Native American literature has always been uniquely embattled. It is marked by particularly divergent opinions about what constitutes authenticity, sovereignty, and even literature. It announces a culture beset by paradox: simultaneously primordial and postmodern; oral and inscribed; outmoded and novel; quixotic and quotidian. Above all, its texts are a site of political struggle, shifting to meet expectations both external and internal. This Cambridge History endeavors to capture and question the contested character of both Indigenous texts and the way they are evaluated. This book has a chronological structure. It delineates significant periods of literary and cultural development in four parts: "Traces and Removals" (pre-1870s); "Assimilation and Modernity" (1879–1967); "Native American Renaissance" (post-1960s); and "Visions and Revisions" (twenty-first century). These rubrics highlight the various ways Native literatures have evolved alongside major transitions in federal policy toward the Indian, and via contact with broader cultural phenomena such as the American Civil Rights movement. There is a balance between a history of canonical authors and traditions, introducing less-studied works and themes, and foregrounding critical discussions, approaches, and controversies.

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE

Edited by

MELANIE BENSON TAYLOR
Dartmouth College, New Hampshire
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