

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Where White Men Fear to Tread: The Autobiography of Russell Means.
By Russell Means, with Marvin J. Wolf.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8x1061g7>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 20(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

1996-06-01

DOI

10.17953

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west models. They are very successful in meeting their goal in terms of demonstrating the existence of conflict and competition. Only time will tell if their concluding appeal will be acted upon: "[W]e . . . have to stop turning a blind eye to the unavoidable conclusion indicated by the evidence for two thousand years of conflict and competition all across the southwest and . . . consider its potential role in the evolution of the prehistoric Anasazi, Mogollon, and Hohokam peoples" (p. 238).

The final essay addresses macroregional relations, a topic of long-standing interest to Southwesternists. All four of the authors (R.J. McGuire, E.C. Adams, B.A. Nelson, and K.A. Spielmann) have written about Meso-American influences on the Southwest. That is the core of the discussion in this chapter, as it should be because of the overall impact of Meso-America on the region. Interactions with California, Great Basin, and Plains all receive some limited coverage. The underlying message of this chapter is that the boundaries of "the Southwest" are fuzzy at best and that if it is not a "hard-bounded" entity, then scholars need to range more widely in their research; also that a variety of subject experts should be involved in the work. This is a fitting conclusion to a volume intended to help stimulate the discussion at a multidisciplinary seminar on the pan-Southwest.

Themes in Southwest Prehistory is a valuable addition to any collection dealing with the Southwest, not just for archaeologists. The volume from the third seminar should be equally interesting and valuable.

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Where White Men Fear to Tread: The Autobiography of Russell Means. By Russell Means, with Marvin J. Wolf. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995. 554 pages. \$26.95 cloth.

I made use of *Where White Men Fear to Tread: The Autobiography of Russell Means* in my recent English Department course at Bemidji State University, "Indigenous Peoples and the Cinema, A Study of Film and Literature." The idea was to look at the evolution of a movie star; Russell Means played a major role in *The Last of the Mohicans* in 1991.

Besides, Mean's autobiography is a historical note on the American Indian Movement and describes the evolution of an Oglala

Lakota patriot. In 554 pages, including photographs, the book will provide the reader in the twenty-first century with documentation of those AIM events and a look at the individuals who really contributed to that movement and those whom the media sold as leaders to the general reading public. The reader will want to examine the photographs closely, for they prove to be essential in making sense of Means's life. Some very important individuals contributed to Means's view of the world, as an actor and as an Oglala Lakota patriot.

The book contains a powerful photograph of Crow Dog; his great-great grandson Leonard Crow Dog became AIM's spiritual adviser. There is a photo of Means at age sixteen, a senior class picture at San Leandro High School in California, where Means grew up. And there are photographs of his father and brothers in Mission, South Dakota, in 1961. The photographs become part of the long story and are juxtaposed with Means's narrative.

The photographs reveal a lot, simply because the eyes and faces, the hair and smiles are more telling than written syntax. In a photographic image of Means with his wife and two children in Cleveland in 1969, he is a cut-hair in a sports coat. Below that photo is another showing Means in long braids, with his new wife, Peggy Phelps Means. In pictures of him with his many children, Means wears earrings and braids. There also is a series of AIM photographs: Plymouth, Massachusetts, on Thanksgiving Day in 1970; AIM's seizure of BIA headquarters in Washington in 1972; AIM in Custer, South Dakota, after the killing of Wesley Bad Heart Bull; Means and Dennis Banks at the Wounded Knee trials in St. Paul, Minnesota, in the 1970s.

Means does not hold back details. In linear fashion, moving from boyhood to manhood to Hollywood acting, he tells both sides of his life story—the personal and the public—and what led up to his role as Chingachgook in the most recent film version of James Fenimore Cooper's 1826 novel *The Last of the Mohicans*. He comments, "During *Mohicans*, I fell in love with acting" (p. 517). He believes he is in a good position now to bring about change: "Working from within that tremendous venue of expression, I could become an agent for change" (p. 517).

In the chapter entitled "The Making of a Militant," Means relates his indigenous philosophy of life. "I still don't know how the Hopi water their crops," he writes, "except that they depend on the Great Mystery. That is why they pray—and why they are successful. The Hopi, like all traditional societies, know that the

earth and the stars determine what the water will do, that all three together ordain what they will do for the green things. The green things determine what will become of all other living things, including, at the bottom of the food chain, human beings. It's all a very logical, commonsense approach" (p. 124). A Hopi spokesperson once told me that they sing to the corn; that's why the corn grows with little water. Singing is a prayer, and in that sense Means's interpretation of the Hopi's relationship with the earth reinforces that idea, that spirituality.

Means's education among the Hopi is an indication of what our indigenous ancestors did before the Europeans arrived: We learned from each other. "Living with the Sinquahs, I discovered that although white people describe this as a desert, a barren place, to an Indian living in traditional ways it's the Garden of Eden. I learned how much sustenance was available from nature, and it blew me away. There I was, digging in the desert, planting seeds in the sand, then watching the plants grow and flower and yield food. It was awesome" (pp. 124–25). This is a different side of Means from the militant image presented in newspapers and on television. He was in touch with the earth, in spite of all the urban experiences that shaped his life.

But life in AIM was not easy for Means. He tries to make sense of it, of the envy and jealousy. In a yuwipi ceremony in Minnesota, "Leonard told everybody who supported him to sit close by. Then he told us quietly that when it got completely black, we were to cover our faces with our hands. He didn't say why, but a few seconds after lights-out, a cup or plate—something—came flying through the darkness and hit my knuckles hard enough to drive my hands into my face. In the blackness to my right, a woman screamed" (p. 210). What happened is difficult to understand, but Means is straightforward about the incident. More screams came in the darkness as people were hit on the head. Someone translated into English what another said, that "the spirits were angry." That "bad medicine" was present, that the spirits were throwing dishes. "Sure they were," Means writes sarcastically. The crockery had been thrown in one direction, Means discovered when the light came on—toward Leonard and his supporters. "Leaving the yuwipi I was stunned," Means says. "I had been raised to revere elders. I thought they could do no wrong that they lived lives of wisdom—and yet here were men from my own reservation . . . defiling a holy ceremony (p. 211)." It takes courage to write this honestly.

Means writes about the backstabbing and infighting and bickering in a cracking voice, "almost crying at times." These are the words of a human being who is trying to make sense of his place in the only movement, from his perspective, for indigenous survival. He admits, "During the next hours and days, I slid into a deep depression. AIM had changed my life, filled me with hope, given me the courage to quit drinking. I thought AIM could do no wrong, that we were perfect, the answer for dispossessed, disenfranchised, disrespected, and discouraged Indians everywhere" (p. 212).

Means writes about AIM's takeover of Gordon, Nebraska, about Wounded Knee, Dick Wilson, and the Sun Dance. He describes how, at the Wounded Knee trial, Judge Alfred Nichol cited U.S. government misconduct and threw out all remaining charges. A photograph of that triumphant moment in time shows Means with Dennis Banks on the steps of the federal courthouse in St. Paul, Minnesota.

I first met Russell Means in 1977 in Minneapolis, at a meeting with one of the Bellecourts and other interested AIM people. Means was interested in working with indigenous people of Central and South America. Years later, I met him again at one of the AIM powwows in St. Paul. I organized the AIM Youth Olympics at the powwows. There was an honor dance for Means, and I remember shaking his hand. He is a human being, I thought, with human weaknesses, and he is concerned with our people.

As I write, I am thinking of the current conflict in AIM. In 1994, a panel of indigenous peoples reviewed evidence against Clyde and Vern Bellecourt and banished them from AIM for life. In an article published in the *Bemidji Native American Press*, 11 November 1994, the panelists stated, "Repeatedly, the tribunal was confronted with overwhelming evidence that the Bellecourts abused and subverted American Indian people for their own personal gain." The tribunal panelists also said, "They have engineered and carried out an extensive and purposeful campaign to defame those who disagreed with them, creating an atmosphere of distrust and factionalism that aids and abets the exploitation and destruction of Native peoples." There are many more charges against the two brothers.

Means played a central role in the AIM tribunal. A statement of the tribunal dated 4 November, which was provided to *Indian Country Today* by Colorado AIM executive director Means, says, "The verdicts followed a two-year investigation. The purpose of

the prosecution was to set the record straight for all those that follow us into the next century.”

One of the criticisms of Means’s book is that not once did he bring up the issue of Leonard Peltier. I looked in the index under *p* and was disappointed. AIM leader Peltier needs no introduction. International and domestic indigenous communities know of him, of his more than twenty years in American federal prisons following a shoot-out between AIM members and FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Peltier is mentioned in a new book, *Crow Dog: Four Generations of Sioux Medicine Men*, by Leonard Crow Dog and Richard Erdoes. He also is discussed in *Live from Death Row* by Mumia Abu-Jamal, an Afro-American journalist on death row. Abu-Jamal makes mention of an infamous lockdown of the Marion Federal Penitentiary, “where the government promptly dumped a number of political prisoners, including former American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier.”

Recently, Peltier asked President Clinton for executive clemency, a sentence reduction or a pardon, but Clinton has yet to act on the request. Former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark, Peltier’s lead defense counsel, once said, “If he’s free, there is hope for the fruits of freedom and a better future.” Why didn’t Means mention Peltier, since it was a perfect opportunity to keep the case alive? Why not set the record straight on Peltier as we move into the twenty-first century? This is perhaps the major omission of *Where White Men Fear to Tread: The Autobiography of Russell Mean*.

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Winter of the Holy Iron. By Joseph Marshall III. Santa Fe, New Mexico: Red Crane Books, 1994. 295 pages. \$19.95 cloth.

The historical novel *Winter of the Holy Iron* focuses on South Dakota’s Wolf Tail Lakota Indians’ first contacts with white men and particularly, with white men’s guns. As Joseph Marshall III explains in his foreword, the “holy iron” or “mystery iron” was the name that the Lakota gave to the gun. The action of the novel takes place over a short period of time, a winter season in which Whirlwind, war leader of the Wolf Tail band, stalks the French trapper who has killed one of the tribe’s elder women.