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“My Heart Jumps Happy When I . . . Hear That Music”

*Powwow Singing and Indian Identities
in Eastern North Carolina*

CLYDE ELLIS

On the evening of January 15, 2011, several hundred people crowded into the old high school gymnasium in Pembroke, North Carolina, for a memorial powwow to honor the late Ray Littleturtle, a Lumbee elder who devoted his life to the defense of Native communities and their cultures in eastern North Carolina. Well known for his political activism, Ray was also a profoundly important figure in the North Carolina powwow scene for more than forty years as a promoter, dancer, and emcee. Present from the powwow's beginnings in the mid-1960s, Ray lived long enough to see three generations of North Carolina Indians gather around the drum where, as he told me, “they could *listen* to what it said. Those songs, they really mean so much to our people. My heart jumps happy when I . . . hear that music.”¹

Given Ray's love of powwow singing, it was fitting that the evening's emotional high point came when we closed the dance with two songs. The first was the American Indian Movement (AIM) song, composed in 1968 in South Dakota in the wake of Raymond Yellow Thunder's racially fueled murder by four non-Indians. Littleturtle had been an AIM member, and his family requested the song because they thought it appropriate to hear what the late Severt Young Bear once described as an anthem that “pulls alike-thinking people together to take a stand.”² And indeed, alike-thinking people flocked to the dance floor as we began the song.

The emotional intensity of the scene was reminiscent of dances in South Dakota, Montana, or Oklahoma. But we were at a dance in eastern North Carolina—a fact that was driven home by the evening's second closing song, a memorial song composed for the family by Stoney Creek, a nationally renowned drum group from the Haliwa-Saponi

community. Based on a typical Northern Plains song structure, the Littleturtle memorial song could easily be mistaken for a garden variety, intertribal powwow song heard at dances all across the Plains. But two things mark it as a something more. First, the song's lyrics call attention to the life and legacy of a specific person and community in eastern North Carolina. Second, those lyrics are in the Tutelo language, a Siouan dialect historically spoken in the region. Stoney Creek member Marty Richardson explained it this way: "Before Ray passed, his grandson asked us if we could put a song together. I came up with some ideas . . . and that song basically says 'Littleturtle, strong warrior. You taught us, and you stood up for us.'" Thus the Littleturtle song is situated unambiguously in a particular place and time; it contains a narrative that not only memorializes an important figure, but also speaks to the larger role of Native language and powwow singing in the contemporary eastern North Carolina Indian community. In short, the song's language and narrative, and the context of its performance remind listeners that such expressions affirm deeply rooted identities among the region's Native people. These songs represent more than what we simply hear.³

For nearly fifty years, Indian people in the region have used powwows as one way to construct and negotiate ideas about identity and belonging, and to challenge widely held ideas about their looming disappearance. Although these gatherings are typically associated with crowd-pleasing demonstrations of dancing, powwows are also extraordinarily powerful examples of what Marty Richardson describes as "overlapping and complex levels of both meaningful continuity and gradual change." One of the most important aspects of the continuity and change that Richardson notes are the singing traditions at the heart of the powwow. Like powwow culture itself, powwow singing in eastern North Carolina began as a tradition borrowed from the Plains tribes. Local influences and practices were present from the beginning, but—generally speaking—early powwow singing relied heavily on outside models. While those singing traditions were persuasive expressions of Native identity, their ability to speak directly to local contexts was inherently limited, and over time this became a source of frustration for many singers.⁴

By the 1980s and 1990s, however, an important transition occurred when singers began—in powwow parlance—to "make" songs using local tribal languages and speaking to local community perspectives.

Northern and Southern Plains song structures have continued to serve as the structural templates for the majority of powwow songs heard in North Carolina, but the words and contexts attached to these new compositions reflect a maturing powwow culture that speaks directly to and for the region's Indian people. Thus, what began in the 1960s as a borrowed institution based on Plains models now celebrates the power of language and performance in the maintenance of identity for the Native South. I believe that listening to singers speak about music and dance not only leads to a better understanding of the forms and functions of powwow singing, but also prompts conversations that move inevitably from the powwow arena to an array of ideas, values, and practices that concern Native communities across the region. Such discussions occur with particular frequency among the young people who dominate the powwow scene, and for whom such gatherings are community touchstones.⁵

It has not always been this way, and the powwow singing traditions at the heart of this research are part of a larger set of community and scholarly narratives that in recent years have begun to dismantle colonialist interpretations of the Native South.⁶ The powwow gatherings that are now the dominant public expression of Indian identity in eastern North Carolina originated in Southern and Northern Plains Indian communities in the 1910s and 1920s as one response to the era's assimilationist impulses. In the postwar decades, the powwow quickly spread beyond the Plains and gained momentum as a remarkably flexible institution capable of accommodating a wide variety of local and regional practices. As a result it appealed to many different kinds of Native communities, including those anxious to create new forms of expression.⁷ Already established regional traditions of gathering, singing, and celebration ultimately proved to be good fits with powwow ways, but participants and audience members alike in eastern North Carolina found Plains-style dancing and singing particularly compelling. The timing of these threads—a performative tradition open to many different Native people, and the desire to embrace new and credible public forms of expression—is completely consistent with the circumstances that led to eastern North Carolina's first powwows in the mid-1960s.

Many factors shaped the region's distinctive powwow culture, but there is widespread agreement that the central turning point was the federal desegregation mandate that brought an abrupt end between

1964 and 1970 to the region's decades-old all-Indian schools. The 1965 Haliwa-Saponi Powwow is generally regarded as the state's first true powwow gathering, for example, and the timing was not a coincidence. In the wake of desegregation, every Indian school in the eastern half of the state closed by 1970, save for a handful in Robeson County. Although they were the product of the Jim Crow South's racially antagonistic climate, segregated Indian schools were also one of the few places in which Native identity could be nurtured and safely expressed. The Waccamaw Siouan schools, for example, "were a powerful force for the socialization of Indian identity," writes Patricia Lerch. "The children who attended the schools were Indian. The teachers . . . were Indians. . . . The school committeemen were leading men from the Indian families of the community. Education was filtered through the lens of Indian culture and values." Segregated Indian schools, notes John Wertheimer, "were central to Lumbee identity." These were universally shared notions in eastern North Carolina's Indian community.⁸

Although its supporters hailed desegregation as a triumph of liberal reform, Chris Goertzen notes that it was "devastating to North Carolina Indian communities." It is, in fact, difficult to overstate the sense of urgency that many Native people felt when desegregation's larger consequences became apparent. (One protestor went so far as to lie down on a bed of nails.) "Keep our schools and live," wrote one supporter. "[L]eave them and die." Brian Simmons, a Coharie, recalled that after his father moved to a desegregated school in the late 1960s, "he had to fight for his right to be Indian. He'd *never* had to do that in school before—never." A story in Lumberton's *Robesonian* newspaper included one local man's description of all-Indian schools as "part of a rich cultural heritage shared by the region's Lumbee tribesmen. . . . [Closing them would] provoke a cultural jolt and rob the children of their own folkways." The *Greensboro Daily News* echoed this sentiment in the January 1971 article "'Our Schools Are Close to Us': Will Loss of Indian Schools Mean Loss of Identity?" When the Lumbee community faced renewed pressure in 1970 to close its all-Indian schools, Helen Schierbeck responded that "the Lumbee Indians feel the desegregation plan is discriminatory against them, [and] will destroy the Indian public schools which they built themselves and to which their identity . . . is inextricably bound. . . . American Indian [communities] must be permitted the freedom to organize and maintain their identity."⁹ But the tide

was against them, and by the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was clear that the all-Indian schools would not survive.

As they began to respond to desegregation's consequences, Native communities across the region were drawn to Plains-style powwow gatherings as a way to "send messages about their collective identity to non-Indians." In the years to come, writes Lerch, activists in the Waccamaw Siouan community (another North Carolina Indian group) realized that "a more public forum . . . was appropriate. The dismantling of the Indian schools after 1964 opened the way for the introduction of the pan-Indian powwow, a more public event." Marty Richardson sees a similar pattern in the Haliwa-Saponi community. The closing of their school in 1969, he writes, "heightened the powwow's importance as a cultural symbol for public Indian identity and Haliwa-Saponi activities." As in other Native communities in the South, powwow culture made sense to many North Carolina Indian people in search of what J. Anthony Paredes has called "expressive symbols of their Indian identity."¹⁰

North Carolina's Indian people appreciated the powwow's utility as a public event that could be used to great effect in the campaign to educate outsiders, celebrate the Native community's presence, and gain political capital through official state recognition. The 1971 creation of the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs was an important component in achieving these goals. As the sanctioning body for state recognition of tribes, the commission explicitly required evidence of "documented traditions, customs, legends, etc. that signify the tribe's Indian heritage." Thus, from its start, the commission has been directly connected to both the new public presence that the desegregation crisis prompted, and to the powwows and other cultural events that promote the continuing vitality of the state's Native communities. "Creating the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs and arranging the first local powwows," writes Chris Goertzen, "were complimentary (and often explicitly linked) responses to the assault on community by integration—which was itself not a force acting alone, but a large last straw." Chief Pricilla Jacobs, who was influential in organizing the first Waccamaw Siouan powwow in 1971, told Lerch that "we needed that here to try to revive our Indian culture." Jacobs added that in addition to celebrating Waccamaw Siouan identity, their powwow was an especially effective way of "letting other people see. Mostly we had always had a problem with recognition as Indians anyway. . . . At that time, all the In-

dian tribes were doing the same thing, we were all getting started in it at the same time, trying to revive our culture. That was the purpose of the powwow at that time.” For John Blackfeather Jeffries, an Occaneechi-Saponi, the powwow was where outsiders “first witnessed the Occaneechi people coming back.”¹¹

These communities were not so much revitalizing traditional practices and expressions (many of which had never disappeared in the first place) as they were reflecting a national trend highlighting the complex political, social, and cultural contours of contemporary Native identity. In eastern North Carolina there was “a deliberate and growing search for what it meant to be an Indian,” notes John Wertheimer, and powwows clearly had a role to play in that search. “At that time,” Ray Littleturtle recalled, “we had a stigma of not being BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] recognized. So all of this powwow stuff comes in to fight that stigma. We saw powwows as one way we could come together and tell the locals about our Indianness.” In the most important early scholarship on eastern North Carolina powwows, Patricia Lerch and Susan Bullers convincingly demonstrate that in the Waccamaw Siouan community, the powwow was widely perceived as tailor-made for groups striving to be “‘recognized’ as Indians.” Because of its unique ability to send very clear and convincing signals about identity, write Lerch and Bullers, “the powwow became important in communicating the presence of the Waccamaw to a much larger audience than ever before possible.” More than that, the powwow assumed a crucial role as a marker of Waccamaw identity: “Powwows shape individual social identity, promote intertribal unity and action, and interact with and support the most important traditional values of family, community, heritage, and parentage.” Thus, these gatherings, while new in terms of their appeal to Plains-style dancing and singing, also strengthened long-standing traditions and practices that had existed outside of the powwow complex.¹²

The same considerations were at work in Native communities across the region. In 1971, for example, Joe Liles, a non-Indian, helped organize one of Lumbee country’s first powwows. Nervous about whether locals would be interested enough to attend, the dance was scheduled to coincide with Lumbee Homecoming, a revered annual institution tied to the Fourth of July holiday that brings large crowds to Pembroke. “We weren’t sure how it would go,” Liles recalled, “because remember, this was 1971, and in those days a fair number of Lumbees were still un-

sure about this powwow business. But once we started singing, people showed up in droves and we had hundreds of people there. Not many dancers, but lots of people came just to listen. It was amazing.” Liles believes that the presence of the drum had a discernible effect, even for those who attended simply out of curiosity. Looking back on the event more than forty years later, he added, “In the early 1970s, a lot of Indian people down there didn’t have the traditional knowledge of the drum and what it stood for, but the power of the drum and those songs cultivated a respect, even from people who were totally new to these ways. The drum was a revered part, and more and more it became the magnet that pulled people in.” The late Derek Lowry, a Tuscarora, noted that early dances like the first Lumbee Homecoming were especially memorable because they

brought people together and we saw a commonality we hadn’t seen before. There was a cohesiveness created by the powwows. . . . I really believe that the drum and the singing were the keys. Those songs—they were so distinctive. There was nothing else like them in the community. They were really, really powerful. You could tell that the singing was reaching a lot of people. Singing those songs, even when we were borrowing them from other tribes, it was a defining moment for a lot of us when we were young. I prayed that one day we’d have our own drum groups and our own songs. It’s one of the things that made me become an activist and a powwow person.¹³

These are widely felt sentiments. Marty Richardson sees the powwow as a “cultural revolution for the Haliwa-Saponis—that includes the singing and the language, especially for the young people.” J. D. Moore, a Waccamaw Siouan who has been singing and dancing since the early 1980s, said, “I take ownership of my tribe and my cultural identity at a dance. I feel very strongly about that. When I hear that music, and especially now that I hear *our* songs, it just reminds me of what it means to be a Native person today.” In a 2001 interview, Ray Littleturtle commented that powwows reflected an emerging sense of cultural and political autonomy that, unlike the schools, was free of white control. This was especially important for “young Indian people who needed a way to be Indian. We had no real cultural identity. We had racial identity, and that didn’t help us very much in the 1960s in the South.” What Indians

lacked, he said, were cultural institutions that could be safely and advantageously used in public settings. “The powwow was something we controlled,” Ray said. Ray’s wife, Kat, added that because of the drum, her grandchildren along with other young Indian people were growing up with new traditions that strengthened their identity. “There’s a power in that arena that you don’t get at other places,” Kat said. “These kids feel it, and so do the non-Indians who watch.” In a subsequent interview Ray added, “We didn’t need any whites to approve it. We were having it in Indian country, and whites could like it or lump it.”¹⁴

These attitudes had wide appeal in a region where Native people were anxious to take control of the images and messages that spoke to their identity as Indians. Still, the speed with which powwow culture spread across North Carolina after 1970 was astonishing. By the 1990s, writes Chris Oakley, “of all the outward manifestations of the Native American cultural revival in North Carolina, the contemporary tribal powwow was easily the most visible and significant.” In a 2001 essay, for example, Chris Goertzen lists thirty-five annual powwows in Virginia, and North and South Carolina combined.¹⁵ A decade later, there were no fewer than thirty dances every year in North Carolina alone. In 2012 those dances included the twenty-fourth annual Meherrin Powwow, the twenty-sixth annual Guilford Native American Powwow, the twenty-seventh annual Occoneechi-Saponi Powwow, the twenty-ninth annual Metrolina Indian Association Powwow, the forty-second annual Waccamaw-Siouan Powwow, the forty-third annual Coharie Powwow, the forty-fourth annual Lumbee Homecoming Powwow, and the forty-seventh annual Haliwa-Saponi Powwow. The 2012 list also includes dances at major universities in the eastern half of the state—including Duke (fifth annual), East Carolina (twentieth annual), North Carolina State (twenty-second annual), and Chapel Hill (twenty-fifth annual).¹⁶

What Indian people were borrowing was a Plains practice whose eye-catching dance clothes and rituals were well suited to Southern Indians eager to take advantage of the powwow’s cultural and political capital. By the same token, Indian people lost no time shaping powwows to reflect local interests and customs that were often quite different from their Plains models. This was especially true in the early days, when the learning curve was steep and relatively few locals had significant experience in the powwow world. One longtime participant chuckled at his memory of the first Guilford Native American Association powwows in

the 1970s; he recalled that the most pressing concern was not how many dancers or singers would show up, but whether the piano would arrive in time for the afternoon gospel singing.

This is not to say that early North Carolina powwows were inauthentic because they were borrowed, or because they sometimes departed radically from their Plains models. The powwow is a twentieth-century cultural innovation designed explicitly for diffusion and adaptation, and from the beginning it has thrived on intertribal models of clothing, performance, and gathering. Indeed, one of its greatest strengths is the ease with which it can be adapted for use according to local contexts. In her work on Gros Ventre, Cheyenne, and Arapaho dances, for example, Loretta Fowler notes that “powwows are expressions . . . of a wide range of identities. . . . [I]n the context of powwow ritual, change is made culturally and socially acceptable.” Joe Liles notes that “the powwow is a thoroughly modern practice that from the beginning was stamped with local customs. There is no one way to do a powwow. Powwows don’t erase or eclipse or replace local customs, in fact they often amplify them.” Well suited to an intertribal ethos, powwows have contributed to the creation of a supra-tribal identity that nonetheless maintains room for tribally specific expressions and values. The powwow, writes Michael Sam Cronk, “does not submerge regional traditions and values; instead it is a vehicle that allows different nations to express a common bond as . . . ‘real/first people’ of North America.” In her perceptive and informed work on eastern North Carolina tribes, Lerch describes this as “the powwow paradox—introducing something new and reinforcing something old,” and argues that this process “is central to the adaptability of the Waccamaw powwow.” Native identity, she notes, “rests not in the authenticity of a powwow regarding local history and culture, but rather in the relationship of the activity to popular community participation.” Music’s role in these negotiations was especially powerful because although powwow singing did initially rely on outside models, it nonetheless offered a compelling way to express a sense of identity that was uniquely Native. And in time, singing would become one of the hallmarks of a fully matured regional powwow form that is unique to eastern North Carolina.¹⁷

This flexibility framed such gatherings then and now as thoroughly intertribal events that produced innovations of all kinds. As a result, powwow culture was accessible to—and meaningful for—virtually any

Indian community, including those in eastern North Carolina. Indeed, at dances in eastern North Carolina it is the *simultaneous* presence of Plains-inspired singing and dancing; Southern tribal clothing; powwow songs using regional languages; Southern gospel music; strong-man contests; food stands serving collard sandwiches; and vendors selling locally made pine-needle baskets and DVDs with titles like “In the Heart of Tradition: The Eight State-Recognized Tribes of North Carolina,” or “Our People: The Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation,” or “Lumbee by Grace: Landmarks in Lumbee Identity” that clearly marks these gatherings as part of a Native South powwow world. We need not explain these things away according to imagined and arbitrary standards of “authenticity”; these are simply part of the fabric of the region’s powwow culture.

Skeptics abound, and they often point to what they perceive as poor singing for evidence. (As Ray Littleturtle’s son, Tony Clark, wryly put it, “there’s always a punch line when people talk about powwows and Eastern Indians.”¹⁸) In an influential 1983 essay on “pan-Indian” powwow culture, for example, anthropologist James Howard described the Lumbees and Haliwa-Saponis as “submerged” and “part Indian,” and argued that they were “largely or totally unacquainted with *any* American Indian music, dance, or costuming as practiced by their ancestors.” Howard concluded that because these tribes were “sublimely unaware of the specific tribal origins of the forms being borrowed” (he described their powwow singing as “ragged,” and was “amused” by some of it), their interest in powwow culture was superficial and disingenuous. Adding insult to injury, he criticized the Haliwa-Saponi tribal name as a cheap neologism intended to sound “Indian,” and condescended to say that the powwow traditions found in these and other non-Plains communities reflected “a homogeneity . . . approaching that of Howard Johnson restaurants or McDonald [*sic*] hamburger outlets.”¹⁹

Howard’s impatience is an example of what J. Anthony Paredes has called the “ethnographic-present fallacy.” In this view, powwows and powwow singing have no legitimate place in Southern Native communities because they are not part of the “set of essential characteristics upon which a people’s existence over time depends.” In other words, because they were borrowed, powwows were not sufficiently traditional, and thus they disrupted fantasies of an unchanging “*particular* social repertoire of ways of doing things.” This argument neatly ignores the fact that culture “is not a given,” writes Paredes, “but is in a state of con-

stant construction and negotiation among and between social actors.” These constructions and negotiations, adds Malinda Maynor Lowery, are well-established examples of “expansive attitudes about . . . cultural exchange [in the Native South]. . . . Yet their identities as Indians do not dissipate as a result of these changes.” Powwow singing traditions have been uniquely suited to these kinds of exchanges from the very beginning, and are a core component of the ease with which powwow culture has spread to communities far from the Plains. Unlike Howard, who saw Southern Indians as caricatures of powwow singers, Paredes took a more nuanced approach and observed that what began as “homely versions” of powwow culture had “matured into an integral part of the ‘powwow circuit’ nationwide. . . . The powwow complex [in the South] is . . . a genuine coin of Indianness.”²⁰ Unlike Howard, Paredes saw no need to explain away the region’s distinctive take on powwow culture. For him, those peculiarities were simply part and parcel of the Native South’s expressive culture.

Singing was taken quite seriously in eastern North Carolina from the very beginning, but knowledgeable singers were initially relatively scarce, and repertoires were often limited. J. D. Moore smiled at memories of dances where recorded music was played over loudspeakers, and recalled, “Way back in the day when I was a little guy—this would be the late 1970s and early 1980s—there were some dances where I guess the singers could’ve sung the same song twenty times and no one would’ve known the difference. Not anymore.”²¹ Moreover, the importance of singing was not lost on powwow people, and from the beginning they took its demands very seriously, as Derek Lowry noted:

Good dancers were a dime a dozen, but good singers weren’t, especially in the early days. Most of us didn’t know a lot about singing, and so we just did the best we could. And a lot of times, we just muddled through. Those thirty-minute breaks that are a standard part of our powwows here—they started partly because emcees were worried that no one knew enough songs to get to the end of a dance without running out. And we didn’t really have a good knowledge of family songs, or that there are specific songs for men, for women, for kids, for giveaway, for whatever. We knew we had to learn it. And you know, these songs, even though they belonged to other tribes, they meant a lot to us, too. I knew we

were just barely getting it, but this was important, we had to get better or no one would take us seriously. Becoming good singers was my biggest goal. I mean, think about it. The first question powwow people ask about a dance is “Who’s singing?”²²

Singers in the region made enormous strides in a relatively short period of time, helped by a combination of sources and influences. In many cases, community members brought knowledge and experience home with them after living in other Native communities. Marty Richardson points to Arnold Richardson’s very important role in introducing Haliwa-Saponi singers to powwow songs from the New York Indian communities in which he lived and worked in the 1960s and 1970s. In Lumbee country, a Cree named Walter Pinchbeck married a local woman in the 1950s, led a Boy Scout troop in Pembroke that specialized in Indian dancing (the Haliwas had a similar troop), and taught Plains-style singing and dancing to local youth. Art Lewis, a Pima who worked in the Baltimore Indian Center likewise taught Plains-style singing to Native people there and in eastern North Carolina. “Those Baltimore guys,” said Joe Liles, “knew the song structures and were accomplished singers. They could handle Oklahoma-style singing.”²³

Drum groups also formed regularly in the region and by the 1970s there were as many as half a dozen of these groups regularly singing in Northern and Southern Plains styles. In the Haliwa-Saponi community, for example, Arnold Richardson used a 1969 North Carolina Arts Council grant to begin teaching classes in song, dance, and material culture. One of the most important consequences of this work was the creation of the Shallow Water Singers (the name is derived from the Saponi phrase *moni seep*, “shallow water”), a group that Marty Richardson describes as “the beginning of a tradition of Haliwa-Saponi singers [that] laid the foundation for later drum groups in the east, especially in North Carolina.” While they began by learning Eastern Woodland songs, the group quickly made the transition “to Plains-style singing,” writes Marty Richardson, “learning songs from Lakota drum groups such as the legendary Porcupine Singers.” Shallow Water disbanded in the mid-1980s but was followed by a flurry of other groups in the Haliwa community including the Midget Singers; the White Tail Singers—who were among the first to use local languages in their songs; and the Young Society Singers, created in 1991 and committed, Richardson recalled, to singing

“our own songs in our own language.” When Young Society broke up in 1992, a group of former White Tail and Young Society singers came together and called themselves *Witahe Biwa* “Good Friends” singers. By 1993 they became the powerhouse drum group Stoney Creek. In the years that followed, a number of other drum groups emerged in the region including the Red Wolf Singers, Secret Hill, Fox Tail, Red Oak, Red Earth, and Southern Sun.²⁴

Singers also took advantage of the East Coast’s growing powwow circuit, and Marty Richardson has vivid memories of hearing and being inspired by singers from other communities. Richardson, who spent much of his youth in Baltimore before moving to North Carolina, recalled that when he began singing as a youngster with White Tail, he met singers from the Northern Plains and Canada at dances on the East Coast. “Many of them were from up North in Canada. Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario . . . White Fish singers, Blackstone . . . Northern Cree [all extremely influential drums] . . . so I just started learning their songs . . . It was kind of like a North Carolina, Baltimore, Northern connection. It was all [from] the powwow trail.”²⁵

Interestingly, the powwow trail also includes non-Indians. Tony Clark, his brother Cochise, and their father, Ray Littleturtle, eagerly acknowledged their debt to non-Indians who helped them learn powwow songs. “We used to go to all the hobbyist dances,” said Cochise Clark, “because that’s all there was in the early days around here . . . And they treated us good.” Littleturtle recalled that non-Indians had been instrumental in encouraging him and others to learn powwow songs, and he wholeheartedly agreed with Derek Lowry’s comment that “if the Creator sends a non-Native person to us, and that person has a gift, and we can help one another, what’s the problem? At the drum it’s only singers, not ‘whites’ or ‘Indians.’” Non-Indians like Joe Liles and Mark Wagoner (both original members of the drum group Southern Sun) had many years of substantial singing experience in Southern Plains Indian communities going back to the 1970s, and they made important and widely admired contributions to the development of powwow singing in eastern North Carolina. Tony expressed frustration with critics who say that non-Indians don’t belong at the drum. “Now, those guys [non-Indians] have to know the songs, of course, and they got to know us, and they got to be able to hang with our ways. This ain’t Oklahoma, we’re down on the swamp. But let me tell you, I’ll whoop somebody’s ass about this.

You, and Joe Liles, and Mark Wagoner—ya'll been singing in Oklahoma longer than some of the current powwow people have been alive. I personally think those songs have a larger purpose than for dancing, I really do. They brought you guys to our people, and ya'll helped bring those songs to us. That was a good thing, a sacred thing.”²⁶

An important moment in the evolution of powwow singing in eastern North Carolina occurred in 1969 when Joe Liles and Mike Clark (a Lumbee and Ray Littleturtle's younger brother), created “Lumbees and Friends,” an intertribal and interracial drum group that specialized in Southern Plains songs. Littleturtle remembered that “those kids in Raleigh needed a way to *be Indian*,” and like Liles he was increasingly convinced that powwow culture was one way to achieve that goal. And unlike many early enthusiasts who were more attracted to dancing than singing, Liles, Clark, and Littleturtle shared a deep interest in singing. Liles recalled Clark's telling him that “Lumbee culture was very different from the Western tribes I'd been around, but he [Clark] and other Lumbees were interested in learning about other Indian cultures and thought that powwow singing might be a vehicle to increase Indian pride.”²⁷ Clark and Liles arranged a meeting in Raleigh to gauge the interest level. Liles was nervous that the plan would flop, and remembered that when he walked into the house where they were to meet, “Indians were sitting everywhere. And remember, these folks had driven one hundred miles from Pembroke to do this, and would have to drive back that night. We had more success that first night than anyone ever thought possible in terms of Lumbees embracing pan-Indian powwow music. At the end of the evening the one thing they wanted to know was, when were we going to do it again?”²⁸

The group grew to two dozen regulars who began meeting weekly, and the Lumbee community in Pembroke quickly became their home base. By 1971 they were singing at regional powwows as “Lumbees and Friends,” and had gained a reputation as a reliable and competent drum group. In spring 1972 they recorded an album of Southern Plains powwow songs titled *Lumbees and Friends* with support from the Lumbee River Development Association, a group that funded and promoted Lumbee cultural programs. Other powwow people from outside the region also played supporting roles, including the Tecumseh Lodge singers (a hobbyist group from the Midwest), and Tony Isaacs, the non-Indian proprietor of Indian House Records, established in 1966 in Taos,

New Mexico, and now arguably the most important source for commercially produced Native music in the country. The project also had the blessing of an extremely prominent group of singers from the Ponca community in north-central Oklahoma. Liles recalled,

Lumbees and Friends was inspired by the sound of the old time Ponca singers: Lamont Brown, Harry Buffalohead, Joe Rush, Sylvester Warrior, and Albert Waters. . . . We were also inspired by the Round Dance singing that came out of the Taos Pueblo. Several of us ran into Lamont Brown at the Tulsa Powwow, and he was very encouraging to us, and made us a tape in which he went over the words to quite a few Ponca songs. I ran into Harry Buffalohead at a powwow outside of Colorado Springs in 1970. He was very supportive and encouraging of what we were doing.²⁹

The Ponca endorsement is an important and little-known aspect of the larger story. Not only did it introduce Lumbees and Friends to some of the most respected powwow singers on the Southern Plains, it also meant that—as was true of Marty Richardson’s experiences with Northern Plains singers—the movement of such songs into North Carolina’s powwow community was not entirely a case of appropriation. As Tony Clark remembered it, “Those Ponca gentlemen from Oklahoma—Joe Liles knew them and had sung with them. *So they came over here and gave us their blessing to sing those songs. We weren’t borrowing or taking those songs.* Those men brought those songs to us—recorded them, translated them, told daddy and them to go ahead and sing them. I don’t know how you get a better pedigree than that.”³⁰ Tony’s comment about having the songs given to the Lumbees is supported by a narrative in the Ponca community about the creation of a song specifically for the Lumbee tribe. Mark Wagoner, a non-Indian with deep connections to the Ponca community, has heard repeated references during the last decade to a story that recounts how, sometime around 1969, an influential Ponca singer named Russell Rush composed a song with Ponca words for the Lumbee tribe. No recording of the song appears to have survived, however, and today no one in the Lumbee or Ponca communities can accurately sing it. Several present-day Ponca singers are anxious to recover and reintroduce the song to the Lumbee community—not only because of its association with a revered elder like Rush, but also because they regard it as part of the larger history of Poncas sharing their

music and dance traditions with non-Poncas in a tradition that stretches back to the nineteenth century. “They [the Poncas] take this very seriously,” noted Wagoner, “and they want to recover the song so that people can sing it. There are singers in the Ponca community who are very proud of their role in bringing this music to the Lumbees.”³¹

In its review of the album, *The Robesonian* newspaper noted that although the album’s tracks were “not traditionally Lumbee . . . this recording carries with it considerable musical authority and deserves wide public interest.”³² Indeed, the music was not “traditionally Lumbee,” yet that does not obscure the fact that it simultaneously nurtured eastern North Carolina’s Indian identity and connected it to the larger powwow community. In a 1972 article published in the hobbyist magazine *American Indian Crafts and Culture*, four members of Lumbees and Friends described their “driving force” as the desire “to share the knowledge of the modern, pan-Indian culture with those Indians in North Carolina who have lost a great deal of their ties to the past.” The album’s liner notes echoed that sentiment, describing *Lumbees and Friends* as

dedicated to the boosting of self-awareness among the Lumbees. The purpose of this album is to further distribute this American Indian cultural interest to all non-reservation Indians of the eastern United States. This record is further intended to tell people of all races of the efforts the Lumbees are making to strengthen their Indian community.³³

Here were Native and non-Native singers performing Southern Plains songs in order to amplify their commitment to eastern North Carolina’s Native communities; this spoke strongly to the power of such music. Lumbees and Friends became an icon in the local powwow world and—like Shallow Water and Young Society—is remembered as a watershed moment in the history of eastern North Carolina powwow singing. When I arrived at his home for an interview, for example, Tony Clark immediately showed me the drum that had been used by Lumbees and Friends. “That’s a piece of real history right there,” Clark observed. “A lot of blessings came out of that drum. My mom and dad sang around that drum when she was pregnant with me, so I met that drum in the spirit world. When I hold *that* drum, it has power, and I want you to be near it while we’re talking.”³⁴

As Marty Richardson has noted in his research on Haliwa-Saponi

powwows, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, singers began to expand their repertoires by composing original songs, and importantly, using regional languages in the lyrics. This reflected a parallel trend in which North Carolina's powwow culture was rapidly maturing into more than a borrowed practice based on outside models. An increasingly informed and nuanced understanding of powwow ways was evident at dances across the region, for example, and larger dances like the Haliwa-Saponi Powwow, Coharie Powwow, and Lumbee Spring Powwow began to regularly attract participants from the Midwest, Canada, and the American West. Visitors to the 2012 Lumbee Spring powwow, notes Isaac Dial, "speak well of it."³⁵

But it was the singing prowess of local drum groups that established the region's powwow credentials and elevated eastern North Carolina's singers to prominence. Singing is universally regarded as the most important and difficult job in the powwow world. For example, drum groups must have large repertoires in order to handle multisession and multiday dances without running out of, or repeating, songs; and because song selection is crucially important, they must also be able to sing the appropriate song, often at a moment's notice. As a result, a drum group like Stoney Creek or Southern Sun will typically have three or four dozen songs representing four or five genres at the ready when they set up at a dance. While Plains song forms remain the default structural template, what we hear at North Carolina powwows tells us we are not in Oklahoma or South Dakota. Just as they do in Plains communities, the songs being made and sung by North Carolina drum groups situate and express shared experiences and histories by calling explicit attention to local contexts. A good example of this comes Southern Sun, a drum group largely comprising Lumbee young men and women who specialize in Southern Plains singing (thus the reference to "Southern" Sun). The liner notes to their 2007 CD *Third Degree Burn* call attention to the group's interest in using their own, original compositions to celebrate the lives and legacies of local elders:

Southern Sun began [in 1994] by concentrating on the Southern Plains singing style of the Ponca, Pawnee, and Kiowa tribes of Oklahoma. Today, drum members also compose original songs that still conform to the traditional structure of Southern Plains music. . . . The last two songs on this CD bring us back to *our tra-*

ditional ways and upbringings. They are songs for two individuals composed by our younger singers who look up to these elders . . . “Mr. Pete” . . . and “Aunt Gracie.”³⁶

Other singers echo these ideas. While Stoney Creek excels at performing Northern Plains-style songs, the substantive core of those songs is connected to local contexts. Marty Richardson described his interest in composing original songs this way:

I was curious about my tribe and who I was, so I just started doing research. At the time, we wanted to make our own songs. It was all about expression, about wanting to say what *you* want to say. It was also about using your own language. We were singing songs from other tribes and in some cases we might not know what they really mean. My desire was to be able to use our language *and to make this our own*. For me, those words, they say “This is ours.” It’s really pretty simple—we want to be able to speak to our own people. So yeah, when people ask us to make songs, the first thing that comes to my mind is what words and ideas do I need? Maybe there’s not a word for what they want, and that makes me think carefully about the use and meaning of this song.³⁷

For Tony Clark, a founding member of Southern Sun, the transition from borrowed songs using someone else’s language to original songs using local languages was transformative: “In the early days, and on into the ‘70s and ‘80s, we were singing other tribes’ songs. And people were messing up the words. That ain’t good. We have our own languages—let’s use them. Let’s make songs that talk about our people and our land and our history.” One example of this is an original Southern Sun composition called the “Good Dancing Song.” Composed in 1996, “Good Dancing” was a collaborative effort between Tony Clark and Joe Liles. (It can be heard on *At Last*, Southern Sun’s first commercially produced recording.) Liles recalls that the melody and vocables “came to me while I was driving down I-95 to Pembroke for a dance one weekend. So I asked Tony to help me put words into it. We just started thinking about what this song should talk about, and we agreed that like a lot of those Kiowa and Ponca songs we sing, it would be nice to have a local song that encouraged people to dance and enjoy themselves. So, in the end we put Cheraw words in the song that basically say ‘dancing is good.’”

Clark recalled that the song came along at the same time that he and his wife had begun seriously researching local languages—“Cheraw, Tutelo, Catawba, so when Joe called, I was over the moon. This was what we’d wanted to do. What I wanted to do was to give back something to the tribe. I really wanted them to sing songs that belonged to them, in their language, for their community, for their children. I got to be part of one of the greatest transitions that’s ever happened in this area because I actually saw and was part of the shift to these new songs.”³⁸

For Chris Conner of Southern Sun, making original songs reflects his desire to answer the local community’s needs and interests, and not simply to proficiently copy someone else’s music:

We’re influenced by the Cozads, Yellowhammer, and Southern Thunder [a who’s who of Southern Plains powwow drums], but we’ve created a new style with the Oklahoma sound, so our sound is slightly different. It’s ours now, and it’s clear that it’s an eastern North Carolina expression. We’ve made songs for people’s kids, for our elders—memorial songs. We’ve made a flag song, round dance songs, all kinds of other powwow songs that come from *here*, from *our* Indian country with titles and stories that come from *here*. It makes me feel good to know that we can bring attention to our own people in a way that other powwow people recognize.³⁹

The group’s *Third Degree Burn* CD confirms the group’s commitment to Conner’s approach. Thirteen of the fourteen songs are original compositions by various members of the group, and all are connected in some way to local stories, events, locales, and individuals—as evidenced by titles like “Highway 130,” “Spotted Turtle,” “Grandpa,” “Aunt Gracie,” and “Millicent Clark’s Song.” The CD also shows something of the group’s depth and breadth by virtue of the fact that it includes general powwow songs (called “intertribals”), fancy dance songs, and memorial songs, as well as two round dance songs with English lyrics—a nod to a very popular Oklahoma genre.⁴⁰

Liles’s observation about the high regard that other drum groups have for North Carolina singers is borne out in a number of ways. A particularly good illustration is the frequency with which top-tier drum groups routinely and publicly acknowledge that these singers have learned their craft well. Chris Conner recalled that at the 2010 Lumbee Spring Powwow, for example, one of the invited drums was Sizzortail, a top drum

group in the Oklahoma powwow world. (That Sizzortail would attend the dance in the first place is an affirmation of Lumbee Spring's place in the powwow world.) "We sang a song that belongs to someone on that drum," Conner remembered, "and those guys *got up and danced on the song* and then came over and put money on our drum and said, 'Good job, boys, glad to see you're doing it right.' Sizzortail—we're talking the biggest of the big. So when people say this isn't real *because we're Lumbees*, I just shake my head. . . . My answer is come to a powwow where Southern Sun or Stoney Creek has 12–15 singers and listen. Then tell me it's not 'real.'" A similar occurrence marked Southern Sun's invitation as a host drum group at the University of Michigan's thirty-eighth annual powwow in 2010. That weekend, the group sang for the first time a song composed by Southern Sun member Houston Locklear in honor of his infant son. Moved by the performance, and impressed by the quality of the song, Eagle Flight, a well-known drum group from London, Ontario, put a monetary gift on Southern Sun's drum.⁴¹

The Stoney Creek singers enjoy perhaps the highest profile of eastern North Carolina's drum groups. Its members are prolific composers, and the group has a well-deserved reputation for being one of the finest drums to come out of the East Coast. Drumhop Productions, an important distributor of powwow music headquartered in Bismarck, North Dakota, described Stoney Creek's 2007 CD *Powwow Trail Blazin'* thus:

For the powwow people who don't get a chance to travel east of the Mississippi, Drumhop is excited to introduce you to Stoney Creek. For the past 15 years, they have continued to gain more and more respect as they have climbed the powwow ladder. Stoney Creek has a unique sound that has been influenced by some of the all time greats like Eyabay, Stoney Park, Whitefish Jrs, Blackstone, Blacklodge, Northern Cree, Southern Cree, Mystic River, Little Boy just to name a few. "Powwow Trail Blazin'" was recorded live at the 2007 Crow Fair Powwow and Rodeo.⁴²

Drumhop's promotional copy is no idle boast. In addition to hosting virtually every important powwow on the East Coast, Stoney Creek has been invited to sing at the Six Nations Powwow in Ontario; the Gathering of Nations Powwow in Albuquerque; Schemitzun (until its demise in 2009 the largest powwow on the East Coast); the Morongo Powwow (one of the most popular dances in the West); and most tellingly, as an

invited host drum group at Crow Fair in 2007, now in its ninety-third year as one of Indian country's premier dances. Richardson smiled at the memory of those dances. "I guess we've been pretty much everywhere. But Crow Fair—let me tell you, those people really treated us well. We met some of their committee members at the Morongo [California] Powwow, and they were impressed with our sound and the next thing you know, we're an invited host drum at Crow Fair. It was really something—Crow Fair. And they *really* liked our singing. Man, it was awesome."⁴³

Like Southern Sun, Stoney Creek's members are prolific composers. The fourteen tracks on their most recent commercial recording, *Love Is Determination* (2010), for example, are all original compositions. The songs cover a number of genres, and demonstrate both the group's technical and musical proficiency, as well as its commitment to using the powwow in culturally discerning ways. Many of the songs refer specifically to eastern North Carolina themes, locales, and contexts, including songs such as "Them Carolina Boys" and "The Old Ones." Richardson's "LBB Remastered," made in honor of Stoney Creek singer Dwayne Harris, is a case in point: "This song 'Little Big Boy' was originally made for Dwayne Harris and talks about how he has grown up with Stoney Creek from being a young teenager into the man he is today. Dwayne brings a lot of heart, soul, power and emotion to the drum."⁴⁴ Another example of a song dedicated to an individual from the community is "Piscataway Woman—Wanda's Song," composed by Keith Cox:

This song is dedicated to Ms. Wanda Iris Blake, who passed into the spirit world on March 26, 2010. She was a jingle dress dancer. Wanda and her family have always been (and always will be) very close to us on the powwow circuit. We will remember and cherish so many great memories of Wanda.⁴⁵

"We made a song for her," remembered Richardson,

and it's just talking about [how] . . . she had a great spirit and she's basically looking down on us. [The Tutelo words are:] Strong Piscataway Woman . . . we thank you for being who you are . . . we thank you for your spirit . . . your good spirit . . . you're in the sky . . . you're in the sky . . . you're in heaven . . . we will see you in the future.⁴⁶

What do these singing traditions mean to the Native communities of eastern North Carolina? In the larger powwow world, these songs have fostered a level of respect that has put eastern North Carolina singers on the map in a way that most people could not imagine twenty years ago. Joe Liles noted, "We always felt that the powwow gave North Carolina Indian people a way to celebrate their kinship with Indian people all over the country. North Carolina Indian people hold their own everywhere and are seamlessly integrated into the powwow world across the country. This is especially true of the best singers. Those drums can hang with anyone in the powwow world."⁴⁷

Since they first emerged in the mid-1960s, these singing traditions, like the powwow itself, have also become cherished and powerful forms of identity. Taking the long view, Ray Littleturtle commented,

Now, we've got a whole group of people who have grown up in the powwow culture, like my grandson Kaya. He knows nothing else. He excels in his academics, but he's Indian all the way. Singing all the time, singing twenty-four/seven. These powwow ways and those songs help him to be proud of who he is. My two sons, Cochise and Tony, they grew up with this. . . . And Kaya . . . he went with us when he was two years old, and all of a sudden he started singing and he ain't stopped yet.⁴⁸

Now in his late teens, Kaya has become a talented singer whose gifts were expressed with great poignancy when, dressed in his powwow clothes and standing at the front of the Berea Baptist Church in Pembroke, North Carolina, he sang a "passing song" at his grandfather's funeral. Liles, who has been part of the powwow world in the region from its earliest beginnings, was struck by the scene: "There was a time when I never would've imagined going to a funeral in Pembroke and hearing Indian singing. And remember, the family asked members of the community to wear their powwow clothes to the service. So as I looked around, I saw probably two dozen people wearing their outfits. I know Ray's heart was lifted by this, and by Kaya's singing."⁴⁹

Like Littleturtle, Derek Lowry observed that the drum had been instrumental in the decades-old fight to embrace and celebrate Native identity. "Elders and adults got together to help the young ones, who didn't have a question mark over their heads about who they were. It set the tone for younger generations, and reminded adults of their responsibilities. If it's only going to be for the youth, it loses part of its power.

You hear those songs, and you're in touch with everyone who has gone ahead of you. That drum, it speaks, you know."⁵⁰ Lowry had been instrumental in that process, and when he died in early 2004, Southern Sun set up a drum during the graveside rites, and a group of young people Lowry had taught to sing closed the service with a memorial song.

Marty Richardson and Chris Conner believe that young Native people should be exposed to the power of the drum at an early age. As Conner said, "I feel an obligation to be around the drum as a way of being a good example." With a chuckle he added, "Especially for some of the Gen X knuckleheads." Richardson agreed: "I think we should start them [around the drum] as young as possible. They grow up and it is second nature to them. . . . They grow up to appreciate it, they grow up to be a part of it." Richardson added that he hoped young people would hear these songs and "remember that they tell we're still here, still Native people, still living on the same land as our ancestors." That sentiment is clearly expressed in "The Old Ones," composed by Stoney Creek member Keith Cox: "Those are the old towns . . . that's where our people lived, and our people still live in this community and a long time ago people saw us and we're still here . . . we are standing and living here."⁵¹

Singers also invariably point to the inherent power of language that these song traditions represent. As Joe Liles commented,

Composers from this part of the country have made songs for their own people that fit into the music that Indian people all over North America are doing, and in my opinion that's what took East Coast Indians into the powwow world on equal footing in many cases. But there's more to it than being accepted on the powwow circuit. It's clear that these songs are one way of keeping languages alive. It's not a particular consequence that you'll become fluent, but it can help that to happen. It can also help preserve language as a way of delivering prayers, and that's important in both powwow and ceremonial ways. So maybe language as incorporated in song is an incremental way of preserving language and the ideas that go with it.⁵²

"When you hear that right song, with the right words," said Tony Clark,

you know that this is worth whatever it takes to get our young people around that drum. It's like being in a deep ceremonial state. It heightens all your senses. At that point, the world connects . . .

You've got your ancestors with you and your future in front and you feel both of them. What gets me is not just the singing, but the way it's being danced to. That's when I *really* enjoy those songs and those words. Like at the memorial dance for my dad—when those people came out, they danced and prayed with their feet. You hear those words in those songs, and when things are going right, it's just so powerful. It elevates you.⁵³

The relationship between the power of song to convey important community values was never clearer to me than when Derek Lowry and Mark Wagoner from Southern Sun made the flag song of the North Carolina Tuscarora Nation in 1996. Working collaboratively on the words and melody, they made the song over the course of many months. Inspired by Plains models, and especially by the Ponca and Kiowa flag songs, the tone, structure, and lyrics of the Tuscarora flag song clearly echo those other examples. Wagoner recalled, "This was something Derek talked about a lot going back to the early 1990s. He was always working on finding a way to get language into songs. We had a lot of discussions about doing more than collecting lists of words. Derek was always asking, 'How do we make this part of life?'" But the crucial act was not the final working out of the Tuscarora lyrics by Lowry (*Quasi aya ke ya oriqua*: "This is our flag, it is a good thing"), or the creation of the melody by Wagoner. It was the conversation that Lowry had with his clan mothers, deep in the recesses of Robeson County, in the Tuscarora longhouses that dot the landscape to this day. There, according to practices and values that are older than recorded memory, Lowry made his case for a new kind of song, to be used in a dance arena that had come to the community from far away. Wagoner vividly remembers that Lowry did not believe he could act on the plan for making a flag song without the blessings of his elders, and without the approval of the clan mothers. So, he went to the longhouse and made the case for the song. The clan mothers gave him their blessing, and the song was made.⁵⁴

This song, like so many others heard in the powwow arenas of eastern North Carolina, is a testament to the ability of Indian people to balance innovation and tradition in the search for cultural practices that are relevant. And as is true of powwow songs in general, the Tuscarora flag song helps us to see how and with what consequences the region's Native people have constructed new forms of gathering and expression that take advantage of the powwow's remarkably flexible boundar-

ies. In their hands, the song traditions that began as borrowed elements have—over the course of the last forty years—taken on a deeper, richer, more explicit role as Indian people have embraced and reshaped the singing that is at the core of powwow gatherings. Chris Conner, a singer who learned his craft under Lowry’s tutelage, summed up our conversation this way:

The drum has become part of the equation for how some young Indian people around here are living their lives. It teaches them who they are—behavior, respect, attitude, their own history and ways. It gives them brothers and sisters who care about them. It’s about more than learning a song. For a lot of young people who have grown up with it, this is who you are. It’s an instrument for identity.⁵⁵

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NOTES

1. Ray Littleturtle, interview by Clyde Ellis, February 27, 2010, Pembroke NC. Beginning with the celebrated 1958 Klan rout in Maxton NC, and continuing with his work in the American Indian Movement, the Lumbee tribal council, and the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs (whose chairman described him as “a textbook traditionalist”), Littleturtle became one of the most influential Native leaders in eastern North Carolina. See Commission of Indian Affairs chairman Greg Richardson’s comments at <http://www.governor.state.nc.us/eTownhall/Blog/post/2011/01/12/Remembering-traditionalist-Ray-Littleturtle.aspx>; and also Kay Oxendine, “The Legacy of Ray Little Turtle,” <http://www.powwows.com/2011/07/ray-littleturtle/>.

2. The most complete discussion of the song is in Severt Young Bear and R. D. Theisz, *Standing in the Light: A Lakota Way of Seeing* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 155–57.

3. Marvin M. Richardson, interview by Clyde Ellis, August 7, 2011, Chapel Hill NC. For discussions of powwow music's wider dimensions, see Young Bear and Theisz, *Standing In the Light*; Luke Eric Lassiter, *The Power of Kiowa Song: A Collaborative Ethnography* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998); and William K. Powers, *War Dance: Plains Indian Musical Performance* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990). For especially insightful analyses of how borrowed song traditions can quickly become bound up in community constructions of identity, see David W. Samuels, *Putting a Song on Top of It: Expression and Identity on the San Carlos Apache Reservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004); and Kristina M. Jacobson, "Manly Voices: Navajo Country Music and the Politics of Indigeneity" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2012).

Indian communities in the eastern side of the state include the 55,000 members of the Lumbee Tribe found largely in Robeson County; the 2,700 members of the Coharie Tribe primarily in Sampson and Harnett counties; the 3,800 members of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe primarily in Halifax and Warren counties; the 2,300 members of the Waccamaw Sioux Tribe in Bladen and Columbus counties; the 900 members of the Meherrin Tribe in Hertford, Bertie, Gates, and Northampton counties; the 850 members of the Sappony Indians in Person County; the 700 members of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation; and four urban Indian associations: Metrolina Native American Association (Charlotte), Guilford Native American Association (Greensboro), Cumberland County Association for Indian People (Fayetteville), and the Triangle Native American Association (Raleigh). See the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs website, <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/tribesorg.htm>.

4. Marvin M. Richardson, "The Powwow among the Haliwa-Saponi: Indian Identity, Performance, and Culture" (MA thesis, Indiana University, 2007), 60. Richardson echoes the work of scholars such as Loretta Fowler and Morris Foster on innovation and continuity in powwow traditions. See Loretta Fowler, "Local Contexts of Powwow Ritual," in *Powwow*, ed. Clyde Ellis, Gary Dunham, and Luke Eric Lassiter (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 68–82; Loretta Fowler, *Shared Symbols, Contested Memories: Gros Ventre Culture and History, 1778–1985* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 141–96; Loretta Fowler, *Tribal Sovereignty and the Historical Imagination: Cheyenne-Arapaho Politics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 252–75; and Morris Foster, *Being Comanche: The Social History of an American Indian Community* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 131–65.

5. Native language in one eastern North Carolina community has been examined by Walt Wolfram, Clare Dannenberg, Stanley Knick, and Linda Oxendine, *Fine in the World: Lumbee Language in Time and Place* (Raleigh: North Carolina State Humanity Extension Program, 2002). Richardson is the only scholar who has discussed the cultural and linguistic contours of powwow sing-

ing in the region; see Richardson, "The Powwow among the Haliwa-Saponi," 60–80.

For the history and evolution of powwow in the region see Clyde Ellis, "'There's a Dance Every Weekend': Powwow Culture in Eastern North Carolina," in *Southern Heritage on Display: Public Ritual and Ethnic Diversity within Southern Regionalism*, ed. Celeste Ray (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 79–105; Patricia Lerch, "Powwows, Parades, and Social Drama Among the Waccamaw Sioux," in *Celebrations of Identity: Multiple Voices in American Ritual Performance*, ed. P. R. Frese (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 75–92; Patricia Lerch, "Pageantry, Parade, and Indian Dancing: The Staging of Identity among the Waccamaw Siouan," *Museum Anthropology* 16 (1992): 27–34; Patricia Lerch and Susan Bullers, "Powwows as Identity Markers: Traditional or Pan-Indian?" *Human Organization* 55 (1996): 390–95; Chris Goertzen, "Powwows and Identity on the Piedmont and Coastal Plains of North Carolina," *Ethnomusicology* 45 (2001): 58–88; Chris Goertzen, "Purposes of North Carolina Powwows," in Ellis et al., *Powwow*, 275–302; Christopher Arris Oakley, *Keeping the Circle: American Indian Identity in Eastern North Carolina, 1885–2004* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 81–106; Patricia Lerch, *Waccamaw Legacy: Contemporary Indians Fight for Survival* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 117–42; Meredith McCoy, "Something to Gather Around: Powwows and Lumbee Community Identity" (BA honors thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2010); Elizabeth Thompson Wyrick, "Pocahontas, Powwows, and Musical Power: Native American Women's Performances in North Carolina" (MA thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1998); and Dana H. Brumley, "Outside the Circle: The Juxtaposition of Powwow Imagery and Cherokee Historical Representation" (MA thesis, University of Central Florida, 2009).

6. Good examples of this include Malinda Maynor Lowery, *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South: Race, Identity, and the Making of a Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Stanley Knick, ed., *The Lumbee in Context: Toward an Understanding* (Pembroke NC: Native American Resource Center, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, 2000); Christopher Arris Oakley, "'When Carolina Indians Went on the Warpath': The Media, the Klan, and the Lumbees of North Carolina," *Southern Cultures* 14 (2008): 55–84. See also the DVDs produced by the Museum of the Native American Resource Center, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, and the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs: "Our People: The Coharie" (2011); "Our People: The Lumbee" (2009); "Our People: The Occaneechi Band of Saponi Nation" (2008); "Listen to the Drum: A Closer Look at American Indian Powwow Music" (2008); "Our People: The Sappony" (2007); and "In the Heart of Tradition: The Eight State-Recognized Tribes of North Carolina and the NC Com-

mission of Indian Affairs" (2005). A complete list of these publications can be found at Museum of the Native American Resource Center, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, <http://www.uncp.edu/nativemuseum>.

7. For overviews, see Clyde Ellis, *A Dancing People: Powwow Culture on the Southern Plains* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003); and Tara Browner, *Heartbeat of the People: Music and Dance of the Northern Powwow* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004). For discussions of how contemporary dance cultures have become widely shared, see Charlotte Heth, ed., *Native American Dance: Ceremonies and Social Traditions* (Washington DC: National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, with Starwood Publishing, 1992), and the essays in Ellis et al., *Powwow*.

8. Lerch, "Powwows, Parades, and Social Drama," 78–82, 90; John Wertheimer, *Law and Society in the South: A History of North Carolina Court Cases* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 169; Thomas Massey, "School Desegregation: Its Significance for Native Americans of Eastern North Carolina" (MA thesis, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, 1996), 64–86. For a list of Indian schools in eastern North Carolina, see Theda Perdue, *Native Carolinians: The Indians of North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1985), 66; and Massey, "School Desegregation," 64–85. See also Heather Kimberly Dial, "Struggling for Voice in a Black and White World: Lumbee Indians' Segregated Educational Experience in North Carolina" (PhD diss., North Carolina State University, 2006); and Heather Kimberly Dial, "Struggling for Voice in a Black and White World: The Lumbee Indians' Segregated Educational Experience in North Carolina," in *Transformations in Schooling: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Kim Tolley (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 225–50.

9. Goertzen, "Powwows and Identity," 60, 81; Schierbeck quoted in Wertheimer, *Law and Society in the South*, 174; Ellis, "There's a Dance Every Weekend," 91. For a local commentary on desegregation's consequences, see James Arthur Jones and Malinda Maynor, "What Is Progress? Desegregating an Indian School in Robeson County, North Carolina," *Southern Cultures* 10 (2004): 87–93.

10. Lerch, "Powwows, Parades, and Social Drama," 90; Lerch, "Pageantry, Parade, and Indian Dancing," 30; Richardson, "The Powwow among the Haliwa-Saponi," 58; J. Anthony Paredes, "The Folk Culture of the Eastern Creek Indians: Synthesis and Change," in *Indians of the Lower South: Past and Present*, ed. John K. Mahon (Pensacola FL: Gulf Coast History and Humanities Conference, 1975), 109.

Powwows in non-Plains communities are often aimed at presenting carefully constructed images and messages to non-Indians. In a description of New England powwows that bear a striking resemblance to those in North Carolina,

Ann McMullen writes that “having begun their climb to recognition through pan-Indianism, these individuals continued to use traditional dress and rhetoric drawn from western tribes to promote versions of local Indian culture. . . . Powwow culture was invented explicitly for instructional purposes . . . as in other invented rituals; powwow participants are self-conscious in explaining the gravity of action and its importance to culture.” See Ann McMullen, “‘Canny about Conflict’: Nativism, Revitalization, and the Invention of Tradition in Native Eastern New England,” in *Reassessing Revitalization Movements: Perspectives from North America and the Pacific Islands*, ed. Michael E. Harkin, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 266.

11. Goertzen, “Powwows and Identity,” 58, 60, 81; Lerch, “Powwows, Parades, and Social Drama,” 80; Lerch, “Pageantry, Parade, and Indian Dancing,” 28.

12. Wertheimer, *Law and Society in the South*, 173; Littleturtle, interview; Lerch and Bullers, “Powwows as Identity Markers,” 391, 392, 395.

13. Joe Liles, interview by Clyde Ellis, July 4, 2001, Pembroke NC; Joe Liles, interview by Clyde Ellis, August 7, 2011, Durham NC; Derek Lowry, interview by Clyde Ellis, June 9, 2001, Greensboro NC.

14. Richardson, interview by Ellis; J. D. Moore, interview by Clyde Ellis, August 18, 2011; Ray and Kat Littleturtle, interview by Clyde Ellis, June 2, 2001, Pembroke NC; Littleturtle, interview; Ellis, “‘There’s a Dance Every Weekend,’” 79, 94–96; author’s field notes, September 6, 2000.

15. Oakley, *Keeping the Circle*, 103; Goertzen, “Powwows and Identity,” 87. This rapid expansion of powwows occurred in other areas of the country as well, especially where tribes were pursuing state and federal recognition and believed that the powwow could satisfy the need for evidence of expressive cultural institutions. For a Virginia case, see Samuel R. Cook, John L. Johns, and Karenne Wood, “The Monacan Nation Powwow: Symbol of Indigenous Survival,” in Ellis et al., *Powwow*, 201–33. For a discussion of the same patterns in a region even more remote from the Plains, see Ann McMullen, “Soapbox Discourse: Tribal Historiography, Indian-White Relations, and Eastern New England Powwows,” *Public Historian* 18 (1996): 53–74; and McMullen, “‘Canny about Conflict,’” 261–306. See also J. Anthony Paredes’s discussion of the Poarch Creek Powwow in Alabama in “Federal Recognition and the Poarch Creek Indians,” in *Indians of the Eastern United States in the Late 20th Century*, ed. J. Anthony Paredes (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992) where he writes that the “most visible expression of the Poarch Creek Indian community over the years, has been its annual Thanksgiving Homecoming Powwow initiated in 1970” (125).

16. Footage of recent dances can be found here: “Grand Entry for 2012 Catawba Indian Nation Pow Wow @ The Come See Me Festival in Rock Hill, SC,” YouTube video, 3:11, posted by “TeamLLamaTV,” April 14, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com>; “Haliwa-Saponi Tribal Powwow, Hollister, NC,” YouTube video,

3:30, posted by "lumbo716," April 19, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com>; "Haliwa-Saponi Tribal Powwow, Hollister, NC," YouTube video, 0:30, posted by "Spottyhorsez," May 8, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com>; "Carolina Indian Circle Pow Wow Grand Entry [at UNC-Chapel Hill]," YouTube video, 2:41, posted by "lumbo716," April 1, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com>; "NC State Powwow, Women's Traditional Contest," YouTube video, 2:53, posted by "goinsb," April 1, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com>; "Coharie Powwow, Clinton, NC September 2010," YouTube video, 4:59, posted by "jaylee90210," September 10, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com>; and "NC School of Science and Math Powwow," YouTube video, 4:52, posted by "Joe Liles," January 9, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com> (Stoney Creek sings the first song; Southern Sun sings the second song).

17. Fowler, "Local Contexts of Powwow Ritual," 68; Liles, interview, August 7, 2011; Michael Sam Cronk et al., "Celebration: Native Events in Eastern Canada," *Folklife Annual* (Washington DC: American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, 1987), 77; Lerch, *Waccamaw Legacy*, 129–30; Lerch and Bullers, "Powwows as Identity Markers," 394.

18. Tony Clark, interview by Clyde Ellis, February 27, 2012, Rowland NC.

19. James H. Howard, "Pan-Indianism in Native American Music and Dance," *Ethnomusicology* 27(1983): 72, 74, 75, 76, 78 (emphasis in the original); see also Howard, "Pan-Indian Culture of Oklahoma," *The Scientific Monthly* 81 (1955): 215–20.

20. J. Anthony Paredes, "Paradoxes of Modernism and Indianness in the Southeast," *American Indian Quarterly* 19 (1995): 346–47, 351 (emphasis in the original); Malinda Maynor Lowery, "Indians, Southerners, and Americans," *Native South* 2 (2009): 3.

21. Moore, interview.

22. Lowry, interview.

23. Richardson, "The Powwow among the Haliwa-Saponi," 52–55, 72–79; Liles, interview, July 4, 2001; Liles, interview, August 7, 2011.

24. Richardson, "The Powwow among the Haliwa-Saponi," 53–55, 76–77; Richardson, interview by Ellis.

25. Marty Richardson, interview by Karen Lynch Harley, July 7, 2010. Transcript in Clyde Ellis's possession, courtesy of Marty Richardson.

26. Ellis, "There's a Dance Every Weekend," 98; Lowry, interview; Clark, interview.

27. Liles, interview, July 4, 2001; Liles, interview, August 7, 2011; Ellis, "There's a Dance Every Weekend," 96–97.

28. Liles, interview, July 4, 2001.

29. Joe Liles, e-mail to Clyde Ellis, May 7, 2012.

30. Clark, interview.

31. Mark Wagoner, interview by Clyde Ellis, July 25, 2012, Greensboro NC.

32. Lee Hamilton, "American Indian Music Gets Boost from Lumbees," *The Robesonian*, June 21, 1972, <http://newspaperarchive.com/robesonian/1972-06-21/page-14>.

33. Ray Clark, Horace Locklear, Joe Liles, Ron Rozzelle, "Lumbees & Friends," *American Indian Crafts and Culture* 6 (1972): 15; *Lumbees and Friends*, liner notes, courtesy of Joe Liles and Mark Wagoner.

34. Clark, interview.

35. An April 18, 2011, *USA Today* feature, for example, included Lumbee Powwow in a discussion of the nation's most noteworthy Native events. Other dance gatherings mentioned in the story included Red Earth, Gathering of Nations, Ponca Powwow, and Crow Fair. See "10 Great Places to be Wowed by American Indian Culture," *USA Today*, April 14, 2011, <http://travel.usatoday.com/destinations/10great/story/2011/04/10-great-places-to-be-wowed-by-American-Indian-culture/46076118/1?loc=interstitialskip>; Dial quoted in "Powwow Puts Lumbees in the Spotlight," *Fayetteville Observer*, May 7, 2012, <http://fayobserver.com/articles/2012/05/071176077?sac=fo.community/robeson>.

Other examples of a growing national presence include Ray Littleturtle's work as an emcee at the Mashantucket Pequot tribe's Schemitzun Powwow, a dance that enjoyed a reputation in the 1980s and 1990s as the East Coast's premier contest powwow. In more recent years, Sandon Jacobs, a Haliwa-Saponi (and member of Stoney Creek), has gained a strong reputation as an emcee at large dances across the Northern Plains and in Canada. April Whittemore Locklear, a Lumbee, won the Miss Indian World powwow princess contest at the 1998 Gathering of Nations Powwow in Albuquerque NM (the largest powwow in the country), and four years later served as the Head Lady Dancer at the First Inaugural Native American Celebration on the National Mall in Washington DC. For an account of Locklear's bid to become Miss Indian World, see Kathleen Glennister Roberts, "Beauty is Youth: The Powwow 'Princess,'" in Ellis et al., *Powwow*.

36. *Southern Sun Singers: Third Degree Burn* (Hollister NC: Thundercuts Productions, 2007), liner notes. Southern Sun is also something of a lineal descendant of Lumbees and Friends. Original members of Southern Sun include Joe Liles, who led the Lumbees and Friends group, and Tony Clark, youngest son of Ray Littleturtle—another leader of Lumbees and Friends. And like the earlier group, Southern Sun is not limited to Native Singers, or even to Lumbees.

37. Richardson, interview by Ellis.

38. Clark, interview; Liles, interview, August 7, 2011.

39. Chris Conner, telephone interview by Clyde Ellis, September 8, 2011.

40. Southern Sun's round dance lyrics are typical of those heard on the Southern Plains. In their song "Round Dance," for example, the lyrics are: "I remember darling / In the backseat of my car / You were only 16 / Now we're in the old folks home."

“Eternity,” another Southern Sun round dance song on the same recording, goes this way: “I’ve been waiting for so long / For this day to come to me / From this moment we’ll be together / For eternity.” Compare this to a popular Oklahoma round dance song with English lyrics like the well-known “Motel 6”: “Go with me tonight, dear / Stay with me tonight, dear / Oh my darling, stay with me tonight, dear / At the Motel 6, dear.”

41. Conner, interview; Liles, interview, August 7, 2011. Examples of Southern Sun singing include the following: “Men’s Fancy Dance 2012 Catawba Indian Nation Pow Wow @ The Come See Me Festival in Rock Hill, SC,” YouTube video, 2:27, posted by “TeamLLamaTV,” April 14, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com>; and “2007 Powwow at the North Carolina School of Science and Math,” YouTube video, 7:11, posted by “mikehelms,” February 23, 2007, <http://www.youtube.com>. Eagle Flight can be seen at the 2008 University of Michigan Powwow in “eagle flight,” YouTube video, 2:32, posted by “mel121072,” October 28, 2008; and at the 2010 Lumbee Spring Powwow in “Eagle Flight—Intertribal,” YouTube video, 2:37, posted by “mdt75,” May 3, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com>.

42. “Stoney Creek—‘Powwow Trail Blazin’—Live at Crow Fair 07,” http://www.drumhop.net/stoney_creek_blazin.htm.

43. Richardson, interview by Ellis; *Love Is Determination* (Bismarck ND: Drumhop Productions, 2010), liner notes. Selections from Stoney Creek’s 2007 visit to Crow Fair can be heard at “Stoney Creek—‘Powwow Trail Blazin.’” Stoney Creek can be seen singing at the 2012 Catawba Powwow in “Stoney Creek Drum Group,” YouTube video, 4:04, posted by “gamercon390,” April 16, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com>; and “Stoney Creek Catawba 2012,” YouTube video, 3:10, posted by “Monte Boddie,” April 18, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com>.

44. *Love Is Determination*, liner notes.

45. *Love Is Determination*, liner notes.

46. Richardson, interview by Harley.

47. Liles, interview August 7, 2011.

48. Littleturtle, interview.

49. Liles, interview, August 7, 2011.

50. Lowry, interview.

51. Richardson, interview by Harley; Richardson, interview by Ellis. “The Old Ones” can be heard at “Stoney Creek—‘Love is Determination,’” http://www.drumhop.net/Stoney%20Creek_Love.htm.

52. Liles, interview, August 7, 2011.

53. Clark, interview.

54. Mark Wagoner, interview by Clyde Ellis, August 14, 2011, Greensboro NC. Goertzen glosses the song, but his narrative is incomplete. See “Powwows and Identity,” 76–77.

55. Conner, interview.