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# Genocide of Native Americans: Historical Facts and Historiographic Debates

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# **Genocide** of **Indigenous** **Peoples**

**Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review**  
*Volume 8*

**Samuel Totten and**  
**Robert K. Hitchcock**  
editors



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# 1

## **Genocide of Native Americans: Historical Facts and Historiographic Debates**

*Brenden Rensink*

### **Introduction**

One of the most sobering themes that underlie North American history is the demographic collapse that Euro-American contact initiated among many of the continent's indigenous peoples. As twentieth-century scholars consider the post-contact unfolding of Euro-American and Native American histories and the ways in which they have become inextricably intertwined, their oft-divergent trajectories raise immediate questions of causality. There is no doubt that contact with Euro-Americans served as the catalyst for sea changes in Native America, but the demographic decline apparent in historical retrospect was not an inevitable outcome to be imposed upon historical actors or events. To presume that the tragic fate of many indigenous peoples was unavoidable precludes carrying out any inquiry into the causal relationships between cultures, empires, and individuals.

This chapter explores some prominent issues in the field of Native American studies germane to the field of genocide studies. The primary foci are upon philosophical debates, historiographic trends, and the relative virtues and challenges presented by the current body of scholarship. The accompanying set of annotated

entries considers both sides of this spectrum: the praiseworthy and the problematic. Doing so should provide a clearer picture of the state of Native American genocide studies.

### **Troublesome Trends**

While many historical events could be investigated within the framework of comparative genocide studies, recent trends in Native American genocide research have often been deterred from such prolificacy. Worthwhile scholarship has not been altogether arrested, but rather, impeded. Foremost, debates and arguments over the very definition of “genocide,” and whether it should be applied to Native American history have overwhelmed the scholastic vigor of aspects of the field of genocide studies. On one hand, historians dedicate energy extolling their reasons for terming events as genocide and on the other critics lambaste such efforts. Israel Charny (1996) feared that “such intense concern with establishing the boundaries of a definition” might ultimately downplay the historical realities of human tragedy or infamy (p. ix). While using genocidal terminology too liberally can prove equally damaging to useful scholarship, excessive definitionalism must not come at the cost of moving scholarship forward. Some Native American scholarship focusing on genocide oscillates between two opposing camps: those that devote energy simply to proving that genocide did occur in Native American history and those that more liberally apply the concept of genocide without sufficient analytical support.

#### *Political Activist Foundations*

An emotive a subject as any, the ongoing and intense debate and contrasting opinions in genocide scholarship should be no surprise, but the polemical tone which some of this dialog has incorporated is troubling. The genesis of this trend lies in the political activist foundations that underpin much of the contemporary Native American studies field. In the late 1960s, a new brand of Native American political activity, identity and call for Native self-determination gave birth to a prolific body of literature. Much of

this literature pointed to historical narratives for support of their political causes.

Prominent and influential figures such as the late Vine Deloria, Jr., who wrote various treatises critiquing the contemporary state of affairs in the United States and Native America by placing them within a historical context, was joined by others who sought to expose past injustices in order to foment change. As the body of literature and Native American studies as a field have become more established, the political undertones of those early works have persisted. While political bias or agendas do not inherently create poor scholarship, their predominance does complicate matters of von Rankean objectivity in the context of broader comparative history.

### *Genocide in Native America*

It is within the aforementioned context that scholars in the field debate over how to define genocide and ascertain its applicability in Native American history. Two issues claim prominence in this dialogue: numbers and intent. These are not new concepts to the broader field of genocide studies, but the unique impacts they have had in Native American historiography merit comment. First, if genocide is defined by the number of victims killed, Native American history mourns some of the highest. Although the consensus on such estimates has been tenuous, much of the related demographic debate over pre-contact and post-contact population statistics asserts per capita loss percentages unparalleled in human history (Dobyns, 1983, and Stannard, 1992). If taken at face value and as the only criteria for assessing genocide, one might conclude that Native American history should stand as *the* archetype. However, the accepted legal definition of genocide entails a second important factor: the *intent* to destroy a targeted group in whole or in part. This consideration greatly complicates the issue.

The demographic collapse which Euro-American contact precipitated and perpetuated in Native America spans centuries and involves no less than eight colonial or federal governments, and thousands of distinct indigenous empires, cultures, and confedera-

cies. How does one parse out the overall demographic decline of Native America as a whole into the appropriately specific geographic and chronologic terms? Furthermore, in ascertaining the commission of genocide, taking into consideration the issue of intent, how can such monumental numbers be properly assigned to the intent of innumerable separate and distinct Euro-American – Native American relationships? To label North America’s indigenous populations in such monolithic terms is more than problematic. To generalize about the actions and reactions of all officials at the federal, regional and local levels vis-à-vis their treatment of all Native American groups is equally problematic. To attempt to extrapolate from one case where there was clear genocidal intent to all other cases – across centuries and historical contexts – is to rely on inherently faulty methodological processes.

One way to avoid unfairly extrapolating hemispheric or continental conclusions from regional histories is to refocus the scope of such research. While it is possible that a large composite of isolated events may speak to the existence of broader general trends, those more narrowly focused regional histories must be better understood before such conclusions can be fully supported. The concept of genocide in Native American history must first be analyzed in the micro, rather than macro scale. Once the sundry remote histories of possible genocide in Native North America are better documented and interpreted, and boast a more exhaustive historiography, broader generalized study of genocide in North America as a whole will be more productive, balanced, and substantive.

### **Examples of Genocide in Native America**

#### *Genocide or Not Genocide?*

A key concept in this proposed approach of more particularized study lies within the bounds of scale, both temporal and geographic. While painting Native American and North American history in broad strokes vis-à-vis the issue of genocide is not possible at this juncture in time as a result of the current state of the field’s historiography, careful scholarship has been—and can

be—undertaken on a variety of what might be considered, for lack of better terminology, genocidal events.

Throughout the centuries of interaction between Euro-Americans and the continent's numerous indigenous peoples, various events appear as if they may constitute cases of genocide. Upon closer examination, though, some lie in the context of campaigns, relationships, and cultural negotiations which do not stand up to the criteria of being termed genocide. The task of careful scholarship is to delineate where broader non-genocidal narratives digress into specific genocidal events. Some argue that such delineation is irrelevant. Rather than viewing them as aberrations in larger histories, they perceive these isolated events as the "normative expression" of broader Euro-American civilization. Regardless of where one falls on this debate, the specific events in question must be better understood individually before collective guilt can be drawn (Jaimes, 1992, pp. 3, 5).

An example of a genocidal event that has featured prominently in the field's historiography is the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864. On the morning of November 29, 1864, the Colorado Third Cavalry, under the command of Colonel John M. Chivington, attacked the sleeping encampment of Chief Black Kettle's Cheyenne and Arapaho at Sand Creek. The resulting scene left a large number of unarmed Native American men, women, and children dead, their bodies mutilated by Chivington's men. This horrific event has received considerable attention from scholars due to certain statements made previous to the attack. In authorizing Chivington's Third Cavalry in their 100-day tour of duty, Colorado Governor John Evans gave instructions to "kill and destroy, as enemies of the country, wherever they may be found, all such hostile Indians" (U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, 1865, p. 47). It was later reported that Chivington echoed this policy by pronouncing his goal to "kill and scalp all, little and big; that nits made lice" (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1865, p. 71).

Taken together, a specific group was singled out for utter destruction, and the actions of the Colorado Third Cavalry on the cold morning of November 29, 1864, indicate that such intent was actualized in the massacre of members of that defined group.

The massacre at Sand Creek is perhaps the most prominent event which has been examined as a genocidal event in North American history, but most certainly does not stand alone. The field's historiography features similar events for which some have suggested the need for consideration. First, in 1851, California Governor Peter Burnett called for a "war of extermination" to continue "until the Indian race becomes extinct" (Madley, 2008, p. 309). Governor Burnett's declaration was aimed broadly at the various Native groups in northern California whose presence was deemed deleterious to the development of the region and its new-found mineral wealth. Governor John McDougal, who followed Burnett as governor, echoed similar sentiments, stating that if negotiations with Natives were unproductive, the Natives would wage war, which would, by necessity, result in the "extermination [of] many of the tribes" (Madley, 2008, p. 310). For years to follow, the Yuki Indians of Northern California's Round Valley (present Humboldt and Mendocino Counties) were severely decimated by this policy, losing tens of thousands of their population (Baumgardner, 2005, p. 34). In this case, the intent to utterly extirpate groups of California Natives was declared, and in the case of the Yuki, actualized. These are the facts that have attracted the interest of certain genocide scholars.

There are also events which have been presented in genocidal terms due to their shocking brutality, but lack the specific declarations of intent that were clearly evident in the cases of the Sand Creek Massacre and Round Valley Wars. One year before the Sand Creek Massacre, a less publicized event in Cache County, Idaho (then southwestern Washington territory), took place that ended up bearing striking similarities to Chivington's attack on Black Kettle's sleeping encampment. As settlers came into increased contact with Shoshoni populations in the region, tensions ran high and U.S. Army detachments were eventually dispatched. The protracted conflict which followed reached a climax on January 29, 1863, on the banks of the Bear River, when Colonel Patrick E. Connor's command attacked Shoshoni Chief Bear Hunter's encampment. The attack left up to 400 Shoshoni dead, some of whom were unarmed, and was followed by the raping of Shoshoni

women and killing of Shoshoni children. Unlike the precursory inflammatory language in the Sand Creek case, no such pronouncements of genocidal intent were made in the case of the Bear River Massacre.

Likewise, attention has focused on the Battle of Washita River on November 27, 1868, and the infamous Wounded Knee Massacre of December 28, 1890. Unarmed Cheyenne women and children were counted among the fallen at the Washita River, as were arguably noncombatant Miniconjou and Hunkpapa Lakota women and children at Wounded Knee Creek. With such cases, the horror of the events was unquestionable but the underlying historical context of each was not explicitly genocidal.

In understanding the continental contexts of intercultural conflict, both the events, which may eventually be classified as genocidal and those which may more appropriately be deemed tragedies that fall outside the genocide paradigm, offer historical understanding and insight. It is in these micro-histories, be they of genocide or of other forms of violent altercation, that the groundwork for broad conclusions may be based. All such events, regardless of whether genocidal intent was declared or not, share a role in the overarching narrative of, Euro-American expansion, Native American resistance and cultural misunderstanding.

### *Other Conceptualizations of Genocide*

The production of ongoing scholarship of intertribal conflict is expanding historical understanding of genocide outside the traditional dichotomy of white-Native conflict. For example, the recently published collection of essays, *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica*, points towards such intertribal complexities (Matthew and Oudijk [2007]). The pioneering work of Richard White (1978), which asked scholars to reorient their view of the Western Sioux to that of an expanding empire, and now followed by Pekka Hämäläinen (2008) in his study of the Comanche as empire, suggest a more complicated historical reality of violence in North America. These studies make no claims of intertribal genocide, however the theoretical shift that

such studies provide suggest that further investigation of such possibilities is needed. Effectively, they expand our traditional view outside the binary paradigm of white-Native violence to consider more complex relationships.

On a different note, considerable scholarship has been conducted on the various other “-cides” (e.g., linguicide, culturicide, ethnocide), and no doubt some of those “cides” have contributed to the denigration of Native populations (Adams, 1995). Linguistic genocide (linguicide) and cultural genocide (culturicide) have both received significant scholarly attention. The nineteenth- and twentieth-century efforts of the United States government to forcibly assimilate Native peoples into “American” society by discouraging or criminalizing Native culture, language, and religion, are all being examined as forms of one “cide” or another. Finally, the role of sexual violence as a form of genocide adds another facet to the current historiography (Smith, 2005; and Fleisher, 2004, pp. 293-298). Whatever spirited or polemical debates result from these and future studies, the study of the various forms, examples, and conceptualization of genocide in North America can, if properly and fairly executed, add to a broad field of knowledge, ready and ripe for comparative analysis with similar work being done elsewhere.

### **What are the Critical Challenges Facing the Field Today?**

Certainly the impediments of definitionalist debates, political bias and polemical rhetoric must be surmounted. To whatever degree possible, the ever present desire to assign guilt to historical parties, which more often than not does more to satisfy contemporary sensibilities of justice than to move historical understanding forward in any significant way, must be jettisoned. Bias inherent in any scholarship places the proverbial set of blinders on the scope, interpretation, and conclusions of historical study. Scholarship suffering from the latter often adheres more to political activism than the tenets of objective historical methodology.

When embroiled in contemporary political and cultural discord between disparate concerned parties, this will prove difficult. Native American scholars, especially those with close cultural,

familial, and personal ties to the historical accounts they investigate, may have fundamentally different aims than those of less personally invested scholars. These personal motives are significant and important. Scholarship which helps Native communities today with their sense of cultural identity, political awareness, and historical foundations are paramount for all involved in the multitudinous facets of Native American studies. The best scholarship, however, will offer understanding and relevance to a much broader demographic.

Perhaps the call for a new kind of Native American genocide scholarship has simply been lost in the mix. Other voices for equally worthy topics have swung the field in various directions in recent decades, but widespread enthusiasm for Native genocide studies has not yet taken that center stage. The growing list of publications in the field, however suggest that momentum is growing.

### **The Real Probabilities of Progress in the Field**

Discerning the why's and how's of genocide, genocidal events, and overall intercultural violence in North America promises to provide something of much broader value: the groundwork for meaningful comparative study. Perhaps it is this angle that may provide Native American genocide studies the momentum and exposure it needs to come to the forefront of broader associated fields. Thankfully, a growing number of scholars are focusing their attention on Native American histories and, in various cases, the comparison of such with other groups across the globe. From comparing the conquest of defiant Sioux and Zulus in the nineteenth century, to the role of women in indigenous child removal and boarding schools of Native Americans and Australian aborigines, the possibilities for comparative scholarship in general are limitless (see, for example, Gump, 1996, and Jacobs, 2005). In terms of comparative genocide studies, those possibilities are invaluable – both to indigenous populations worldwide, to Native American communities and to members of the so-called dominant cultures implicated in these tempestuous histories.

## Conclusion

The historiography of genocide studies in North America and Native America is slowly emerging. By avoiding the pitfalls of largely fruitless definitionalist debates over whether or not widespread genocide occurred in North America and polemical work that constitutes unsatisfactory scholarship, scholars are bound to make valuable contributions to the literature. With an expanding foundation of balanced and carefully researched regional or thematically narrow studies, broader applications will likely be forthcoming. That, in turn, will likely result in a deeper and more significant understanding of the events that unfolded in North America in years past.

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Adams, David Wallace (1995). *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press. 396 pp.

An important issue in the concept of cultural genocide is the boarding school program implemented for Native American youth across the country in the late nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries. Adams gives a detailed account of how the boarding school system, geography, curriculum and philosophy sought to systematically dismantle Native children's cultural upbringing. By analyzing the day-by-day occurrences at Indian boarding schools during a fifty-year time period, Adams provides an important context for the statement by Richard Henry Pratt (founder of the Pennsylvania Carlisle Indian School), that his goal was to "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." This is a significant synthesis of primary and secondary research, and an invaluable resource for understanding the United States' attempts to assimilate Native peoples through childhood education.

Baker, Bob (1968). *Americans in Bondage: California's Dark History of Indian Slavery and Extermination and the Continuing Oppression of the Klamath River-Yurok Indians*. Fairfax, CA: Allan Morris. 20 pp.

This early report, written by journalist Bob Baker in the midst of political turmoil on the Northern California Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation, lays out an argument linking past extermination attempts to contemporary socio-political affairs. Though the term genocide is not employed, his short pamphlet presents an intriguing picture into early attempts to address contemporary Native issues with the history of past injustices. Very much in the vein of Vine Deloria, Jr., Helen Hunt Jackson, John Kenneth Turner, and others.

Bradford, William C. (2006). "Acknowledging and Rectifying the Genocide of American Indians: 'Why is it That They Carry their Lives on Their Fingernails?'" *Metaphilosophy* 37 (3-4): 515-543.

Providing commentary on physical extermination, land theft, cultural oppression, termination, relocation and forced sterilization, Bradford (a former law professor) presents a useful overview of many of the key issues facing current political debates of how to redress injustices Native American communities have faced historically. Most interestingly, Bradford's detailed analysis of the various ways in which redress may be enacted leads to his conclusion that the United States should use this as a moment to provide leadership and stand at the forefront of global indigenous issues.

Carranco, Lynwood, and Estle Beard (1981). *Genocide and Vendetta: The Round Valley Wars of Northern California*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 384 pp.

Though the work of Carranco and Beard is narrowly focused, both geographically and chronologically, its potential for comparative application is broad. By detailing the struggle between Northern Californian Indians such as the Yuki and white settlers, miners, and military forces, this study asserts that these various white groups actively sought the extermination of the Round Valley region's indigenous populations. It lacks significant amounts of direct comparative analysis, but provides a detailed case study for such future research to utilize. Furthermore, it presents detail and information that add to earlier works (e.g., Garry Garrett's "The Destruction of the Indian in Mendocino County, 1856-1860," MA Thesis Sacramento State College, 1969). Combined with other more recent scholarship, a full picture of the Round Valley Wars and the genocidal themes in the region's history are well defined.

Churchill, Ward (1994). *Indians are Us? Culture and Genocide in Native North America*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press. 382 pp.

Despite the inherent bias and nonacademic tone of Churchill's study, *Indians are Us?* does succeed in presenting ways in which

international understanding of genocide and genocide-related legal issues should be applied to events and trends in Native American history. Specifically, he details episodes from twentieth century U.S. history that provide evidence for his case of past and current genocidal intent being exhibited by the United States and its citizenry.

Churchill, Ward (2004). *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books. 128 pp.

The concept of the United States' Indian Boarding School program in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries contributing to the physical and cultural genocide of Native Americans is not exclusive to this text. Herein, Churchill makes greater strides towards integrating this narrative into more international contexts of comparative genocide studies. Churchill argues that the curriculum, physical infrastructure, and underlying philosophy of boarding school programs were all aimed at erasing Native culture, language, and even life by forced assimilation of children. Churchill provides copious footnotes to support his claims, but the overwhelming bias in both his prose and unbalanced selection of sources undermines some of the text's value. Nevertheless, it does contribute useful information that can be extracted through careful and judicious analysis.

Churchill, Ward (2001). *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present*. San Francisco, CA: City Light Books. 531 pp.

*A Little Matter of Genocide* represents Churchill's most exhaustive and unbalanced treatise on Native American genocide. The bias and polemics often present in his writings are represented here in their strongest form, but the text is not without merit. Churchill compiles a phenomenal amount of information and presents useful foundations for future scholarship. His source material is extremely useful if careful reading of the sources cited is undertaken. The latter is imperative as close examination of his footnotes reveals that some citations are misleading and that quotations are taken out of context.

Churchill, Ward (2002). *Struggle for the Land: Native North American Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide, and Colonization*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books. 460 pp.

Herein, Churchill narrows his focus to how issues of land management and environmental policy have become intertwined with Native genocide and survival. This text adds another important facet to our understanding of an oft-overlooked aspect of the implications of U.S. colonization, and geographic expansion vis-à-vis the environments they encountered. These altered landscapes, ecosystem, and geographies had direct impact on Native populations and cultures.

Costo, Rupert and Jeannette Henry Costo (Eds.) (1987). *The Missions of California: A Legacy of Genocide*. San Francisco, CA: The Indian Historian Press. 246 pp.

California boasts an impressive historiography of its colonial and federal history, but the presence of the dense indigenous populations which Spanish colonizers met is somewhat lacking. This edited volume explores a variety of issues concerning this early history. It contains essays on the Spanish mission system, Native perspectives on the mission era, and a report of a scholar's opinions of the lasting influence of Father Junipero Serra. Together, these resources suggest that the mission to civilize California's Native populations was often enacted through vicious means and, whether intended or not, had genocidal consequences.

Deloria, Vine Jr. (1969). *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. New York: The Macmillan Company. 279 pp.

Nowhere in this text, or elsewhere in his prolific writings, does Vine Deloria directly equate events in Native American history with genocide. However, this seminal text laid the foundational groundwork upon which nearly all such subsequent studies have been built. In *Custer Died for Your Sins*, Deloria made some of the first cohesive arguments along the line that current Native American problems were directly caused by—and thus, should be rectified by—the United States government. He details past and current U.S. government policies that precipitated disastrous

consequences for the continent's indigenous peoples. In doing so, Deloria most notably cites the Termination policy of the mid-twentieth century, the preoccupation of anthropologists with "saving" Native culture and the deleterious effects of missionary efforts among Native peoples.

Dobyns, Henry F. (1983). *Their Numbers Become Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press. 378 pp.

By exploring ways in which demographers can ascertain the pre-Columbian population levels of various North American regions, Dobyns' (an anthropologist) overarching conclusion supports the general idea that regardless of what exact pre-contact population levels were, dealings with Euro-American civilization triggered universal demographic collapse. His estimate regarding pre-contact populations (as high as 18 million) has been critiqued by some as too high.

Fleisher, Kass. (2004). *The Bear River Massacre and the Making of History*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 352 pp.

The Bear River Massacre of 1863 provides a shocking picture of violence and depredation that has perhaps been overshadowed by the more heavily publicized Sand Creek Massacre of 1864. Fleisher examines a broad spectrum of issues that detail not only the history leading up to the massacre and the massacre itself, but its aftermath as well. This text is of particular import in its analysis of the formation of historical memory. Applying theories of historical memory to this Native American history bolsters the overall value of the text.

Freeman, Michael (1995). "Puritans and Pequots: The Question of Genocide." *New England Quarterly* 68 (2): 278-293.

In response to Steven T. Katz's 1991 article questioning the application of the concept of genocide to North American history, Freeman analyzes Katz's take on the 1630s Pequot War ("The Pequot War Reconsidered" in *The New England Quarterly*). In that conflict, colonists from Massachusetts Bay and the Plymouth

Colony allied with Narragansetts and Mohegans to eliminate the Pequot tribe of present day Connecticut. Freeman concludes that calling the Pequot War genocide does not imply any sort of comparison with Nazi Germany, but rather acknowledges the event for what it was: “nation-destruction” as a part of “nation-building.” Freeman’s arguments, when compared with Katz’s original statement provide an essential foundation for understanding much of the political debate amongst scholars over defining genocide and applying it to North American history.

Friedberg, Lilian (2000). “Dare to Compare: Americanizing the Holocaust.” *American Indian Quarterly* 24 (3): 353-380.

Artistic director of the Chicago Djembe Project, which promotes cross-cultural understanding through public arts programs, Friedberg applies her expertise in German studies to better understand links between Jewish Holocaust studies and Native American studies as the latter relates to genocide. While some Holocaust historians have borrowed from Native American history in exploring their histories, the same cooption of Holocaust history has not been afforded to Native American scholars. Friedberg presents an interdisciplinary analysis of using the Holocaust in comparative terms with Native American history and shows why doing so has proved so controversial.

Hauptman, Laurence M., and James D. Wherry (Eds.) (1990). *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 288 pp.

As a whole, this edited volume offers a broad and firm foundation for understanding the context in which the Pequot War (which some refer to as a genocide) can be best understood. Of particular import is Laurence M. Hauptman’s chapter entitled “The Pequot War and Its Legacies.” Therein, he argues that the Pequot War is one of the most important events in early American history because it laid a foundation of white-Native relations that included the possibility and actualization of genocide. In understanding the attempted extirpation of Pequots by allied colonists and Native groups, Hauptman examines the legacy of the latter on modern

Pequots, their self-identity and contemporary struggles for self-determination and tribal recognition.

Jaimes, M. Annette (Ed.) (1992). *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*. Boston, MA: South End Press. 468 pp.

This edited work includes a number of provocative essays. Contributors such as Jaimes (the editor of the book), Ward Churchill, Lenore A. Stiffarm, and Phil Lane, Jr. all comment on the genocide of Native Americans. While some of the text waxes strongly political in its agenda and bias, distracting from objective historical understanding, it is still a valuable resource for understanding the contemporary political climate surrounding Native American studies and genocide.

Katz, Steven T. (1991). "The Pequot War Reconsidered." *New England Quarterly* 64 (2): 206-224.

In this essay, Holocaust historian Steven Katz addresses the history of the 1630s Pequot War and whether it should be discussed in comparative terms with the Jewish Holocaust of World War II. Katz asserts that the demographic collapse of the indigenous New World is without precedent and stands as the "greatest demographic tragedy in history" (p. 223). However, for a variety of reasons, Katz argues that direct comparison with the Holocaust is problematic. In so doing, Katz opened a lively debate in both the fields of Holocaust Studies and Native American Studies.

Katz, Steven T. (1995). "Pequots and the Question of Genocide: A Reply to Michael Freeman." *New England Quarterly* 68 (4), 641-649.

After Katz had published his 1991 article "The Pequot War Reconsidered," Michael Freeman answered in 1995 with "Puritans and Pequots: The Question of Genocide." In publishing Freeman's piece, the *New England Quarterly* offered Katz the opportunity to concurrently reply to Freeman's critique of his work. In his response, Katz does not back down from his previous assertions, but does refine them somewhat, showing how Freeman perhaps

misunderstood his original 1991 statements. Taken as a whole with the two other pieces, the Katz-Freeman dialogue is a fascinating study in how and why the opposing sides apply or do not apply the concept of genocide to Native American history as a whole and the Pequot War in particular. This dialogue has broad applicability to both of the fields of Holocaust Studies and Native American Studies.

Lewy, Guenter (2004). "Were American Indians the Victims of Genocide?" *Commentary*, September, 55-63.

In the midst of increasing debate concerning genocide in Native American history, Lewy, a professor emeritus of political science and the author of a number of very controversial works on the Armenian genocide and the fate of the Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust, attempts to synthesize and bring together disparate voices into the debate. Lewy seeks to discuss a few key issues and events that have been predominant in these dialogues. In particular, Lewy discusses the role of disease in decimating Native populations, the complicity of U.S. Army officials in purposefully spreading disease, the early violence between Natives and Puritan settlements, and the much debated Sand Creek Massacre, Round Valley Wars, and the mid- to late-nineteenth-century Indian Wars of the Great Plains. This provides a useful, albeit slanted, introduction to the debate as a whole. Lewy concludes that although extermination was at times implemented, it was never the policy of the U.S. government. Hence, he argues, the history involved was a tragedy, but did not constitute genocide.

Madley, Benjamin (2008). "California's Yuki Indians: Defining Genocide in Native American History." *Western Historical Quarterly* 39( 3): 303-332.

Building on past work about the Yuki Indians of Northern California's Round Valley, Madley offers a concise explanation of why Yuki decimation constitutes genocide. Trying to more coherently link on the ground factual history with broader issues of U.S. federal and California state policy, Madley makes a convincing case. His introductory statement concerning the 1948 United

Nations Genocide Convention definition of genocide is useful in framing his subsequent presentation of Yuki history. That said, the UNCG definition could have been better integrated as an analytical anchor to the article before concluding that the “Yuki catastrophe [fits] the two-part legal definition set forth by the United Nations Genocide Convention.” Nevertheless, Madley’s work stands as an excellent example of a useful case study micro-history.

McDonnell, Michael A., and Moses, Dirk (2005). “Raphael Lemkin as Historian of Genocide in the Americas.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 7 (4): 501-529.

This article provides an analysis of Raphael Lemkin’s writings prior to that of his 1944 coinage of the term *genocide*, and how they relate to Native American history. This is a significant contribution to the growing scholarship linking genocide studies with Native American studies. McDonnell and Moses illustrate how Lemkin’s study of colonial and pre-colonial history were instrumental in his original conception of genocide.

Neu, Dean, and Therrien, Richard (2003). *Accounting for Genocide: Canada’s Bureaucratic Assault on Aboriginal People*. Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing - Zed Books. 192 pp.

The work of Neu and Therrien aims to show the bureaucratic structure of Canadian Indian policy which often led to genocide of Canada’s First Nations peoples. The discussion of aboriginal genocide in terms of financial accounting and bureaucratic structuring is chilling. Behind the more public violence of genocide lies a deep and carefully constructed framework of governmental policy. Like work concerning U.S. Indian policy and bureaucracy, direct analysis of Canadian documents concerning the genocidal effects of policy, bureaucracy and finances could prove fruitful.

Rosenbaum, Alan S. (Ed.). *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 288 pp.

There are two chapters in this volume of particular import: Steven Katz’s “The Uniqueness of the Holocaust: The Historical

Dimension,” and David E. Stannard’s “Uniqueness as Denial: The Politics of Genocide Scholarship.” Both speak to the underlying debate over whether or not comparative genocide studies should be undertaken. Both address issues related to Native American history.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (2001). “Ishi’s Brain, Ishi’s Ashes: Anthropology and Genocide.” *Anthropology Today* 17 (1): 12-18.

This article discusses the controversy over the repatriation of indigenous ancestral remains and the relationship between Native American anthropology and historical genocides, ethnocides and demographic mass destruction. The author uses the example of Alfred Kroeber, an University of California anthropologist in the early twentieth century, and Ishi, the last remaining Yahi of Northern California. Upon “discovering” Ishi, Kroeber employed him as a janitor and studied him as a sort of living specimen. Subsequently, Ishi’s preserved brain was forgotten and rediscovered in 1999, opening a new debate about repatriation of ancestral remains. Relatively little direct commentary is made of the extinction of Yahis in California, but the underlying framework of Scheper-Hughes’ brief article, which calls into question past and current anthropologic study when underwritten by the realities of past genocides, is intriguing and worth consideration.

Smith, Andrea (2005). *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. 250 pp.

Andrea Smith’s study presents a shocking chronicle and analysis of cultural and genetic genocide via sexual violence. Her study is deeply rooted in the gendered history of rape as a tool of genocide. Other significant issues include the sexual violence built into the Indian boarding school system, issues of Native women’s reproductive rights, and ways in which Native bodies were used during medical experiments. Smith’s deconstruction of the Native body and its role as a battleground for colonization and associated genocidal results is a worthwhile contribution to Native American studies, genocide studies and the burgeoning field of decolonization and gender studies in North America.

Stannard, David (1992). *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*. New York: Oxford University Press. 358 pp.

Stannard's history of the conquest of America by European powers stands at the forefront of a body of literature that came forth around the 500 year anniversary of Columbus' "discovery" of the American continents. As part of an effort to reorient how the public viewed this historic anniversary, Stannard presents colonization in terms of repeated European atrocities and de facto genocide in a variety of forms perpetrated by a variety of groups. The text is informative and useful as a general reference, but plagued and ultimately devalued by the author's overbearing bias.

Thornton, Russell (1990). *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History since 1492*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 312 pp.

Following in the footsteps of Henry Dobyns' earlier work, Russell Thornton reinvestigates the demographics of Native America from 1492 onward. Finding Dobyns' pre-contact estimate of 18 million too high, Thornton provides a well-supported argument for something in the range of 5 million plus. Others find this estimate too low, and so the debate continues on. When coupled with the work of Dobyns, a still uncertain, but clearer picture can be ascertained of the situation. Analyzing ecosystems and calculating the pre-contact populations they could sustain is no exact science, but these works provide much of the statistical data used by others to make their case for or against the genocide of various indigenous peoples of North and South America.

Tinker, George E. (1993). *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press. 196 pp.

Providing a detailed examination of the role of Christianity and the conversion attempts of various groups, Tinker offers four case studies of prominent missionaries (the Franciscan Junipero Serra, the Puritan John Eliot, the Jesuit Pierre-Jean de Smet, and the Episcopalian Henry B. Whipple) through which broader conclusions can be made. Offering a wide chronological and geographic

sampling, Tinker concludes that although intentions may have been pure, the results of these missionizing efforts were often devastating.