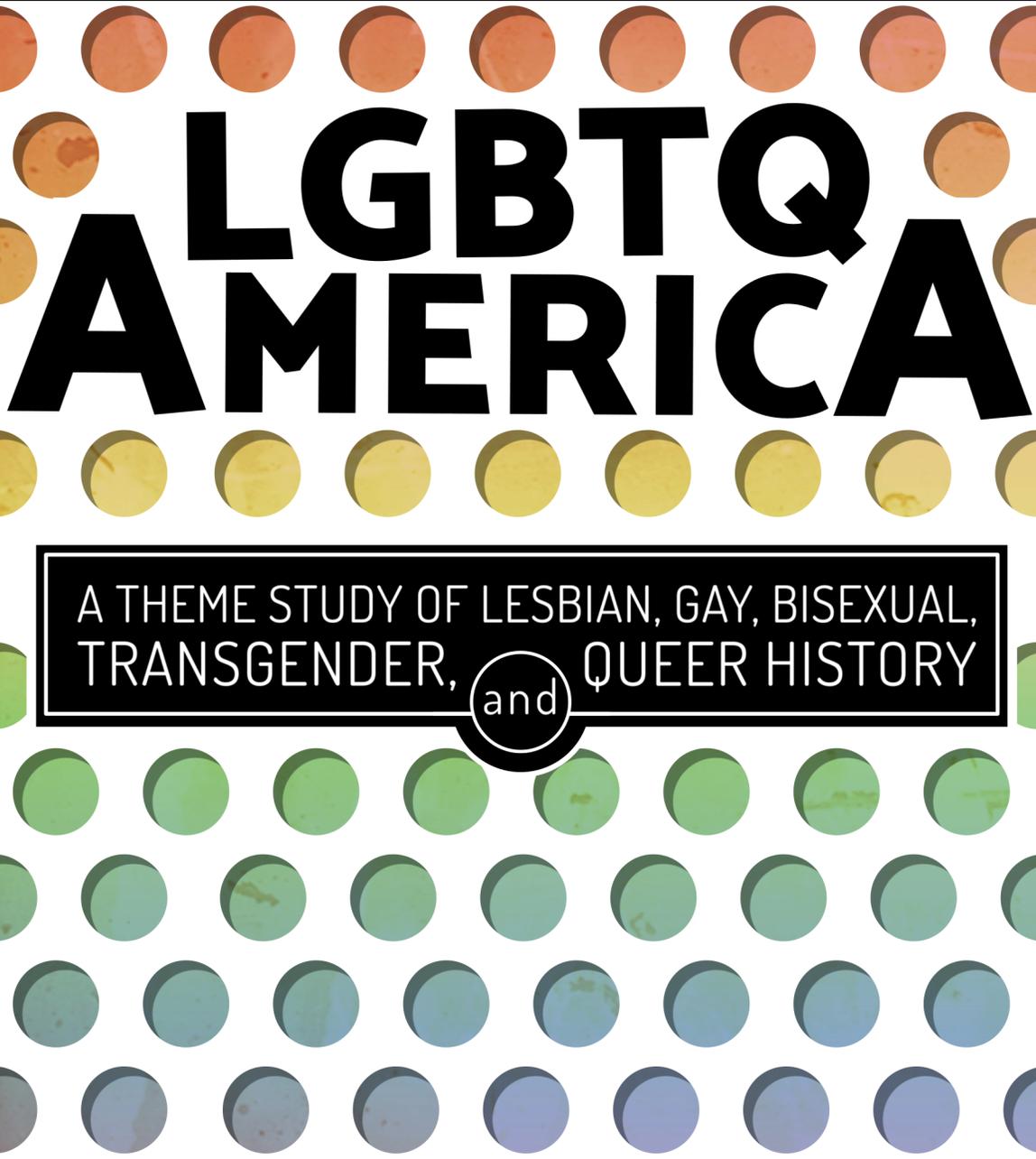


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LGBTQ AMERICA

A THEME STUDY OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL,
TRANSGENDER, and QUEER HISTORY

Edited by Megan E. Springate



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INCLUSIVE STORIES



Although scholars of LGBTQ history have generally been inclusive of women, the working classes, and gender-nonconforming people, the narrative that is found in mainstream media and that many people think of when they think of LGBTQ history is overwhelmingly white, middle-class, male, and has been focused on urban communities. While these are important histories, they do not present a full picture of LGBTQ history. To include other communities, we asked the authors to look beyond the more well-known stories. Inclusion within each chapter, however, isn't enough to describe the geographic, economic, legal, and other cultural factors that shaped these diverse histories. Therefore, we commissioned chapters providing broad historical contexts for two spirit, transgender, Latino/a, African American Pacific Islander, and bisexual communities. These chapters, read in concert with the chapter on intersectionality, serve as examples of rich, multi-faceted narrative within a fuller history of the United States.

SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY IN NATIVE AMERICA AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Will Roscoe

This chapter provides an introduction to the significant diversity in gender roles, sexualities, and identities among the native peoples of the United States—American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and native Hawaiians. Following an overview of the varying characteristics, roles, and meanings attributed to sexual and gender diversity in native traditions, the lives of four historical two spirits who played notable roles in American history are explored.

Two Spirits in Native Tradition: Roles, Genders, Identities, and Diversity

In 1564, René Goulaine de Laudonnière arrived in Florida to assert French claims to the region, homeland of the village-dwelling Timucua

people.¹ On a forced march through the dense Florida woodlands, his party found itself exhausted and far from its destination. At that moment, he reported, “We met an Indian woman of tall stature, which also was an Hermaphrodite, who came before us with a great vessell full of cleere fountaine water, wherwith she greatly refreshed us.... And I beleieve that without the succour of that Indian Hermaphrodite... we had taken up our lodging all night in the wood.”² Later he encountered another “hermaphrodite” serving as an emissary of a Timucuan king.

The artist Jacques Le Moyne, who accompanied the expedition, painted two pictures of these “hermaphrodites,” published as engravings in 1591



Figure 1: “Employments of the Hermaphrodites,” engraving based on a watercolor by Jacques Le Moyne depicting Timucuan two spirits, published by Theodore De Bry, 1591. Source: Charles Bourel de La Roncière, ed., *La Floride Française: Scènes de la Vie Indienne Peintes en 1564* (Paris: Les Éditions Nationales, 1928), plate 17.

¹ Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve, Florida (National Preserve established and listed on the NRHP on February 16, 1988); Fort Caroline National Memorial, Florida (established January 16, 1953; listed on the NRHP on October 15, 1966).

² René Goulaine de Laudonnière, in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation....* vol. 9, 1-100, ed. Richard Hakluyt (Glasgow, Scotland: James MacLehose and Sons, 1904), 16, 56, 69.

(Figure 1). One depicts four long-haired men carrying corpses on stretchers, while two others carry sick or injured persons on their backs. According to Le Moyne, because they were strong, hermaphrodites accompanied warriors to battle, carrying provisions and tending to the injured.³

The multiplicity of gender and sexuality among native peoples was noted as early as 1540 along the Colorado River by Alarcón, in the 1770s, in Hawai'i by Cook's third expedition, and in the same decade by Russian explorers in Alaska.⁴ Sadly, the gestures of friendship made by the Timucuan hermaphrodite and others in these early encounters were often met with condemnation and violence—epitomized by the grizzly episode in 1513 when Vasco Núñez de Balboa had forty two spirits in Panama thrown to his dogs.⁵

The term hermaphrodite was often used by Europeans to describe native people they encountered who appeared to be crossing or mixing genders. In fact, the striking individual that gave Laudonnière “succour” represents traditions with no counterpart in European societies—belief systems in which gender is not limited to “man” and “woman,” and sexuality is not constrained to relationships between “opposite” genders defined by anatomical sex. Europeans had no single term for these multidimensional identities—and, indeed, the sheer diversity of Native American and Pacific Island cultures makes the use of any umbrella term problematic.

³ Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, *Brevis Narratio Eorum quae in Florida Americae Provicina Gallis Acciderunt, Secunda in illam Navigatione, duce Renato de Laudoniere Classis Praefecto Anno MDLXIII; quae est Secunda pars Americae*, ed. Theodore de Bry (Frankfurt, Germany: Theodore de Bry, 1591), pl. 17, 23.

⁴ Fernando Alarcón, “Report of Alarcon's Expedition,” in *Narratives of the Coronado Expedition 1540–1542*, ed. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, 124–155 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), 130, 148; Robert J. Morris, “*Aikāne*: Accounts of Hawaiian Same-Sex Relationships in the Journals of Captain Cook's Third Voyage (1776–80),” *Journal of Homosexuality* 19, no. 4 (1990): 21–54; and Stephen O. Murray, “The Traditional Kodiak and Aleutian Islanders' Non-Sacralized Trans-generational, Trans-gender role,” ed. Stephen O. Murray, *Oceanic Homosexualities* (New York: Garland, 1992), 341–352.

⁵ Peter Martyr, “De Orbe Novo Petri Martyris ab Angleria, Mediolanensis Protonotarii Caesaris Senatoris Decades,” *Opera*, facs. ed. (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck and Verlagsanstalt, [1516] 1966), 106.

One finds an array of terminology in Euro-American accounts. To describe what appeared to be a mixing of genders, some of the earliest explorers evoked the figure of Hermaphroditos from Greco-Roman mythology. In Renaissance Europe, “hermaphrodite” could indicate intersexuality, androgyny, or homosexuality. Others singled out what they saw as the sexuality of the males they observed and deemed them “sodomites”—men who committed an abominable act. Throughout the contact period the terminology used by Euro-Americans alternated between this dichotomy of gender and sexuality. As a Spanish explorer of California in 1775 wrote, “I inferred they must be hermaphrodites, but from what I learned later I understood that they were sodomites.”⁶

The word “berdache” is believed to have been introduced by the French, although only one published use of it in reference to Native Americans occurs before 1800.⁷ At the time, versions of “berdache” were current in several western European languages, referring to a younger or subordinate partner in a male homosexual relationship. In Canada and the Mississippi Valley it became an intercultural or “frontier” term used by both French speakers and Native Americans to identify a social role common among various tribes.⁸ From the Mississippi Valley its use spread into the Plains and Rocky Mountain regions, and in the early nineteenth century, Métis *voyageurs* from Canada introduced it into the Chinook jargon, a pidgin trade language used along the lower Columbia River.⁹ In some instances it was used as a personal name (see the account of Qánqon below). When anthropologists heard it spoken by both whites and natives they recorded it using a variety of spellings—bardache, berdache, bird-ash, bredache, and so forth—and identified it merely as French-

⁶ Pedro Font, *Font's Complete Diary: A Chronicle of the Founding of San Francisco*, trans. Herbert E. Bolton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1931), 105.

⁷ Pierre Deliette, “The Memoir of Pierre Liette,” in *The Western Country in the 17th Century: The Memoirs of Lamothe Cadillac and Pierre Liette*, ed. Milo Milton Quaife, 87-174 (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1947), 124.

⁸ John F. McDermott, “A Glossary of Mississippi Valley French, 1673-1850,” *Washington University Studies, Language and Literature*, n.s., 12 (1941): 22-23.

⁹ See “Chinook Jargon Phrase Book,” accessed August 28, 2015, <http://www.fortlangley.ca/chinook%20jargon/people.html#engl>

Canadian in origin, unaware of its longer history in European, Arabic, and Persian languages.¹⁰

In the twentieth century, “berdache” became the standard anthropological term for alternative gender roles among Native Americans. By the 1980s, however, its inappropriateness, as articulated by scholars and community members, led to a search for new terminology. “Two spirit” was coined at a gathering of Native American and First Nations people in 1990 and embraced for its connotations of balancing or combining male and female qualities. In 1993 a conference sponsored by the Wenner-Gren Foundation brought together anthropologists, native scholars, and community members who adopted a formal statement endorsing its use.¹¹ Today, “two spirit” (sometimes rendered as “two-spirited”) is used in reference to both male-bodied and female-bodied native people who mix, cross, or combine the standard roles of men and women.¹²

Two-spirit males have been documented in at least 155 tribes; in about a third of these a recognized status for females who adopted a masculine

¹⁰ See Will Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 7, 249; Randy P. Conner, *Blossom of Bone* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 186–187.

¹¹ Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, chap. 5; Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas, and Sabine Lang, eds., *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); and “Revisiting the ‘North American Berdache’ Empirically and Theoretically: A Wenner-Gren Conference,” November 17–21, 1993, Quality Inn, 1900 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, DC.

¹² “Two spirit” has been widely embraced but some commentators have pointed to its limitations. In many tribal belief systems all individuals are understood to combine male and female modes of being, whether intellectually, psychologically, socially, or ceremonially. In these contexts, identifying specific tribal members as “two spirits” implies that they achieve this balance while others do not, which can lead to confusion and division. In other cases, when “two spirit” is translated back into native languages it acquires unintended meanings (see Bea Medicine and Sue-Ellen Jacobs, eds., *Learning to Be an Anthropologist and Remaining “Native”: Selected Writings* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001], 147–148). Yet others have noted the way in which its use fosters blanket statements about the universal presence and social acceptance of “two spirit people.” The case for presence and status needs to be established for each tribe through careful research grounded in written and oral sources. As the dialogue among scholars and in native communities evolves, the most encompassing way to identify the subject of this chapter is “two-spirit/LGBTQ” native people. For additional discussion, see Wesley Thomas and Sue-Ellen Jacobs, “...And We Are Still Here”: From *Berdache* to Two-Spirit People,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*: 1999, 23 no. 2 (1993): 91-107; Joseph Gilley, *Becoming Two-Spirited: Gay Identity and Social Acceptance in Indian Country* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); and the various contributors to Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang, *Two-Spirit People*. For a discussion of the interrelationships of white colonialism, modern queer identity, and two-spirit activism, see Scott L. Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).



lifestyle existed as well.¹³ Each tribal language had its own terms for such individuals and each term reflects distinct beliefs, traditions, and social customs. In Crow, a male two spirit was called *boté*, in Lakota *winkte*, in Zuni *lhamana*, in Navajo *nádleehí*.¹⁴ Terms for a female two spirit include *hwame*: in Mohave, *hetaneman* in Cheyenne (Figure 2), and *tayagigux'* in Aleut. Sometimes the same word was used for both male and female two spirits: *tw!inna'ek* in Klamath, *t'úbás* in Northern Paiute, and *tangowaip* in western Shoshone. Some of these terms can be translated as “man-woman” but many cannot. *Nádleehí*, for example, literally means “one who is changing.”¹⁵

These terms, which distinguish two spirits from men and women, have lead anthropologists, historians, and archeologists to describe two-spirit roles as alternative or multiple genders.¹⁶ Although Western cultures

¹³ For an index of anthropological and historical sources by tribe see Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, 223-247. The evidence is heavily weighted toward tribes west of the Mississippi River. Various factors account for this. Unlike the Spaniards, who sought to missionize intact native communities and often recorded details of their cultures, English settlers were singularly uninterested in the cultures of the people whose lands they were determined to occupy and recorded little about them. Indeed, Puritans such as John Winthrop conflated the entire native population with the Biblical Sodomites (Charles M. Segal and David C. Stineback, *Puritans, Indians, and Manifest Destiny* [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977], 50). By the time anthropologists began documenting native cultures in the late nineteenth century, few descendants of Eastern tribes remained with knowledge of traditional practices and beliefs. Limited, but questionable, evidence has been cited for the presence of two spirits among the Iroquois, and a single reference from 1825 suggests that male two spirits had at one time been present in Cherokee society. See Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, 250-251 and Gregory D. Smithers, “Cherokee ‘Two Spirits’: Gender, Ritual, and Spirituality in the Native South,” *Early American Studies* 3 (2014): 626-651 (Smithers offers a nuanced discussion of the challenges and opportunities for recovering two spirit traditions in the face of limited documentation using the methodology of ethnohistory). Better evidence for male and female two spirits comes from the Algonkian-speaking Illinois of the Mississippi Valley, where Marquette observed males called *ikoueta*, who engaged in women's work, assisted men on war parties, sang at ceremonies, and gave advice at tribal councils, and Lahontan noted women who refused to marry and were called *ickoue ne kioussa*, or “hunting women,” because of their preference for men's activities (Jacques Marquette, “Of the First Voyage Made by Father Marquette Toward New Mexico, and How the Idea Thereof was Conceived,” in *Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, ed. Reuben G. Thwaites, 86-163, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* 59 [Cleveland, OH: Burrows Brothers, 1900], 128-129; Louis Armand de Lahontan, *Memoires de l'Amérique Septentrionale, ou la suite des voyages de Mr. Le Baron La Hontan*, vol. 2 [Amsterdam: Jonas L'Honoré, 1705], 144).

¹⁴ The term *nádleehí* refers to an individual who is a member of the gender class *nádleeh*, see Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang, eds., *Two-Spirit People*, 15.

¹⁵ For a listing of native language terms for alternative gender roles see Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, 213-222.

¹⁶ See Roscoe, *Changing Ones*; Jacobs, Thomas, and Sabine, *Two-Spirit People*; Sabine Lang, *Men as Women, Women as Men: Changing Gender in Native American Cultures* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Sandra E. Hollimon, “The Archaeology of Nonbinary Genders in Native North American

Sexual and Gender Diversity in Native America and the Pacific Islands

assume only two genders are “natural” based on anatomical sex, many native societies are capable of accommodating three, four, and possibly more genders, or having a gender system characterized by fluidity, transformation, and individual variation.

Typically, male and female two spirits were identified in childhood based on a preference for activities of the “opposite” sex. In some tribes, entry into two spirit status was marked ceremonially. Shoshone, Ute, Kitanemuk, and Pima-Papago families staged a ritual test in which a boy was placed in a circle of brush with a bow and a basket (men’s and women’s objects, respectively). The brush was set on fire, and whichever object the boy picked up as he ran out determined his identity: if he took the basket he would be two spirit.

The occupations Le Moyne attributed to Timucuan “hermaphrodites”—conducting burial rites, caring for the ill, assisting on war parties, serving



Figure 2: Cheyenne *hetaneman*, or female two spirit, in battle wearing a man’s breechcloth. Ledger book drawing attributed to Yellow Nose, ca. 1889. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives (MS 166,032, 08709000).

Societies,” in *Handbook of Gender in Archaeology*, ed. Sarah M. Nelson (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2006), 435–450.

as intermediaries—were common to two male two spirits in many parts of North America. Perhaps the trait most often attributed to them was skill in crafts typically made by women. As Ruth Benedict noted, “The Dakota had a saying, ‘fine possessions like a berdache’s,’ and it was the epitome of praise for any woman’s household possessions.”¹⁷ Among Plains tribes, male two spirits excelled in working with hides, which were used to make everything from clothing to shelter; in California they were basket-makers; in the Southwest, weavers and potters.

In many instances, male and female two spirits were medicine people, healers, shamans, and ceremonial leaders. While these roles were not specific to two spirits, certain ceremonial functions were. Cheyenne *he’emaneo* and Mohave *alyha*: directed their tribes’ victory dances, while Crow and Hidatsa two spirits selected the tree used for construction of Sun Dance lodges. In the late nineteenth century, a Mohave female two spirit, or *hwame*:, was widely recognized as a powerful shaman able to cure venereal disease. Among Plains tribes, dreams and visions of female deities or the moon served to confirm male two-spirit identity and convey unique abilities. Some *winkte* were seers who could locate enemies at great distances, predict the weather, and foretell future events. Among the Pueblo Indians, two-spirit status was sanctioned by myths and portrayed in masked dances representing mythological figures.

Evidence for a named status for females who routinely engaged in men’s activities such as hunting and warfare comes predominantly from tribes west of the Rocky Mountains, but as noted earlier, absence of evidence cannot be taken as evidence of absence. The lives of native women have been overlooked in general and obscured by Euro-American sexual and racial stereotypes. Taking a broader view reveals that women throughout North America and the Pacific Islands often engaged in male pursuits, from hunting to warfare and tribal leadership, without necessarily acquiring a different gender identity. Some of these women deserve recognition as leaders in the Native American resistance to European

¹⁷ Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), 264.

settlement. Weetamoo, a chief of the Pocassets led a force of more than three hundred warriors against the English during King Philip's war, and the Apache warrior woman Lozen fought alongside Geronimo until his final surrender in 1886.¹⁸

Two spirits typically formed relationships with non-two-spirit individuals of the same sex, which were viewed within their own cultures as equivalent to those between men and women (but typically understood as homosexual by Euro-Americans). In the 1930s, a Navajo elder told Willard Hill, "If they marry men, it is just like two men working together."¹⁹ In the early nineteenth century, the Crow leader Woman Chief married four women following her successes in battle. Because two spirits occupied a distinct gender status, their relationships were not viewed as being same-sex. Some had relations with both men and women, and sometimes heterosexually-married men and women became two spirits on the basis of dreams or visions. (The one sexual pattern not attested is that of two spirits in sexual relationships with each other.)

Sexual and Gender Diversity in Native Hawai'i

In native Hawai'i, males who preferred the work of women and formed relationships with other men were called *māhū*, a status present in several Polynesian societies.²⁰ Christian missionaries and travelers, in their zeal to suppress what they considered immoral practices, recorded little about *māhū*, but a vibrant oral tradition credits them with a variety of

¹⁸ See Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, chap. 4. Weetamoo was present at the Great Swamp Fight in 1675 (Great Swamp State Management Area, West Kingston, Rhode Island). After drowning while attempting to escape the English 1675, her head was displayed on a pole in Taunton, Massachusetts (Taunton Green Historic District; listed on the NRHP on March 1, 1985). Key sites associated with Lozen include the Fort Apache Historic District, located on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, Arizona (listed on the NRHP on October 14, 1976), Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, St. Augustine, Florida (designated a National Monument on October 15, 1924; listed on the NRHP on October 15, 1966), and Mount Vernon Arsenal-Searcy Hospital Complex, Mount Vernon, Alabama (listed on the NRHP on May 26, 1988), where she died as a prisoner of war in 1889.

¹⁹ Willard W. Hill. "The Status of the Hermaphrodite and Transvestite in Navaho Culture," *American Anthropologist* 37 (1935): 276.

²⁰ Terms for a similar status in other Polynesian languages include *fa'afafine* in Samoan and *wakawawine* in Pukapukan. See Raleigh Watts, "The Polynesian Mahu," in *Oceanic Homosexualities*, 171–184.



significant roles, from healing, to caretaking, naming infants, and above all teaching and leading hula dance traditions.²¹

Distinct from *māhū* were men who formed *aikāne* relationships. This term is often translated as “friend” or “lover,” but in native Hawaiian it has distinctly sexual connotations. A member of the Cook expedition of 1776–1780 wrote, “It is a disagreeable circumstance to the historian that truth obliges him to inform the world of a custom among them contrary to nature, and odious to a delicate mind. . . . The custom alluded to is that of sodomy, which is very prevalent if not universal among the chiefs.”²² *Aikāne* relationships were often between older and younger, or higher and lower status men, but they could be formed by men of similar age and social status, and in traditional stories the goddess Hi’iaka has an *aikāne*.²³ Most men with *aikāne* were bisexual and married women as well. One of the legendary hero-kings of Hawaiian mythology, Kepakailiula, has an *aikāne*, and with him performs some of his most spectacular feats.²⁴

The Cook expedition had several encounters with *aikāne* of Hawaiian chiefs. In January 1779, after making landfall at Kealakekua Bay on the island of Hawai’i, Palea, an *aikāne* of the chief Kalani’opu’u, appeared as an emissary.²⁵ His negotiations with one of Cook’s officers resulted in the chief’s ceremonial visit soon after. But a month later, when Cook returned, Palea had been replaced by a rival. The embittered former *aikāne* was implicated in the theft of one of Cook’s boats, resulting in the hostilities that led to the explorer’s death.²⁶

²¹ Andrew Matzner, *‘O Au No Keia: Voice from Hawai’i’s Mahu and Transgender Communities* (n.p.: Xlibris, 2001); Carol E. Robertson, “The Māhū of Hawai’i,” *Feminist Studies* 15, no. 2 (1989): Watts, op. cit.; Mario Vargas Llosa, “The Men-Women of the Pacific,” *Tate Etc.* 2 (Autumn 2010), accessed April 4, 2015, www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/men-women-pacific.

²² Morris, “*Aikāne*,” 32; Robert J. Morris, “Same-Sex Friendships in Hawaiian Lore: Constructing the Canon,” in *Oceanic Homosexualities*, 71–102.

²³ Matzner, “*O Au No Keia*,” 222.

²⁴ Abraham Fornander, *Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk-Lore*, Memoirs of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1918–1919), 4: 384–405, 5: 498–517.

²⁵ Kealakekua Bay Historic District, Hawai’i (listed on the NRHP on December 12, 1973).

²⁶ Morris, “*Aikāne*,” 33–34.

Two Spirits Today: Renewal and Change

“Before Alcatraz,” recalled Mohawk poet Maurice Kenny, referring to the occupation of the island by Indian activists in 1969, “it was just about impossible to stand up and say who you were. If you had a job you’d get fired. Your family might disown you. You certainly would be ridiculed.”²⁷ Kenny’s 1976 essay, “Tinselled Bucks: An Historical Study of Indian Homosexuality,” and Paula Gunn Allen’s 1981 article, “Beloved Women: Lesbians in American Indian Cultures,” marked the beginning of renewed awareness of two-spirit traditions.²⁸

In 1975, Barbara Cameron (Lakota) and Randy Burns (Northern Paiute) founded Gay American Indians in San Francisco.²⁹ In addition to providing advocacy and social services, the group published *Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology* in 1988. Several contributors have since played prominent roles in fostering cultural renewal and political activism among two-spirit/LGBTQ native people, including Richard LaFortune (Anguksuar), who launched the Two Spirit Press Room in 2005, and the writers Beth Brant, Chrystos, Anne Waters, and Janice Gould.³⁰ In 1988, a conference organized by American Indian Gay and Lesbians in Minneapolis inaugurated a tradition of annual gatherings.³¹ By the 1990s, LGBTQ native organizations had appeared throughout the country, often in response to the need for services created by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

²⁷ Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, 101. Alcatraz, San Francisco Bay, California (became a National Recreation Area in 1972; listed on the NRHP on June 23, 1976; designated an NHL District on January 17, 1986).

²⁸ Maurice Kenny, “Tinselled Bucks: An Historical Study in Indian Homosexuality,” *Gay Sunshine*, nos. 26–27 (Winter 1975–76): 17–48; Paula Gunn Allen, “Lesbians in American Indian Cultures” *Conditions* 7 (1981): 65–87.

²⁹ Burns, Cameron, and other founding members met while participating in the American Indian Art Workshop at the American Indian Center, 225 Valencia Street, San Francisco, California.

³⁰ Roscoe published a bibliography of Native American LGBTQ writers in 1998 (*Changing Ones*, 279–280).

³¹ “The Basket and the Bow: A Gathering of Lesbian and Gay Native Americans,” June 18–19, 1988, American Indian Center, 1530 East Franklin Avenue and Gay 90’s Bar, 408 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota. See Megan L. McDonald, “Two-Spirits Organizing: Indigenous Two-Spirit Identity in the Twin Cities Region,” in *Queer Twin Cities*, ed. Twin Cities GLBT Oral History Project (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 150–170; See also Qwo-Li Driskill, Daniel Heath Justice, Deborah Miranda, and Lisa Tattonetti, ed., *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011).



Many who identify as two spirit today are active in intertribal powwow networks. In 2015, the Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits Powwow drew more than two thousand attendees.³² Comments from participants reveal the broad range of identities and beliefs encompassed by the term “two spirit” today. One dancer explained that “two spirit means being born with a male and a female spirit,” while for another the term is “more of a historical reminder that before colonization all of our tribes had multiple genders.”³³ In Hawai‘i there has been a similar revival of the *māhū* role.

In the 1990s, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, as it had among American Indians and Alaskan Natives, provided impetus for creating organizations reaching out to Hawaiian gay and transgender communities. Today, the



Figure 3: Hina Wong-Kalu, Hawai‘ian *kumu* (teacher), transgender woman, and *māhū*. Kumu Hina photograph by Kai Markell, 2013. Copyright Qwaves, LLC, <http://kumuhina.com>.

³² Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits Fourth Annual Two-Spirit Powwow, February 7, 2015, Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Avenue, Daly City, California.

³³ Jorge Rivas, “Native Americans Talk Gender Identity at ‘Two-Spirit’ Powwow,” *Fusion*, February 9, 2015, accessed March 22, 2015, www.fusion.net/story/46014/native-americans-talk-gender-identity-at-a-two-spirit-powwow.

term *māhū* is being reclaimed by a wide range of individuals, and some like Hina Wong-Kalu, are widely-respected as traditional *kumu*, or teachers (Figure 3).³⁴ As one contemporary *māhū* explains:

The American Indians have a really nice way of putting it. They say “two-spirited.” So I like to borrow that and apply it to *māhū*, and have it mean “two-spirited”....Because *māhū* could mean a guy who likes a guy, but is somewhat soft, and likes to have relations with the same sex. Or it could be like us [transgender]. And many, many others. So, if you’re anywhere within that two-spirited realm, the word



Figure 4: The Stones of Kapaemāhū (Nā Pōhaku Ola Kapaemāhū ā Kapuni), Kuhio Beach Park, Waikiki, Hawai‘i. Photograph by Wally Gobetz, 2010.³⁵

³⁴ According to Robertson, “The *māhū* population today embraces an astounding variety of individuals. It can designate women who dress and work as men, men who dress and work as women, women or men who dress and act so as to obscure their biological classification, women who will only associate with other women, men who dress ‘festively,’ men who undergo hormone treatments and/or eventually change their sex surgically, true hermaphrodites, and women and men who might, in English, call themselves ‘gay.’ Any of these people may choose to procreate or to raise children through the traditional adoption arrangement known as *hanai*. In fact, parents sometimes put their children in the care of *māhū*, for mixed gender individuals are recognized as special, compassionate, and creative,” (“The Māhū of Hawai‘i,” 314–315).

³⁵ License: CC BY-NC-ND 2.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wallyg/4744202959/>

māhū could apply to you. People like this have an aura...They give off both man and woman.³⁶

In Waikiki, Hawai'i, tucked between the tourist hotels lining Kalakaua Avenue, four worn boulders embedded upon a stone platform attest to the enduring presence of *māhū* traditions in Hawaiian history (Figure 4).³⁷ According to markers in English and Hawaiian, the stones were erected as monuments in the early sixteenth century at the direction of four powerful healers from Tahiti.³⁸ In Hawaiian historical accounts, these healers performed miraculous cures throughout the Hawaiian Islands. To commemorate their deeds they had these stones placed at Waikiki, transferring their *mana*, or spiritual power, to them before they returned to their homeland. The stones were named for these four priests, the most important of whom was Kapaemahu.

The element “mahu” in this name is the only trace in this account of the true significance of the stones. By supplementing written sources with oral tradition, Andrew Matzner gives a fuller telling of their history. The four priests were *māhū*—“hermaphrodites” in the earliest sources. They had both male and female appearance and manners, and this quality was the source of their powers. Today, hundreds of tourists pass by the site every day, but as Matzner notes, “The transgendered aspect at its core remains deeply buried, like a piece of history deemed unfit for consumption.”³⁹

For centuries the stones remained in place and were credited with healing the sick and protecting seagoers. When Archibald Cleghorn acquired the site in 1872 the stones had naturally settled into the sand.

³⁶ Matzner, *‘O Au No Keia*, 221.

³⁷ The Stones of Kapaemāhū, Kuhio Beach, adjacent to Waikiki City Police Station, 2425 Kalakaua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

³⁸ Mary K. Pukui, E. W. Haertig, and Catherine A. Lee, *Nana I Ke Kumu (Look to the Source)* (Honolulu: Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, 1972), 2: 108, 110; June Gutmanis, *Pohaku: Hawai'ian Stones* (Laie, HI: Institute for Polynesian Studies, Brigham Young University, Hawaii, [1986]), 33–36. Andrea Feeser speculates that they may have settled in O'ahu during the second wave of Polynesian immigration to Hawai'i, which introduced Tahitian religious and sociopolitical practices to the islands (*Waikiki: A History of Forgetting and Remembering* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 79.

³⁹ Matzner, *‘O Au No Keia*, 279; Feeser, *Waikiki*, 78–82.

Cleghorn had them unearthed and placed in a prominent setting on his estate; his wife, Princess Likelike and her daughter prayed to them whenever they went swimming. Following Cleghorn's death the stones underwent a variety of ignominies: the Moana Hotel was built behind them; in the 1920s they were buried beneath a bowling alley.⁴⁰

By the standards of many preservationists, historical significance is seen as function of what humans attribute to places and structures. The disappearance of the stones in the sands of Waikīkī Beach represents an interruption in their use that compromises their historical integrity. But for native people, as Luan Fauteck Makes Marks notes, “the Land inheres as sacred—beyond human perception and conception, beyond our capacities for belief and imagination—in and of itself.”⁴¹ This is especially true for sacred places. As Christopher H. Peters of the Seventh Generation Fund says, “If there were no humans on earth, they would still be sacred.”⁴²

Recovered in the 1960s, the Stones of Kapaemāhū, as they are known today, were relocated to their present site in 1980; in 1997, they were rededicated in a ceremony lead by the Hawaiian leader Papa Henry Auwe—and as the leis strewn upon the wrought iron fence that surrounds them today attest, for Hawaiian people the influence of the stones in their lives, that is, their spiritual power, has never been interrupted.

Two Spirits in the History of the United States

In the long history of contact between native and Euro-American peoples, two spirits have had important roles and their stories are linked to many places and sites. Q̄anqon-kámek-klaúlha (Kutenai), Ohchiish (Crow), We'wha (Zuni), and Hastíín Klah (Navajo) were each remarkable individuals who lived complex lives against the backdrop of unfolding conflict and change.

⁴⁰ Feeser, *Waikīkī*, *Ibid.*; Gutmanis, *Pohaku*, 35.

⁴¹ Luan Fauteck Makes Marks, *A Typology of Native North American Sacred Lands and Places* (Little Canada, MN: Indian Land Tenure Foundation, 2008), 45, accessed August 28, 2015,

<http://sacrednaturalsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/NaturesoftheSacredTypology.pdf>.

⁴² *Ibid.*



Qánqon-kámek-klaúlha (ca. 1780s–1837)

One of the most fascinating, if ultimately mysterious, female two spirits was the Kutenai known as Qánqon-kámek-klaúlha, Sitting-in-the-Water-Grizzly, or simply Qánqon. Born in the late 1700s along the lower Kootenai River around the border of Idaho and British Columbia, her tribe occupied a strategic area of the Northwest, the site of fierce competition between the Americans and British in the fur trade.

According to Kutenai elders interviewed in the 1930s, Qánqon's original name was One-Standing-Lodge-Pole-Woman.⁴³ Undistinguished as a child, she grew up to be large and strong. The earliest reference to her is in the journals of David Thompson of the British North West Company, who crossed the Rocky Mountains and established a trading post near the headwaters of the Columbia River in 1807. One of his men returned from a foray accompanied by a Kutenai wife. According to Thompson, her "conduct was then so loose that I had to request him to send her away to her friends."⁴⁴ This was the woman who became known as Qánqon.

When Qánqon rejoined her people she told a fantastic tale. Her white husband had "operated" on her and transformed her into a man; she now called herself Gone-to-the-Spirits. "We Indians," she said, "did not believe that white people possessed such power from the supernaturals. I can tell you that they do, greater power than we have." As a result of her experiences among the whites, Qánqon claimed to have acquired supernatural power of her own.⁴⁵

She began dressing in men's clothes and courting women, and she became interested in hunting and warfare. The Kutenai called such women *títqattek*, which has been translated as "pretending to be a

⁴³ Claude E. Schaeffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache: Courier, Guide, Prophetess, and Warrior," *Ethnohistory* 12, no. 3 (1965): 193–236.

⁴⁴ David Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative of His Explorations in Western America*, ed. J. B. Tyrrell (Toronto, Canada: The Champlain Society, 1916), 512–513.

⁴⁵ Schaeffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache," 196–197.

man.”⁴⁶ After her first war party she adopted the name Qánqon Kámek Klaufha, Sitting-in-the-Water-Grizzly. She was also known by the Europeanized name Ignace Onton.

In April 1811, the Americans established a trading post at Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River.⁴⁷ Simultaneously, David Thompson was making his way down the river from the east. Unbeknownst to him, two Kutenai Indians were traveling ahead of his party and reached Astoria before him. The Americans believed them to be a man and a woman; in fact, they were the two spirit Qánqon and her companion. They had with them a letter addressed to a trading post in British Columbia, and they claimed, somewhat dubiously, to have become lost while attempting to deliver it.⁴⁸

When David Thompson arrived at Fort Astoria in June he immediately identified Qánqon as the Indian woman once married to his aide. The Americans were unfazed. Qánqon’s glowing description of the interior and the maps she drew for them convinced them to organize an exploring party to compete with Thompson. In late June, two parties left Astoria—the Americans, guided by Qánqon and her wife, and Thompson.⁴⁹

One of the Astorians described the Kutenai women as “bold adventurous amazons....They sometimes shot ahead, and at other times loitered behind, as suited their plans. The stories they gave out among the non-suspecting and credulous natives as they passed were well calculated to astonish as well as to attract attention.”⁵⁰ Qánqon claimed that she had been sent by “the great white chief” to announce that white men were bringing the Indians wonderful presents. As they traveled upstream, the couple was eagerly greeted along the way and given generous gifts.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 224.

⁴⁷ Fort Astoria, Astoria, Oregon (contributing property to the Astoria Downtown Historic District; listed individually on the NRHP on October 15, 1966; designated an NHL on November 5, 1961).

⁴⁸ Schaeffer, “The Kutenai Female Berdache,” 202.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 212.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 206.



Eventually, they led the Americans to the confluence of the Columbia and Okanogan rivers, where the Astorians established Fort Okanogan.⁵¹

Qánqon's prophecies spread throughout the Pacific Northwest. According to the explorer John Franklin, "many young men put themselves under her command...and at length she became the principle leader of the tribe, under the designation of 'Manlike Woman.'"⁵² In the early twentieth century, Kutenai elders remembered her as a shaman as well, who on one occasion cured a chief.⁵³

In 1825, Qánqon appeared at Flathead Post in western Montana with a group of Kutenai.⁵⁴ The trader John Work described her as a "leading character among them" and called her "Bundosh"—a variation of the word "berdache." Fluent in the Flathead language, Qánqon served as an interpreter.

In 1837 she appeared at another key moment, when William Gray, who had helped establish the Whitman Mission at Walla Walla, Washington, was traveling through northwestern Montana with a group of Flathead Indians. The party encountered hostile Blackfoot and several were killed. The Flatheads were holding a victory dance when three unknown Indians appeared—two Blackfoot and a woman, whom Gray identified as "Bowdash." They were seeking a truce, with Qánqon serving as an interpreter. Gray was able to resume his journey, but several days later wrote in his journal: "We have been told that the Black Feet have killed the Kootenie woman, or Bowdash, as she is called. She has hitherto been

⁵¹ Fort Okanogan, Okanogan County, Washington (listed on the NRHP on June 4, 1973. The fort site was flooded in 1967 by the newly-formed Lake Pateros reservoir, following the construction of the Wells Dam).

⁵² John Franklin, *Narrative of a Second Expedition to the Shores of the Polar Seas in the Years 1825, 1826, and 1827* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1828), 251–252.

⁵³ Schaeffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache," 214.

⁵⁴ Flathead Post (also known as Saleesh House), Highway 200, one mile east of Thompson Falls, Montana. The location is identified by a Montana State Historical Marker.



Figure 5: Kuilix, Pend D'Oreilles (Kalispel) warrior woman, in a painting by Father Nicolas Point ca. 1846. According to Point, after advancing into enemy lines she made such a swift about face that her opponents were left "stupefied." Courtesy of The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada/Archives des jésuites au Canada (Nicolas Point, fonds).

permitted to go from all the camps, without molestation, to carry any message given her to either camp."⁵⁵

In 1916, a Flathead elder recalled his memories of the Kutenai two spirit. She was a strong woman and a great prophetess. After her success as a warrior, she became a peace messenger among the warring tribes. She was killed by the Blackfoot because they discovered that she had purposely delayed the talks in 1837 to allow the Flatheads to escape.⁵⁶

In the early nineteenth century, native women in several tribes gained renown for crossing cultures and genders. Woman Chief of the Crow led war parties, killed a grizzly bear single-handedly, and had four wives; Kuilix, a Pend d'Oreille woman who wore a British soldier's coat (Figure 5), was

⁵⁵ Schaeffer, "The Kutenai Female Berdache," 214–215.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 217.

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observed in battle by the Jesuit missionaries Pierre-Jean De Smet and Nicholas Point; and Running Eagle of the Blackfoot, joined nine raids and counted coup three times.⁵⁷

We'wha (ca. 1849–1896)

Gender diversity among the Zuni Indians of western New Mexico can be traced from prehistoric times. At the site of Hawikku, near present-day Zuni, archeologists found males buried with objects typically associated with women—a ball of clay and baskets—and in one case a woman was buried wearing both a dress and a man's dance kilt.⁵⁸

In 1879, the first expedition of the government's newly-founded Bureau of Ethnology arrived at the remote village of Zuni. Led by James Stevenson, accompanied by his wife Matilda Coxe Stevenson, the expedition was charged with collecting artifacts and recording the customs of a people considered to be both ancient and on the verge of extinction. The Stevensons encountered a striking Zuni working for the local missionaries. We'wha, Matilda Stevenson noted, "was the most intelligent person in the pueblo" with an extensive knowledge of Zuni history and culture, and therefore an excellent informant for anthropological research. But there was something unusual about We'wha. "She" was one of the tallest members of the tribe, male or female, and in Stevenson's opinion, "certainly the strongest, both mentally and physically."⁵⁹ Nonetheless, many years passed before Stevenson discovered the truth: We'wha was a man. His identity in Zuni culture was that of the *Ihamana* or two-spirit male (Figure 6).

⁵⁷ See Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, chap. 4.

⁵⁸ Watson Smith, Richard B. Woodbury, and Nathalie F. S. Woodbury, *The Excavation of Hawikuh by Frederick Webb Hodge: Report of the Hendricks-Hodge Expedition 1917–1923*, Contributions from the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, vol. 20 (New York, 1966). Hawikuh, Cibola County, New Mexico (added to the NRHP on October 15, 1966; designated an NHL on October 9, 1960; part of the Zuni-Cibola Complex NHL designated on December 2, 1974).

⁵⁹ Matilda Coxe Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians: Their Mythology, Esoteric Fraternities, and Ceremonies," *Twenty-third Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1901–1902* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), 20, 37, 310–311. Stevenson uses both male and female pronouns in referring to We'wha. We'wha's life is the subject of Will Roscoe, *The Zuni-Man Woman* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991).



Figure 6: We'wha in ceremonial dress. Photograph by John K. Hillers, Washington, DC, 1886. Courtesy of the US National Archives and Records Administration (NAI 523798).⁶⁰

The *Ihamana* role entailed complex interweavings of men's and women's traits and activities. Born around 1849, We'wha demonstrated a talent for women's work at an early age and learned pottery making from female relatives. But We'wha also excelled in weaving, which was usually done by men, and a census made in 1881 lists him as a farmer, another male role. We'wha was also a member of the men's kachina society, responsible for performing masked dances.

Stevenson formed an enduring friendship with the Zuni *Ihamana*. In 1886, she brought We'wha to live with her and James for six months in Washington, DC, where

We'wha called on President Cleveland and other political leaders and circulated in Washington society.⁶¹ All believed he was a woman. We'wha assisted Stevenson with her ethnographic research and posed for a series of photographs documenting Zuni weaving at the Smithsonian Institution and on the National Mall—one of the first uses of photography for this purpose.⁶² In fact, We'wha may be one of the first Native American artists to have signed their work—two pots in the collections of the American

⁶⁰ In the public domain: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/523798>

⁶¹ Home of James and Matilda Coxe Stevenson, 1913 N Street NW, Washington, DC (no longer extant).

⁶² Smithsonian Building, Jefferson Drive at Tenth Street SW, Washington, DC (added to the NRHP on October 15, 1966; designated an NHL on January 12, 1965), National Mall (added to the NRHP on October 15, 1966).

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Museum of Natural History bear a crude signature with a version of that name.⁶³

In 1892, six years after traveling to DC, We'wha was arrested for striking an American soldier attempting to arrest the Zuni governor. A contingent of heavily armed troops from Fort Wingate was dispatched to the pueblo and a raucous confrontation ensued. In the aftermath, key Zuni leaders, and We'wha, were arrested and imprisoned at Fort Wingate for a month.⁶⁴

Stevenson was present at We'wha's death in 1896:

We'wha asked the writer to come close and in a feeble voice she said, in English: "Mother, I am going to the other world....Tell all my friends in Washington good-by. Tell President Cleveland, my friend, good-by. Mother, love all my people; protect them; they are your children; you are their mother."⁶⁵

We'wha's death, Stevenson reported, elicited "universal regret and distress."⁶⁶ When a Zuni woman was tried by tribal authorities for having caused We'wha's death by witchcraft, soldiers were again dispatched from Fort Wingate and occupied the village for five months. These traumatic events are remembered vividly by Zunis to the present day.⁶⁷

Ohchiish, (1854-1929)

On June 17, 1876, General George Crook was leading one of three Army columns bearing down upon the hostile Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne Indians amassed under Sitting Bull when he decided to bivouac along the

⁶³ See Dwight P. Lanmon and Francis H. Harlow, *The Pottery of Zuni Pueblo* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2008).

⁶⁴ Fort Wingate Historic District, near Gallup, New Mexico (added to the NRHP on May 26, 1978).

⁶⁵ Stevenson, "The Zuñi Indians," 311-312.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 310.

⁶⁷ For a full account of the episode and its aftermath see Roscoe, *The Zuni Man-Woman*, chap. 4.

Rosebud River in southern Montana.⁶⁸ He sat down to play a game of cards with his officers. At that moment the Sioux and Cheyenne attacked.

Crook barely avoided Custer's fate, whose forces were wiped out ten days later at the Little Big Horn. In the initial fray, Crook's command was nearly overwhelmed and only the intervention of Crow warriors, who had joined his forces to



Figure 7: Ohchiish (Finds-Them-and-Kills-Them) standing in front of his cabin, wearing clothes he had prepared for his burial. Photograph by C. H. Asbury, 1928. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives (INW 00476300).

fight their traditional enemies, saved his position. Among these was the *boté* Ohchiish, a shorted form of Ohchikapdaapesh, or Finds-Them-and-Kills-Them (Figure 7).⁶⁹

Born in 1854, Ohchiish had shown interest in women's work from an early age and as an adult dressed as a woman. He enjoyed a reputation for skill in leatherwork and beading, and was credited with making the largest tipi known in the tribe, the lodge of Chief Iron Bull. Years later, a Crow woman named Pretty Shield recalled what happened that day on the Rosebud:

⁶⁸ Rosebud Battlefield—Where the Girl Saved Her Brother, near Kirby, Montana (added to the NHRP on August 21, 1972; designated an NHL on August 19, 2008). “Where the Girl Saved her Brother” is the Cheyenne name for the site, based on an incident that occurred during the battle when a Cheyenne woman, Buffalo Calf Road Woman, charged into the fray to rescue her brother. She was not a *hetaneman*, or two-spirited female, however, as indicated by her appearance in a ledger drawing depicting the event (National Anthropological Archives, MS 166.032, 08704700), where she is dressed in the typical manner of a Cheyenne woman. In contrast, the Cheyenne female depicted in Figure 2 is fighting as a *man*, bare-chested, wearing a man's breechclout.

⁶⁹ See Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, chap. 2. I follow the transcription of the name in Lillian Bullshows Hogan, *The Woman Who Loved Mankind: The Life of a Twentieth-Century Crow Elder* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012). Hogan, a Crow elder, uses both male and female pronouns in referring to Ohchiish and notes, “They don't call him ‘him’ or ‘her.’ They just say ‘a person’” (124).

Yes, a Crow woman fought with Three-stars [Crook] on the Rosebud, two of them did, for that matter; but one of them was neither a man nor a woman. She looked like a man, and yet she wore woman's clothing; and she had the heart of a woman. Besides, she did a woman's work. Her name was Finds-them-and-kills-them....

The other woman...was a wild one who had no man of her own. She was both bad and brave, this one. Her name was The-other-magpie; and she was pretty....

During the fight on the Rosebud both these women did brave deeds. When Bull-snake fell from his horse, badly wounded, Finds-them-and-kills-them dashed up to him, got down from her horse, and stood over him, shooting at the Lacota as rapidly as she could load her gun and fire. The-other-magpie rode round and round them, singing her war-song and waving her coup-stick, the only weapon she had.

When the Lacota, seeing Bull-snake on the ground, charged to take his scalp, The-other-magpie rode straight at them, waving her coup-stick. Her medicine was so strong that the Lacota turned and rode away; and Bull-snake was saved.

Both these women expected death that day. Finds-them-and-kills-them, afraid to have the Lacota find her dead with woman-clothing on her, changed them to a man's before the fighting commenced, so that if killed the Lacota would not laugh at her, lying there with a woman's clothes on her. She did not want the Lacota to believe that she was a Crow man hiding in a woman's dress, you see.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Frank B. Linderman, *Red Mother* (New York: John Day Company, 1932), 227–231.

Fighting together, Ohchiish and The-Other-Magpie killed a Lakota warrior and returned to camp bearing his scalp.

In the years that followed, the Crows faced growing pressure to abandon traditional culture. *Boté*, including Ohchiish, were singled out by government agents, school teachers, and missionaries. One agent attempted to suppress the role altogether. According to tribal historian Joe Medicine Crow, “The agent incarcerated the *badés*, cut off their hair, made them wear men’s clothing. He forced them to do manual labor, planting these trees that you see here on the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] grounds. The people were so upset with this that Chief Pretty Eagle came into Crow Agency, and told [the agent] to leave the reservation.”⁷¹

In the end, none of this seemed to affect Ohchiish. In 1919, retired Army general Hugh Scott interviewed “Woman Jim” as he was known among the local whites. Using Plains Indian sign language, Ohchiish recalled the day he fought on the Rosebud. An officer, Colonel Guy Henry, was shot in the face, and while being carried on a travois dropped into a mud hole. Ohchiish pulled him up and remembered how the gallant officer laughed at his predicament. Asked how he felt, another observer reported, Henry replied, “Bully! Never felt better in my life. Everybody is so kind.”⁷²

Hastín Klah, (1867-1937)

In November 1937, a group of Anglo-Americans and Navajo Indians gathered on a hilltop above Santa Fe to inaugurate a unique institution, the Museum of Navajo Ceremonial Art. Built at the expense of the Boston heiress, Mary Cabot Wheelwright, the museum was to be devoted to the preservation of the art and culture of the Navajo Nation. Today, the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian continues to occupy the

⁷¹ Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 179. Chief Plenty Coups (Alek-Chea-Ahoosh) Home, Pryor, Montana (added to the NRHP on October 6, 1970; designated an NHL on January 20, 1999).

⁷² Martin F. Schmitt, ed. *General George Crook: His Autobiography* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), 197.



same striking structure dedicated that day—a large-scale recreation of the traditional Navajo house, the eight-sided hogan.⁷³

The Wheelwright Museum was the result of a collaboration between two remarkable individuals, Wheelwright and perhaps the most influential two spirit in American history, the Navajo *nádleehí*, Hastíín Klah (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Hastíín Klah, weaving a sandpainting tapestry. Photograph by Dane Coolidge, ca. 1925. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (BANC PIC 1905.17171:47).

Klah was born in 1867 in western New Mexico. He showed interest in religion at an early age, and by the time he was ten he had learned his first ceremony.⁷⁴ This required memorizing long chants, mastering complex ceremonial procedures, and creating sandpaintings using ground stones and other materials depicting mythological scenes.

⁷³ Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, 704 Camino Lejo, Santa Fe, New Mexico (added to the NRHP on December 18, 1990).

⁷⁴ The following account of Klah's life is based on Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, chap. 3 and Franc Johnson Newcomb, *Hosteen Klah: Navaho Medicine Man and Sand Painter* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964).

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Klah's *nádleeh* status was confirmed when he was a teenager following his recovery from a near-fatal accident. According to his friend Francis Newcomb, he had entered a "very special category":

The Navahos believed him to be honored by the gods and to possess unusual mental capacity combining both male and female attributes. He was expected to master all the knowledge, skill, and leadership of a man and also all of the skills, ability, and intuition of a woman. Klah during his lifetime lived up to these expectations in every way.⁷⁵

As an adult, Klah dressed as a man. The anthropologist Gladys Reichard observed that "there was nothing feminine about him unless an indescribable gentleness be so called. The reasons the Navajo called him 'one-who-has-been-changed' were chiefly that he wove blankets and was not interested in women."⁷⁶ He mastered the skills of weaving smooth, finely patterned rugs, and in 1893 he was invited to demonstrate his craft at New Mexico's exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.⁷⁷

When Arthur and Francis (known to friends as Franc) Newcomb took over a remote trading post near Klah's home in 1914, he was a prominent figure in the area. Whereas most medicine men learned one or two ceremonies in a lifetime, Klah mastered eight.⁷⁸ At his first Yeibichai dance in 1917, Newcomb estimated that nearly two thousand Indians from several tribes attended. Klah distributed goods and sheep representing one-third of his worldly wealth and declared his intention to devote his life to spiritual concerns.

In 1919, Franc Newcomb proposed that Klah incorporate sandpainting designs into his weavings. "I assured him that a blanket of this type would never be used on the floor but would be hung on the wall of some

⁷⁵ Newcomb, *Hosteen Klah*, 97.

⁷⁶ Gladys A. Reichard, "Individualism and Mythological Style," *Journal of American Folklore* 57 (1944): 23.

⁷⁷ Burnham Park, Lakefront and Northerly Island, 5491 South Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois.

⁷⁸ James C. Faris, *The Nightway: A History and a History of Documentation of a Navajo Ceremonial* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990), 87.



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museum. He said he would think about it.”⁷⁹ Klah’s first sandpainting tapestry created a stir. Because of its religious content, some Navajos demanded that it be destroyed. Klah believed that his powers as a medicine man could protect him. His tapestries were an immediate success. In the midst of the Depression, they sold for as much as five thousand dollars. Most are now in museums. Klah’s bold innovation helped transform what had been a craft into a fine art.

Wheelwright’s friendship with Klah began in 1921 soon after she purchased one of his weavings. In 1931, when Klah’s assistant died, it was a bitter disappointment. In his sixties, he no longer had time to train another student. Wheelwright asked him if he would be willing to place his ceremonial equipment and weavings in a place where they would be preserved and could be studied. Klah agreed and plans were begun for the museum in Santa Fe.

In 1934, Klah returned to Chicago to demonstrate sandpainting and display his tapestries at the Century of Progress International Exhibition.⁸⁰ En route, a newspaper reporter asked him for his impression of Americans. Klah replied:

The Americans hurry too much. All the time you hurry and worry how you are going to hurry and worry more. You go thru life so fast you can’t see beauty. I live the way I did when I came here first in 1893. I am happy. That is why I come. I want to show the white people that I am happier than they are because I don’t have all those things to worry about.⁸¹

Hastíin Klah died at the age of seventy in February 1937, a few months before the dedication of the museum he helped envision.

⁷⁹ Newcomb, *Hosteen Klah*, 157.

⁸⁰ Jackson Park, 6401 South Stony Island Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

⁸¹ Roscoe, *Changing Ones*, 57.

Conclusion: History Matters

Knowledge of the sexual and gender diversity of American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and native Hawaiians has real implications for Americans of all backgrounds. The 2010 film *Two Spirits* relates the story of a young Navajo named Fred Martinez, Jr.⁸² As a teenager in Cortez, Colorado, Fred expressed many of the mix-gender traits and temperament typical of a traditional *nádhleeh*. In the film his mother recalls, “He’s the kind of person so willing to give what he has. If he seen somebody, a boy that has a shoe that’s not good...‘I got lots of shoes, I got lots of shirts. Let me give this to them.’ He would give it to them.” Fred wore makeup and often used female names. His mother supported him, but living off the reservation he had no access to traditional extended family support systems or mentoring. Nor did school officials intervene when he was subjected to bullying. Tragically, as the film relates, Fred was murdered in 2001 by a young Anglo man in a brutal hate crime.

The incident shocked the community, and in its aftermath the local high school changed its dress code and instituted anti-bullying programs to protect gay and transgender children, while local law enforcement officials gained awareness of the seriousness of crimes motivated by homophobia and transphobia. But another lesson is to be learned, as well. Two-spirit/LGBTQ history not only challenges stereotypes and transforms prejudice, it provides the path to self-esteem, empowerment, and community for two-spirit/LGBTQ native people, while the stories of two-spirit males and females in American history teach us all about sexual and gender diversity and the ways in which these differences make distinctive cultural and historical contributions.

⁸² Lydia Nibley and Russell Martin, *Two Spirits* (Los Angeles: Independent Lens/Riding the Tiger Productions, LLC, 2010), DVD.

