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“This Hole in Our Heart”: Urban Indian Identity and the Power of Silence

DEBORAH DAVIS JACKSON

The majority of us [city-raised Indian people] walk around with this hole in our heart. We know we're different, that there's a piece of our life that is missing.

—Michelle Duncan¹

Since the middle of the twentieth century, when large numbers of American Indian people began migrating from reservations to cities in search of work and a better life, a great deal has been published on the “urban Indian” phenomenon. While a few ethnographic or ethnohistorical works have appeared recently that seek to describe entire urban Indian communities in all their complexity,² the great majority of urban Indian studies to date focus on some aspect of the circumstances, problems, and adjustment strategies of those who grew up on reservations and then moved to a city, or those who move back and forth between the two sites.³ This emphasis, while valuable, neglects an increasingly important segment of urban Indian communities—those whose parents grew up on reservations but who themselves have grown up in the city. In the present article, I

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focus on this second generation of urban Indian people in an analysis that relies heavily on life-historical interview material. Before turning to a description of the ethnographic setting and then to the narratives themselves, a few words on my theoretical and methodological perspective are in order.

This study falls generally within the tradition of ethnographic analyses that focus on “discourse” in one form or another. These works comprise a varied and wide-ranging literature; what they all share is the premise that speaking is a powerful force in the reproduction and transformation of social identities.⁴ There is a closely related phenomenon which, while nearly always implicit in social analyses that focus on discourse, has not received as much explicit attention as speech has. I refer to *silence*.⁵ Silence, too, can work as an active force in constituting and/or transforming cultural and ethnic identities; far from being a neutral and passive background, silence can, under certain circumstances, act to shape individual identities and group social life in profound and enduring ways. In this article, based on more than two years of fieldwork (September of 1993 through December of 1995) in the American Indian community of a Great Lakes area city I’ll call “Riverton,” I focus on silence as it emerges in the narratives of urban-raised Indian people—not the silence of the interviewees themselves, but rather their childhood experience of their parents’ silence on certain topics. In the discourse of these interviewees, silence does not manifest merely as the absence of speech; instead, it looms as a salient presence in the process of ethnic identity construction for this first generation of city-raised Native American people.⁶ The significance of silence in the life-historical narratives of urban-raised American Indians will be explored below; first, however, a brief introduction to Riverton’s American Indian community will prove useful.

ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

Riverton is the major city in a county identified here as “Birmingham,” an area that had traditionally been home to the Great Lakes area’s indigenous Chippewa (Ojibwa) people, but from which most Native people had been “removed,” in accordance with the U.S. government’s Indian policy, by the end of the nineteenth century. Moreover, census records for the years 1900 through 1930 show Birmingham County as having no

American Indians in its population.⁷ It was only at mid-century, starting during the second World War, that Indian people began returning to the area from reservations and off-reservation rural communities around the Great Lakes (as well as from more distant regions) in large numbers. This was due both to the “push” of poverty and lack of job opportunities on reservations, combined with the threat of termination of Indian tribes by the federal government,⁸ and the “pull” of relatively good wages and job security to be found, even for relatively unskilled, uneducated people, in Riverton’s auto factories, which were then booming.⁹

While some came only for a short time to earn quick money before returning to their home communities, many Indian people stayed on in Riverton, married, and raised their families there. The result was a growth in the American Indian population throughout the forties, fifties, sixties and seventies, culminating in a total Native American population of almost 4,000 (out of a total population of 450,000) for Birmingham County in 1980. As is the case with urban Indians in many cities, Native American migrants to Riverton did not settle into geographically bounded “Indian neighborhoods,” but rather tended to scatter throughout low-income neighborhoods interspersed with Mexican Americans, African Americans, and other poor minorities. But a genuine sense of community developed early on among those Native Americans who kept in touch with other Indian people (which, in most cases, tended to be other families from the same home community, or at least the same general tribal/cultural group) through social connections such as potluck dinners, a bowling league, and work parties to help one another with home improvement projects. Later, in the late sixties and early seventies, a number of official institutions were formed to address the needs of the Indian people of Riverton. Primary among these were the Greater Riverton Indian Association, which established an Indian center in downtown Riverton in 1971. Also, Native American student organizations were formed at both of the city’s main institutions of higher learning, the Riverton public school system established an Indian Education Program, and a local office of the state’s Indian Employment Training Services was opened in Riverton.

Then came a period of decline in Riverton’s American Indian population (corresponding to the decline in the city’s general population) due to the auto industry’s decision to

downsize its Riverton operations during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s; some younger Indian people went elsewhere to find work, while some of their elders returned to home reservations to retire. Furthermore, new migrations slowed virtually to a halt because, as job opportunities were diminishing in Riverton, new jobs were opening up on reservations throughout the Great Lakes region due to the rise of Indian gaming (casino gambling) and other tribally owned businesses that have been proliferating as a result of the current self-determination era of federal Indian policy,¹⁰ which began in the early 1960s. Still, though now somewhat diminished in size from its peak in 1980 (the 1990 census shows a Native American population of about 3,000 for Birmingham County¹¹), the American Indian community in the Riverton area has remained vigorous. All the main Native American organizations in Birmingham County (named above), as well as the informal social groups that first developed in the fifties and sixties, have remained intact and continue to play a meaningful role in the lives of many of Riverton's Indian people.

While Riverton's American Indian community comprises people from many different tribal backgrounds, including Cherokee, Iroquois, Lakota, Apache, Diné (Navajo), Hopi, and others, the majority are from the tribes indigenous to the Great Lakes region, the Native-language term for whom is "Anishinaabe": Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi. And it is people from these three latter groups who tend to be most strongly represented in the various organizations and institutions of the urban Indian community, as well as in the general population. Furthermore, the staff, board members, and volunteers in the official institutions are most often Anishinaabe people now in their thirties and forties who are the first generation to have grown up in the city. They are the children of people who grew up on reservations or in rural Indian communities or small towns around the Great Lakes area, and who then moved to Riverton as young adults. Since new migrations from reservations slowed to a virtual halt around 1970, Riverton's American Indian community has become "layered" in the sense that virtually everyone who grew up on a reservation is now reaching, or past, retirement age, while the middle and younger generations (approximately those under the age of 55) are composed almost entirely of people who grew up in the city.

Those in this next generation are proud of their Native American heritage and express their Indian identity openly.

Through their involvement in Indian organizations, they help organize and participate in traditional powwows and other ceremonial events, provide social services and economic assistance to low income American Indians and others, engage in political activism in support of Native American causes, and assist with programs designed to educate the public about American Indian traditional culture. In short, these urban-raised Indian people tend to be verbal and vocal about their Native American heritage; they *talk* about being Indian—in public settings, among themselves, and with their children.

However, in the discourse of life-historical interviews with me, descriptions of their own childhood experience have a very different tone. In that context, many of the second-generation Anishinaabe talk about an elusive American Indian heritage that hovered around the margins of their childhood, not quite present, yet never completely absent. Furthermore, it is in descriptions of the past that their complex and difficult feelings come to the fore, as they express the pain, confusion, and shame that seem to have constituted, during their childhood years, the most salient aspect of their American Indian heritage. It is to these narratives that I now turn.

THE NARRATIVES

From as far back as he can remember, Jake Benson knew there was something wrong on his father's side of the family—that "somebody had done something they were real ashamed of." Jake grew up in Riverton, and although two of his father's brothers also lived in Riverton with their families, and Jake occasionally saw these relatives, he never really got to know them. Furthermore, Jake recalls how, on a trip to Michigan's Upper Peninsula when he was about ten, as the family was driving through the father's hometown, he saw a large group of people out on the front porch of a house they were passing. He knew it was his father's family—he recognized some of his aunts and uncles—and could see that they were having a family reunion. But Jake's father just drove on by; he said he wanted nothing to do with that "Benson trash."

This is how Jake describes the way he grew up—knowing there was something unspeakable about his father's side of the family and haunted by questions of what it might be. Finally, in 1991, at age 45, Jake learned the answer: The Bensons were

Chippewa Indians. Thus, explicit confirmation of his American Indian heritage came late to Jake. However, certain experiences and interactions with his father earlier in his life, especially during his childhood, had left Jake feeling that he both knew he was Indian and did not know. Some further background on Jake and his family will help make sense of this seeming contradiction.

Jake recounts that his father came to Riverton around 1940, just after graduating from high school in the small northern Michigan town where he had grown up, to take a job at a Buick plant. Then, much later, when he was in his mid-thirties, he married a younger woman (who was not Native American), and they started a family. Jake was the middle of three children (the other two were both girls), and he reports that, from a very early age, he remembers his father commenting on his coloring in relation to that of one of his sisters, who was considerably lighter. One comment that made a strong impression on Jake was his father saying, "Jake's so dark, he always looks dirty." Furthermore, according to Jake, his father openly favored the sister who was light-haired and fair-skinned. Jake did not know what to make of this, and only became further confused when he started school.

It was a Catholic school, and the other students were either Mexican or white. Jake remembers thinking he should belong to one group or the other: His coloring was too dark for him to fit in with the white kids, so he tended to socialize more with the Mexicans, but he knew he was not Mexican either. So Jake experienced confusion as a child about "what he was" (in terms of racial/ethnic identity), but he could get nothing from his father except reinforcement that he was "too dark," and that that was somehow "dirty."

Jake also recalls his father, once when the two of them were alone, warning him about "Indians":

He told me that if I ever got in a fight with one, to bite him, kick him, scratch him—never let him up. Do anything I could to hurt and humiliate him—make sure he'd never come back and try me again.... And there was an absolute hatred in his voice for them.¹²

So Jake knew that there was some shameful secret about his father's side of the family, that he and his father both had dark coloring and there was something wrong with dark coloring,

and that his father feared and hated Indians. Certainly there were hints at the connection between these factors, but Jake's father maintained a resolute silence as to what that connection might be. Jake could only guess and wonder.

Jake Benson's account is no doubt extreme in that it portrays a father so seemingly unequivocal in his renunciation of family and thus his denial of his Native American ancestry. But if extreme in degree, Jake's story is nonetheless similar in kind to that of many of the sons and daughters of American Indian people who left reservations and off-reservation rural Indian communities to migrate to Riverton (and other Midwestern cities) during the manufacturing boom years of the mid-twentieth century. Most people in this younger generation had more contact with their American Indian extended families during childhood than Jake did, and some even recall some fairly explicit acknowledgments (examples to be given below) on the part of their parents that they were Native American. But a theme that emerges, in one form or another, in the narratives of all of the second generation urban Indian people I interviewed,¹³ is that of their confusion and frustration at their parents' reluctance, unwillingness, or inability to really speak about being Indian.

Michelle Duncan (quoted at the beginning of this article), now in her forties, moved to Riverton with her family when she was five, and her father got a job at a Ford Motor plant in the area. Her mother was white, and Michelle subsequently learned that her father was Ottawa, but that Native American heritage was not readily apparent to Michelle during her childhood. Her father did keep in touch with his extended family who still lived in their Ottawa home community in southern Ontario. But while he admitted that these people were Native, he would not admit that they were family. Michelle recalls her father saying, "We're going to see some Indians," and then they would travel to his home community and visit people that she now knows were her father's first cousins—but this relationship was never explicitly acknowledged. Similarly, Michelle has childhood memories of her family going to visit other families around the Riverton area and hearing her father and some of the other adults "talk in a funny language." She now knows that language to have been her father's native Ottawa, but this was never explained to her at the time.

There were other ways in which Michelle's father hinted at his—and therefore Michelle's—Native ancestry without actual-

ly telling her the family background. For example, Michelle tells of her father's response when she was in elementary school and was upset because an older boy from the junior high school next door had said to her, "You're nothing but a dirty little squaw, and the only thing you're good for is to throw down on your back." Michelle went home crying and told her father, who said, "You're going to run across that.... All you can do is just hold your head up high, be proud of who you are." And her response, thinking back on this today and giving voice to what she could not bring herself to express at the time, is to say, "But wait a minute, Dad. I don't *know* who I am. What *am* I? Am I white, or *am* I that dirty little squaw?" Michelle continued to be confused about this question for many years.

A similar theme of silence and evasion emerges in the narrative of another interviewee, Tom Richards.¹⁴ Tom's childhood family situation differs from that of Jake and Michelle in that in Tom's case, it was his mother who was American Indian (Chippewa) and his father who was white.¹⁵ His parents had met in a predominantly rural area in a county that borders the north side of Birmingham County where both had grown up, and after they were married, in 1940, they moved to Riverton where Tom's father got a factory job, while his mother stayed home to raise the children. Tom was well aware that his mother was Indian because she maintained close ties with her relatives from her home community—a predominantly white town I'll call Morrystown—that the family had moved to when Tom's mother was a young child in the mid-1920s. Prior to that, the family had lived in an area known to local whites as "Indian Town"—a rural Chippewa community that existed near Morrystown until the 1940s when all the land was bought, much of it under rather suspicious circumstances, by local white farmers. Some Indian Town families then moved to cities, while others, including many of Tom's mother's relatives, moved into Morrystown.

When Tom was a child during the 1940s, his mother would take him and his siblings to visit the Morrystown relatives; similarly, relatives from his mother's extended family would sometimes come and stay with Tom and his family in Riverton. He describes these contacts as follows:

We would go socializing with my mom's relatives almost every single weekend. [The relatives] didn't have tele-

phones, yet they all managed to meet about the same time on Saturday afternoon in Morristown.... There were a lot of social activities, dinners.... I remember when everyone got together at our house to help put up a stone and cement retaining wall terrace in front of the house. All my [maternal] relatives showed up.¹⁶

So overall, Tom describes considerably more contact with his American Indian relatives than Michelle, whose father's family lived much further away than Tom's mother's family, and certainly far more than Jake, who hardly ever visited with his father's brother's families, even though they lived right there in Riverton.

This contact did give Tom some sense of his Chippewa heritage. For example, in discussing his maternal grandfather's extended visits to their home in Riverton, Tom says:

As far as the Indian heritage itself, he talked an awful lot about his dad making ax handles and making baskets. Some of my earliest memories are we had Indian baskets all over the house—my mom's laundry basket was a large, probably two-bushel basket that was all handmade of black ash.¹⁷

However, it is important to keep in mind that this is Tom talking *now* about his childhood memories. At the time, these were not "Indian baskets" that were all over the house—they were just baskets. And while Tom now knows that making ax handles was a skill typically practiced by the Chippewa people of the area up into the early 1900s, he did not realize when his grandfather was telling him about the ax handles that he was learning about his Indian heritage. Tom reports that at the time, when he was a child, his mother and other relatives did not talk much about Indians at all, especially with regard to their own family. Furthermore, in addition to the silence that surrounded the family's American Indian heritage, Tom reports being witness, more than once, to his mother's outright denial of being Indian: He remembers occasions in his childhood when the subject of his Native American heritage came up with outsiders (for example, at school), and hearing his mother insist that that was because Tom's *father*, not she, was Indian. Thus, even Tom, with his close ties to an extended Chippewa family that lived nearby, reports a childhood filled with silences about certain

aspects of his Indian ancestry and outright denials by his mother of her own ancestry.

These silences on the part of elder generation Anishinaabe relatives were interpreted by their (now grown) children as having a number of different causes or motivations. However, one theme that emerged more than any other was shame—a shame at being Indian. A story told by another woman, Doris Rider, also focuses on shame as a powerful force in perpetuating silence—not only her Indian father’s own silence, but that of a member of *his* elder generation as well.

Doris, in her late thirties at the time of the interview, tells of having just discovered recently that her father, who had worked all his life in a Riverton auto factory, was a full-blooded Potawatomi, yet she could not recall a single time he had ever spoke of this heritage. Doris has very dark coloring—dark eyes, brown skin, and black hair—like her father (her mother was white), and had always wondered why this was. Like Jake, Doris explains that as a child, she knew she was not Mexican; she also knew she was not African American, although she had sometimes been called “nigger” by her classmates in school. But this topic was never discussed in the family. So upon finding out about her Potawatomi heritage while looking through some old documents from her father’s side of the family after his death, she wanted to learn more. Consequently, she took the opportunity during a visit to her father’s aunt to ask: “Is it true we’re Indian?” Although the two of them were alone in the house, Doris’ great aunt looked around hurriedly as if to make certain no one could overhear. Then she whispered fiercely: “Shhhh! Don’t *ever* speak of that!” She added, as if to explain the importance of maintaining this silence, “Indians are *dirty*!”¹⁸

This act of silencing—Doris’ great aunt’s reaction to a seemingly benign question—is shocking in its strength and intensity. Her “Shhhh!” has a brute force which no doubt found its source, during her earlier years, in the brutality of countless experiences that served, time and time again, to shock her into her deep conviction that “being Indian” must never be spoken of—that Indians are “dirty.” The partial answers, omissions, ambiguities, and outright denials described in others’ narratives may be less dramatic than Doris’s great aunt’s fierce insistence on complete silence. Yet they, too, appear as brute forces, pushing against the childhood awareness of young people just beginning to wonder who they were, abruptly precluding questions that could not even be fully formulated, let alone given voice.

As adults, urban-raised Anishinaabe people not only have learned how to formulate those questions, they have also become tenacious in seeking answers in the knowledge and practices of the cultural heritage they have come to feel is their birthright. They seek to, in the words of Michelle Duncan, “fill the holes in their hearts.” In the full passage from which the shorter quote at the beginning of this article is excerpted, she explains:

The majority of us [city-raised Indian people] walk around with this hole in our heart. We know we’re different, that there’s a piece of our life that is missing. And once we can [find out] what’s missing, and fill that hole ourselves, then we see a whole person emerge. We start asking questions, and we become these enormous sponges, and we just want to absorb, absorb, absorb. And it fills that hole.

This “absorption” process—the attempt to “fill the holes in their hearts”—is evident to one degree or another in the current life choices of virtually all the members of this generation whom I have spoken with or interviewed, including those profiled here.

All four of these interviewees (and many other second-generation urban Anishinaabe I came to know in Riverton as well) present themselves as now having a strong sense of Native American identity and a commitment to Riverton’s various urban Indian organizations. Michelle has served for a number of years on the board of the Greater Riverton Indian Association (GRIA); Tom, who went to college and later earned an MBA, uses his business knowledge to assist Native American groups and individuals in the Riverton area who want to start their own businesses; Jake has become active on the committee that organizes and operates the GRIA’s annual summer powwow; and Doris volunteers her time at Riverton’s Indian Center, helping to develop programs and activities for American Indian children in the community. All four attend at least some of the various Native American functions and events that occur in the Riverton area throughout the year. Finally, all four have become involved in attempts to recover in their personal lives something of the heritage they feel was lost to them.

Michelle, in addition to having collected documentation on her father’s family (birth certificates, school records, marriage

licenses, etc.), has been seeking out older Indian people around the area—her “elders,” as she puts it—over the past several years, learning all she can about traditional spiritual beliefs and practices. Jake has become an amateur genealogist, tracing his father’s side of the family several generations back and learning a great deal in the process about large-scale movements of Native people around the Great Lakes area, back into the early 1800s. Doris has been involved in helping document the ancestry of members of her father’s Wisconsin Potawatomi tribe, which has recently received federal recognition. Finally, Tom has become a family oral historian of sorts, seeking out older relatives on his mother’s side of the family and conducting tape recorded interviews with them about Chippewa culture and language so he can document their knowledge before they die and take their memories with them. These efforts to reclaim a positive Native American identity have played a significant role in the lives of Jake, Doris, Michelle, and Tom, yet each reports a negative consequence as well—that such overt interest in and public displays of American Indian heritage have caused problems with the parents who struggled so hard not to be known as Indians.

Jake, of course, had the most difficulty in this regard. His genealogical work, as well as his involvement in Native American activities, which includes powwow dancing in full regalia, resulted in total estrangement between him and his father. At the time of Jake’s father’s death in 1993, he and Jake had not spoken in five years. Still, Jake did what he could to make peace with the father with whom he had experienced such difficulties, and he did so by means of the heritage his father had renounced so violently:

I went back up [to northern Michigan] and scattered his ashes in the woods. And I used smudge, and did the Indian ceremony over him, because he wasn’t buried Catholic. So I figured that was the least I could do. Even though I don’t fully understand the traditional ways.

Jake says he now feels resolved about his relationship with his father.

Michelle’s story starts out sounding very much like Jake’s, but finds a happier resolution. She reports that when she first started to get involved with Riverton’s Indian Association, her father “threw an absolute fit. He did not talk to me for almost

a year. Because I was acknowledging the fact that I was Native American." But, she continues, "He's accepted it now. He's accepted it, once he realized that it was okay—it was okay to be Indian." Similarly, Tom's mother, who no longer denies her Chippewa heritage, now occasionally accompanies Tom to powwows and other American Indian events around the area and shows interest in the work he does in advising American Indian entrepreneurs. (Doris has no such experiences to report, since her father died before she started becoming involved in the Native American community.)

All of those profiled in this article, and many other second-generation urban Anishinaabe as well, are struggling to "fill the holes in their hearts"—to make sense out of the American Indian heritage that lurked in the shadows of their childhood experience, and to bring that heritage out into the light of day. For this generation, Riverton's official American Indian institutions provide a much needed community that makes information on traditional Native practices and beliefs available, encourages political activism on behalf of Native American causes, and provides opportunities for socializing with others of American Indian ancestry. Most importantly, these institutions create an atmosphere in which it is not only "okay to be Indian," but in which American Indian heritage is respected, valued, even *celebrated*. Furthermore, while many in the parent generation have only a marginal connection, if any, to these official institutions, most of these elder Anishinaabe are gradually coming to terms with the choices their grown children are making, and recognizing that a new climate in the dominant culture—the recent proliferation of positive images of Native Americans and a general openness to cultural diversity—renders these choices "harmless" in a way that similar choices could not have been in the past.

Even the urban-raised generation, growing up in Riverton in the 1950s and 1960s, had to endure, as we have seen, social ostracism, racist slurs, and at times, physical attacks. The childhood experiences of the elder, reservation-raised generation were even more fraught with such difficulties, which were further intensified by the extreme poverty that plagued most Indian communities throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In their search to understand their own childhood experiences, many urban-raised Anishinaabe are now reinterpreting their parents' contradictory statements, denials, and silences with a new understanding and sympathy, based on

their growing knowledge of the very different social and political climate that prevailed at mid-century and earlier, when their parents were young.

This more sympathetic perspective often takes the form of recognizing their parents as workers in the dominant society. While regretting and perhaps resenting their parents' (seeming) "assimilation," they have come to respect their successes in adjusting to urban life and to sympathize with the hardships inherent in that transformation and the coping strategies their parents had to develop to survive. Urban-raised Anishinaabe people have come to appreciate—in both senses of the word—the obstacles their parents had to overcome and the sacrifices they had to make in order to achieve success in an alien environment, thereby giving their children advantages and opportunities that they, the parents, had never had.

Both Jake and Michelle portray their fathers as having suffered prejudice and bigotry in the factories where they worked, commonly referred to as "the shop." Their fathers spoke very little about the problems they faced on the job, but a brief comment here or there gave glimpses into the abuse they endured. For example, Jake reports that his father was called "Indian Joe" in the shop (his name was not Joe) because he "looked like a pure blood." He expresses his general sense that his father felt ridiculed and humiliated at work. Also, it is clear from the way Jake talks about his father's drinking that he sees it as tied to shame his father experienced, in the shop and elsewhere, about his Native American ancestry—the primary source of the "demons" Jake mentions below. After discussing his father's shortcomings as a parent, Jake goes on to say: "I understand that in a lot of ways, he was a good dad. And he had his own demons.... He didn't want to be identified [as Indian].... He would never admit to being Indian." Jake has gained this sympathetic perspective only in his adult years, as he has struggled with his own "demons" (including alcoholism, from which he is recovering) about his past and his identity.

Michelle talks about these same kinds of issues with regard to her father, but she makes a more explicit connection between her father's anger, his drinking, and his situation at work:

My father was an alcoholic. A very sad man. Even though he tried not to be. And I understand now that it was because he was denying who he was. He was denying who his children

were. And there was a lot of anger that he suppressed over the years. And to get rid of that anger, he drank. And my father got in many fights [with co-workers], because they would call him "Chief," or they would make derogatory comments.... And he has a lot of scars from his battles.

This denial of "who he was" and "who his children were" was primarily caused, according to Michelle, by her father's experience at an Indian boarding school, where he was beaten for speaking his Native language—"that was the beginning of his humiliation, of his punishment for being who he was." Therefore, "he said that his children would not suffer that discrimination—to the point that he even listed us as 'white' on our birth certificates."

Thus, Michelle sees her father's drinking as the result of shame and anger that was deeply rooted in childhood experience and was then exacerbated by abuse he suffered on the job. Yet despite this extreme hardship Michelle sees her father as having endured, she also sees a positive side to his work experience. After depicting her father's life in the shop as quoted above, Michelle continues:

And it's sad because, well [but] it's not sad! I'm really, really proud of my father, because the more discrimination that he suffered, the harder he tried. And when he retired, he was one of the top two electricians for his entire division of the Ford Motor Company!

This theme—that despite the racial prejudice suffered in the shop, or perhaps in some way because of it, the worker role came to be of central importance as a means of achieving admiration—is echoed by Jake, as well. He explains how he sees this kind of dynamic operating in his own father's life:

His whole life revolved around the job.... I guess he wanted to be a "normal white person" somehow—that was very important to him. And he had to show that he was smarter than everybody else. And better at his job.... My mother and him worked at the same factory, and they'd talk about the shop all night long. They'd sit and drink and I'd just hear about "Buick, Buick, Buick."

So the factory, and the role of worker, takes a central position in their fathers' lives as constructed by Jake and Michelle in their

narratives. Unlike the American Indian heritage that was only hinted at, the worker identity that Jake's and Michelle's fathers struggled so hard to develop were quite openly discussed within the family.

Tom's situation is somewhat different, since in his case it was his mother who was the American Indian. While in many cases Native women worked outside the home, whether in professional or, more often, working-class jobs, Tom's mother was able to stay home and care for her five children, since Tom's (non-Native) father's factory job provided enough income for the family to get by on. Therefore, Tom does not have any stories about his mother trying to fit into the proletarian world of work outside the home. However, he does talk about how she worked, during the years Tom and his siblings were growing up, to practice the habits and skills of a homemaker that were valued by the dominant society. After describing his mother's efforts to maintain a clean and well-ordered home, along with her shunning of "Indian ways" even within the home, Tom offers the following sympathetic explanation for his mother's choices:

It was hard for my mother, because she was the youngest, but she was the only one who finished high school and they had by that time moved into Morristown [which was nearly all white], and so I think she tried then to be a different person, unfortunately. Which happens a lot. She tried to leave it all behind her, and pretend it never happened.¹⁹

The "it" refers to life in Indian Town, where Tom's mother had spent her early childhood years, before the family moved to nearby Morristown, and all the hardships and prejudice her family faced there.

To convey a sense of what might have been behind his mother's need to "leave it all behind her," Tom gives an example of the prejudice his mother's family had suffered in Indian Town:

My Great-Aunt Grace talked constantly about how my uncle (mother's brother) would be arrested. The local police would just come up and say "Oh, we think you've been poaching" and they would throw him in jail.... [She also told of a time when] he had been doing work for [a white farmer] cutting wood, and [the farmer] said he could have

the wood that was on the ground. So [my uncle] hauled the wood away. Then the farmer next door came along and they started fighting. So the policeman threw [my uncle] in jail and then he asked the white farmer [for whom the uncle had been working] what had happened.... So there were some pretty strong memories there.²⁰

He adds that this type of prejudice followed his mother even to Riverton, because "the Ku Klux Klan was very strong in this area," and the house that his parents bought in Riverton in 1940

had a deed restriction against selling it to American Indians. It was, of course, legal at that time. They could have taken [my parents'] home away from them in court because she was Indian. So she apparently had a lot of contact with the law that was very bad.²¹

Thus, the recognition of the hardships and difficulties that his American Indian parent had faced, and the choices she made as a result, seems to be helpful to Tom as he struggles to understand why his mother had always been so reluctant to discuss, or even acknowledge, her Chippewa heritage. Even something as seemingly positive as her own mother's impressive success as a traditional Chippewa healer, for both Natives and whites around Morristown, was a source of great conflict for Tom's mother. As Tom found when he did some oral historical research as an adult into his mother's family background, his maternal grandmother had used indigenous spiritual practices as well as medicinal remedies, and when Tom tried to discuss this with his mother, already in her seventies at the time, he found that

she has a real problem because she wants to identify as being a Christian, and so she still has problems talking about [her mother's Native spiritual beliefs and practices]. So it has been very difficult for her. And none of the other family members have spoken about.... none of my mother's brothers and sisters ever mentioned their mom.²²

He reports that he has been at least partially successful more recently in getting his mother to discuss her mother's healing practices and other matters of traditional spirituality, but it has not been easy—he has really had to "drag it out of her."

Tom's recollections of his mother during his childhood years depict her as resolute in her determination to be a Christian and a Euro-American-style homemaker and mother, and to have nothing to do with the "Indian ways" her own mother and other relatives had practiced. Despite the interest Tom has developed as an adult in his Chippewa heritage, and therefore the sense of loss he feels at having not been "raised Indian" in a more overt manner, he concedes that his childhood was no doubt eased by having a mother that was more or less like those of his non-Native friends.

Thus, Michelle, Jake, and Tom (and Doris, as well) each recognize, looking back, the benefits they reaped as a result of their Native parents' efforts to be like "normal white people" and in so doing to give their children, insofar as was possible, the chance to live the lives of "normal white people." These urban-raised American Indians had a level of financial security while growing up that had been entirely unavailable to their parents during their own childhood years. This financial stability led to opportunities in adult life for this generation as well. While Jake chose to follow in his parents' footsteps and has worked for twenty-five years at the same Buick plant where they worked (and that they talked about incessantly while he was growing up—"Sometimes I think they loved the shop more than they loved me"), the other three all obtained college degrees. Michelle now has a professional career as a substance abuse counselor, Doris works as an accountant for a large corporation, and, as mentioned previously, Tom went on to earn an MBA and has become a successful businessman.

These second-generation urban Anishinaabe, as well as many other urban-raised American Indian people with whom I talked, are well aware that their lives are considerably better, in material terms, than their Indian parents' lives have been, in large part due to the hard work and sacrifices of those parents. That is, urban-raised Indian people such as Jake, Michelle, and Doris see the *worker* identity their fathers developed (or, in Tom's case, his mother's choice to devote herself to being a homemaker, thus providing a "good home" for her children) as a key factor in allowing them to enjoy the benefits they did. But they see their parents' worker identity as having come at the price of their Indian identity. Becoming "like a normal white person" at work (in the shop and in the home)—the means of succeeding and providing a good life for their children—also meant "putting away," in the phrase of one interviewee, their American Indian

ways. However, despite the considerable constraints on the Indian identity of their parents, each of the second-generation people being profiled here also refers to at least some shred of a "positive identity" about being Native American that was conveyed by their Indian parent when they were growing up.

One such instance has already been quoted—I refer to Michelle's father's having told her to "hold [her] head up high" and "be proud" of who she was. Although her father did not actually *tell* her on that occasion "who she was," she did pick up enough hints from these and other incidents to have some sense that she was somehow "Indian." So, on another occasion during her childhood, after having seen Indian people on television portrayed as blood-thirsty savages, she remembers asking her father straight out, "Are we Indian?" His response, Michelle reports, was to say, "Yes, we are. But not like they show on TV." Michelle adds that then, "he just let it go at that"—that the topic was not "open for discussion." Yet Michelle at least was able to get confirmation that they were Indian, and reassurance that that did *not* mean they were like the "Indians" portrayed so negatively on television.

Tom reports that despite his mother's reluctance to talk about the *spiritual* (and therefore non-Christian) aspects of her mother's healing practices, she was very proud of her mother's ability to effect cures for *physical* ailments and illnesses and to deliver babies, using traditional Chippewa herbal remedies and techniques. He says, "I recall many times when my mother talked about her mom, because of her mom going around healing people." Tom explains that the fact that his grandmother healed by traditional Indian means was very important to his mother because many of the grandmother's patients were white people who either could not get a white doctor to come to their small town or who had tried a conventional (non-Native) medical treatment that had failed. He reports that his mother was quick to point out, with pride, that her mother had a very high success rate with these patients, using the *Indian* ways.

Finally, even Jake's father had some positive things to say about Indians (although he still never admitted to *being* one). Jake describes how his father would

express admiration for things Indian. He would talk about the way an Indian would do something in the woods, or ... about hunting game. Things like that. Or he would talk about the way they lived ... in the old days.

Furthermore, Jake reports that his father would talk about how some day, "our society as a whole" is going to collapse, and then "the people up north will be strong again." Jake explains that this was an old Chippewa belief, that the Indian people would have to teach the Whiteman how to live. But, he says, his father "never acknowledged that it was an Indian belief"; still, he did express in veiled form (substituting "the people up north" for "Indians") his admiration for the traditional ways of his Chippewa ancestors.

These examples of times during childhood when the interviewees' parents showed pride in their American Indian heritage, exhorted their children to have pride, or simply expressed positive attitudes about Indian people and culture in general were not directly elicited by me. That is, none of the statements quoted in this section was in answer to a question of mine such as: "Can you think of a time when your parent ever showed pride in his/her American Indian heritage?" Rather, as we talked,²³ these statements seemed to arise unbidden as a sort of counterpoint to the predominant themes that pervaded the narratives—themes of the confusion that interviewees had felt about their identity, their frustration at their parents' unwillingness to discuss such issues directly, and the deep empathy they felt for the hardships their parents had endured both in the "present" (of the interviewees' childhood) and in the parents' own childhood. Clearly, as part of their need to "fill the holes in their hearts," these urban-raised Anishinaabe people need to find some hint of positive identity in their childhood experience, however oblique or fleeting. This no doubt allows them some sense of continuity between a past characterized most strongly by its lack of a positive Indian identity, and a present in which such an identity has come to have central importance.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

All of the people considered here—Jake, Michelle, Tom, and Doris—speak readily, easily, and proudly about their Native American heritage, and seek ways to express that heritage in the context of Riverton's Indian community. And yet they also speak—sometimes with resentment and bitterness, sometimes with compassion and understanding—of their parents' and other older relatives' failure to acknowledge openly the

American Indian heritage that has now become a cause of such pride. Their narratives of these Indian parents and other relatives portray a poignant image: one of American Indian people who sought a better life for their families and struggled, in the often hostile environment of the Riverton of the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, to develop a new identity—that of an intelligent, competent, Christian, and generally assimilated worker and member of mainstream society. But their children also tell the story of how their parents' Indianness could not be completely eradicated. These are *not* the grown children of assimilated Indians who had succeeded in becoming “normal white people”—who really did “leave it all behind.” They describe childhood memories freighted with clues, hints, and traces of an Indian heritage that was not discussed. They speak of the dark coloring and Indian features of their parent (and in some cases of themselves as well); trips to “see some Indians” in a faraway community, and other visits closer to home where a “funny language” was spoken; admonitions to stay away from Indians as well as exhortations to “be proud”; cryptic denials of being Indian and equally cryptic acknowledgments that they were Indian.

None of the people profiled here, and few of the dozens of other second-generation urban Indian people I talked with, ever “learned about their heritage” in a straightforward way from their Indian parent or other older relatives. The elder generation conveyed a reticence on this topic that was readily perceived by the children—this was not a subject to be pursued. This was a topic on which they must remain *silent*, as their parents remained silent. And yet these adult children of American Indians who migrated to Riverton now convey, in their present-day narratives, a strong sense of the confusion and ambivalence that characterized their childhood experience of their ethnic and racial heritage. The absences that the second-generation people now perceive as having made “holes” in their “hearts” are also presences. That is, far from being unconditionally “empty” or “silent,” these absences are filled with a cacophony of competing messages—a mix of shame and pride, rejection and acceptance, whispering of something “lost” but not saying what it was. So now, in their adult lives, these men and women speak of their efforts to determine what it is they lost and to reclaim it—of how they seek to replace that powerful silence of their childhood experience with the powerful voice of a strong, positive American Indian identity.

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NOTES

1. "Michelle Duncan" (not her real name) is one of those profiled in this article. I have changed the names of all persons quoted and referred to herein (as well as the name of the city and county where they live, and other potentially identifying information) in order to protect the anonymity I promised those who participated in my study. I have chosen pseudonyms that conform to the kinds of last names most American Indian people in "Riverton" have—names of Western European origin (mostly English, French, Scottish and German), due to the intermarriages with non-Native people that have taken place over the past two centuries in the Great Lakes area. (The other pattern—less common—is for a Native name to be retained but, unlike the custom in the Great Plains and some other parts of the United States and Canada, where an English translation is used, some variation on the Native language form of the

name is more typical of the Great Lakes area. No examples of this latter type appear in this article.) This particular quote comes from the transcript of an interview I conducted on March 28, 1995. All subsequent quotes attributed to Michelle Duncan come from this interview.

2. Notable examples are Joan Weibel-Orlando, *Indian Country, L.A.: Maintaining Ethnic Community in Complex Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); and, Edmund Danziger, *Survival and Regeneration: Detroit's American Indian Community* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991).

3. Examples include Joan Ablon, "Relocated American Indians in the San Francisco Bay Area: Social Interactions and Indian Identity," *Human Organization* 23 (1964): 296-304; James N. Kerri, "'Push' and 'Pull' Factors: Reasons for Migrations as a Factor in American Indian Urban Adjustment," *Human Organization* 35 (1976): 215-90; Alan Sorkin, *The Urban American Indian* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1978); Jack O. Waddell and O. Michael Watson, eds., *The American Indian in Urban Society* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).

4. One approach within this general trend toward attention to discourse that has been especially fruitfully applied to the anthropology of Native America (North, Central and South) is the "ethnography of speaking." First advanced by Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer in their edited volume *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989/1974), this perspective offers "a vantage point on social life as communicatively constituted and on languages as socially constituted" (p. ix). It would be impossible to do justice here to the range of works on American Indian communities that have approached language ethnographically or approached ethnography through language, but a few titles should at least suggest the variety and scope of this literature: Greg Urban, *A Discourse-Centered Approach to Culture: Native South American Myths and Rituals* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991); Joel Sherzer, *Kuna Ways of Speaking: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983); Regna Darnell and Michael K. Foster, eds., *Native North American Interaction Patterns* (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, National Museums of Canada, 1988); Keith Basso, *Portraits of 'the Whiteman': Linguistic Play and Cultural Symbols Among the Western Apache* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); and Lisa Valentine, *Making It Their Own: Severn Ojibwe Communicative Practices* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). Also, a recent journal article that focuses on the narrative event (as opposed to the narrated event) in discourse—in this case, informal storytelling—in the formation and maintenance of American Indian identity is: Theresa D. O'Neil, "Telling About Whites, Talking About Indians: Oppression, Resistance and Contemporary American Indian Identity," *Cultural Anthropology* 9:1 (February 1994): 94-126. Furthermore, a number of American Indian writers and scholars have written about the important relationship between speaking (usually in the form of the oral tradition of stories and songs) and the formation and transformation of tribal identity. Gerald Vizenor, for example, in his introduction to his collection of essays

on contemporary Native North American issues, illustrates the powerful potential that words and song have for tribal people to be “touched into being, made whole in the world” (*Word Arrows: Indians and Whites in the New Fur Trade* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978], 3).

5. One scholar who does explicitly raise the issue of silence is linguist Alton Becker who, in proposing six kinds of contextual relations that act as “constraints” on particular instances of language use, includes “silential relations, relations of a text to the unsaid and the unsayable” (“Biography of a Sentence,” in *Text, Play and Story*, ed. Edward Bruner [Washington, DC: American Ethnological Society, 1984], 136.) Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on this particular “contextual constraint.” Feminist sociolinguist Susan Gal also appreciates the potential for (women’s) silence to constrain discourse. In “draw[ing] on a cultural analysis to show how links between linguistic practices, power, and gender are themselves culturally constructed” (“Between Speech and Silence,” in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge*, ed. Micaela di Leonardo [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991], 76), Gal emphasizes that “silence, like any linguistic form, gains different meanings and has different material effects within specific institutional and cultural contexts” (ibid). Finally, ethnographic treatments of silence, though rare, do exist. For example, Richard Bauman explores the role of silence in a Quaker community (*Let Your Words Be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence Among Seventeenth Century Quakers* [Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983]); Mary Black-Rogers discusses the importance of “no-talk,” or silence, as a strategy for showing respect among Ojibwa people (“Ojibwa Power Interactions: Creating Contexts for ‘Respectful Talk’,” in *Native North American Interaction Patterns*); and in what is perhaps the best-known ethnographic treatment of silence, Keith Basso analyzes the uses and meanings of silence in Western Apache culture (“‘To Give Up on Words’: Silence in Western Apache Culture,” Chapter 5 in *Western Apache Language and Culture: Essays in Linguistic Anthropology* [Tucson and London: The University of Arizona Press, 1991], 80-98). Two other ethnographic works that, while not devoted to the topic of silence, do explore its manifestations in some detail, are Susan U. Philips’ “Warm Springs ‘Indian Time’: How the Regulation of Participation Affects the Progress of Events” (in Bauman & Sherzer’s, eds., *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, 92-109) and Regna Darnell’s “Correlates of Cree Narrative Performance” (also in Bauman and Sherzer, 315-336). Note that four of the five ethnographic works mentioned are of American Indian communities, and the fifth, while about Quakers rather than American Indians, is by a Native Americanist anthropologist. Since so little work has been done outside Native North America on silence, it is difficult to know whether Native American cultures emphasize silence more than other cultures do, or the Native Americanist tradition of anthropology has fostered such studies more than other traditions have.

6. A similar observation is made by Hank Greenspan in his study on how Holocaust survivors retell their traumatic memories (“Lives as Texts: Symptoms as Modes of Recounting in the Life Histories of Holocaust

Survivors," Chapter 8 in *Storied Lives: The Cultural Politics of Self-Understanding*, eds. George C. Rosenwald and Richard L. Ochberg [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992], 145-164). In discussing the struggle for words of these survivors, a struggle that often ends in failure, Greenspan writes: "If the silence between the words strikes us in survivors' written memoirs, where only space on a page marks its presence, it strikes harder when we can hear that silence as an abrupt halt, a gasp for breath, the agonized deliberation that may surround the choice of a single word. In embodied speech, the silence between the words becomes a fully palpable, sometimes consuming, presence" (p. 147). Although Greenspan is confronting directly the silence of his interviewees, while I am encountering a discourse by my interviewees about the silence of their elders, it is at least reasonable to speculate that the confusion and ambivalence conveyed by the people profiled in this paper reflect their experience of a silence between their elders' words that became "a fully palpable, sometimes consuming, presence."

7. Benedict Anderson discusses the many kinds of problems posed by census data. He writes, "the fiction of the census is that everyone is in it and that everyone has one—and only one—extremely clear place. No fractions." ("Census, Map, Museum," Chapter 10 in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition [London: Verso Press, 1991/1983], 166). That is, there is a conceptual problem with census categories, and this problem may be especially serious with regard to off-reservation American Indians during the early twentieth century. The U.S. government certainly had a category, "Indians," but this category of people was (and still is) the responsibility of a special branch of the federal government, the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior, which kept its own records and made its own reports. Given this "division of labor," combined with the fact that the great majority of Indian people were, in fact, still living on reservations or in large off-reservation rural communities during the first few decades of the twentieth century, the "Indian" category for counties that did not contain reservations or known historic communities must have seemed somewhat anomalous to census-takers. This problem deserves an entire article (or perhaps even an entire book!) unto itself; for now, I will simply state my suspicion that, while the category "Indian" does appear in early twentieth century records for Birmingham County, the census-takers were most likely not really "looking" for American Indian people in Birmingham County. That, combined with the strenuous efforts made by Indian people of that era to "blend in" with mainstream society, no doubt resulted in failure to count people who, by common-sense criteria, would be considered American Indian. In fact, it is certain that there were some Native Americans living in Birmingham County during the early part of the twentieth century, because there was an off-reservation community within the county limits that remained viable for at least the first few decades of the century. Additionally, there were a number of other such communities in surrounding counties (one of which is described below), and a number of the life-historical interviews I conducted with con-

temporary Native Americans in Riverton describe how their parents, grandparents, and other elder relatives grew up in these rural communities and then moved to Riverton early in the century as factory jobs started to become available. However, the general point is still valid—that the American Indian population of Birmingham County remained very small—almost negligible—between 1900 and 1940.

8. The termination period, lasting approximately from 1943 to 1961, had a devastating impact on American Indians, especially with regard to its most extreme policy—the actual termination or withdrawal of federal trust responsibilities from many Indian tribes. While few Great Lakes area tribes were formally terminated during this period, the threat loomed very large, especially since “one of the most notorious examples of the devastation caused by this policy” was the termination of the Menominee tribe in Wisconsin (*Empowering Native People* [Michigan Department of Social Services Native American Task Force Report, 1990], 29). (The tribe was eventually restored by Congress in 1973 in recognition of how disastrous the termination policy had been in this case.) Furthermore, in much of the United States, the termination policy period was also characterized by job relocation programs designed to encourage Indian people to move from reservations to urban areas where they would (presumably) “assimilate” into mainstream American society. Although Riverton was not targeted in the federal relocation program, the postwar industrial boom brought large numbers of American Indian people to Riverton and other Great Lakes area cities for factory work.

9. Like many Midwestern cities, Riverton’s main industry during this time was the manufacture of automobiles and auto-related parts.

10. This current period of federal Indian policy is generally characterized by tribes gaining greater control over their own resources. A number of tribes in the Great Lakes region have established casinos that bring in tens of millions of dollars per year. But many tribes have other businesses as well, and all are using the revenue from their businesses to provide social services for their members, offer schools for the young and retirement facilities for the elderly, and sponsor social and cultural activities for people of all ages.

11. This figure, like those for the early part of the century, is no doubt low. As Joan Weibel-Orlando points out with regard to Los Angeles’ American Indian Community (*Indian Country, L.A.*, 19-20), there continue to be problems in locating and documenting urban Indian people (for example, in Riverton, many Indian households do not have telephones), and while the recent “popularity” of American Indians is certainly encouraging more people (such as those profiled in this article) to come forward and claim a Native American identity, this is most likely more than offset by the number of Indian people (usually older, often poorer) who are not being counted.

12. This quote is from the transcript of an interview I conducted on September 25, 1995, as part of my ethnographic field research. All subsequent quotes attributed to Jake Benson are from this same transcript.

13. Although I conducted tape-recorded interviews with approximately

twenty second-generation Anishnaabe people in the Riverton area, and conversed informally with many more, in this article I am drawing primarily on only four cases. While this is a very small number in terms of "sampling," I am attempting here to convey the experience of my interviewees as richly and vividly as possible. Thus, I have chosen to explore a few cases in depth rather than a greater number more superficially. And I have chosen these particular cases because they provide especially good illustrations of themes that emerge, echo, rebound, and reverberate throughout the narratives of virtually everyone I talked with who was of this second generation of urban Indian people in Riverton. I have sought "cases that represent the typical with atypical clarity" (George Rosenwald, "A Theory of Multiple-Case Research" in *Journal of Personality* 56:1 [1988]: 32) and can only hope I have met with some measure of success.

14. Tom Richards is a member of the Riverton Indian community and was one of my interviewees. But he also participated in an "Intergenerational Family Interview Oral History Project" sponsored by a Chippewa tribe located in the general part of the state where Riverton (and more to the point, Tom's family's home community) is located. This oral history was carried out during 1995-1996, during which I served as director of the project and primary interviewer (with Crisca Bierwert serving as project consultant). Since there was some overlap between my interviewees in the Riverton area and tribal members who participated in the project, I donated some of the interviews I had collected during my dissertation research to the tribe for use in the project—with full permission of the interviewees, of course. The Kellogg Foundation, which funded the Family Interview Oral History Project, has made the transcripts available to the public by depositing them in several library collections around the Great Lakes area. In quoting from these transcripts, I have used the same pseudonyms assigned in the Oral History Project, and will indicate the origin of such quotes by referencing them as "Kellogg" in the endnote, followed by the page number(s) on which the quoted material appears in the edited collection of transcripts (prepared by Crisca Bierwert).

15. The reader will no doubt have noticed that all three interviewees introduced so far have only one Native American parent, with the other being non-Native/white. This is also the case with the fourth person profiled in this article, to be introduced below. This introduces another factor that is not being directly considered here: the distinction between those whose parents both came from Native American communities and those who have a non-Native as well as a Native parent. (I purposely avoid the "full-blood" vs. "mixed-blood" terminology, since cultural heritage is much more the issue here than strict genetics.) The question is: are the people I focus on in this article "representative" of second-generation Anishnaabe people in Riverton? My response is as follows. First, it is important to understand that the great majority of people who identify as American Indian and who grew up in Riverton are of mixed heritage. It was very common for American Indians who migrated to Riverton during the mid-century manufacturing boom to marry non-Natives/whites.

Of course, there are exceptions, and I did become acquainted with and interview urban-raised Indian people of the second generation who had grown up with two Native American parents. But my own experience has been that the great majority of first-generation American Indian migrants married non-Natives, and thus that the great majority of those in the second generation are of mixed heritage. Census reports and other demographic surveys support this impression. Thus, those profiled in this article *are* “representative” of their generation with regard to heritage. Furthermore, to the extent that I was able to get to know, and in some cases interview, urban-raised Indian people whose parents were both of Native American heritage, I found many of the same themes that are discussed in this article echoing throughout their conversations and life-historical narratives as well.

16. Kellogg, 688.

17. *Ibid.*, 689.

18. This quote comes from my fieldnotes of a conversation I had with Doris Rider and others on April 15, 1994.

19. Kellogg Project, page 691.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, 692.

22. *Ibid.*, 693.

23. I used a very unstructured interviewing style that resembled guided conversations more than formal interviews. Thus, while always sticking to general topics that I had prepared in advance, and that were the same across interviews, I allowed a fair amount of leeway within each interview for the interviewee to talk about things that were important to him or her that weren't necessarily in response to a direct, specific question.