Racial Stereotypes Past and Present: The Impact of viewing Native Americans through a distorted lens.

JULIA LOVING
NEH “Native Americans in New England”
July 7 to July 27, 2013
Most students learn about American Indians via...

Television
Textbooks
Literature
Newspapers
Film
Internet

*Rarely through interacting directly with Native People
What is the impact of non-interaction with Native Americans?

- Ethnic attitudes
- Strained ethnic relations
- Misconceptions
- Feelings of Superiority
- Fear
- Hatred
- Lack of Empathy
- Misguided Legislation

Stereotypes
Historical Stereotypes
Savage
Uncivilized
Unclean
Lazy
Drunken
Untrustworthy
Essential question(s) for the unit and/or lesson:

1. What is revealed about race relations between Native American and early European American settlers?

2. What is revealed about non-native understandings about Native American culture?

3. What are some of the generalizations and stereotypes made about Native Americans and have they changed much, if at all today? Why do you think that is?

3. Are these stereotypes racist and if so, why is it important to be aware of these things?

4. Are the stereotypes told from the perspective of a dominant group of people, if so what are they attempting to accomplish?

5. What is the impact of such portrayals and depictions on today’s Native Americans?

6. What role did Native Americans play in their own stereotypical portrayals?
Learning objectives (skills, content and attitudes) for the lesson:

- Students will understand that today’s popular misconceptions and mistreatment of Native Americans is directly attributed to early New England propaganda.
- Students will learn the meaning of the word stereotypes, why stereotypes have been used against various ethnic groups?
- Students will understand how stereotypes have historically impacted negatively Native Americans, and other groups.
- Students will understand the mediums in which stereotypes have been portrayed media, film, literature, comedy etc.
- Students will use Library Media resources (print/non-print) to analyze a primary source document and images from the early 1600s – 1800s as well as political cartoons/comics from the 1900s through the 2000s in order to identify, compare and contrast, generalizations from both time periods.
- Students will learn about the currents issues impacting Native Americans today.
- Students will gain understanding of the social, political and economic impact of these historical stereotypes.
- Students will learn to apply empathy throughout all of their classroom experiences.
Stereotypes about Native Americans in New England
A Look at *Primary Documents*
“Excerpts”
“The Most Remarkable and Strange State Situation and Appearance of Indian Tribes in this Great Continent” Samson Occom (1783)

Shall now take notice of things peculiar to the Natives of this Country. — Indians, So Called, in this most extensive Continent, are Universally Poor, they have no Notion of Laying up much for the Future, they all live from Hand to Mouth, as the Common Saying is Chiefly by Hunting Fishing and Fowling; the Women Raise little Corn, Beans, and Pompkins, and pick Wild Frats, and do other Drudgery; those that live among or near the White People, have Learnt, Some of them, to live a little in immittance of them, but very poor Still, they are good Serv[an]ts to themselves, they have no Oeconomy to live; wastful and imprudent, both of time & Substance, they will worry and Toile all Day to lose two Shillings & gain Six pence, they have no Patience nor Ambistion to appear Great in the World, they have no Notion of much learning, them that have had Some Learning made Little or no good Use of it many have lost all their Learning, — they Learn no trades, if any of them have Learnt, they follow it not They have no Laws or Regulations Neither in, every on d[o]es what is right in his own Eyes, — Yet in general they kind to one another, and are not given to Lying, Cheating, and Steeling much what this way a is Trifling But they are much for Drinkg Strong Drink, Yet I Cant think that it is more Natural to them than other[s] .
“Monuments of the Anger of a righteous God”
Rev. John Callender, Rhode Island, 1739
Callender was a prominent Baptist clergyman.

The Indians in this Part of America appear to have been some of the least improved of the human Species, without any Learning or Knowledge in any of the politer Arts of Life, even without Iron and the Improvements which depend on that. The strange Destruction of this People, now since the Wars ceased, and within Memory, is very remarkable. Their insuperable Aversion to the English industry and Way of Life, the Alteration from the Indian Method of living, their Laziness, and their universal Love of Strong Drink, have swept them away in a wonderful Manner. So that there are now above twenty English to one Indian in the Colony. Their few miserable Remainders are left, as Monuments of the Anger of a righteous God, . . .
“If they had been wise enough to make use of the Opportunities”
Rev. Samuel Stoddard, Massachusetts, 1722

A Puritan clergyman in Boston, Stoddard published a question-and-answer pamphlet addressing ethical issues of import to the community, including the colonists’ acquisition of Indian land with little to no payment.

Question:

**DID we any wrong to the Indians in buying their Land at a small price?**

Answer. 1. **THERE** was some part of the Land that was not purchased, neither was there need that it should – it was vacuum domicilium;9 and so might be possessed by virtue of GOD’s grant to Mankind, Gen. I:28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. The Indians made no use of it, but for Hunting. By GOD’s first Grant Men were to subdue the Earth. When Abraham came into the Land of Canaan, he made use of vacant Land as he pleased: so did Isaac and Jacob.

2. **THE** Indians were well contented that we should sit down [settle] by them. And it would have been for great Advantage, both for this World and the Other; if they had been wise enough to make use of their Opportunities. It has been common with many People, in planting this World since the Flood, to admit Neighbours, to sit down by them.

3. **THO’** we gave but a small Price for what we bought, we gave them their demands. We came to their Market and gave them their price, and, indeed, it was worth but little. And had it continued in their hands, it would have been of little value. It is our dwelling on it and our Improvements that have made it to be of worth.
Edward Randolph’s report of King Philip’s War in New England, 1675

Various are the reports and conjectures of the causes of the present Indian warre [sic]. Some impute it to an imprudent zeal in the magistrates of Boston to christianize those heathen before they were civilized and enjoining them the strict observation of their laws. . . . [T]he people, on the other side, for lucre and gain, entice and provoke the Indians to the breach thereof, especially to drunkenness, to which those people are so generally addicted that they will strip themselves to their skin to have their fill of rum and brandy. . . .
"Civilization rebuked by the savage" in "Gazette and Mercury" Newspaper Phelps and Ingersoll [editors], Sep 5, 1837 Greenfield, Massachusetts

http://www.memorialhall.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=13078
• “I sympathize with the lost Westerner who is searching for the sacred, who only wants a tribe to call his own. However, these individuals need to recognize that stolen images based on inaccurate, offensive stereotypes of ancient cultures that they have made no effort to understand will not give them fulfillment they seek. As Native People, we do not belong to you; therefore, we are not at your disposal or available for your misappropriation. Befriend us, don’t insult us. If you listen to us, we’ll show you the ways of the Earth. In the process, you might uncover the sacred that was within you all along.”

Ruth Hopkins, Sisseton-Wahpeton
Colonist for Indian Country Today
Stereotypes of Native Americans
A Look at Images Through Time
A SCHOOL FOR SAVAGES; or, Teaching the Young Idea not to Shoot.

BIG INJUN. “White man, hold on; we want to Big Talkee.”
GENERAL SHERIDAN. “No, no. I’ll Whip you first, then you can Big Talkee afterward.”
Captain Thunder's Indian powers "Make Way For Captain Thunder!" appeared in SUPERMAN #274 (June 1974) by Richard Meyer Creation of Willie Fawcett of Fawcett Comic
Cartoon Title: Anchor Babies
Nick Anderson   Thursday, August 12, 2010 Houston Chronicle
AAEC Ref Num: 89335

http://editorialcartoonists.com/cartoon/display.cfm/89335/
WE THANK THEE FOR THY GENEROUS PROVISIONS. NOW DO TELLETH—WHEN DOOTH THY BLACK FRIDAY SALES BEGINNETH?

WHEN DID THEY SAY THEY WERE SAILING?
Blog: Newspaper Rock Where Native America meets pop culture
http://www.comicbookresources.com/?page=article&old=1&id=8078
WWC: Jason Aaron Cuts Close With "Scalped" 2006.
"Indian's and wolves are both beasts of prey, tho' they differ in shape."
George Washington

"If ever we are constrained to lift the hatchet against any tribe, we will never lay it down till that tribe is exterminated, or driven beyond the Mississippi... in war, they will kill some of us; we shall destroy them all." Thomas Jefferson

“Those tribes cannot exist surrounded by our settlements and in continual contact with our citizens is certain. They have neither the intelligence, the industry, the moral habits, nor the desire of improvement which are essential to any favorable change in their condition. Established in the midst of another and a superior race, and without appreciating the causes of their inferiority or seeking to control them, they must necessarily yield to the force of circumstances and ere long disappear.” Andrew Jackson

"Ordered that of the Indians and Half-breeds sentenced to be hanged by the military commission, composed of Colonel Crooks, Lt. Colonel Marshall, Captain Grant, Captain Bailey, and Lieutenant Olin, and lately sitting in Minnesota, you cause to be executed on Friday the nineteenth day of December, instant, the following names, to wit... "
Text from President Lincoln to General Sibley ordering the execution of American Indians in Minnesota.” Abraham Lincoln

"I don't go so far as to think that the only good Indians are dead Indians, but I believe nine out of ten are, and I shouldn't like to inquire too closely into the case of the tenth." Theodore Roosevelt
"It is the fundamental right of every American, as guaranteed by the first amendment of the Constitution, to worship as he or she pleases… This legislation sets forth the policy of the United States to protect and preserve the inherent right of American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiian people to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religions," as he signed into law the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Jimmy Carter

"Let us rededicate ourselves to the principle that all Americans have the tools to make the most of their God-given potential. For Indian tribes and tribal members, this means that the authority of tribal governments must be accorded the respect and support to which they are entitled under the law. It means that American Indian children and youth must be provided a solid education and the opportunity to go on to college. It means that more must be done to stimulate tribal economies, create jobs, and increase economic opportunities." Bill Clinton

"Tribal sovereignty means that. It's sovereign. You're a... you're a... you've been given sovereignty and you're viewed as a sovereign entity.“ George W. Bush

"We also recommit to supporting tribal self-determination, security, and prosperity for all Native Americans. While we cannot erase the scourges or broken promises of our past, we will move ahead together in writing a new, brighter chapter in our joint history.“ Barack Obama

Are American Indian mascots a positive way to honor and include American Indians or a harmful and negative stereotyping of American Indians?

http://ais101dorhout.wordpress.com/2011/04/22/post-17-imagery-issues/
Overview of lesson: (See Lesson Plan)

-the context of the lesson within a broader unit of study
-a summary of the learning activities
What I want students to mostly understand is that the Native American experience has been so often distorted, in the pages of history, But they are still here!

Taken of a photo on exhibit at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum July 2013