The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature

Invisible, marginal, expected – these words trace the path of recognition for American Indian literature written in English since the late eighteenth century. This Companion chronicles and celebrates that trajectory by defining relevant institutional, historical, cultural, and gender contexts, by outlining the variety of genres written since the 1770s, and also by focusing on significant authors who established a place for Native literature in literary canons in the 1970s (Momaday, Silko, Welch, Ortiz, Vizenor), achieved international recognition in the 1980s (Erdrich), and performance-celebrity status in the 1990s (Harjo and Alexie). In addition to the seventeen chapters written by respected experts – Native and non-Native; American, British, and European scholars, the Companion includes bio-bibliographies of forty authors, maps, suggestions for further reading, and a timeline which details major works of Native American literature and mainstream American literature, as well as significant social, cultural, and historical events. An essential overview of this powerful literature.

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KENNETH M. ROEMER, an Academy of Distinguished Teachers Professor at the University of Texas at Arlington, has received four NEH grants to Direct Summer Seminars and has been a Visiting Professor in Japan, a guest lecturer at Harvard, and lectured in Vienna, Lisbon, Brazil, and Turkey. His articles have appeared in journals such as American Literature, American Literary History, and Modern Fiction Studies. His Approaches to Teaching Momaday’s The Way to Rainy Mountain (ed.) was published by the MLA; his Native American Writers of the United States (ed.) won a Writer of Year Award from Wordcraft Circle. He has written four books on utopian literature, including The Obsolete Necessity and Utopian Audience. His collection of personal narratives, verse, and photography about Japan is entitled Michibata de Deatta Nippon (A Sidewalker’s Japan).
To
Mildred Allison Roemer, 1906–2003
Brooklyn and East Rockaway, New York
Arthur Kenneth Roemer, 1912–2005
East Rockaway, New York
and
Kathleen and John Porter,
Derry/Londonderry, N. Ireland.
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The maps are taken from American Indians: Answers to Today’s Questions by Jack Utter. (Reproduced by permission of the University of Oklahoma Press.)
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editors of this volume thank Ray Ryan, of Cambridge University Press, David Murray, and A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff for their help and professional direction with this project. Special thanks are also due to the volume's Cambridge University Press editor Sarah Stanton and to Lesley Atkin. Joy Porter also thanks David S. Berman and Muffy Roxy Porter, who made the editorial task enjoyable. Ken Roemer thanks his wife Micki for her patience.
A NOTE ON INDIVIDUAL AND TRIBAL NAMES
IN THIS VOLUME

The variety in number and type of name Indian individuals and groups possess can sometimes seem confusing, however, rather than dismiss this complexity, it pays to embrace it. Names, and their uses and development over time provide vital keys to understanding. They bring people, places, groups, and their interactions into immediate and sharp focus in ways other sorts of information do not.

A fundamental reason for complexity in Indian names and naming is that many tribes and individuals have, and have had in the past, more than one name. Some Indian names may be intended only for group or family use and yet others reserved for use outside the family or group. People of a single area sometimes have more than one name. The same name was sometimes given to people who lived far away from each other and a single group could be known by a series of names as they traveled from one area to another. Furthermore, often tribes were known by names given to them either by other tribes or by non-Indians. The Cherokee, for example, are known by perhaps fifteen designations and the name Cherokee is itself a name bestowed by others. Further examples are the Ojibwe who are also known as the Ojibwa, Chippewa, Anishinabe, Mississauga, Anishinabeg, and Saginaw; the Diné, who are also known also as Navajo, Dineh, Tenuai, and Navaho; and the Mohican from the Hudson Valley in New York who are also known as Mahican and Mahikan (and often confused with Mohegan of the Thames River in Eastern Connecticut as a result of James Fenimore Cooper’s muddling of tribal names in his 1826 novel, The Last of the Mohicans). Understandably, as time has progressed, various tribes have ceased to recognize names by which they have been generally known because those names were never their actual names to begin with. Likewise writers over time have changed how they identify themselves, as when Louise Erdrich moved from identifying herself as Turtle Mountain Chippewa to Turtle Mountain Ojibwe. Yet further complexity comes from the fact that as well as there being variation in tribal designation, there have also been changes in how those designations have been spelt.
A NOTE ON INDIVIDUAL AND TRIBAL NAMES

Our policy has been to use the designation writers use to refer to themselves, but, where known, to further specify tribal affiliation when nineteenth-century writers have simply been identified using general terms that encompass large groups, such as the designation Sioux. Generally, where tribal affiliation is known it appears as the full tribal name in parenthesis; where an individual is identified as possessing heritage from more than one tribe both tribes are listed in parenthesis separated by a slash. Some writers prefer that a dash separate their tribal designations and every effort has been made to respect that preference. Where an individual is known by a name in an Indian language, this is given in the text first, where possible with an English language translation and alongside any commonly used non-Indian name(s).

For further information on tribal names, consult the following web sites: http://anpa.ualr.edu/; http://americanindian.net/names.html and http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/nations.html. The latter site can be reached through the Bureau of Indian Affairs website http://www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html.