

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE

WIMACHTENDIENK, WINGOLAUCHSIKM, WITANMEUI:
USE OF NATIVE CULTURE IN THE ORDER OF THE ARROW

SENIOR PAPER
HISTORY 489: SENIOR SEMINAR
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EAU CLAIRE, WI
DECEMBER 2007

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ABSTRACT

Founded in the United States in 1907, the Boy Scouts of America are a cultural icon of altruistic character, moral fiber, and strong masculine tradition. The Order of the Arrow is a service fraternity within the Boy Scouts. Founded in 1915 at a Pennsylvanian camp, the “Brotherhood of Cheerful Service” inducted Scouts who exemplified Scout law and tried to keep camping traditions throughout the year. The ceremony used to induct new Arrowmen included Native American tribal dances, a Native-inspired creation myth, and Plains-style regalia. This ceremony is in use still today. Scholars traditionally placed the OA ceremony alongside Indian hobbyists and other youth organizations that “played Indian” as a way to reaffirm white American identity, but changes in the OA ceremony indicate a shift towards Native culture preservation.

INTRODUCTION

A Boy Scout is reverent. A Boy Scout is also kind, loyal, trust worthy, helpful, friendly, courteous, cheerful, thrifty, brave, and clean. He is patriotic, and he does a good turn each day. He is between the ages of eleven and eighteen, and probably Caucasian and middle-class. He is the embodiment of America's idea of what a good male teenager should be.¹

Many Americans are familiar with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA.) Although in recent years the youth organization suffers for membership, and controversies of “God, gays, and girls” plague the organization in the press, the icon of the Boy Scout remains in the forefront of youth culture.²

Therefore it is surprising that many Americans remain unaware of the service fraternity within the Boy Scouts. A “secret society” type of group, the Order of the Arrow (OA) boasts a membership of 176,000 members according to the OA's official website. Dedicated to promoting camping throughout the year, the OA performs manual labor projects as well as fundraising for BSA councils and camps across the country, and holds a national convention each summer where Arrowmen attend leadership seminars and team-building exercises.³

¹ Harris Interactive, “Values of Scouts: A Study of Ethics and Character,” www.scouting.org/nav/enter.jsp?s=mc&c=rr, accessed 15 April 2007.

² Jay Mechling, *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the making of American youth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 2

³ Chris Almquist, Vigil Honor Member, Interview by author, 14 October 2007, Eau Claire.

The greatest item of interest for the OA, however, is the ceremony used to induct new members. In the ceremony, OA members dress in Native American regalia, perform tribal dances, and stage a Native American-inspired myth to explain their own creation.

In the politically correct climate of the modern United States, the ceremony seems at best naïve, and at worst offensive. Over the last century, attempts by OA lodges to portray their ceremony as honoring and preserving local Native American culture fell on deaf ears as scholars like Philip Deloria and Shuri Huhndorf explored the historical racial and political complexities of Native exploitation at the hands of white Americans.

The attempts by OA have gone unheard for the very good reason that many Americans are unaware of its existence, let alone the ethical ambiguities of its initiation ceremony. For members within the OA, however, the suggestion that their ceremony is distasteful is a bitter topic. Many members believe that they are honoring Native culture and introducing a way to life to young men who do not live in areas of great diversity.

With the amount of scholarly work on the topic available, it is difficult to prove either argument conclusively. This is the case for several reasons, the first and largest being that since the wave of BSA-related controversies in the 1990's, the Boy Scouts as an organization refused admission to many of their archives and documents to any non-BSA member for fear of further scrutiny. In return, scholars largely ignore the unique experience of the BSA. Deloria, who is considered the prominent scholar on "playing Indian" grouped the BSA in with other youth organizations created at the turn of nineteenth century, perhaps not realizing that the Boy Scouts historically dealt very little with Indians-while the OA founded their entire culture upon them.

The OA, too, became very selective about who their members interacted with. There remain some ceremonies that only Arrowmen may attend, such as the Ordeal ceremony, and

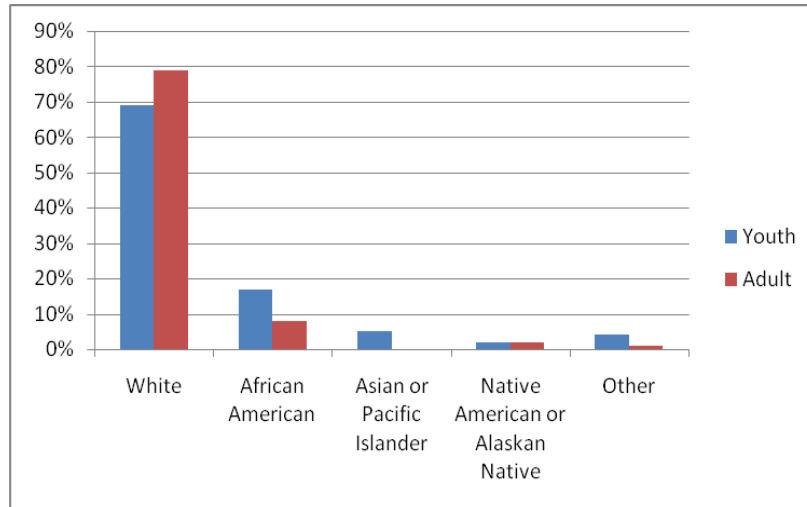


Figure 1. Demographic Characteristics of Scouts. 275 Youth and 595 Adult, conducted by Harris Interactive.

although there is no recorded rule against discussing these closed-door ceremonies, few Arrowmen are willing to discuss the topic even off the record.

The ceremonies that are open to the public are isolated behind BSA boundaries-induction ceremonies usually occur on BSA council camps, which traditionally only BSA members attend. While this keeps the organizations free from scandal or bad press, it also limits the outside world’s understanding of what exactly the OA is and why it exists.

Scholars researching on the OA may also be a rarity for the simple reason that it seems at first glance a topic without depth. The Boy Scouts remain a boys’ club, hidden behind locked doors, and the existence of a secret society based on Indian lore is a phenomenon repeated since the Revolution. However, the OA remains one of the only organizations that still conducts a Native ceremony. Even more interesting, the National OA Lodge changed aspects of the ceremony over the last century in an attempt to honor and preserve Native culture. Many of the organizations, like YMCA camps, that “played Indian” fell out of favor before the 1950’s, but the OA attempts to adapt and shape itself as a appreciation society warrant further research.

The Order of the Arrow changed aspects of their ceremony in an attempt to preserve Native culture, but some remaining traditions and the historical complexity of white Americans' relationship to Native Americans prevent the organization from moving forward any further. This paper will attempt to shed light on these complex issues of white identity and search for authenticity, and what traditions the OA changed and could change to fully become preservation-oriented.

The relationship between whites and Native Americans is stupefying in its complexity, mutating and morphing through the centuries. Issues exist to this day originating in the relationship between Old World Europeans and "noble savages," and these matters only expound when adding on the relationship between native white Americans and immigrants in the nineteenth century. Perhaps unknowingly, in current times the OA flirts with the complex history surrounding the use of Indian dance and culture in its ceremonies. Considering the vast scope of issues the OA ceremony calls to mind, it's incredible to remember that at least superficially, it's merely a group of teenage boys attempting to fit in.

A full study of these issues is unfortunately too great for a paper of limited scope like this one. The hope remains that it will glean some small amount of understanding out of this multifaceted topic, and perhaps inspire even further research into the Order of the Arrow and the hobby of "playing Indian."

I. JOIN WITH US IN COUNCIL

THE OA CEREMONY

The sun sets low into the west as the canoes slip serenely through the crystal lake. The water laps against the birch bark sides, and paddles gently push the waves aside. Far over the lake, drifting up from the forest, the sound of singing echoes out over the wilderness. The daylight is not yet gone, and the arc of the simple altar stretches up above the trees. The singing slowly ends as the canoes slide up onto the wet bank, and the inhabitants step forward to meet the crowd.⁴

Some of the younger boys giggle. They recognize their handicraft counselor, now shirtless and holding a torch; but the older boys shushes them. Some of the Scouts have been waiting all year for this opportunity.

The crowd rises from the stands as one, and silently follows the two torchbearers. The dusk is now growing thicker, but fortunately, the guides lead the crowd down the only paved stretch of road in camp. The crowd, made up of Scouts of all ages, Scout masters, parents and friends, instinctively know the way; past the medical lodge and the mess hall, the main parking lot and the parade grounds. Some of the boys fidget in anticipation; all week, the destination of this traditional march has been off-limits to anyone except camp staff, but now the Scouts will be escorted in as honored guests.

⁴Transcripts of OA ceremonies are available to Arrowmen only; the following description of the Otyokwa OA ceremony is the author's personal observation 27 July and 3 August 2007.

The torchbearers suddenly turn sharply to the left, seemingly leading the crowd deep into the woods. But before the forest swallows them, the boys spot two figures, wordlessly guarding the dirt path marked by a wood sign bearing the markings “OA.”

The torchbearers lead the way down the winding trail, their sputtering fires barely pinpoints of light in the encroaching darkness of night and woods. But trail lights illuminate the ground, and just beyond the glow within the trees stand more figures, mute and mysterious.

After what seems an eternity for the anxious boys, the crowd emerges into the OA Bowl, a clearing dug out of the side of a hill in the midst of the forest. Simple wooden bleachers circle the arena, and the mass of humanity slowly begins to fill in as the torchbearers pause beside the entrance. In the arena, four stacks of wood have been constructed in a cross formation, and a handful of boys, proudly displaying their OA sashes across their chests, clusters around a massive drum off to one side of the arena. Off in the distance, the boys can hear thunder; but it is in fact another massive drum, set up on the other side of the camp. The OA Scouts pick up their own mallets, and return the beat in one collective hit; a few seconds pass, and the distance drum answers back.

Finally, the entire crowd has filled in. The anxious boys have only a few minutes to wait; from the trail emerges the mysterious figures that had welcomed the crowd into the OA bowl from the shadows. The boys know immediately who to watch, because their regalia is the most impressive; one of their aquatics directors, wearing a large feather headdress, and the Bear Lake instructor solemnly standing at his side. Together with the torchbearers, the four walk forward to the first stack of wood.

“Great spirit of the West, land of the setting sun, join with us in council tonight. Oh Great Spirit, give us fire!”⁵

Suddenly the pyre goes up in flames, as if by magic. The four young men turn, and carefully walk to the next.



“Great spirit of the North, land of the cool winter winds, join with us in council tonight. Oh Great Spirit, give us fire!”⁶

Like the pyre before, the next goes up in fire. The four travel to each corner of the cross, and continue the ritual at each point.

“Great spirit of the East, land of the rising sun, join with us in council tonight. Oh Great Spirit, give us fire!”⁷

“Great spirit of the South, land of the warm summer breezes, join with us in council tonight. Oh Great Spirit, give us fire!”⁸

As all four pyres are lit, the small group stops in the center of the four fires.

“Grandfather Sacred Above, you who represent the spirit world, join with us in council tonight!” the Chief, Allowat Sakima, announces. He continues,

Grandmother Sacred Below, you who represent the Earth, join with us in council tonight!”⁹ With the introductions done, the party moves

Picture 1. An OA Guide. Image taken by author 3 August 2007.

⁵ Matthew Thompson, Brotherhood Honor Member, interview by author, 15 November 2007, Eau Claire.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

back into the darkness beside the drum, clearing the arena.

Three dances follow. The first portrays two groups of warriors from warring tribes, hunting in the woods-as they come across each other, the beat of the drum becomes faster and louder. The warriors circle each other wearily, until-an attack! The Scout craft counselor beats the shield of the Cub World staffer with his club, and retreats. The pulse of the drum ebbs, and then begins to beat faster once again; the warriors attack at once, pounding and whirling in a dance imitation. The Scout Craft counselor falls first, followed by his opponent; after a grueling battle of pounding feet and hammered shield, only one remains standing. He kneels beside his fallen brother and as a gesture of reverence, removes his beading necklace and lays it beside the defeated warrior.

The second dance does away with the somber feeling of the first; half a dozen warriors dance into the arena, spears and shields at the ready as they circle the arena. What are they looking for? The audience spots it well before the hunters; a buffalo, wandering through the bleachers. Occasionally he'll pause, to hide behind a Cub Scout too small to fully cover the buffalo's girth, or sit on the lap of a lady in the audience and beg for a kiss. The buffalo cannot outrun the hunting party for long, though, and as the spotlight follows his progress through the crowd, he is spotted. With the raging drum pushing them on, the hunting party charges and circles the beast. He tries to outrun the spears, but they are too clever for him. The circle of hunters grows tighter and tighter around the poor creature until finally, the drum dies, and the hunters retreat, leaving the buffalo where it fell.

The third and final dance is coy and charming. Another buffalo flits around the arena, a flower perched precariously on her right horn. Now two more buffalo enter the arena, one from either end; both spot the female gallivanting freely, and begin to circle her. But at that moment,

the males spot each other... The two rush headlong into a confrontation, as the female suddenly darts out of harm's way, fretting from the sidelines. The Boy Scouts at the drum beat furiously as the feet of the buffalo pound the ground, and one male buffalo staggers from the arena in utter defeat.

With the dances done, the Chief, Allowat Sakima, and the Medicine Man, Meteu, step forward once more. Allowat Sakima announces that the council has been called, and welcomes the audience as honored guests. More figures creep from the shadows-Golden Eagle takes his place at the center of the arena. Winter is fast approaching, Allowat Sakima explains. Fire has chased scorched the land and driven prey out of the forest. Hunting parties have come back empty handed, and the whole village will starve, unless a brave travels to other villages to beg assistance. Many of the braves will not go, either out of familial obligation or cowardice-but Golden Eagle offers himself as messenger to neighboring chiefs. The council places all its hope on the young warrior.

Golden Eagle travels first to the village chief to the west. He explains the fire and the death of his village, but the chief refuses help, as winter will be harsh to them as well. Golden Eagle travels on.

He goes next to the village chief positioned at the north of the arena. Again he explains, and again he is denied assistance. The tired but persistent brave makes one last attempt, telling his story to the village chief at the east of the bowl. It is a miracle-the chief agrees to help! There is ample game in the forest still, and the hunting parties will find "many marks for their arrows." Golden Eagle travels with the Eastern Village Chief back to his home council as both villages celebrate the newfound alliance. Allowat Sakima suggests that this should be the dawn of a new era, in which brother helps brother in the spirit of friendship.

A spotlight suddenly lights on the hill surrounding the arena. A young man stands there beside the emblem of the OA, and he addresses the crowd, explaining that this was the beginning of the Order of the Arrow, the Brotherhood of Cheerful Service.

The darkness is now absolute beyond the circle of the firelight, but the ceremony is not quite concluded. Meteu and Allowat Sakima step forward once more, but now Meteu holds a large turtle shell in his hands. One by one, the warriors move into the arena beyond the Chief and the Medicine Man, each standing among the bleachers, arms crossed and faces severe.

For the first time the entire ceremony, Meteu speaks. “The Otyokwa Lodge calls to membership, from Troop {X}, Scout Johnny Smith!” he announces. The drum beats feverishly, as if a hundred feet were stomping the earth, and the spotlight flashes across the audience. Timidly, looking as if he’s going to faint at any moment, a young teenager stands up. The spotlight immediately focuses on him, and the nearest warrior seizes the boy’s arm and nearly drags him before Meteu and Allowat Sakima.

Solemnly the Chief will place both his hands on the boy’s shoulders. The drum has ceased; all is silent. The Chief, stiff-armed, raises his right hand, and forcefully taps the boy on the shoulder. Behind him, the drum emphasizes the three taps. BAM-BAM-BAM!

Meteu shakes the boy’s hand. The warrior guide seizes the boy’s arm again, and leads him into the arena. The boy seems to be struck dumb, so the warrior pushes down on his arm to signify the Scout should be seated on the ground. The scout finally obeys.

Meteu calls out again. “The Order of the Arrow calls to membership, from Troop {Y}, Scouter John Doe!”

This time an adult rises. He is much more cooperative with his warrior guide, and towers over both the Chief and the Medicine Man. Again the Chief taps the left shoulder of the Scouter

as the drum beats loudly three times. The Scouter shakes hands with Meteu, and takes his place beside the younger scout.

So on it goes, until a circle has been formed on the ground in the arena, within the circle of the bleachers and the circle of the bowl itself. Finally, the final name is called. The newly taped-out members of the Order of the Arrow stand, and follow Meteu, Allowat Sakima, and the other silent braves into the woods. This time, there are no drums to echo. When the last boy has disappeared into the darkness, the remaining audience stands, and leaves the same way they came, silent and reflective.

With the conclusion of the OA ceremony, the week at summer camp has officially ended.

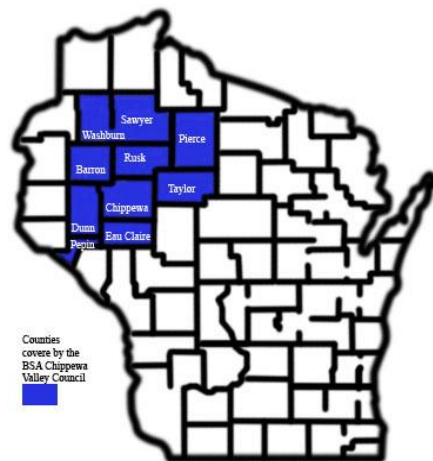


Figure 2. Map of Counties overseen by BSA Chippewa Valley Council.

THE BSA COUNCIL AND OA LODGE

During the last decade, due either to the scandals of homosexual Scout Masters, accusations of religious prejudice, or the exclusion of girls, the BSA became a very close-door organization. Generally, BSA officials are reluctant to discuss the particulars of the BSA, and there is a muted anxiety of the next big scandal even among members that are not in the public eye.

Surprisingly, a small yet significant amount of Americans are members of the BSA. A US Census Survey taken in 2005 concluded that male youths made up of 21 million of the United States' population of 301 million population. Although the majority of the United States does not belong to the demographic, but male teenagers remain a significant part of the populace. According to the official BSA website, membership as of 31 December 2006 just within the Boy Scouts and Webelos (excluding the Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers) equaled 1,495,637 boys between the ages of eleven and eighteen. This suggests that roughly six percent of the current male teenage population is in Scouting. Six percent is obviously not a majority, but the amount of attention the BSA scandals drew in the press suggests that the BSA is still a part of American life.^{10 11}

While six percent of American male youth are in Scouting, ninety-four percent are not. Coinciding with this, the actual mechanics how a BSA council operates is a mystery to the average American. The Order of the Arrow is shrouded even further in ambiguity, due perhaps to the nature of the OA. Who sits on the council, how councils are divided, and what this means to the OA are tidbits of knowledge that every Boy Scout knows, but are novel to people outside the BSA. The Order of the Arrow is directly connected with the BSA, so to understand how the OA works a minimum working knowledge of the BSA is also required.

As a rule, the Boy Scouts divide into troops, usually by city. A council oversees these troops. Each council resides over counties within a state, the number of which can range anywhere as little as two and as much as ten counties. For example, the Chippewa Valley

¹⁰ US Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 2007 (126th Edition), Washington DC 2000, 12

¹¹ Boy Scouts of America, "BSA At a Glance," <http://www.scouting.org/nav/enter.jsp?s=mc&c=fs> (accessed 1 October, 2007)

Council, located in Wisconsin, has jurisdiction within the counties of: Barron, Washburn, Rusk, Sawyer, Eau Claire, Dunn, Pepin and Chippewa, Taylor and Clark. Districts further divide the Council; for the Chippewa Valley Council, these include the Blue Hills, Clear Water, Glacier's End and Tall Oaks Districts. Each Council in Wisconsin has about three to six districts each, depending upon its overall size.^{12 13}

An OA lodge is directly connected to the council in the area in which it is located. The Chippewa Valley Council's lodge is the Otyokwa Lodge #337. The Lodge is largely self-governing, but also places a representative of Otyokwa on the Council Executive Board. Anyone who joins the OA who is from a troop within the Chippewa Valley Council joins the Otyokwa Lodge. As well as being self-governing, the Lodge also has a different patch from the Council. Consequently, each Lodge's patch and symbol, or totem, is different than the next Lodge's.

Lodges and Councils do not draw as distinctive lines as could be predicted. One example of this is the occurrence of multiple lodges. Although a single Lodge cannot be a member of multiple Councils, because of merges over the years, some Councils do end up with more than one Lodge. Another example is the L.E. Phillips Scout Reservation. Located in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, it is the camp for the Chippewa Valley Council and the Otyokwa Lodge. But troops from other councils regularly attend the camp, and when the OA ceremony is conducted at the close of camp, out-of-council troops can ask the Otyokwa Lodge to "tap out" a new member.

¹² Bigger cities can have more than one troop associated with them.

¹³ Chippewa Valley Council, "Chippewa Valley Council, Boy Scouts of America," <http://www.bsacvc.org/index.html> (accessed October 20th, 2007.)

This member does not join the Otyokwa Lodge, but can still be called out to join the OA at a camp not within his council.¹⁴

Lodges are set up in a similar way to any other administrative board with a few slight variations. Officers in the Lodge are elected, not appointed, by other Arrowmen, and have to be below the age of twenty-one. This rule also holds for who can be involved in the OA ceremony itself; once a scout turns twenty-one he is not eligible to be an officer or participate in the ceremony. Additionally, while there is a secretary and treasurer, the “president” of the lodge is referred to as the Lodge Chief, and the vice president, the Vice Chief. The administration of the OA is very similar to that of the BSA Council Executive Board, but the titles of “Lodge Chief” and “Vice Chief” suggest the Native-influenced history of the OA, a topic explored in the second section of this paper.¹⁵

¹⁴ Kenneth Davis, *Brotherhood of Cheerful Service: a history of the Order of the Arrow*, (Irving: Boy Scouts of America, 1996), 30

¹⁵ Otyokwa Lodge, “Otyokwa Lodge #337-Chippewa Valley Council, Boy Scouts of America,” <http://www.otyokwa.com/officers.html> (accessed September 10th, 2007.)



Picture 2. Vigil Honor Sash [Left], Brotherhood Honor Sash [Right]. Image taken by author 2 December 2007.

RANKS WITHIN THE OA

Being “tapped out” or “called out” is the term used when a troop elects a scout to join the OA. One of the proudest distinctions for OA members is the fact that they do not elect members into their organization. Rather, troop members-either OA members themselves or not-submit anonymous ballots, vote on a fellow troop member who they believe exemplify the virtues of scouting. If enough boys vote for a Scout or Scoutmaster, that individual will be “tapped out” at the ceremony on Friday. The non-member voting only occurs when first joining the OA; Vigil Honor, which is the highest rank given to OA members, is voted for within the organization without any outside input.¹⁶

There are three levels of honors within the OA: Ordeal, Brotherhood, and Vigil. Ordeal members are those scouts recently tapped out who have not yet shown their dedication to the OA. Vigil is a special honor given to those who are deeply devoted to OA virtues and wish to act as leaders within their Lodges and representatives at national events. A sash worn over the left shoulder displays the rank of an OA member. On the sash is an ornate red arrow and further adornments indicating the rank. Ordeal members have just the simple arrow, while Brotherhood

¹⁶ Davis, *Brotherhood of Cheerful Service*, 39

Arrowmen sashes exhibit two bars on either end. Vigil members also have the bars, but their arrow displays a triangle at the center of the shaft.

In order for Ordeal members to move on to the rank of Brotherhood, they must undergo the Ordeal, a series of tests designed to instill OA virtues into the Ordeal candidate. On a chosen day, an Ordeal scout will travel to the lodge's camp and spend the day working on jobs of physical labor around the camp. The projects' purpose is to remind scouts that the Order of the Arrow is first and foremost a service fraternity; the OA oversees many of the repairs and camp developments done in the off-season.¹⁷

In addition to the manual labor, Ordeal scouts are expected to remain silent the entire day, eat only a bare minimum of food, and that night sleep apart from the group. The Order of the Arrow handbook stresses the point that the Ordeal is not a hazing ritual, but an attempt to help the scout understand “the deepest and most inspirational meaning of the Ordeal.” According to the Handbook, each candidate should hold to the Ordeal tests of their own free will, and not be badgered or teased into speaking. Each candidate should also be fully aware of what the Ordeals represent, and “should know why he spent a night alone, why he was silent, and why he spent a day working.”¹⁸

The basics of how the BSA and the OA function are important in understanding the OA as an organization, but such information does not even break the surface on the complexity of the OA ceremony itself and the history behind it. Before the ceremony can be broken down and

¹⁷ Theodore Weiland, Vigil Honor Arrowman, interview by author, 15 November, 2007, Eau Claire.

¹⁸ Boy Scouts of America, *Order of the Arrow Handbook* (Irving: Boy Scouts of America, 1977), 21

analyzed, the next section will explore how the OA came to be and the two polar factions that had a hand in its creation, militarism and naturalism.

II. THE CULTURE OF SELFISHNESS AND THE RED MAN

The result is that to the frontier the American intellect owes its striking characteristics That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness, that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients, that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great levels, that restless, nervous energy.

-Frederick Jackson Turner,
The Significance of the Frontier in American History, 1893

THE ERA OF PROGRESS

At the turn of twentieth century, the Western world raced towards a new era defined by what civilization deemed one of the greatest accomplishments of humankind; industrialization. With the advance of industry came faster transportation, cheaper goods, a higher rate of capitalist competition, and greater communication over vast reaches of land. Railroads pushed American citizens westward, and progress was the catchphrase of the era.

The great progress, however, came at a price. In the years following, numerous scholars documented the harm inflicted on civilization by these grand achievements, and when Frederick Jackson Turner presented his now-famous speech on the closing of the frontier in 1893, the citizens of the still-young nation wrung their hands over what they perceived to be the lose of traditional American virtues.¹⁹

For many Americans, predominantly the upper- and middle- class Americans, the closing of the frontier signaled the abandonment of traditional values cultivated in colonial times. There are an abundant number of scholarly works on the paradox of American identity, and by extension, the supposed “lose” of identity, but scholar Philip Deloria connects this search for

¹⁹John Milton Cooper, Jr. *Pivotal Decades: The United States 1900-1920* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 30

identity with the complex relationship Americans exhibited towards both themselves and Native Americans.

In his research, Deloria surmises that when European immigrants first settled the colonies in the East, they attempted to distance themselves from the Old World. They were no longer Europeans, but they were also not the first inhabitants of the New World, so nor were they Americans. According to Deloria, white American citizens spent the subsequent two to three centuries establishing the “us”/”them” identity. Europeans in the Old World were a “them,” and colonists distanced themselves not only by revolting, but also by creating a new identity through use of America’s original inhabitant-the Indians. To the colonists, Indians existed outside the boundaries of Old World society, living in the wilds of the land. In this way, the virtues of adventure often associated with pioneers and frontiersmen formed.²⁰

Furthermore, white settlers sought to secure a right to the American continent. They were not the original inhabitants, and so tried to appease this fact by seeking authenticity to their right to land by establishing themselves as “heirs” of the Native people. A common tactic used was the “evidence” of the disappearance of Native Americans. With the original inhabitants dying or disappearing, the land passing into the grasp of the colonists was the next logical step.^{21 22}

Colonists, however, also distanced themselves from the Indians, using the Native Americans as a mirror in which they judged their own image. Indians were resourceful, nature-

²⁰ Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1-5

²¹ Theodore Weiland, Vigil Honor Arrowman, interview by author, 22 September 2007, Eau Claire.

²² Tabitha Erdey, *Remnants of Savagery: Playing Indian at Wisconsin summer camps, 1896-1970* (MA Diss., University of Eau Claire-Wisconsin, 2007), 19

minded, and strong, but they were also uncivilized, heathen, and savage. The stereotype of the “noble savage” perfectly articulates this mindset, presented to the colonists an Indian who they could identify with but could also feel superior to. Deloria’s work *Playing Indian* charts the American search for identity and authenticity of the white American’s right to the continent through use of Native culture, dress, and overall image.

The Us/Them identity outlined by Deloria becomes especially complicated in the nineteenth century with the immigration boom. Suddenly, the identity of what it meant to be an American clashed with the cultures brought over by immigrants from their native countries. From the native white American’s point of view, many immigrants refused to give up their own culture to become an American, either by refusing to learn English, refusing to send their children to American schools, or disagreeing with the America virtues colonists painstakingly constructed.²³

In the face of immigration, those Americans wishing to preserve the “integrity” of America, or nativists, once again turned to Native Americans. In his article “Know Nothings and Indians: Strange Bedfellows?” Dale Knobel explores that at the turn of century, “friends of Indian” sought alliances with nativists. According to Knobel, nativists and Indian-friendly activists were natural political bedfellows for the particular reason that they “demonstrated an ethnocentrism/environmentalism that both demanded of the Indians acculturation and affirmed their capacity to change.”²⁴ Nativists hoped to demonstrate through Native Americans that

²³ Dale T. Knobel, “Know-Nothings and Indians: Strange Bedfellows?” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 15 (1984), 185

²⁴ *Ibid*, 192

becoming Christian (specifically Protestant) and “civilized” was the noblest path. The use of the “savage” Indian transforming by way of American values reinforces Deloria’s assertion that Americans founded their own identity in juxtaposition to the Indian.

In the midst of the immigration boom and the industrialization of America came another crisis, this one in regards to gender. Many of the values associated with the frontier, and by extension American spirit and “that nervous, restless energy,” were masculine. With the closing of the frontier, and the replacement of artisans with machines, Americans intellectuals began to fear that men suffered from a lack of traditional masculinity. The fear that men had become morally fragile and physically impotent inspired one of the figures of the age, Teddy Roosevelt, to remark about “the vulnerability of (what he called) the ‘great fighting features of our race’ to the combined effects of physical softening through material comfort and spiritual coarsening through frenetic money-grubbing.”^{25 26}

The Boy Scouts was not the first of youth organizations in the Western world. In fact, by the time Lord Baden-Powell became a household name, the “youth” movement was already fully up and running. Organizations such as YMCA camps, the Woodcraft Indians, and the Campfire Girls were competitors of the Boy Scouts in the race to save the American spirit in twentieth century’s youth.²⁷

²⁵ Cooper, *Pivotal Decades*, 37

²⁶ R. Marie Griffith, “Apostles of Abstinence: Fasting and Masculinity during the Progressive Era,” *American Quarterly* 52 (2000): 605

²⁷ Sharon Wall, “Totem Poles, Teepess and Token Traditions: Playing Indian at Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-1955,” *Canadian Historical Review* 86 (2005), 515

It was in this period of anxiety that Lord Baden-Powell established the Boy Scouts. Originally founded in Great Britain in 1905, the Scouts migrated across the Atlantic and found a permanent place in the United States around 1907. The Order of the Arrow evolved later at a Philadelphia Boy Scout camp in 1915.²⁸

NATURALISM AND MILITARISM

To explore all the nuances and complexities of the Order of the Arrow is beyond this paper, due partially to the fact that the OA's connection to the Boy Scouts tangles many of its issues. The organizations operate with separate boards of administration, different ways to reward progress through ranks and dedication, and evolved from two polar schools of thought, but remain parasitically linked. The schools of thought, naturalism and militarism, directly affect how the two organizations deal with the "Indian question," and shed light on whether the modern OA changes are in the spirit of preservation or exploitation.

Lord Baden-Powell was born in England as a middle-class boy at the beginning of the industrial age, and as Michel Rosenthal explores in his work *Character Factory*, the environment left a significant mark on the budding explorer. Baden-Powell's military career interested Rosenthal the most, for the military gave Baden-Powell both his claim to fame and his passion for Scouting. During the course of his military campaign during the Boer War, Baden-Powell became involved in the Mafeking siege. Rosenthal argues that this was really an opportunity for Baden-Powell to sit back in comfort, as the town was of no real strategic value or in any kind of

²⁸ Kenneth Davis, *Brotherhood of Cheerful Service: a history of the Order of the Arrow* (Irving: Boy Scouts of America, 1996), 2

great danger, and yet when Baden-Powell returned to England, the public revered him as a national hero, a statue of masculinity bravery and empire power.²⁹

The siege granted Baden-Powell the opportunity to test his scouting skills, techniques he would later compile into several articles and handbooks that would become the basis of scouting knowledge. The ability to track both man and beast and manage one's rations were crucial to survival-something that neither Baden-Powell nor the average middle-class boy in Great Britain really needed to be concerned about. In the height of the "softening" crisis though, Baden-Powell's bravery and success in the face of all odds by way of his skills contributed to an environment just waiting for him to found his organization.

The militaristic influence of Baden-Powell is obvious when studying the patriotic overtone and preoccupation with class in the BSA. Baden-Powell lightly adjusted his approach of these issues depending on which side of the Atlantic Ocean he was on. In England, the need for citizens to assimilate was not as great because of the fewer amounts of immigrants. Class, however, was a large concern, especially for the middle- and upper- classes. In these instances, Baden-Powell presented his "Brick in the Wall" speech. In the speech, he emphasized that each brick was important in keeping the wall together, and that although there were some bricks that rested at the foot of the wall, and so seemed lower than the rest, theirs was actually the most important position for they held up all those bricks above them. Each brick situated in its place, and pleased to support the bricks that depended upon them.³⁰

²⁹ Michael Rosenthal, *The character factory: Baden-Powell and the origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 53

³⁰ Rosenthal, *The character factory*, 9

This idea of satisfaction with class position took on different nuances in America. Here, too, Baden-Powell stressed the importance of class, but he did so by pointing out the same “modern” disease Roosevelt had, saying that “immorality is rife among the lads, not merely the poorest-indeed, it is probably less prevalent among the working boys than among those who have leisure on their hands.”³¹

For Baden-Powell and many intellectuals of the time, the salvation from this leisure-induced “immortality” was the emphasis on strength of character. Like American identity, however, “character” proved a difficult term to define. This difficulty promoted Baden-Powell to create his Scout Law, a collection of qualities he believed epitomized what it meant to be both an American and a man. The Scouting movement combated the “culture of selfishness” Baden-Powell believed was corrupting the young males of his country. “The movement,” he wrote in his guide *America’s Use for Scouting*, “is a jolly fraternity, all the jollier because in the game of scouting you are doing a big thing for others.”³²

Each youth organization created unique twists on the Scout Law, values their leaders believed young men and women lacked. Unfortunately, the actual application of these qualities proved an even greater challenge. Despite the differences in each code of conduct, Campfire Girls, YMCA Camps, and the Woodcraft Indians adopted a semi anti-modernist stance.

Before the founding of the Boy Scouts of America in the early nineteenth century, a Canadian named Ernest Seton Thompson gained fame in North America with his youth organization, the Woodcraft Indians. Deeply concerned with reverence of nature and the decay

³¹ Sir Robert Baden-Powell, *Scoutmaster ship: A Handbook for Scoutmasters on the theory of Scout training*, American ed. (New York: G.P. Putnam’s sons, 1920), 12

³² *Ibid*, 5

of civilization, Thompson's Woodcraft Indians shared many more similarities to the majority of youth organizations at the time than the Boy Scouts. Thompson grounded his organization in an anti-modern, anti-materialistic philosophy, "placing true civilization in the realm of the primitive"³³ and revering "the red man" as the ideal embodiment of humankind.

Thompson's belief in civilization's salvation through nature appreciation and primitive rebirth was a commonly held philosophy, embraced by YMCA camps and other youth groups like the Campfire Girls. In her thesis *Remnants of Savagery*, Tabitha Erdey discusses the phenomenon of middle- and upper- class parents sending their children to summer camps so to escape the immortality supposedly caused by leisure. At these summer camps, children of the elite class dressed in Indian clothes and "acted the savage" as a means of therapy, freeing them from the ills of modern living. Sharon Wall went so far as to say that children at the camp, by playing Indian, sought to "claim a piece of the Other's past" as a means of "therapeutic recreation....(and) the transformative possibilities of playing Indian."³⁴

Deloria also examines this phenomenon, though he suggests that the anti-modernist movement in youth organizations was misleading. Camps were not embracing the Native American ways and culture, but instead using it to better modern living. Campers in the early twentieth century went to camp to commune with nature, only for society to expect upon their return that they take up the mantle of modern living once more. "Anti-modern campers played

³³ Linda Lizut Helstern, "Indians, Woodcraft, and the Construction of White Masculinity: the Boyhood of Nick Adams," *The Hemingway Review* 20 (2000), 62

³⁴ Sharon Wall, "Totem Poles, Tepees and Token Traditions: Playing Indian at Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-1955," *Canadian Historical Review* 86 (2005), 514

the primitive authentic,” Deloria says,” against modernity’s inauthenticity in order to devise a better modern.”³⁵

Another example of using the surface of native ceremony but making the substance “American” is the emphasis on “democracy” in the Woodcraft Indians and the early OA. As stated in the first section of this paper, OA members pride themselves on the member voting system, claiming that it is unbiased and rewards the scout who “best lives up to the Scout Oath or Promise and Scout Law in their daily lives....(and) promotes camping and maintains camping traditions and spirits.”³⁶ The concept of voting and democracy are creations Americans pride themselves on, and fit strangely into an organization supposedly based on pre-Contact societies.

The juxtaposition makes more sense, however, if the organizations’ primary purpose was not to represent the modern Native American, on reservations or suffering at the hands of unfair treaties. By representing a persona of the past, camps that “played Indian” also contributed to the self-justifying belief that Native culture was disappearing and thus needed to be preserved.³⁷

Surprisingly, Baden-Powell did not endorse the use of the Native American as a means of transformation and salvation. There are several possibilities as to why this might be: first, Baden-Powell sought to make his Scouts appealing to many different types of people, especially in America. In *Scoutmaster ship*, Baden-Powell happily writes that in the United States:

“there are....a pretty large number of boys, under the stars and stripes but of foreign blood, boys who are in the process of being Americanized. It is for those that such law is

³⁵ Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 102

³⁶ Boy Scouts of America, *Order of the Arrow Handbook*, 58

³⁷ Erdey, *Remnants of Savagery*, 18

necessary if they are to be Boy Scouts; if they are not to be Boy Scouts, well then it will take three times as long to make them good Americans.”³⁸

Scholar Dale Knobel explored in great depth in his article “Strange Bedfellows” the connections between friends of the Indian and nativists in the half-century following the Civil War. The political connections persisted up to the elections of the early 1900’s, and it makes sense that Baden-Powell did not wish his newborn organization associated with an anti-immigrant philosophy.³⁹

Another explanation is that Baden-Powell simply did not see how using Indians would be advantageous in the long term. He comments, perhaps in criticism of the Scout rival, Thompson’s Indian that while “playing Indian” appeals to the boy because he is a boy “it is easy to appeal to a fitting fancy at an adolescent age. There is a time when a boy is delighted with a tomahawk and feathers and buckskin leggings.”⁴⁰ Whatever the reason for Baden-Powell’s distaste of using Indians, it seems incredible that the OA still maintains the “playing Indian” tradition when it has largely died out everywhere else.

One reason for this enduring tradition is the influence of the Woodcraft Indians on both the Boy Scouts and the Order of the Arrow. Although the truth is debated between scholars, the similarities of organization and reward between the Boy Scouts and the Woodcraft Indians are well documented. Before the Scouting movement came to America, Thompson and Baden-

³⁸Baden-Powell, *Scoutmaster ship: A Handbook for Scoutmasters on the theory of Scout training*, American ed., 3

³⁹ Dale T. Knobel, “Know-Nothings and Indians: Strange Bedfellows?” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 15 (1984), 177

⁴⁰ Baden-Powell, *Scoutmaster ship: A Handbook for Scoutmasters on the theory of Scout training*, American ed., 14

Powell corresponded frequently and encouraged the other in the pursuit of a youth organization. As the Boy Scouts gained popularity, however, Thompson hotly accused Baden-Powell of blatant plagiarism, citing the reward of badges and emblems worn on the Scout uniform, decorations that parallel Thompson's reward system of feathers and wampum medals. Additionally, a Scout receives a badge or "life" when he has earned a set amount of merit badges and other achievements, whereas a Woodcraft Indian receives a scalp (a long tug of black horsehair.)⁴¹

There are also similarities in the way Baden-Powell and Thompson arranged ranks and hierarchies in their respective organizations. In the Boy Scouts to this day, troops divide by patrol, and senior Patrol Leaders who also assume the responsibility of teaching merit badges monitor the patrols. This hierarchy reflects Baden-Powell's military leanings, as Thompson's distinction of Head War Chief, Second War Chief, and so on reflect his naturalistic philosophy.⁴²

The confusion of similarities between the Boy Scouts and the Woodcraft Indians make it very difficult to distinguish what traditions belong to whom. Thompson's Indians clearly influenced the ranks of the OA officers, such as Chief and Vice Chief, and there is the obvious parallel of "playing Indian." However, the OA also places significant weight on camping and scouting, characteristics of Baden-Powell's militaristic influences.

There is one large aspect of the Order of the Arrow that does not come from either the Woodcraft Indians or Baden-Powell. Although other youth organizations, like the Campfire Girls and YMCA summer camps, sponsored "Indian" days and taught Indian Lore, no other youth

⁴¹ Rosenthal, *The character factory*, 74-75

⁴² Mechling, *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the making of American youth*, 30

organization went to such extremes to “play Indian.” Not only does BSA teach Indian Lore as a fundamental to all Boy Scouts, but also the organization actually borrowed whole chunks of native ceremony to construct their own creation myth. To fully the answer of whether the OA means to preserve or exploit, the next section will deconstruct the OA ceremony itself.

III. THE EAGLE FEATHER AND THE ARROWMAN

Since the 1950's, the Order of the Arrow has attempted to adjust the ceremonies performed at BSA camps around the nation to reflect a philosophy of preservation. As this paper explored in the second section, scholars who have written on the history surrounding "playing Indian" largely agree that white Americans have used Natives to justify their "inheritance" of North America and to rescue white society from the ills of modernization. The following section will explore the changes of OA policy over the last hundred years, the actual Native inspiration for the OA ceremony, and whether the positive influences of the OA on Scouts throughout the years might inspire optimism for the future of white-Native relations.

THE INDIAN AND CHARACTER

There is no doubt that Seton Thompson was extremely influential for why the OA uses Native ceremony. The building of character was a cornerstone of Thompson's teachings as he "established in the image of the American Indian a moral, spiritual, and physical ideal entirely consist with the publicly avowed values of the culture."⁴³ Today's Arrowmen still echo Thompson's belief that Indian ritual would save the character of the white American, if not in those exact words.

When interviewed by the author in the fall of 2007, Vigil Arrowmen Theodore "Ted" Weiland and Chris Almquist both described the impact the OA had upon their personality. "The OA taught me to be a leader," Weiland explains, going on to say that usually troops elect the

⁴³ Jay Mechling, "Playing Indian and the Search for Authenticity in Modern White America," *Prospects* 5 (1980), 20

scouts that exhibit leadership qualities.⁴⁴ The BSA emphasizes leadership, strength of character through example, but only in the OA is strong leadership awarded with a Vigil honor.

Section two explored the negative history associated with “playing Indian,” but in the 1940’s the national Order of the Arrow lodge attempted to foster positive relations between themselves and the people of the culture they were portraying. Pictures displayed on the Otyokwa Lodge website from the 1950’s show OA members in Plains-inspired regalia with war paint on their cheeks. However, as lodges attempted to make the ceremony secular and polite to Native culture, the National lodge gradually outlawed war paint because of its sacred meaning for Native Americas. Additionally, singers have never participated in the OA, despite the drum because of the religious significance. The removal of war paint did not occur until into the 1980’s, as a 1977 OA handbook notes that an Arrowman shouldn’t get “carried away” when applying makeup and war paint.^{45 46}

Regalia also changed, as lodges were encouraged to style their regalia after local tribes, or at least local regions. The Order of the Arrow Handbook from the 1970’s also advises that “designs and styles from different tribes shouldn’t be mixed within a lodge.”⁴⁷ Dancers were encouraged to study local tribal customs closely, conduct research using encyclopedias and sources written by anthropologists and other scholars, and remember that “Indians were and still

⁴⁴ Theodore Weiland, Vigil Honor Arrowman, interview by author, 22 September 2007, Eau Claire.

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Boy Scouts of America, *Order of the Arrow Handbook*, 96

⁴⁷ Ibid, 93

are individualistic as other people.... Don't confuse tribal styles with uniform."⁴⁸ Perhaps the most important step forward was the attempt by lodges to create friendly channels of communication with tribes in their region.⁴⁹

For all these positive steps forward and achievements, there remain traditions and attitudes in the OA that invoke Shari Hundorf's assertion that the Boy Scouts were a generic white hobbyist fraternity with little redeeming quality, a youth organization that called upon Natives to support their own superiority. Two of the biggest traditions in the OA, the Lenni-Lenape language and the secular nature of the ceremony, suggest that as far as the OA has come, it still has a long way to go.⁵⁰

THE THREE-DAY WALK

One of the dangers of claiming that the OA is an organization of preservation of Indian lore is the generality in its traditions. In *Remnants of Savagery*, Erdey addresses that Native ceremony performed for the benefit of white audiences "froze Indian culture in the Long Ago.... By portraying a generic 'Indian' culture, (whites) ignored the cultural specificity associated with the actual lives of Native Americans."⁵¹

Lodges in modern times strive to respect and preserve the culture of local tribes, but the use of the Lenni-Lenape language inflicts considerable damage to the preservation argument.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 93

⁴⁹ Theodore Weiland, Vigil Honor Arrowman, interview by author, 22 September 2007, Eau Claire.

⁵⁰ Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American cultural imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2001), 156

⁵¹ Erdey, *Remnants of Savagery*, 18

Like many aspects of life in the Boy Scouts, several OA traditions existing today are remnants of the organization's origins. Boy Scout scholar Kenneth Davis opens his book on the history of the "Brotherhood of Cheerful Service," another name the OA goes by, with the story of the Three Day Walk. Previously to 1737, the original colonist who owned the area that later became the first OA headquarters arranged a treaty with local Lenni-Lenape, or Delaware Indians, that white settlers would only claim however much land they could walk through in a designated period of time. Upon the colonist's death in 1737, the settlers and the local tribe selected runners who would set the near perimeter.

However, their greed for land pressed settlers to advertise for the best walker with a promise of five pounds and 5,000 acres of land to whoever traveled the farthest. By the end of the three-day walk, Edward Marshall had traveled 60 miles beyond the starting point, and the race prompted two associated deaths and many Indian runners abstained from participating. More infamously, white settlers drew the boundary of the land in a northeast direction "instead of due east...this gave the Pennsylvanians much more land than they were rightfully entitled to and took from the Indians the rich fertile land in the Minnisink Flats."⁵² The true irony of the "Walking Purchase" treaty is that E. Urner Goodman later created the OA, a secret service fraternity meant to revere the Indian spirit, on Treasure Island, the site of "most infamous Indian deal in the history of Pennsylvania."⁵³

The Order of the Arrow draws one of its most sacred traditions from the original OA campsite. When Goodman and co-creator Carroll A. Edson brainstormed a Scout-inspired group

⁵² Davis, *Brotherhood of Cheerful Service: a history of the Order of the Arrow*, 3

⁵³ *Ibid*, 3

that would keep camping values alive in the year following camp in 1915, one of their first decisions was to adopt the Lenni-Lenape language into the OA as a way to honor the original inhabitants. After all, “the Order (has had) so large a part in preserving the lore and culture of the American Indian throughout the whole country that this would seem more like retribution.” This was the mindset that gave birth to the OA, or as it was first called, “Wimachtendienk, Wingolauchsik, Witahemui.” Later, the National Council dropped the Lenni-Lenape name in favor of the easier to pronounce name Order of the Arrow, but the organization did not abandon the title completely. Instead, it became the tagline to the OA; translated, “Wimachtendienk, Wingolauchsik, Witahemui” means “Brotherhood, Cheerful, Service.”⁵⁴

The Lenni-Lenape language is still a fixture in the modern OA. When an Arrowmen receives the rank of Vigil, he receives a Lenni-Lenape inspired name, such as Gegekhuntschik (Chosen One) or Kikape (Bachelor.) The Lenni-Lenape language is unique to Delaware Native Americans, and yet lodges across the country still use the terms in their call-out ceremonies and songs.⁵⁵

COMPETITION POWWOW AND THE OA CEREMONY

One of the virtues Baden-Powell listed in his Scout law was the need for a Scout to be “reverent,” or dedicated to his chosen religion. When controversies begin to pile up, religion within the Boy Scouts becomes the first culprit blamed. Religion becomes the reason why the BSA excludes homosexuals, or why scouts should respect the authority figures on councils. The OA, in contrast, since the beginning has striven to be generically reverent while removing any

⁵⁴ Boy Scouts of America, *Order of the Arrow Handbook*, 146-152

⁵⁵ Davis, *Brotherhood of Cheerful Service: a history of the Order of the Arrow*, 42



Picture 3. Meteu [Left] and Allowat Sakima [Right]. Image taken by author 3 August 2007.

religious significance to the OA ceremony. The irony of a secular OA ceremony is that it is not specifically the regalia that identifies the tribe supposedly honored and preserved, but the religious ceremonies used in connection to dances and the community environment.

Robert DesJarlait explores the nuances between competition and traditional powwows for Native America communities in his 1997 article, and although he does not discuss the role of non-Native American spectators, his description of competition powwows fittingly parallels the OA ceremony in several ways.

One of the ways the OA ceremony is similar to the contest powwow, as opposed to the traditional powwow, is the community and tribal aspect. Competition powwows are generally intertribal.

“Dance traditions that were once tribally specific have become intertribal traditions,”⁵⁶ fostering a sense of Native American-ness outside of an individual tribal community. Plains cultures also heavily influence dancers in competitive powwows, which may explain why the original regalia of OA Arrowmen are predominantly Plains.⁵⁷

The most interesting comparison, however, is about the concept of religion. The OA Handbook stresses that:

⁵⁶ Robert DesJarlait, “The Contest Powwow versus the Traditional Powwow and the Role of the Native American Community,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 12 (1997), 120

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 116

“dances that have religious themes must be avoided....A religion belongs to the people practicing it. For this reason, any dance that has religious connotations should not be used by Scouts....A nonbeliever cannot performed a sacred dance without degrading or insulting the original religious intent.”⁵⁸

In his discussion of powwows, however, DesJarlait argues that dance traditions are what help tribes remember their identity. Identifying regalia is difficult as certain features have become standard for a dancer. The dance traditions, however, change depending on region and tribe. DesHarlait illustrates this with the example of the dropped-feather dance. If while dancing, a male powwow dancer drops an eagle feather, the community performs a ceremony. This ceremony takes on several different variants, one in which the eagle feather represents a fallen warrior, and another Ojibwe-Anishinaabe alternative in which an elder offers “prayer and tobacco to the Four Directions, Grandfather Sun and Mother Earth.” This last variant is very similar to the opening of the OA ceremony, as Allowat Sakima calls the spirits to council. The calling of the four directions in a type of prayer could be considered a honorific to the Ojibwe-Anishinaabe variant, but there is no eagle feather dropped in the OA bowl. By stripping the Four Directions prayer of its background, and thus its significance, the OA ceremony also strips it of any potential tribal indicator.⁵⁹

DesJarlait also emphasizes the need of the community in a powwow setting. “The individual’s racial collective consciousness (took) visual form through the movements of the dancer,”⁶⁰ he explains, showing that even spectators gain understanding of their cultural heritage

⁵⁸ Boy Scouts of America, *Order of the Arrow Handbook*, 114

⁵⁹ DesJarlait, “The Contest Powwow versus the Traditional Powwow and the Role of the Native American Community,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 12 (1997), 122, 124

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 125

in the traditional powwow by observing the physical manifestation of their racial traditions. In the OA ceremony, spectators-while probably of the same race as the dancers-are stagnant. They do not participate, and there is no expectation that they gain any kind of deeper understanding through the ceremony.

Using powwows as a means of cultural preservation outside of the Native American community may be a no-win situation for the Boy Scouts; embedding the OA ceremony with all the elements that make powwows diverse and culturally relevant skirts very close to the line drawn between exploitation and preservation because of the religious aspect of the dances. Properly preserving dance ceremonies beyond reservations echoes too strongly the exploitative Euro-American traditions seeking authentication, but removing the religious elements creates a toothless ceremony, stripping it of both meaning and any efforts to reflect another culture.

Over the last hundred years, the OA attempted to change some of its traditions in order to be respectful towards Native Americans. In order to distance themselves from the exploitative nature of early youth organizations, OA lodges opened channels of communication with local Indian tribes, outlawed aspects of their ceremony that were seen as too religious, and encouraged the positive qualities of the OA, leadership and service.

Despite the positive steps the OA has taken, there are still traditions that reflect the “pan-Indian” attitude towards Native Americans; that there are no distinctions between tribes, and that they are a people frozen in the past with a vanishing future. There is also the question of whether a Native-influenced honorific ceremony can exist at all without the religious dance traditions that create diversity between tribes.

If OA lodges are truly serious about creating a ceremony that honors and preserves the culture of a local tribe, basic fundamentals within the organization-like the language and the

names given to officers-must change. However, current Arrowmen are optimistic that the OA will continue to foster interest in native culture, and interest in the culture will create greater understanding between Arrowmen and Native American communities. The changes since the OA's creation do inspire some optimism that someday, a predominantly white organization can honor and appreciate the culture of a people their ancestors once used and discredited.

CONCLUSION

At the turn of the twentieth century, American citizens found themselves in a crisis. In an attempt to save themselves from the ills of modernization, they retreated into the past, into a "simpler" time, and fittingly used many similar tactics white colonists used when first coming to this new continent in the face of shifting identity. This is reflected in the Boy Scouts of America, and particularly in the Order of the Arrow, a service fraternity that uses Native ceremony to induct new members.

The Order of the Arrow finds many of its traditions in this time period of turmoil. The use of "frozen in time" Native cultures as therapy for white middle- and upper- class youth was a trend method of anti-modernization that many organizations, including YMCA camps, used. However, the practice continues in Boy Scout camps each summer as Arrowmen struggle to change their traditions to match an attitude of respect for Native culture while still maintain the organization's history.

There are several aspects of the OA ceremony that need change, if the organization is serious about preserving culture over exploiting it. There are positive signs that the future may hold a day in which white Americans and Native Americans can appreciate and fully understand one enough through appreciation of another culture, but that is not yet today.

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