a fraud based on deception (Black Hawk 1990; Hagan 1958: 16–25), and the commissioners would have understood that Black Thunder was delivering a diplomatically phrased message from the principal leaders of his tribe that they, like the Sauks, would not relinquish the disputed territory.

As a member of the Thunder Clan, Black Thunder could not hold the highest tribal offices, either on the peace side or the war side, but the early settler John Shaw (1888: 220–221) described him as of impressive mien and "a very remarkable orator of his day [who] was considered the ablest speaker of the Sauks and Foxes of his time."²⁹ As a great orator and a firm friend of the Americans he would have been the obvious choice to take the message of the Meskwaki chiefs to Portage des Sioux. In fact, as he reminded Clark in his speech, he had told the president the same thing in Clark's presence when he had gone to Washington in 1812 with the Sauk and Meskwaki chiefs to serve as the speaker for the Meskwakis.³⁰ After

that trip, Black Thunder was referred to a number of times from 1814 until 1822, when he signed the treaty with the "Sac and Fox Tribes of Indians" in St. Louis (Anderson 1882: 207; Forsyth 1872: 191; Lyman C. Draper in Meeker 1872: 280; Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 202–203).

The second use of *redskin* to appear in print (in the phrase "one of our red skin chiefs") is in a rendering of some brief remarks addressed to Clark by the Omaha principal chief Big Elk.³¹ The exact date and place are not recorded, but he was probably speaking at a gathering in St. Louis a few days after the signing of the Omaha treaty on 20 July 1815, before returning home up the Missouri.³²

"Who would not wish to die among you! that he may be buried with the honors of war, as you buried one of our red skin chiefs, who died at Portage des Sioux" (*Missouri Gazette*, 29 July 1815).

Big Elk was principal chief of the Omaha from 1811 until his death about 1849 and another noted orator (O'Shea and Ludwickson 1992: 335, 338; Ludwickson 1995: 142–143). The Indian chief he refers to was Black Buffalo, the principal chief of the Teton Sioux, who had died at the site of the peace councils on 14 July and had been buried with full military honors the following day, when Clark was absent. Big Elk had given a funeral oration, which was widely reprinted (Niles 1815b; Bradbury 1817: 220–221; Drake 1833, 5: 114–115; Outa-

lissa 1821a, 1821b). His quoted remarks to Clark were presumably either transcribed by someone working for the *Missouri Gazette* or obtained from official sources. He declared that he represented five bands ("villages"), including those of the Pawnees (*Missouri Gazette*, 5 August 1815).

The third known occurrence in print (as "the *red skins*") is in "the recital of a talk received from an English officer in Canada, addressed to the" Sauks, Kickapoos, Winnebagos, Chippewas, Ottawas, Meskwakis, Menominees, and Iowas. The talk was reported by the Sauks to the Indian agent Nicolas Boilvin at a council he held with them in their village on Rock River (*Missouri Gazette*, 16 September 1815), and Boilvin sent a transcript of it to Governor Edwards:

"My Children—The Americans & English have taken one another by the hand of friendship, and we hope it will be for the benefit of the *red skins* of the Mississippi."

The editor's use of italics presumably indicates that he considered the expression "red skins" to be an Indian turn of phrase. The British talk reported by the Sauks was a speech sent by Lt. Col. Robert McDouall from his post at Michilimackinac explaining the terms of the Treaty of Ghent to the western Indians allied with the British. This speech had been read to a gathering of over 1,200 Indians from various tribes by Capt. Thomas G. Anderson on 22 May 1815 in the last council held under the British flag at Prairie du Chien. Anderson then took the speech to Rock River. The original wording of McDouall that was eventually rendered as "the *red skins* of the Mississippi" was "all his Red children," *his* referring to "Your Great Father the King" (A.H. Bulger 1890: 191–193; A. E. Bulger 1895: 155–161).

Redskin is known to have been used a number of times in public between 1819 and 1822, but the record of the last of these occasions actually appeared in print first. There are twenty-nine occurrences in Edwin James's account of Maj. Stephen H. Long's exploratory expedition of 1819–1820 (James 1823; Thwaites 1905). The Indian Agent Benjamin O'Fallon repeatedly used this expression (usually printed as "red skins" or "red-skins") in speaking to Pawnees and Sauks, and three Pawnee chiefs and a Sauk chief used it in their replies to him; it also appears in James's paraphrases of remarks by two speakers of Omaha. O'Fallon was a nephew of

²⁹ The printed version of the treaty the Meskwakis eventually signed on 14 September 1815 gives Black Thunder's Meskwaki name as Mackkatananama-kee, translated as "the black thunder" (Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1837: 181; Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 122); on the original this is "Mack-ka-ta-na-na-ma-kee," translated "The Black Thunder" (NA mfm T 494, r. 1, ratified treaty no. 73). Another variant is "Mucathaanamickey" (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 203). In correct Meskwaki the name is *mahka-tee-nenemehkiwa* or *mahkateewi-nene-mehkiwa* 'black thunderer', i.e. 'black thunder being'.

³⁰ Clark (1812) listed him as "a Fox Deputy to speak Called the Big Thunder," but this can only be Black Thunder. He gave the response to the president for the Meskwakis after some brief remarks by the Meskwaki principal chief, called

Ridge (Stagg et al. 2004: 184–185). The extant copies of Black Thunder's speech (again ascribed to "Big Thunder") do not include the refusal to surrender the disputed land, but a remark by Boilvin (1815) confirms that the Meskwakis made this point "at the council in the President's House in Washington in 1812."

³¹ Big Elk's name is given as Oupaatanga (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 116) and Ongpatonga (James 1823, 1: 202; Cooper in Beard 1960, 1: 199; McKenney and Hall 1933, 1: 273–282) or Ong-pa-ton-ga (James 1823, 1: 174; McKenney and Hall engraving in Cooper 1983, Plate 2), representing Omaha *á'p'a'á' ttá'ga* (John E. Koontz, pers. comm., 30 November 2004).

³² Because Big Elk refers to Portage des Sioux in a way that indicates that he was somewhere else, he must have been speaking in St. Louis, and this could only have been after the formal council had ended. Clark had a council house at the southeast corner of Main and Vine streets in St. Louis, where he had held a series of meetings with the chiefs of the Missouri River tribes in June (Fisher 1933: 499).

William Clark who had lived with his uncle in St. Louis since his teens and had become a successful Indian trader. He was made Indian Agent at Prairie du Chien for the upper Mississippi tribes in 1817, and in March of 1819 he had been appointed Indian Agent on the Missouri, his first assigned task being to assist the expedition (Michel 1999; Carter 1934–1969, 15: 520–521).

O'Fallon addressed a gathering of seventy Pawnees from the three bands on 9 October 1819:

"Pawnees encamp here and smoke your pipes in security; you have conducted yourselves badly, but the whites will not harm the red-skins when they have them thus in their power; we fight in the plains, and scorn to injure men seated peaceably by their fires" (James 1823, 1: 159–160; cf. Thwaites 1905, 1: 240).

O'Fallon used *redskin* several other times in the formal council the next day, saying for example:

"Pawnees! I wish to be at peace with you, and all the red-skins, I tell you again. ...

"I will work a change among you, Red-skins" (James 1823, 1: 402, 403; cf. Thwaites 1905, 2: 355, 356).

Petasharo, the chief of the Kitkahahki Pawnees, had earlier said:

"Father, I have seen people travel in blood. I have travelled in blood myself, but it was the blood of red-skins, no others.

"Father, I have been in all the nations round about, and I have never feared a red-skin" (James 1823, 1: 400; cf. Thwaites 1905, 2: 353).

At a meeting on 25 April 1820 the Grand Pawnee chief Long Hair (Tarrarecawaho) addressed his warriors by way of responding to O'Fallon, saying (with the editor's parenthetical explanation):

"I have been to the town of the Red head, (Governor Clarke, at St. Louis,) and saw there all that a red skin could see" (James 1823, 1: 352; cf. Thwaites 1905, 2: 147).

In fact, in the style he adopted in speaking formally to Indians, which was influenced throughout by the idiom of Native American oratory, O'Fallon never said *Indian*, only *red-skin*. After the return of the expedition, he used the word repeatedly in speaking to a deputation of Sauks in St. Louis on 3 April 1821, urging them strenuously to cease their warfare against the Otoes, Missouris, and Omahas, saying, for example:

"A few winters since, I was a chief to

the red skins of the upper Mississippi ... I am now chief to the red skins of Missouri, some of whose blood you have spilt. ...

"When I first climbed the rapid Missouri, I found the red skins as wild as wolves. ... They again raised their arms, every body who were there at the time, both whites and red skins, raised their arms, and looked around them" (James 1823, 1: 223–224, n.; cf. Thwaites 1905, 1: 314–315, n. 207).

In his reply the Sauk chief said:

"All those braves have expressed their wish for peace, with the red skins of Missouri" (James 1823, 1: 225, n.; cf. Thwaites 1905, 1: 317, n. 207).

In two places James adopts the word himself in paraphrasing what Omahas had told him. From one, who was almost certainly Big Elk, he had learned:

"In their opinion, the Wahconda ["Master of Life"] has been more profuse in his distribution of gifts to the white people, than to the red-skins" (James 1823, 1: 320; cf. Thwaites 1905, 2: 110).

And he reported that the hunter Nozundaje

"says he has killed several red skins in action, but never yet had the honour to *strike* a body" (James 1823, 1: 183; cf. Thwaites 1905, 1: 268).

After O'Fallon's 1821 council with the Sauks, the next recorded uses of *red-skin* were in August 1821 at a treaty conference held at Chicago with representatives of the Ottawas, Chippewas, and Potawatomis (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 198–201). There the lead speaker for the Potawatomis was the accomplished orator Metea (Mee-te-ay), a chief from the Wabash River (McKenney and Hall 1933, 2: 205–212), who declared:

"I am an Indian, a red-skin, and live by hunting and fishing, but my country is already too small" (Schoolcraft 1825: 342).

And Topinabee (Topenebee), the Potawatomi principal chief, said:

"My Father,—I am a red skin. I do not know how to read or write, but I never forget what is promised me" (Schoolcraft 1825: 347).

The speeches at the council were taken down by Henry R. Schoolcraft (1825: 343), who stated that he had "adhered literally to the spirit and form of expression of the interpreters."

The next recorded public uses of *redskin* were in 1822 and appeared in print that same year, before James's book. They were in two speeches by

members of a delegation of Missouri River Indians that was escorted by O'Fallon from Council Bluffs to Washington to see the eastern cities and meet President James Monroe, much as the earlier group had been brought by his uncle to see Madison in 1812 (Anonymous 1822; Morse 1822: 241; Horan 1972: 45–49, 362; Viola 1972). There were 17 Indians in all from four Siouan-speaking tribes and the three bands of the Pawnees. At the official reception in the White House on 4 February, after Monroe addressed the chiefs, a Pawnee responded first.³³ He can be identified as Sharitarish, who led the Pawnee delegations as the brother and representative of the principal chief:

"My Great Father:

"I have travelled a great distance to see you—...

"I am going to speak the truth. ... The Great Spirit made us all—he made my skin red, and yours white; he placed us on this earth, and intended that we should live differently from each other. He made the whites to cultivate the earth, and feed on domestic animals; but he made us, red skins, to rove through the uncultivated woods and plains, to feed on wild animals, and to dress with their skins. He also intended that we should go to war—to take scalps—steal horses from and triumph over our enemies—cultivate peace at home, and promote the happiness of each other. I believe there are no people of any color on this earth who do not believe in the Great Spirit—in rewards, and in punishments. ...

"My father [Agent Benjamin O'Fallon] ... settles all differences between us and the whites and between the red skins themselves—he makes the whites do justice to the red skins and he makes the red skins do justice to the whites. ...

"Here, my Great Father, is a pipe which I present you, as I am accustomed to present pipes to all the red skins in peace with us" (*Daily*

³³ The texts of the five Indian speeches to President Monroe were printed in a Washington newspaper, *The Daily National Intelligencer* (16 February 1822). Possible reprintings in other newspapers have not been searched for. The speeches are most accessible in Morse (1822: 242–247), but this omits a long section from one of them. The synopses written from memory by Anonymous (1822) generally agree with the texts but contain additional material that appears to be authentic.

National Intelligencer, 16 February 1822; cf. Morse 1822: 242–245, Buchanan 1824: 41–47).

The next to speak was the Omaha chief Big Elk, the same man who had been at the treaty council in 1815. Big Elk began:

“My Great Father:

“Look at me—look at me, my father, my hands are unstained with your blood—my people have never struck the whites, and the whites have never struck them. It is not the case with other red skins. Mine is the only nation that has spared the long knives. ...

“The Great Spirit made my skin red, and he made us to live as we do now; ...

“I am fond of peace, my Great Father, but the Sioux have disturbed my repose. ... they rove on the land like hungry wolves, and, like serpents creeping through the grass, they disturb the unsuspected stranger passing through the country. I am almost the only red skin opposed to war—but, my Father, what should I do to satisfy the dead, when every wind coming over their bones brings to my ears their cries for revenge?” (*Daily National Intelligencer*, 16 February 1822).³⁴

These earliest known attestations of *redskin* (from 1769 to 1822) come from a very restricted context. Almost all of them were in translations of speeches or briefer utterances by Indians who lived in present-day Iowa and Missouri and the surrounding areas of Illinois, northwestern Indiana and extreme southwestern Michigan, southern Minnesota, and eastern Nebraska and Kansas. The remainder were in speeches to Indians of this area. And since the interpreters thus play a central role in the adoption of *redskin* as an English word, their identities and skills are key components of the specific historical reality that provided the context for its origin.

³⁴ The “long knives” are the Americans; this expression (also “big knives”), which diffused through many Native American languages, originally referred specifically to Virginians. It traces back to a conference with the Iroquois at Albany on 13 July 1684, where the Governor of Virginia, Lord Howard of Effingham, was given the Mohawk name *a'share'koówa* ‘big knife’, a translation of the name *Howard* as if it were Dutch *houwer* ‘cutlass’ (Woodward 1928). (I am indebted to Marianne Mithun [pers. comm., 1993] for the phonemic form of the Mohawk word; *sh* represents a cluster *s + h*.)

The Interpreters

As in the case of the use of the simple adjective *red* as a designation of race in the eighteenth century, first by Native Americans and then by Europeans, the English word *redskin* emerged in the nineteenth century as the rendering of a Native American idiom. Except for O’Fallon, who was addressing Indians, all the speakers and writers known to have used *redskin* down to 1822 were translating the words of a Native American language: Miami-Illinois, Osage, Sioux, Sauk-Meskwaki, Omaha, Pawnee, or Potawatomi. Except for the cases in Illinois in 1769 and 1821, the word was spoken or written, or both, by men working directly or indirectly for William Clark, who supervised Indian affairs from St. Louis in several official capacities.

The work of interpreting was complicated by the fact that in the early years of the nineteenth century there were few men who could translate directly between English and the Indian languages of the Missouri and the upper Mississippi. Instead, there were two groups of interpreters. Those who knew the Indian languages translated between Indian and French, and other interpreters, who were bilingual in French and English, translated between those two languages. The first group, sometimes distinguished as “Indian interpreters,” were often French-speaking mixed-bloods who translated between the languages of their French fathers and Indian mothers; some of these could also handle other languages, especially ones that were closely related but sometimes even ones that were not. Also in the first group were a few Frenchmen, born in Canada, Detroit, or the Illinois Country, who had acquired proficiency in Indian languages from long contact with Indians. The interpreters in the second group were most often Euro-Canadians, usually but not always of French origin, who had presumably grown up speaking both English and French after the British takeover of the French possessions. Later there were Americans of British heritage who became interpreters.

The talks sent to Lt. Col. Wilkins by the Piankashaw chiefs in 1769 were written in French, presumably by a trader living among them. Sir William Johnson (perhaps), in forwarding the translation to London, comments that:

“The Speeches made at the Illinois & at other places are generally taken by French Interpreters, who are men of very little learning, this will

account for the badness of the French & the errors or Orthography” (Johnson 1921–1965, 7: 136).

Several interpreters accompanied the delegation that went to Washington in 1812 (Clark 1812). The Osage words of No Ears would have been translated into French by Paul Loise, and Samuel Solomon would have translated the French into English. Loise had been born in St. Louis to French parents in 1777; he was employed for years as an Osage interpreter and had a half-Osage daughter (Calhoun 1822: 38; Lee 1834; Barry 1948: 8 n. 23, 24 n. 60; Fischer 1999).³⁵ Solomon was a St. Louis tavern-keeper who was born in Montreal in 1773 to a German Jewish father, the part-owner a trading house at Michilimackinac, and a French mother (Fischer 1999; Katz 1948: 253; Gundry 1957: 221–224; Armour 1985). He had a son with an Ojibwa woman in 1797 and was present for his baptism in Michilimackinac in 1799, though the mother was not. It is possible that, like his younger brother William, he spoke Ojibwa. He was in St. Louis by January of 1801, when he married a Frenchwoman from Kaskaskia there, and in April 1803 he was an interpreter at the arbitration of an estate in Cold Water (Agua Fría, L’Eau-Froide), a settlement of English-speaking Protestants just north of St. Louis (Fischer 1999; St. Louis Archives 1803). He served Clark as a French interpreter in St. Louis for a number of years.³⁶

³⁵ His surname appears in some records as Louis and Louise.

³⁶ Samuel Solomon (sometimes Samuel D. Solomon) appears in many St. Louis records from 1801 until the U.S. Census of 1830 (NA mfm M19, r. 72), when his age is given incorrectly as 60 to 70. His signature matches that of the son of Ezekiel Solomon who witnessed the marriage contract between his sister Sophie and Isidore Pelletier on 23 July 1798, and the registration of his son’s baptism 26 July 1799 (Thwaites 1908: 501; 1910a: 113; Solomon family records, Mackinac Island State Park Commission, Mackinaw City, Michigan). There seems to be no reason to believe that the St. Louis records refer to more than one man, as Ehrlich (1997–2002, 1: 11) suggests might be the case. In reporting his resignation in 1818, Clark refers to him as “the U.S. old Interpreter & Translator” (Carter 1934–1969, 15: 405). What is transcribed as “jun.” after his name on the Osage treaty of 1808 (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 99) is most likely an error, perhaps a misreading of “int.” for *interpreter* or the like. (The original of the treaty is not in the National Archives and was not microfilmed.)

There were two interpreters of the Sioux language with the 1812 delegation, Augustin Angé and John A. Cameron (Clark 1812). Angé, a native of Canada who had been one of the founders of the French traders' village at Prairie du Chien in 1781 (Brisbois 1882: 285; R. G. Thwaites in Boilvin 1888: 249), was a man of middle age in 1812, so when Walking Buffalo, the Principal chief of the Mdewakanton Sioux, referred to his interpreter as "the young man whom we know" (Stagg et al. 2004: 182) he could only have meant Cameron. French Crow spoke next and Cameron would have interpreted for him also. Uniquely among the interpreters of the five Indian languages spoken in the President's House that day, Cameron would have translated directly into English rather than through the medium of French.

When Black Thunder made his speech on 20 July 1815 his interpreters were apparently not the ones who signed the treaty with the Meskwakis at the time it was finally executed on 14 September. The treaty bears the signatures of Samuel Solomon and Noel Mongrain as interpreters, and the half-Meskwaki sub-agent Maurice Blondeau, who could also have interpreted, signed with the other Indian agents (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 122). Mongrain was a French-Osage mixed-blood who had apparently learned Meskwaki in addition to Osage and Kansa despite the enmity between the Osages and the Meskwakis (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 218–219; Barnes 1936: 240; D. Jackson in Pike 1966, 1: 290, n. 4). On 20 July however, neither Solomon nor Mongrain appears to have been at Portage des Sioux. Solomon was not among the interpreters that signed the Omaha treaty on that day, and Mongrain did not sign any of the treaties of 18–20 July.³⁷ Blondeau, on the other hand, was at Portage des Sioux on 18 and 19 July (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 111–115), and he must have been the one who translated Black Thunder's words into French. By the same logic, Blondeau's French translation would have been put into English by whoever had

performed the same function at the Omaha treaty the same day.

Four names appear after the other signers at the bottom of the 1815 treaty with the Omahas, where the interpreters normally signed; their respective roles are not specified but can be deduced. Louis Dorion, a half-Sioux mixed-blood who also signed treaties with the Sioux and the Iowas, would have been the interpreter between Omaha and French.³⁸ Louis Decouagne, Jacques Metté, and John A. Cameron, who each signed seven or eight treaties, would have been the interpreters between French and English.³⁹ Big Elk's remarks to Clark about the funeral for the Teton chief Black Buffalo were therefore presumably translated into French by Louis Dorion, and his French rendering could have been translated by any of the other three, or by Samuel Solomon, who would have been available in St. Louis.

Nicolas Boilvin, who was born in Quebec in 1761 and apparently knew little English, would have written his report of the talk received from the Sauks in French (Thwaites 1910b: 314; Gregg 1937: 80–83; Scanlan 1943: 161).⁴⁰ This was translated into English by John P. Gates, also a native of Canada, who received it from Boilvin (R. G. Thwaites in Street 1888: 357; *Missouri Gazette*, 16 September 1815). Gates and Mongrain had worked together as the interpreters for the Osage treaty of 1808 (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 95–99). Boilvin's interpreter from Sauk into French would certainly have been the half-

Meskwaki Maurice Blondeau, who was Boilvin's subordinate.

The Omaha interpreter for Edwin James was John Dougherty (1791–1860), who had learned to speak a number of Indian languages (Withers 1930–1931: 359–360; Jones 1969: 303, n. 19; Maximilian 1839–1841, 2: 599, 612); he was later the Sub-Agent at the Council Bluffs agency. The speeches of the Pawnee chiefs to O'Fallon in 1820, and doubtless in 1819, were translated by Charles Simoneau ("Charly Simenon," "Semino") and Alexandre Papin (Calhoun 1822: 38). Both lived in the Pawnee villages, Papin being from an established St. Louis trading family (Jones 1969: 295). The translator for the Sauk chiefs in St. Louis in April 1821 was Louis Pettle, the salaried Sauk and Meskwaki interpreter there (Calhoun 1822: 55). If "Pettle" was a garbled form of Pilet, as in other cases (Danckers et al. 2000), he may have been Louis Pilet *dit* LaSonde, a member of a French family that lived in Cahokia and Kaskaskia.

The Potawatomi speeches at the Chicago treaty council in 1821 were translated by Whitmore Knaggs (1763–1827), a long-time interpreter and later Indian agent and sub-agent who had been born to a trading couple on the Maumee River in Ohio (Calhoun 1822: 80–81, 1823: 11; Ross 1902). He had been the interpreter for Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi at the Detroit treaty of 1807 (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 95), and the Chicago treaty was his seventh.

When Sharitarish addressed President Monroe in 1822 his interpreter was apparently Étienne Malboeuf, who had been paid by O'Fallon as an interpreter to the three Pawnee bands in 1820 (Calhoun 1822: 38).⁴¹ Malboeuf had been one of the French boatmen on the first leg of the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804 (Clarke 1970). He was born about 1775, presumably a half-blood, since his father had children with two or three Indian women. The fact that he had a half-Mandan sister suggests that his mother may also have been from the Missouri River. He was living in Kaskaskia when the explorers hired him, and he was in the militia at

³⁷ Mongrain (whose surname seems to be written "Mograin" on the Meskwaki treaty) was an interpreter only for treaties with the Osages (12 September 1815), the Missouri River Sauks (13 September 1815), and the Meskwakis (14 September 1815) (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 120, 121, 122). He had also been the interpreter for the treaty signed with the Osages on 10 November 1808 (Kappler 1904–1941, 2: 99).

³⁸ Louis Dorion was born in 1782, the son of Pierre Dorion (1740–1810), who was born in Quebec City, and a Yankton Sioux woman named "Holy Rainbow" (Anonymous 2004). He did not speak English (Pilling 1887: 50–51).

³⁹ Jacques Metté (sometimes spelled Matte), who was also an interpreter of the Potawatomi language, was born in Detroit (Carter 1934–1969, 17: 402). As an interpreter working for Ninian Edwards he explained a letter written by Edwards to the Kickapoos (Carter 1934–1969, 16: 229).

⁴⁰ Many letters written by Boilvin in French survive, and transcribed copies of most of these were assembled by Peter L. Scanlan ("Transcript and Translations of Letters and Documents ... Sent by or Concerning Nicholas Boilvin ... 1811–1823"; Platteville Mss D, Peter L. Scanlan Papers, Folder 1; Southwest Wisconsin Room, Karrmann Library, University of Wisconsin at Platteville, Platteville, WI. The new translations are by Marian Scanlan). Gov. Edwards, in listing employees who might have alien sympathies, says he was born in France (Carter 1934–1969, 17: 401).

⁴¹ Vouchers for payments to O'Fallon's interpreters are in the NA RG 217, SIA, box 14 (1821–1822), folders 339–341, account no. 5707. Some men who ostensibly signed vouchers from this period and were paid on the same account had actually remained at the Council Bluffs agency.

St. Louis in 1809 (Marshall 1926, 2: 98). Apparently he had learned English.

When Big Elk's turn came to respond to the president his words were translated by William Rodgers, "an American." Rodgers was encountered in May 1811 near the mouth of the Platte with "a Frenchman from St. Louis," who employed him as an interpreter, and an Omaha woman and her child that he tried unsuccessfully to send back to her father (Bradbury 1817: 55–59). He took out his own license to trade with the Indians "on Missouri & waters" later the same year (Marshall 1926, 2: 202). Rodgers signed treaties with the Pawnees, Omahas, and Otoe-Missouris as an interpreter in 1825 and was paid as an interpreter "for the Otoes, Mahas, &c." in 1826 (Kappler 2: 258, 260, 262; Barbour 1827: Abstract No. 2). Since the Otoes and Missouris spoke the same language and Omaha and Kansa were also mutually intelligible, Rodgers would have been the interpreter for all the Siouans in the delegation. It is possible that he also spoke Pawnee, but neither the fact that Dougherty planned to send him to the Pawnees to try and stop a human sacrifice in 1827 (Jones 1969: 299–301; Thurman 1970: 71) nor the fact that he signed the Pawnee treaty of 1825 with Papin prove this. Papin was certainly a Pawnee speaker, and Rodgers' role may simply have been to translate between French and English for him.⁴²

Louis Tesson Honoré, an interpreter "of several languages" (Lee 1834: 365), was paid on the 1821 trip as "Indian interpreter for the Saks, Foxes, and Sioux Nations on the Mississippi," but these tribes were not represented in the delegation and he served O'Fallon mainly as an assistant for local arrangements.⁴³ It is uncertain which of O'Fallon's three interpreters would

have been the one who apparently translated for both Big Elk and the Pawnee chief Ishkatappa when they met with Jedidiah Morse (1822: 249).

The Native American Sources of *Redskin*

It is clear from the earliest citations that *redskin* was regarded as an Indian expression. It was at first used only to translate what Indians said or as a consciously adopted Indian turn of phrase employed in formally addressing Indians. The tribal identities of the speakers who were quoted using this word in the period from 1769 to 1822 point to its specific languages of origin.

The French expression *Peaux-Rouges* in the written talks of the Piankashaw chiefs in 1769 (and from this *redskins*) translates a Miami-Illinois word for 'Indian'. An Illinois dictionary written at the beginning of the eighteenth century has (nitarante8irouki) 'je suis rouge' (⟨8⟩ is for French *ou*), representing *nitaranteewiroki* 'I am red', literally 'I have red skin' (Masthay 2002: 71).⁴⁴ The components of the verb stem are *aranteew-* 'red' and *-i-rokii* '(have such) skin' (compare the possessed noun *nirookayi* 'my skin', with *ni-* 'I, my'; -ay abstract suffix; -i inanimate singular ending). The dictionary translates this verb literally, but it would hardly have had any application except to specify racial membership. Its unattested plural participle would have been *eeranteewirokiichiki* 'those with red skins,' which is likely the form the Piankashaw chiefs used to mean 'Indians' half a century later. When Miami-Illinois was documented in the nineteenth century, however, this verb was apparently out of use, but there was an exactly parallel stem *oonsaawilokii-* 'have a brown or yellow skin' (with *oonsaaw-* 'yellow, brown') that formed words used specifically as racial designations: *oonsaawiloki-*

ita (pl. *oonsaawilokiichiki*) and *oonsaawilokia* 'Indian'.⁴⁵ Perhaps this replacement had to do with the apparent recent evolution of Algonquian color terminologies to accommodate the need for consistent labels for dyed and manufactured items; this would have entailed a contraction of the range of colors that could be referred to as 'red' and a shift from coppery and tawny shades to brighter hues.

The expressions "red skins" and "white skins" in the speech of the Meskwaki chief Black Thunder conform to the general idiom for talking about races in Meskwaki: The way to say 'be of the same race' is literally 'have the same sort of skin'.⁴⁶ To this day the word for 'white person' is *waapeshkinameshkaata* 'one that has white skin', as also in the Sauk dialect (Whittaker 1996: 106). This has *waapeshk-* 'white' + *-inameshk* 'skin' (as in *nenameshkaya* 'my skin', with *ne-* 'I, my'; -ay abstract; -a animate singular), and a verb-forming suffix -ee 'have', replaced by -aa in participles (which have -ta 'one that', -chiki 'ones that').

More complicated is the corresponding word for 'Indian'. In Meskwaki the everyday word is *nenootee-wa*, but writings by native speakers from the early twentieth century also have a rare, high-register expression *eesaawinameshkaata* 'one that has a brown skin' (with *asaaw-* 'brown, yellow' and a vowel change required in participles). And in an account of traditional history written in Meskwaki by Charley H. Chuck (1914) this word is glossed as *meeshkwinareshkaata* 'one that has red skin' (with *meshkw-* 'red' and vowel change). Given that in Miami-Illinois the earlier expression meaning 'one with red skin' has been displaced by one meaning 'one with

⁴² As pointed out by John Ludwickson (pers. comm., 14 March 2005), to whom I am indebted for several references, Rodgers was presumably the "Rodger, commonly called Bell" (i.e., Bill Rodgers) encountered on the Missouri by Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Württemberg in July and August of 1823 (Paul 1835: 275, 277, 311, 334, 338; 1973: 290–291, 329, 351, 355), but he was not the Pawnee named Rogers who entered school at the age of 17 in 1824, as claimed by Thurman (1970: 279, n. 23).

⁴³ Louis Tesson Honoré was born to French parents in St. Louis in 1789 (Fischer 1999). At least among English-speakers he called himself, and was referred to as, Honoré, but the family surname was *Tesson*, *Honoré* being a *dit* name, a sort of inherited family nickname (McDermott 1941:67–69).

⁴⁴ The authorship of this dictionary is unknown, but it evidently incorporates earlier materials, probably including compilations of the first great student of the language, Jacques Gravier, to whom it has been traditionally ascribed. The writing of the manuscript can be dated to the first two decades of the eighteenth century, probably after 1702 (Michael McCafferty, pers. comm., 13 March 2005). I am indebted to McCafferty and to David J. Costa for discussions of these and other points and for bringing to my attention the Miami and Illinois words discussed here.

⁴⁵ These forms are phonemicizations by David J. Costa (pers. comm., 12 and 14 March 2005) of transcriptions in manuscript materials of Albert S. Gatschet and in Kerr (1835: 26) and Anonymous (1837: 47). I have written the element -rok- (-lok-) 'skin' with a short o when part of a verb stem on comparative grounds (cf. Kickapoo -nok- 'skin' and Meskwaki -nok- 'constitution' < *body < *skin'), but a long oo (taken over from the noun) is also possible; I assume the automatic shortening of word-final vowels.

⁴⁶ A Native American in a myth written by Alfred Kiyana (1913: 9) refers to: *mani eeshinameshkeeyaani eeshinameshkaachiki* 'people of my race', literally 'people whose skin is the way my skin is'. Meskwaki words are phonemicized on the basis of my fieldwork in Iowa since 1990 but cited from syllabary manuscripts in the NAA.

brown skin', it is possible that a parallel replacement took place in Meskwaki, a closely related and geographically neighboring language. It is also possible, however, that Chuck was explaining the old term, which today would seem to mean 'one with yellow skin', by alluding to the English expression. Whether Nomwait and Black Thunder said literally 'redskins' or 'brownskins', however, they were using an established expression based on Sauk-Meskwaki idiom that the interpreters rendered according to the current convention in local French and English.

Potawatomi is like Meskwaki in having two words for 'Indian' (Gailland 1877: 165, phonemicized); the ordinary word *nashnabe* has an Ojibwa cognate, and the rare and now obsolete expression *wenzawnamshkad*, lit. 'one with brown skin', is the cognate of the Meskwaki synonym. Knaggs's translation "I am an Indian, a red-skin" indicates that Metea used both expressions together, and, in fact, Gailland also gives "red skin" as an explanation of the second word, though he certainly knew that this was not the literal meaning.

The expression "red skin" in the speeches of the Omaha chief Big Elk is a literal translation of Omaha *xí^mha-zhide* ('skin' + 'red'), used in the nominal phrase *níkkashí^mga xí^mha-zhide* 'Indian', lit., 'person (with) red skin' (Tteukkaⁿha in Dorsey 1890: 682). Omaha also had *níkkashí^mga xí^mha-ska* 'white person', lit. 'person (with) white skin' (Tteukkaⁿha in Dorsey 1891: 23). As pointed out by John E. Koontz, to whom I am indebted for these forms, these expressions are uncommon and "occur ... in the context of political rhetoric" (pers. com. 19 November 2004, 7 May 2005).⁴⁷ Quapaw, another Dhegiha Siouan language, was using *zho-zhitte* ('flesh' + 'red', i.e. 'redskin') for 'Indian' at least by the 1820s, as this expression was recorded by Gen. George Izard, the governor of Arkansas Territory, in a vocabulary that was received in Philadelphia on 10 January 1827 (Robert L. Rankin, pers. com., 13 January 2005; Freeman and Smith 1966: 318).

The reference to skin in designations of race is found in other Native American languages besides Miami-Illinois, Sauk-Meskwaki, Omaha, and Quapaw and dates back to the seventeenth century. In 1687 an Onon-

daga chief, speaking an Iroquoian language, described the kings of England and France as "both of one Skinn meaning white Skinned, & not brown as they Indians are" (sic; quoted in Vaughan 1982: 933). Other words for 'whiteman, European' in Algonquian languages that mean 'one with white skin' are Kickapoo *waapeshkinokaata*; Shawnee *weewaapilookayeeta* (Voegelin 1938–1940: 411); Miami *waaphkilokiita* (pl. *waaphkilokiichiki*),⁴⁸ with variants in other dialects of Miami-Illinois but in the early eighteenth-century Illinois dictionary only with the literal gloss '(one) who has white skin';⁴⁹ and Ojibwa *wayaabishkiiveed* (Baraga 1853: 393, phonemicized; cf. Rhodes 1985: 350). In Unami the word for Indian is *meexkeehkə'ssiit*, lit. 'the one with red flesh'.⁵⁰

For the languages of some of the early users of expressions that were translated as 'redskin' no term for 'Indian' with the same literal meaning is known. Osage and Pawnee have or had words that literally mean 'red person'. Osage *níkka zhúche* 'Indian' is 'man' + 'red' (LaFlesche 1932: 109, 282; John E. Koontz, pers. com. 19 November 2004). Pawnee *cahrikspahat* (Skiri dialect *cahispahat*), also 'person' + 'red', was known in the nineteenth century as a word for 'Indian' in general but is now restricted to the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma (Douglas R. Parks, pers. com., 23 February 2005). For Santee and the other dialects of Sioux, on the other hand, no expression for 'Indian' is attested that contains 'red' (David S. Rood, pers. com., 2 February 2005; Raymond J. DeMallie, pers. com., 3 February 2005).⁵¹ It is thus uncertain what Santee expression might have

existed in 1812 that French Crow could have used with the meaning 'I am a redskin'. It is possible that shared formal idioms were used in inter-tribal diplomatic language in the early nineteenth century that have not survived, and it is suggestive that Lakota has a word *hásapa* 'black person' (Rood and Taylor 1996: 447), literally '(having) black [sápa] skin [há]', which may earlier have been part of a larger set of racial designations on this pattern. Alternatively, Cameron may have translated French Crow's word for 'Indian' according to the literal meaning of the corresponding expression in other languages, which is presumably what was done by the interpreters of Osage and Pawnee.

In any case, it is evident that a convention of translating the word for 'Indians' in all Indian languages with French *Peaux-Rouges* and English *redskins* had become established among the close-knit group of interpreters that worked for William Clark and his agents, many of whom had linguistic skills in more than one Indian tongue. Even if these expressions were used in translating languages that did not have a term with this exact meaning, the linguistic evidence shows that this usage was a literal translation of expressions used in at least some of the Algonquian and Siouan languages of the area. And the rendering of an Algonquian element meaning 'brown' as *rouge* or *red* would attest the persistent influence of an older and more widespread Native American convention.

French *Peau-Rouge*

The occurrence of *redskin* in the English version of many Indian speeches reflects a key role played by French, the language of most of the traders and Indian agents in the old Illinois Country in the early years of the Illinois Territory and the Louisiana Territory (called the Missouri Territory after 4 June 1812). In the case of the talks of the Piankashaw chiefs in 1769 and Maurice Blondeau's report of Nomwait's speech in 1813 the two-stage translation through French is documented. The Piankashaw word was written down as French "peaux

⁴⁷ The second form occurs in the cited text with the suffixed animate plural article *-ma* 'the'.

⁴⁸ Phonemicized from Volney (1804: 436) and Anonymous (1837: 47).

⁴⁹ Illinois *waapihkiilokiita* 'qui a la peau blanche', *waapilokiita* 'qui a le teint, la peau blanche' (Masthay 2002: 217, phonemicized).

⁵⁰ The Kickapoo and Unami words are from my field notes.

⁵¹ In two of the earliest Lakota vocabularies *wich^hásha* 'Indian' is explained as literally 'red man' or 'red men'—i.e., *wich^há* 'man' + *sha* red' (Husband 1849; Hayden 1862: 378). Hubert Rankin (pers. comm., 29 April 2005) points out, however, that this is most likely a folk etymology specific to Lakota (and Yankton) *wich^hásha*, as the older form of this word appears to have been *wich^háshta*, the word for 'man, men, person, mankind' in Santee (Riggs 1852: 241), which is supported as old by the forms in the most divergent languages of the Dakotan subgroup, Assiniboiné *wí^{ch}háshta* and

Stoney *wich^hásta*. Today Lakota *wich^hásha* is 'man, person', and 'Indian' is *lak^hóta*, especially applied to Sioux Indians and their allies, or *ikché* *wich^hásha*, with *ikché* 'common, wild' (Rood and Taylor 1996: 477, 479; Ingham 2001: 141).

rouges," and this was rendered as "redskins." Nomwait's Sauk word was translated into French by Blondeau as *les Peaux-Rouges*, which is attested in the copy of his report that survives, and this in turn was translated into English as "the red skins."

The use of *Peau-Rouge* in Mississippi Valley French is implied by McDermott (1941: 113–114), though he cites no specific cases. Apparently, however, it was readily adopted not only in translations of Indian speeches but also in official communications addressed to Indians. An early example that is not a translation is in a letter which Don Francisco Cruzat, the Spanish Lieutenant Governor of Upper Louisiana, wrote in French to the Sauks and the Meskwakis on 20 November 1781. He had met that day with their chiefs, the Meskwaki nicknamed Wisconsin ("Huisconsin") and the Sauk called Leggin ("Mitasse"),⁵² and was trying to persuade the tribes "not to take part in the war between the whites":

"De tout tems vous savez que tous vos Enciens pères les français avec qui vous êtes poussé, et sorti de la terre, ont aimé les peaux rouges, ... et l'arbre dont je vous parle c'est votre encien père le français vous voyez mes Enfants qu'il est debout, et qu'il ne veut point voir verser le sang de sez Enfants les peaux rouges" (Cruzat 1781).

'From earliest times you have known that your former fathers, the French, with whom you have sprouted and grown up out of the earth, have loved the redskins, ... and the tree I'm speaking to you about is your former father, the Frenchman. You see, my children, that he is standing, and that he has no wish to see the blood of his children, the redskins, spilled.'

Here, amid much rhetoric that uses Native American metaphors, phraseology, and fictive kinship relations, "les peaux rouges" 'the redskins' is used twice to refer to the Indians who were loved by the French before their departure.

Robert Vézina has found several later examples from the early period.⁵³

⁵² The Sauk principal chief called Leggin in 1813 could have been the same man, or he could just have been given the same nickname.

⁵³ I am grateful to Robert Vézina for a summary of his findings (pers. comm., 20 February 2005); the French texts of the examples from Truteau, Mackay, and Vasquez were located by him. The Truteau and Vasquez quotations have been verified from the cited sources.

The trader Jean-Baptiste Truteau wrote in 1795 about an encounter with the Yankton Sioux the year before:

"les hantons approuvoient toutes les paroles que je leur avois dit, disant que leurs chefs avoient été en différentes fois au pây des françois; qu'ils avoient été bien reçus du grand chef des espagnols, le pere de toutes les nations peaux rouges" (Truteau 1914: 312–313).

'The Yanktons expressed approval of all the words that I had addressed to them, saying that their chiefs had been at different times in the country of the French, and that they had been well received by the great chief of the Spaniards, the father of all the redskin tribes.' (Adapted from Nasatir 1952, 1: 270–271.)

Vézina observes that on the several occasions when Truteau used the expression *Peaux-Rouges* in his writings, it was always in the context of speeches delivered by or to Native Americans. For example, Truteau used this expression in the summary of a letter he sent to two other French traders in 1795 laying out points they should make in talking to the Mandans; this appears in translation in Nasatir (1952, 1: 304). In a speech Truteau reports making to the Poncas in 1795 he not only used this term, but he also referred to himself and the other traders as "nous autres peaux blanches" 'we white-skins'.⁵⁴ The Poncas spoke the same language as the Omahas, and both expressions would have literally translated the racial terminology they used themselves.

A letter the trader and explorer James Mackay wrote to John Evans on 28 January 1796 survives in a contemporary French translation that contains the phrase "toutes les peaux rouges" 'all the redskins'.⁵⁵ This occurs

⁵⁴ This is found in an unpublished version of Truteau's journal (Robert Vézina, pers. comm., 21 February 2005).

⁵⁵ The letter is: James Mackay, Instructions donnée à Jean Evans pour traverser ce continent (28 January 1796), Louisiana Papers, BANC MSS M-M 508, box 4, folder 365 (The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley). It has been translated by Nasatir (1952, 2: 410–414, esp. 414).

The translator treats "les peaux rouges" as feminine (shown by the feminine plural agreement on *toutes* 'all', instead of masculine *tous*), like the feminine noun *peau* 'skin', as if the Indians were designated by synecdoche as literally 'red skins' ('skins that are red') rather than by a compound meaning 'redskins' ('those with red skins'), which would require masculine agreement. Robert Vézina

in a rehearsal of talking points Evans was to use in addressing the Indian tribes he encountered and is hence of a piece with Truteau's usage. It may indicate that Mackay's English original had *redskins*.

The nearly universal word for 'Indian' (noun and adjective) in the French of the Mississippi Valley in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was *sauvage*, an affectless term without negative connotations (McDermott 1941: 8, 136). In Boilvin's letters the Indian Department is *le Département sauvage* and Indian gifts (to the President) are *présents sauvages*. Expressions of opprobrium for Indians required additional words, as in "cest Diables de sauvages" (*ces diables de sauvages*) 'those wretched Indians', lit. 'those devils of Indians' (Vasquez 1812), and "sais barbare sauvage" (*ces barbares sauvages*) 'those Indian savages', lit. 'barbarians' (Boilvin 1813a).

Peaux-Rouges appears as a simple synonym for *sauvages* in spontaneous discourse, not addressed to or intended for Indians, only in the nineteenth century. The first example to come to light is in a letter Baronet Vasquez wrote to his brother Benito in September 1812 about the defense of Fort Madison on the west bank of the Mississippi during a three-day assault by Winnebago warriors:

"je ta sure que je me sui ennuyez lorsqu'ils se sont retirés car c'était un playsire de tirer sur cest paux rouges" (Vasquez 1812).

(I.e.: Je t'assure que je me suis ennuyé lorsqu'ils se sont retirés, car c'était un plaisir de tirer sur ces Peaux-Rouges.)

'I swear to you that I was sorely disappointed when they withdrew, as it was a delight to shoot at those redskins.'

Antoine François Vasquez, known as Baronet, was born into a St. Louis trading family in 1783. He spoke French, Spanish, and "several Indian languages" but only rudimentary English. He was an interpreter for Pike in 1806 and had been promoted to second lieutenant in the United States Army in 1811 (Lecompte 1969).

The letters of Nicolas Boilvin attest a number of instances of *Peaux-*

points out that the use of this expression with feminine plural agreement is also found elsewhere (pers. comm., 20 March 2005). Most likely this usage reflects an uncertainty over how to treat the gender of the compound in contexts where overt agreement is required, and this has led to a hypercorrection.

Rouges as the equivalent of *sauvages* in the years 1813–1818. (The absence of this usage from his earlier and later letters may or may not be significant.) For example Boilvin wrote to the Secretary of War John Armstrong from St. Louis on 22 May 1813:

“jais Employez tous les moyent possible poure connaitre tous Les Daimarche dais EnGlais En vaire Les amerriquant En charchant de Le vez tous Les paux rouge contre nous, pare Les Espiont que jai tenus tous Levaire Sure Leure rive” (Boilvin 1813b).

(i.e.: J’ai employé tous les moyens possibles pour connaître tous les démarches des Anglais envers les Américains en cherchant de lever tous les Peaux-Rouges contre nous, par les espions que j’ai tenus tout l’hiver sur leurs rives.)

‘I have employed all possible means to gain knowledge of all the actions being taken by the English in opposition to the Americans as they seek to enlist all the redskins against us, by means of the spies that I have kept all winter on their shores.’

He wrote again to the Secretary of War on 5 December 1813:

“je ma Dresse avous poure vous communiQuez Les Dispossiiont Des Sauvage qui abite Sure le missisipi aprais avoire fait plussieure voyage permis les Sac et renard Dont jen est retirres sure le missouris poure les Eloignez de la Gaire, et fuire les consaiye Des EnGlais qui ont Etez toujours laperte de tout Les paux rouge” (Boilvin 1813c).

(i.e.: Je m’adresse à vous pour vous communiquer les dispositions des sauvages qui habitent sur le Mississippi, après avoir fait plusieurs voyages parmi les Sacs et Renards, dont j’en ai retiré sur le Missouri pour les éloigner de la guerre, et fuire les conseils des Anglais, qui ont été toujours la perte de tous les Peaux-Rouges.)

‘I’m writing to you to inform you of the state of mind of the Indians who live on the Mississippi, having made several journeys among the Sauks and Meskwakis, some of whom I have removed to the Missouri to get them further from the war and to get away from the counsels of the English, which have always been the ruin of all the redskins.’

In these and other cases Boilvin appears to use “paux rouge,” etc. (i.e., *Peaux-Rouges* ‘redskins’), in exactly the same way as the usual term *sauvages* ‘Indians’, or, if anything, with more of an implication of solidarity.

For some of the letters in which Boilvin used *Peaux-Rouges* as a synonym of *sauvages* there are contemporary translations. In one of these he refers to his dealings with the tribes at Prairie du Chien in 1818 and to his report to tribal representatives of the friendly attitude towards them that he had observed in the President and other Washington officials:

“je me suis Rendus a la destinasion doux je Doy Ex sai cuttez le Devoir Dont je suis charges En vaire les Paux rouge ... tous les considairres quille ont Envoyez me voire je leure Est Dit ... que je nais vus Ent heux que du bien Envaire tout les paux rouge” (Boilvin 1818). (i.e.: Je me suis rendu à la destination d’où je dois exécuter le devoir dont je suis chargé envers les Peaux-Rouges ... Tous les considérés qu’ils ont envoyés me voir, je leur ai dit ... que je n’ai vu entre eux que du bien envers tous les Peaux-Rouges.)

This was translated as:

“I have ... arrived and shall commence the performance of the duty with which I am entrusted toward the Red Skins, ... I have communicated to all the chiefs whom they have sent to me, ... that I witnessed the most Friendly Sentiments, on their part, towards the Red Skins” (Boilvin 1818).

It is evident that “Red Skins” in such cases is completely dependent on the French expression it translates, and that it is used in an entirely affectless manner, like French *sauvages*.

Outside of St. Louis and the communities in close contact with it, French *Peau-Rouge*, like English *red-skin*, appears to have been unknown in the early nineteenth century. It is evident that even by the 1850s neither expression was familiar to Ursula M. Grignon, a member of an old French Creole family in Green Bay, Wisconsin. She found the original of Cruzat’s 1781 letter to the Sauks and Meskwakis “among the old papers of her father” and presented it to Lyman C. Draper, the corresponding secretary of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, who had interviewed her father, Augustin Grignon, in May and June of 1857 (Draper 1857a, 1857b: 504, n.). In the translation she also furnished she rendered “les français ... ont aimé les peaux rouges” as “the French ... have loved the red complexion” and “sez Enfants les peaux rouges” as “his children, the red skin.” The first French translator of James Fenimore Cooper also knew this idiom in neither

language. In the 1823 translation of *The Pioneers*, “you would have called him as comely a red-skin as ye ever set eyes on” has become “vous auriez avoué qu’il étoit impossible de voir une peau rouge plus avenante”; “There will soon be no red-skin in the country.” has become “Bientôt il n’y aura plus de peau rouge dans ce pays.” (Cooper 1823, 1: 264, 3: 192, 1980: 155, 403). In these passages the translator interprets “red-skin” as “red skin” in the literal sense. By the time he reached the end of the book, however, he may have deduced that this was intended as a compound, given that on the next to the last page “les Peaux blanches” and “les Peaux rouges” appear for “the whites” and “the red-skins” (Cooper 1823, 3: 294, 1980: 455).⁵⁶

The Speeches From the 1815 Peace Council in Print

Since official records of the July 1815 peace councils do not exist, the speeches of Black Thunder and Big Elk survive only because they appeared in newspapers. Big Elk’s funeral oration for Black Buffalo, which he had given on 15 July, and Black Thunder’s speech of 20 July were printed in *The Western Journal*, a St. Louis weekly, having been provided to the paper by the commissioners’ secretary, Robert Wash, who would have transcribed them directly from the interpreter’s words. The brief remarks made by Big Elk that include the phrase “red skin chiefs” were printed in a second St. Louis weekly, the *Missouri Gazette* (29 July 1815). Big Elk also drew attention with a speech he had made when he and other chiefs from the Missouri River tribes had first arrived in St. Louis (*Missouri Gazette*, 10 June 1815; Douglas 1908: 378), and with a much longer speech that he apparently delivered at a joint council with other tribes at the end of the treaty conference (*Missouri Gazette*, 5 August 1815).⁵⁷

No copy of the issue or issues of *The Western Journal* that contained Big Elk’s funeral oration and Black Thunder’s speech is known, but

⁵⁶ The misunderstanding by the French translator is clearly more serious than the apparent gender variation in the earliest French uses in North America, which is hardly more than orthographic; see n. 55.

⁵⁷ James (1823, 1: 174–176; Thwaites 1905: 258–261) also gives a speech of his.

Wash's transcripts caught the eye of Hezekiah Niles, who reprinted them in his Baltimore paper *Niles' Weekly Register* under the heading "Indian Eloquence" (Niles 1815b). Niles had earlier reprinted the brief remarks of Big Elk which contained "red skin" (Niles 1815a: 29), but this short speech was apparently not reprinted further. A writer using the name Outalissa (1821a, esp. 61–62, 68) included Black Thunder's speech and Big Elk's funeral oration in a long article on Indian oratory that appeared in *The New Monthly Magazine* (published in Philadelphia) and was reprinted in *The Literary Gazette*, a Philadelphia weekly (Outalissa 1821b, esp. 586–587, 589).⁵⁸ From there Samuel Drake (1833, 5: 113–114) reprinted Black Thunder's "excellent speech," confirming the attention it had received with the observation that it had made the speaker "remembered by many."

James Fenimore Cooper

One of those who noticed Black Thunder's speech was evidently James Fenimore Cooper. Cooper's novel *The Pioneers*, which appeared in 1823, introduced the word *redskin* to a wide audience. (He wrote it "red-skin," "Red-skin," and "red skin.") In this book the word is used only by the white hunter Natty Bumppo (Leather-Stocking), who spoke "Delaware," and his "Mohican" friend Chingachgook (John Mohegan) (Cooper 1980: 26, 155, 403, 452 [twice], 455), as when the dying Chingachgook says (p. 403): "There will soon be no red-skin in the country."⁵⁹ In *The Last of the Mohicans* (published in 1826), the second of the Leather-Stocking tales though set earlier in time, the same characters use the word *redskin*, as do the Huron chief Magua and an unnamed Delaware. When Magua says, "The pale-faces have driven the red-skins from their hunting grounds," and, "the red-skins know how to take the Yen-geese," he is speaking in English

(Cooper 1983: 103, 261). When Magua says, "a red skin never ceases to remember," and, "The red-skins should be friends," he is speaking Huron (Cooper 1983: 250, 289–290). Cooper clearly uses *redskin* as an affectless designation for Native Americans, and by inserting it into dialogue spoken between Indians he shows that he took the English word to be the translation of an inclusive term of self-reference in one or more Native American languages.

When Cooper was writing the bulk of *The Pioneers* (which his publisher began printing in the spring of 1822 [in Cooper 1980: 468]) the word *redskin* had apparently appeared in print in the East only in the speeches Black Thunder and Big Elk had given in the summer of 1815, and in those Saritarish and Big Elk delivered in Washington in 1822. The later speeches were published in a Washington newspaper, but they were not generally available before the appearance of Morse's *Report to the Secretary of War* (Morse 1822). This book only came out toward the end of 1822, however; it was deposited for copyright on 23 September, and by the time it would have become available the word would already have been set in type in the first and probably also the thirteenth chapters of *The Pioneers* (Cooper 1980: 26, 155). James's *Account*, containing many uses of the word by O'Fallon and Indian speakers, was published in Philadelphia on 11 January 1823, three weeks before the publication of *The Pioneers* on 1 February 1823 (in Cooper 1980: 468), much too late to have been Cooper's source.⁶⁰

Of the speeches of Black Thunder and Big Elk that contain forms of the word *redskin*, Black Thunder's is the one known to have attracted later attention and to have been reprinted after 1815. In fact, a good case can be made that Cooper would have seen this speech specifically in *The Literary Gazette*. This journal, pub-

lished only in 1821, was the continuation of *The Analectic Magazine* (1813–1820), also called *The Analectic Magazine and Naval Chronicle* (1816). *The Analectic* was a journal Cooper had been reading, presumably for its coverage of naval affairs, since long before he began writing novels (Beard 1960, 5: 216).⁶¹ Cooper would thus almost inevitably have seen Black Thunder's speech in *The Literary Gazette*, and this publication was the probable source of his knowledge of the word *redskin*. Cooper's familiarity with Black Thunder's speech is also strongly indicated by his use of the parallel expression "white-skins" in the words he wrote for the dying Chingachgook in *The Pioneers*:

"Hawk-eye! my fathers call me to the happy hunting-grounds. The path is clear, and the eyes of Mohegan grow young. I look—but I see no white-skins; there are none to be seen but just and brave Indians" (Cooper 1980: 421).⁶²

Black Thunder's phrase "red skins and white skins" was the only place the expression *white-skin* had appeared in print before Cooper's novels, and this word has hardly been used since except in echoes his usage.

The appearance of speeches by Black Thunder and Big Elk in a publication Cooper was likely to have seen in 1821 may lend a new perspective to an event that took place later that year. The delegation of Missouri River Indians that met with President Monroe on 4 February 1822 had arrived in

⁶¹ I am greatly indebted to Donald A. Ringe for pointing out the significance of Cooper's life-long passion for the Navy, of which he wrote a history, and the direct evidence that he read *The Analectic Magazine* (pers. comm., 27 November 2004), and to Wayne Franklin for additional detailed discussion and supporting arguments (pers. comm., 5 December 2004).

⁶² The OED cites the first use of *white-skin* from chapter 14 of *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), giving a quotation with two ill-advised ellipses and one repelling that appears in full in Cooper (1983: 138) as: "'Twould have been a cruel and an unhuman act for a white-skin; but 'tis the gift and natur of an Indian, and I suppose it should not be denied!'" (This is Hawk-eye reacting to Chingachgook's scalping of a Frenchman.) The same book also has "men with white skins" (Cooper 1983: 227). I am indebted to Wayne Franklin for drawing my attention to the earlier appearance of *white-skin* in *The Pioneers* and for the information that it appears in the first edition in volume 2 (chapter 19), page 282.

⁵⁸ The pseudonymous author has a British perspective on American Indians and acknowledges receiving "specimens of their eloquence" from "an American friend"; the article also appeared in the London edition of the monthly. Outalissa gives Big Elk's funeral oration with the addition of an inappropriate vocative "Warriors" as the first word.

⁵⁹ David Simpson (1986: 169) unaccountably describes Natty Bumppo as "the single user of the term *red-skin*," citing only this very page.

⁶⁰ Both Morse (1822) and James (1823) were in the "Quarterly List of New Publications" in *The North American Review* (Boston) for January 1823 (vol. 16, issue 38, p. 227). An announcement that James's *Account* was published on 11 January 1823 is in the *Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia) for that day. The speeches in James's book with the word *redskin* are not among the pre-publication excerpts printed in *The National Gazette and Literary Register* (Philadelphia) and reprinted in *Niles' Weekly Register* for 5 October 1822.

Washington on 28 and 29 November. In the intervening period O'Fallon had escorted 15 of the Indians and two interpreters from Washington to New York, where they spent the nights of 11 to 16 December 1821 at the City Hotel. This was the very hotel where Cooper stayed and where he was living that week, and the meetings he later mentioned having with Big Elk and the most famous of the Pawnees named Petalesharo, the son of the Skiri chief (Beard 1960, 1: 199; Beard in Cooper 1983: xix), must have taken place there at that time.⁶³ Without further information, however, Cooper could not have connected the traveling Big Elk to the published funeral oration, which Outalissa ascribed to an unnamed "chief of the Teton tribe," but obviously an encounter with Big Elk, O'Fallon, and the interpreters created an additional opportunity for Cooper to learn or confirm the word *redskin*.⁶⁴

The Indian speeches that used the word *redskin* were soon forgotten, but Cooper's novels eventually brought the word to universal notice. It was not listed in the first edition of John Russell Bartlett's *Dictionary of Americanisms* (1848), but when it appeared in the second edition (Bartlett 1859: 358) the illustrative quotation was an utterance of Natty Bumppo from *The Last of the Mohicans*. The spread of *redskin* as a neutral synonym for *Indian* during the middle decades of the nineteenth century is also illustrated by the revision of the biography of William Penn by the British author William Hepworth Dixon. In describing an attitude towards the Indians on the

part of Penn that would later be ascribed to Samuel Smith's father, Dixon had at first written:

"though a fervent believer in the native virtues of the Red Indian, when treated with truth and fairness, he could not help feeling that before he could have time to impress their rude minds with confidence in his integrity of purpose, some unfortunate mischance might lead to sudden and serious mischief" (Dixon 1851: 247).

Two decades later, in "A New Edition" described as "substantially a new book," Dixon rewrote this as:

"though a strong believer in the native virtues of the Redskins, when these savages were treated well,—he could not help feeling that before he might have time to impress their minds with confidence in his integrity of purpose, some mischance might lead him into peril of his life" (Dixon 1872: 205).

Here, in a passage highly sympathetic to Indians, "Red Indian" has become "Redskins" and "savages."⁶⁵

Cultural and Historical Factors

The spurious occurrence of *redskin* with a date of 1699 has masked the true history of the adoption of this word into English, which has been further obscured by the omission from the standard dictionaries of citations from James Fenimore Cooper, the most important agent of its diffusion. The word *redskin* reflects a genuine Native American idiom that was used in several languages, where it grew out of an earlier established and more widespread use of "red" and "white" as racial labels. This terminology was developed by Native Americans to label categories of the new ethnic and political reality they confronted with the coming of the Europeans.

The sudden emergence of the English word *redskin* in print during the treaty negotiations of 1815 can plausibly be seen as directly stimulated by the circumstance of those events. The treaties were greatly empowering for the Indians, who ceded nothing and were loaded with gifts in exchange for accepting a mutual peace. The huge intertribal gathering at Portage des Sioux encouraged a sense of supra-tribal Indian identity in dealing with the fledgling U.S. Government, continuing

the similar effect of the political alliance and religious movement promoted by the Shawnee chief Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa, the Shawnee Prophet, which had reached the eastern parts of the Illinois Country. The travel to Washington of multi-tribal delegations to be a part of the formation of national policy towards Indians also helped forge a pan-tribal self-image and identity among the leaders of different Indian peoples. When Black Thunder wanted to refer inclusively to all the assembled tribes and to both the Americans and the French, he said "red skins and white skins." When Big Elk told Clark how impressed he had been by the obsequies for Black Buffalo, at which, surely for the first time, an Omaha principal chief had given a funeral oration for his Teton counterpart, he availed himself of the inclusive term "red skin" as an expression of solidarity.

At the same time, the views of the officials and the local whites towards Indians were forced to evolve. The oratorical powers and political skills of the leading chiefs demanded and received respect. Local newspapers that as recently as the month before were denouncing scalplings now were publishing the texts of Indian speeches both as significant news events and as admirable intellectual achievements. In these changed circumstances the interpreters began to use the literal translation *redskins* for Native American expressions they might earlier have rendered *Indians* or *red men*, and the newspapers fixed in print speeches that displayed the new usage in a confident and appealing voice. The local French equivalent, *Peau-Rouge*, played a role in this, though the earliest uses of the English word differ from the contemporaneous uses of the French word in being strictly an Indian expression, used only by or in speaking to Indians.

Cooper's use of *redskin* as a Native American in-group term was entirely authentic, reflecting both the accurate perception of the Indian self-image and the evolving respect among whites for the Indians' distinct cultural perspective, whatever its prospects. The descent of this word into obloquy is a phenomenon of more recent times.

⁶³ The receipt for O'Fallon's payment to Chester Jennings ("Jenings"), the proprietor of the City Hotel, is in NA RG 217, SIA, box 14 (1821–1822), Account no. 5707 (B. O'Fallon). Cooper's account with the hotel for this period is: "James Cooper Esquire to C. Jennings Dr., 2/17/1822," James Fenimore Cooper papers, box 4, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA; I am indebted to Wayne Franklin for the Cooper reference and for the information on Cooper's activities at this time.

⁶⁴ Cooper referred to Big Elk as Ongpatonga (n. 31), which he translated as 'le gros cerf', in an English letter to the Duchess de Broglie. He gives his tribe as "Omawhaw."

Charles Bird King painted a portrait of Big Elk in Washington in 1822; this was among those that burned in the Smithsonian fire in 1865. A replica by King (in the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, Tulsa) bears the painted title: "Big Elk, or Great Orator, Omawhaw Chief." (Viola 1972: 29).

⁶⁵ The OED quotes this use of "Redskins" citing Dixon (1872) but gives it under the 1851 date of Dixon's earlier book.

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⁶⁶ The following abbreviations are used for archival collections:

CHS Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, IL

LR Letters received

LS Letters sent

mfm microfilm

MHS Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, MO.

MS Main series

NA National Archives, Washington, DC, and College Park, MD

NAA National Anthropological Archives, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, Suitland, MD

r. roll or reel

RG Record Group

RIA Relating to Indian affairs

SIA Department of the Treasury, Second Auditor, Settled Indian Accounts

SW Secretary of War

- Expedition*. Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark.
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