



INDIVISIBLE

African-Native American Lives in the Americas



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

SYMPOSIUM

3:00 6:00 PM • FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2009
ELMER AND MARY LOUISE RASMUSON THEATER



Radmilla Cody, Miss Navajo Nation,
and her grandmother, 2006.
Photo © 2009 John Running

“There still exists a largely invisible story of America—how African and Native peoples came together across space and time to create shared histories, communities, and ways of life. Through centuries of struggle, slavery, and dispossession, then by self-determination and freedom, African American and Native American peoples have become, more often than publicly recognized, indivisible.”

—GABRIELLE TAYAC (PISCATAWAY)

INDIVISIBLE: AFRICAN-NATIVE AMERICAN LIVES IN THE AMERICAS

Held on the occasion of the groundbreaking exhibition *IndiVisible: African-Native American Lives in the Americas*, this symposium aims to bring visibility to African-Native American lives and initiate a healing dialogue on African-Native American experiences for people of all backgrounds.

Moderated by National Museum of the American Indian Director Kevin Gover and with opening remarks by National Museum of African American History and Culture Director Lonnie G. Bunch, III, the symposium addresses such compelling themes as race and policy, creative resistance, blended communities, and African-Native lifeways. In illuminating the relationships between African Americans and Native Americans that developed over centuries, *IndiVisible* offers a vital new understanding of how these life experiences have become an essential part of our American identity.

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

3:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Lonnie G. Bunch, III, director, National Museum of African American History and Culture

OPENING PRAYER

Amitiyah Elayne Hyman

INTRODUCTIONS AND FRAMING STATEMENT

Kevin Gover, director, National Museum of the American Indian

IN THE SPIRIT OF THE ANCESTORS

Penny Gamble-Williams, executive director, Ohke Cultural Network, Inc.

THE DYNAMICS OF COMMON UNITY BETWEEN AFRICANS AND NATIVE AMERICANS: EVIDENCE FROM AFRICAN-NATIVE AMERICAN NARRATIVES

Robert Keith Collins, San Francisco State University

RACIAL LEGIBILITY: PUBLIC POLICY AND THE TRANS/FORMATION OF "BLACK" AND "INDIAN" IDENTITY

Angela A. Gonzales, Cornell University

"AND MUSTEE IS MY NATION": REFLECTIONS ON NARRATING CONTESTABLE IDENTITIES

Judy Kertész, North Carolina State University

"ONE OF THE LONGEST UNWRITTEN CHAPTERS": THE INTERRELATED HISTORIES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS AND NATIVE AMERICANS

Tiya Miles, University of Michigan

INDIVISIBLE: MANY HANDS, MANY VOICES

Gabrielle Tayac, historian, National Museum of the American Indian

PANEL DISCUSSION WITH PRESENTERS

Kevin Gover, moderator

CLOSING COMMENTS AND REMARKS

Kevin Gover



Barack Black Eagle. The Crow Nation's Black Eagle family ceremonially adopted Barack Obama in 2008 while he campaigned for the presidency. A Crow leader wondered, "We have called the president The Great White Father, so we are not sure what to call you." Courtesy Billings Gazette

BIOGRAPHIES



LONNIE G. BUNCH, III

Dr. Bunch is founding director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture. Previously, he served as president of the Chicago Historical Society, associate director for curatorial affairs at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, and curator of history for the California African American Museum, Los Angeles. He specializes in interpreting African American history in American museums and the black American experience in California.



ROBERT KEITH COLLINS *African and Choctaw descent*

Dr. Collins is an assistant professor of American Indian Studies at San Francisco State University. His expertise includes research in African and Native American interactions in North and South America, as well as in person-centered ethnography and the formation of public and private identities. Collins also specializes in Choctaw language and culture and has authored several book chapters on black Choctaw lived experiences.



PENNY GAMBLE-WILLIAMS *Chappaquiddick Wampanoag*

Ms. Gamble-Williams is an educator, artist, and community activist and the executive director of Ohke Cultural Network, Inc., in Maryland. She conducts teacher training and works with children of all ages using storytelling, art, music, and movement to teach Native and African American histories. She produces and hosts a radio talk show called the "Talking Feather," which explores the history and culture of Native Americans, African Americans, and indigenous peoples around the world.



ANGELA A. GONZALES *Hopi*

Dr. Gonzales is an assistant professor of development sociology and American Indian studies at Cornell University. Her latest research explores the creation and manifestation of conceptual categories of race. Earlier work included community-based research of sociological processes underlying identity, development, and community health on Indian reservations. Dr. Gonzales strives to refine our understanding of the processes and outcomes of social change affecting Native peoples, tribes, and nations.



KEVIN GOVER *Pawnee*

Mr. Gover is director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and former professor of law at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University (ASU). He also served as co-executive director of ASU's American Indian Policy Institute. Before joining the university faculty, Mr. Gover was assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior, where he oversaw programs in Indian education, law enforcement, social services, treaty rights, and trust asset management.



AMITIYAH ELAYNE HYMAN

Retired after twenty-five years of ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Amityyah Elayne Hyman is now a creative in residence in Greenbelt, Maryland. Her studio is her home; her media are film, print, fabric, and her garden. A mixed-blood woman of Native, African, and Euro descent, she walks the spirit path of her ancestors. Sitting at the crossroads, Amityyah interprets from the spirit world and translates for the physical world, changing contaminated words into clear words.



JUDY KERTÉSZ

Ms. Kertész is a Ph.D. candidate in the history of American civilization at Harvard University and assistant professor of history at North Carolina State University. Her work focuses on colonial, revolutionary, and antebellum U.S. cultural history; American Indian histories and cultures; American nationalism; material culture; African American studies; and tribal sovereignty issues.



TIYA MILES

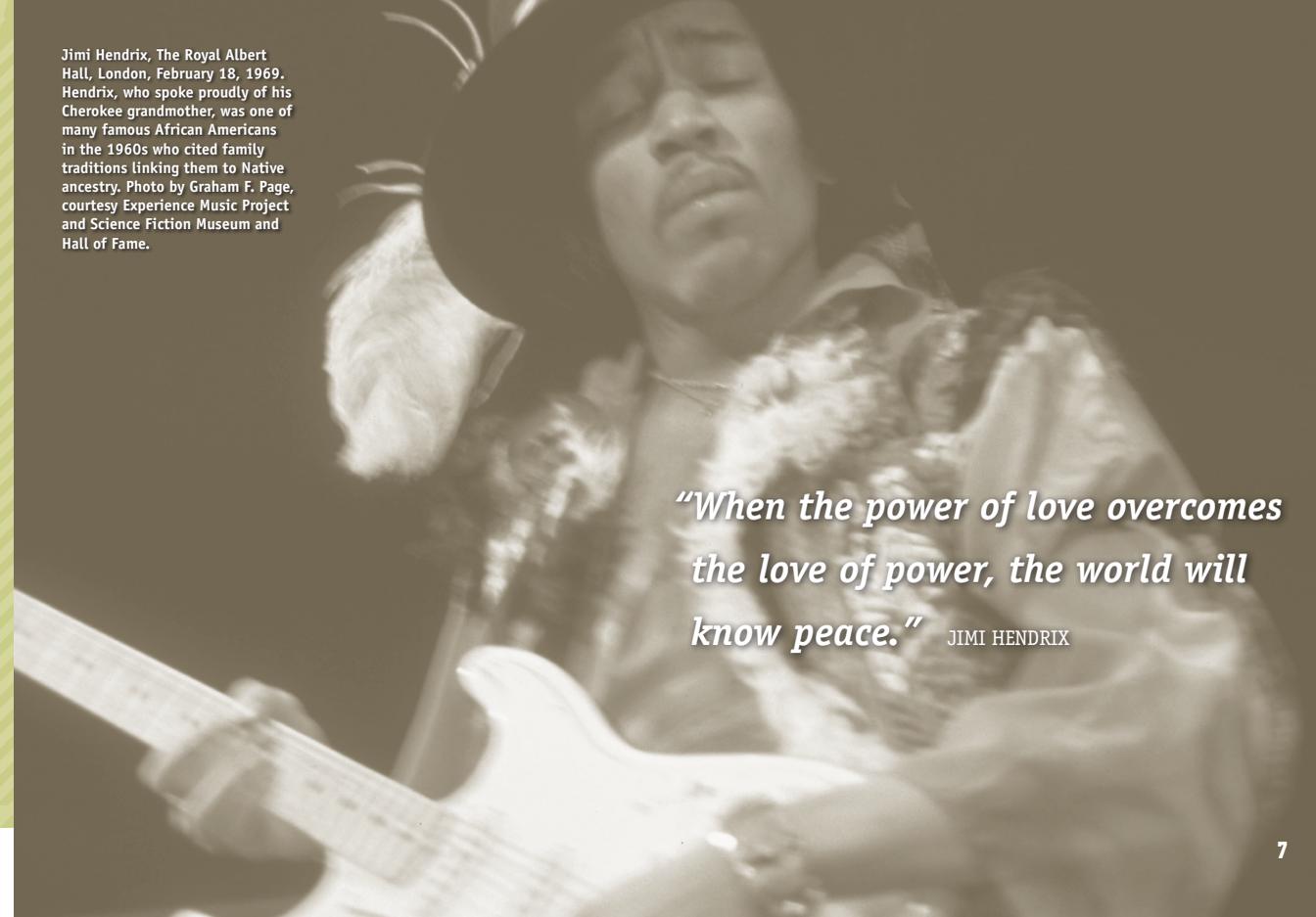
Dr. Miles is an associate professor at the University of Michigan in the Program in American Culture, Center for Afro American and African Studies, Department of History, and Native American Studies Program. Her research and creative interests include African American and Native American interrelated and comparative histories (especially nineteenth century); black, Native, and U.S. women’s histories; and African American and Native American women’s literature.



GABRIELLE TAYAC *Piscataway*

As a historian with the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, Dr. Tayac conducts research focused on Native American identity issues across the Americas. Her areas of specialty include international human rights and the Native peoples and histories of the Chesapeake Bay region. She curates exhibitions at NMAI, lectures widely, and has published an award-winning children’s book.

Jimi Hendrix, The Royal Albert Hall, London, February 18, 1969. Hendrix, who spoke proudly of his Cherokee grandmother, was one of many famous African Americans in the 1960s who cited family traditions linking them to Native ancestry. Photo by Graham F. Page, courtesy Experience Music Project and Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame.



“When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.” JIMI HENDRIX

JOIN US TOMORROW!
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Meet the Curators: *IndiVisible: African-Native American Lives in the Americas*

10:30 a.m. – 12 noon • Room 4018–19, Fourth level
National Museum of the American Indian
4th Street and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC

Join the *IndiVisible* curators for a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at their work on this remarkable project and a lively, informative discussion of the challenges and rewards inherent in the richly complex subject the exhibition presents. Free and open to the public.

The Museum extends a special thank you to our participating partners, The Links, Incorporated, Eastern Area and the Capital City Chapter.

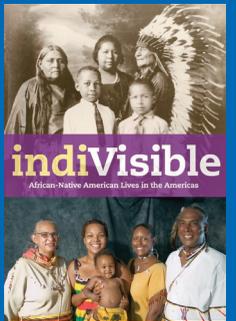
The *IndiVisible: African Native American Lives in the Americas* exhibition was developed, produced, and circulated by the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. The exhibition was curated by Robert Keith Collins, Penny Gamble-Williams, Angela Gonzales, Judy Kertész, Gabrielle Tayac, and Thunder Williams.

The *IndiVisible* project received generous financial support from Akaloa Resource Foundation and federal support from the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center.

Special thanks to the countless community members and project participants who provided encouragement and shared their stories.

IndiVisible is dedicated to the memory of Fred Nahwooksy, 1955–2009.

The book *IndiVisible: African Native American Lives in the Americas* is available in Smithsonian museum stores and online at www.AmericanIndian.si.edu/bookshop.



The exhibition is on view at the National Museum of the American Indian through May 2010. For public programs and national tour schedule, please visit www.AmericanIndian.si.edu.

Island Smith at his desk, ca. 1935. Smith, an Afro-Creek herbal doctor who practiced in Oklahoma in the early 1900s, drew his spiritual power from both African and Native American traditions. Courtesy Research Division of the Oklahoma Historical Society.





The Longest Walk, 1978. Pictured here (left to right) are Muhammad Ali, Buffy St. Marie, Floyd Red Crow Westerman, Harold Smith, Stevie Wonder, Marlon Brando, Max Gail, Dick Gregory, Richie Havens, and David Amram at a concert at the end of the Longest Walk, a 3,600-mile protest march from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., in the name of Native rights. Courtesy David Amram.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

Established in 1989, through an Act of Congress, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) is an institution of living cultures dedicated to advancing knowledge and understanding of the life, languages, literature, history, and arts of the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere. The museum includes the National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall; the George Gustav Heye Center, a permanent museum in lower Manhattan; and the Cultural Resources Center, a research and collections facility in Suitland, Maryland.

Located on the National Mall at 4th Street and Independence Avenue SW, between the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum and the U.S. Capitol Building, NMAI is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The museum is closed on December 25.

To become a Member of the National Museum of the American Indian, please visit www.AmericanIndian.si.edu/give or call 1-800-242-NMAI (6624).

Visit NMAI's website at www.AmericanIndian.si.edu

Cover (top): Comanche family, early 1900s, Courtesy Sam DeVenney;
cover (bottom): Mashpee family, 2008, Photo by Kevin Cartwright.



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian