



Western Connecticut State University
WestCollections: digitalcommons@wcsu

Social Sciences Faculty Papers

Social Sciences

Summer 1995

Ethnohistory Of The Paugussett Tribes: An Exercise In Research Methodology

Laurie Weinstein Dr

Western Connecticut State University, weinsteinl@wcsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.wcsu.edu/socialscipaper>



Part of the [Other Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Weinstein, Laurie Dr, "Ethnohistory Of The Paugussett Tribes: An Exercise In Research Methodology" (1995). *Social Sciences Faculty Papers*. 1.

<https://repository.wcsu.edu/socialscipaper/1>

of a most unusual New England town, and he has done so without neglecting broader historical currents or rushing to harsh judgments. He faults white New Englanders, including those who worked on behalf of the Stockbridge Mohicans, for their Calvinist rigidities and in some instances material greed, but he also admits that many whites offered “genuine demonstrations of charity and concern for the Indians” (244). As such, a few of the Mohicans, despite Cooper’s musings, did survive into succeeding centuries. Frazier thus has successfully recounted the real story of the Mohicans and has written a useful ethnohistorical analysis in the process.

Ethnohistory of the Paugussett Tribes: An Exercise in Research Methodology. By Franz Laurens Wojciechowski. (Amsterdam: De Kiva, 1992. 286 pp., foreword, introduction, figures, appendixes, bibliography. NP.)

Laurie Weinstein, *Western Connecticut State University*

The Ethnohistory of the Paugussett Tribes is an unusually detailed text with transcripts of most major Indian land deeds. Wojciechowski should be commended for his investigative approach, which took him to many town halls, historical societies, and university libraries throughout Connecticut and New York. His ambitious task is especially noteworthy because of his background: Wojciechowski is from the Netherlands; he began devouring information on the New England Indians in 1972; and in 1980 he finally set sail for Connecticut with a mission to learn as much as he could about a “ghost tribe” called the Paugussett Indians.

This book is nearly identical to his previous work, *The Paugussett Tribes* (1985). Both works chronicle the history of the Paugussett tribes through a detailed presentation of land deeds, use the land deeds to examine boundaries between the Paugussett and other Indian groups, and discuss the gaps and problems in the anthropological and historical records about western Connecticut and eastern New York indigenous peoples. The present work differs from the 1985 book in the discussion of the politically loaded concept of “tribe” and in the addition of the ethnohistories (sociopolitical organization, subsistence strategies, etc.) of the Paugussett groups.

My major criticism of Wojciechowski’s works is his use of the word *tribe*. He assumes that the Paugussett proper, Pequannock, Potatuck, and Weantinock should all be lumped under “Paugussett tribes.” He bases this designation on two fairly old texts (Hodge 1907–1910; Swanton 1952) and a 1979 publication of the Connecticut Indian Affairs Council (Guillette). Although his deed research illustrates many of the numerous connections

between the groups, these data need to be brought out more in support of his assumption in both the introductory and concluding chapters. This clarification is especially important now, since one faction of the Paugussett, headed by Quiet Hawk, has filed numerous land suits against many Connecticut towns. Their suits rest on the assertion that these four groups, do, in fact, represent one people.

Despite the sometimes cumbersome presentation of data (the book reads as an encyclopedia of land deeds) and assumptions, the book is nevertheless an important addition to the literature. Wojciechowski has collected a vast amount of information that will be an important asset to scholars for years to come.

The American Indian and the End of the Confederacy, 1836–1866. By Annie Heloise Abel. Introduction by Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993. 419 pp., preface, introduction, bibliography, index. \$12.95.)

Kimberly S. Hanger, *University of Tulsa*

Originally published in 1925 as *The American Indian under Reconstruction*, Annie Heloise Abel's *American Indian and the End of the Confederacy, 1863–1866*, is the last in her trilogy *Slaveholding Indians*. Reprinted in paperback form as part of the Bison Book series, the trilogy assesses the effect of the Civil War on the southern Indians, in particular what are known as the Five Civilized Tribes. In the third book Abel focuses on the last years of the Civil War, when the Confederate cause—with which the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles had aligned themselves—was in decline. Abel begins with the onset of defeat for the Confederacy and its Indian allies and concludes with the signing of the Reconstruction Treaties of 1866 between the victorious Federal government and the five southern tribes. Abel argues that these treaties marked the end of the process of reconstruction and the start of a new relationship between the two parties.

Abel emphasizes the political and diplomatic aspects of this readjustment process, largely ignoring social and economic transformations. Continuing a theme evident in the other two volumes, Abel criticizes the United States government not only for neglecting the Indians but also for failing to win their allegiance in the first place, to provide protection within Indian Territory, and to care for refugees who fled to Union-held Kansas. Once the war was over, politicians and entrepreneurs tried successfully to encroach upon the landholdings and political sovereignty of

Copyright of Ethnohistory is the property of Duke University Press and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.