"Native-Inspired" Traditions at Camp Rising Sun: Origins and Implications

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This document explores the appropriation and misrepresentation of indigenous cultures at North American summer camps with specific focus on the "Native-inspired" practices and traditions at Camp Rising Sun, from the 1930s to today

Camp Rising Sun (CRS) was established in 1930 alongside a growing number of summer camps across North America using "Indian" practices to build character and leadership in a setting physically removed from an increasingly industrialized society. These "Native-inspired" traditions were often inaccurate and lumped the practices of many nations into one homogeneous "Indian" culture. While some of these practices have been abandoned over time, remnants of these so-called Indian traditions still exist today.

The United Nations declares that Indigenous Peoples have the right to maintain, protect, and develop all past, present, and future manifestations of their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and cultural expressions (UN, 2018). By continuing to engage in cultural misappropriation, CRS actively contributes to ongoing misinformation and suppression of Native American heritage and contemporary status (A. EagleWoman, personal communication, January 2, 2020). In the spirit of "compassionate and responsible leadership" for the betterment of the world, the Louis August Jonas Foundation (LAJF) has a responsibility to support Indigenous Peoples in reclaiming their heritage, language, and images worldwide. This commitment can be shown by acknowledging the historical marginalization of Indigenous Peoples upon which CRS is built and taking action to end misappropriation moving forward.

This document explores the appropriation and misrepresentation of Indigenous cultures at CRS as well as the implications and recommendations for their continued use.

What is Cultural Appropriation?

Appropriation means to take something that belongs to someone else and use it for personal gain (Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage Project, 2015). Cultural appropriation applies to situations where the object or idea being taken is linked to cultural elements such as collective identity, intellectual property, cultural expression, artifacts, history, and ways of knowing (Skidmore, 2017). The exchange of cultures is inevitable and even encouraged at CRS. However, the degree to which the exchange is considered appropriate and ethical depends greatly on the context of the relationship between the two parties involved. *Misrepresentation* refers to the use of Native-inspired practices that inaccurately represent the Indigenous cultures they claim to respect. These traditions are often constructed by summer camps and attributed to a generic Indian culture.

An Overview of Three Dangerous Stereotypes

The continued misuse of Native-inspired practices perpetuates stereotypes of Indigenous Peoples on a global scale (Slyck, 2006). Hamilton (2003) describes three specific stereotypes that are propagated through the appropriation and misrepresentation of Indigenous cultures at North American summer camps: The Dying Race Myth, the Noble Savage, and the Generic Indian. Understanding these stereotypes provides a backdrop for evaluating the implications of related traditions at CRS.

The Dying Race Myth

- Implies a generic "Indian race" that is extinct or endangered (commonly referred to in past-tense)
- Changes in ways of life seen as signs of dying race rather than cultural adaptation
- Information about Indigenous Peoples and contemporary issues is not a significant part of program

The Noble Savage

- Depicts "the Indian" as highly moral, living unrestricted in nature
- A romanticized "other" uncontaminated by modern European civilization
- Sometimes well-intentioned or seen as positive, these stereotypes create inaccurate, unrealistic, or simple depictions of Indigenous Peoples

The Generic Indian

- Groups all Indigenous Peoples into one unified culture and ignores vast diversity of Indigenous nations and cultures
- Does not attribute terms, practices, etc. to the distinct language or culture of origin
- Uses artifacts, language, and practices of many Indigenous cultures, often not from the local area

Appropriation versus Appreciation

The following questions provide a framework for evaluating whether current or future exchanges of culture are appropriate and ethical. These questions are vital to the discussion of Native-inspired traditions at CRS. Questions are adapted from the Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage Project (2015) and "Camps: Educating or Appropriating?" (Webb, n.d.).

- Do the representations and practices of another culture perpetuate a stereotype?
- Is one of the depicted groups of people marginalized in society?
    - Is there a power imbalance between the two groups?
    - Does this exchange reinforce the imbalance?
- Is anyone offended by the cultural exchange? If so, what is the power relationship between those offended and those perpetuating the practice?
- What is the purpose of the cultural exchange?
    - Does the impact on marginalized groups match the intent of the dominant group?
- Who initiated the cultural exchange and was it consensual?
- Is there an accurate historical account of the practices? Is this history problematic?
- Is the knowledge of these practices/images accurate and is their significance taught to campers?
    - Are campers learning *about* or pretending *to be* Native Americans?

- Is how you use Native American culture the same as you would for another culture?

The answers to these questions are complex and conversations on appropriation should be "approached with openness, respect, courage, and empathy, and an awareness that it takes place within the context of a long history of Indigenous Peoples not being in control of their own stories" (Skidmore, 2017, p. 11).

Historical Context

Settler Colonialism in the 19th Century

Federal assimilation policies aimed at restricting the cultural identity of Native Americans dominated the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The following provides a brief overview of the policies and practices impacting Native Americans during the emergence of the antimodernist movement.

- **1879:** Children separated from families and forced to attend boarding schools designed to "kill the Indian in him, and save the man" (Pratt, as cited in "U.S. Indian Boarding School History," n.d.)
- **1883:** Code of Indian Offenses allows for the outlaw of many cultural and religious practices, including many dances (Clinton, 2008)
- **1890:** U.S. Forces kill between 150-300 Lakota Sioux on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation ("Native American History Timeline," 2019)
- **1932:** Tribal land is reduced by 90,000,000 acres as a result of the Dawes Act (Newcomb, 2012)
- **1924:** Indian Citizenship Act passes, granting U.S. citizenship to Native Americans (part of assimilation efforts; many rights of citizenship, including voting were still denied)
- **1925:** Over 60,000 Native American children are attending Indian boarding schools ("U.S. Indian Boarding School History," n.d.)
- **1928:** Most Native Americans are living in extreme poverty, suffering from malnutrition, inadequate housing, lack of healthcare, and are disenfranchised (Brookings Institution, 1928)

The Evolution of Summer Camps

It is amid these federal assimilation policies that American summer camps emerged as a way for young white boys to escape the pressures of an increasingly urban landscape and return to natural ways of life (Paris, 2008).

Inspired by publications including *Camping and Character* (Dimock & Hendry, 1929) and *The Woodcraft Manual for Boys* (Seton, 1917), several camps were created to replicate "Indian" communities for non-Indian youth. This practice, called "playing Indian," was part of an antimodernist movement against the cultural changes of increasingly industrialized urban life (Deloria, 1998; Slyck, 2006). These summer camps used so-called Indian traditions to emphasize connections with nature, community, and spiritual experience (Wall, 2005). Playing Indian also served an important role in developing a communal identity and shared whiteness among campers of varied European American backgrounds (Slyck, 2006). Ernest Thompson Seton was among the first recorded individuals to articulate this new camp model when he founded the Woodcraft Indians in 1902. Historians argue that Seton and other camp leaders intentionally promoted Noble Savage imagery and were well aware they were presenting idealized images of Native Americans (Francis, 1992; Skidmore, 2017).

Early Years at Camp Rising Sun

CRS was no exception to these antimodernist trends. Rick Richter's *Camp Rising Sun 1929-2018* outlines the connections between CRS founder, George E. Jonas (Freddie) and several leading publications on the incorporation of so-called Indian practices in early 20th-century summer camps.

Notes from Rick Richter (2018) on the Imitation of Native American Customs at CRS:

- *Sachem* and *how-how* were first used in 1930 (Richter, p. 14)
- Carol Stryker introduced Native American traditions starting in 1930 (Richter, p. 12)
- Freddie asked the American Museum of Natural History to translate "Camp of the Rising Sun" into some "Indian" language (Richter, p. 8)

- Freddie adopted several elements from *Camping and Character* (Dimock & Hendry, 1929):
    - International recruitment
    - "Feathers" for achievements ("the ranks were Paleface-Papoose-Buck-Brave-Warrior") (Richter, p. 14)
    - *Sachem* for camper leaders and *how-how* for approval or applause
    - Some formal Council rituals, including "Zuni Call to Council" (Dimock & Hendry, p. 73)
    - Division of campers into "tribes"
- Charles E. Hendry, junior author of *Camping and Character*, visited CRS
- Freddie invited Ernest Seton to visit CRS to "aid in the development and study of the Indian rituals" (Richter, p. 16)
- Freddie owned *The Book of Indian Crafts and Indian Lore* (Salomon, 1928) and sought "young Indian men skilled in Indian lore available for employment" (Richter, p. 16)
- In 1942, Freddie sought to obtain books on Indian legends to use at Council
- Roland Sundown (Nature Counselor) and John H. Cornehlsen (Camp Director) joined CRS from Camp Henry in 1931
- Sundown, Tonawanda Band of Seneca (CRS staff '31, '32, '33, '34, '39, '54; visited in '53).
    - Had an important role in the development of CRS, including the music program
    - Campers recall he taught about "the totem pole he designed" and "The weekly Council was shaped by Sunny" (Richter, p. 10)
    - Taught "Indian ritual songs, the principles of personal responsibility" and the values of "ghost rocks as more than iconic symbols" (Richter, p. 10)
    - Wrote "O Nay Wah O Hent," which he sang at the weekly Council

Traditions at Camp Rising Sun

The following sections expand on the early years of CRS and provide specific details about former and existing Native-inspired CRS traditions, their origins, and implications of continued use.

Council

"The Council Ring is the most symbolic center of the camp life and its traditions are among the most meaningful for the campers" (Dimock & Hendry, 1929, p. 75). The earliest documentations of the summer camp Council Ring are found in *The Woodcraft Manual for Boys* (Seton, 1917) and *Camping and Character* (Dimock & Hendry, 1929). The following similarities can be found in the CRS Council Ring:

- Call to Council, "' My friend, give ear – we hold a Council'; or if the Indian words are preferred, 'Yo-hay-y-Yo-hay-y-y; Meeta Kola Nahoonpo Omnee-chee-yaynee-chopi'" (Seton, p. 25) (eliminated in 2016)
- Role of fire keepers and tally keeper
- Tapestry/blankets (eliminated in 2018)
- Reference to the Thunderbird and "his wisdom" (Seton, p. 90)
- Beating of the "Indian drum" (eliminated from Council in 2017)
- Placement of totem poles in the circle (totem pole walking stick eliminated in 2016)
- Prayers to the four winds and adherence to the cardinal directions
- Physical location and construction (described in detail in Slyck, 2006)
- "Indian songs" such as Hiawatha's Farewell - an invented story based on Haudenausanee (Iroquois) oral tradition
- Stories told by the Camp "Chief" or "Great Sachem"

Implications

Combining real and fabricated practices in a single Council ceremony with little or no acknowledgment of their origins contributes to the perpetuation of the Generic Indian stereotype (Hamilton, 2003). These practices misrepresent the diversity of Indigenous Peoples and reinforce the notion that Indigenous cultures are interchangeable.

The Dying Race Myth is also perpetuated through the good intentions of camp leaders attempting to "save" or "preserve" Indigenous cultures through

their continued use at camps. This process is described through the "salvage paradigm," defined by Haida/Tsimpsian scholar Marcia Crosby as "a process that attempts to 'save' aspects of a 'dying' culture – dominant culture dictates that is it the last 'pure' example of that culture and thereby commodified and gains ownership of a 'dead' culture, when in fact Indigenous cultures are still alive and sets its own criteria for modern cultural pureness" (as cited in Hamilton, 2003, p.13)

The lasting impact of these stereotypes is seen in the reflections and recollections of CRS alumni like George Wright (CRS '39-'43) In his memoir, Wright recounts the profound experiences CRS had on his life and specifically details the Council Ring practices of the time. Consult his book, *Starting from Staten Island: Memories of Peace and War in the 1930s and 1940s*, for a detailed account (Wright, 2014).

It is not uncommon for campers with little-to-no prior knowledge of North American Indigenous history and culture to attend Council and assume that they are preserving cultures of the past as recounted through anecdotal conversations with campers and staff in the past four years.

Songs and Chants

O Nay Wah O Hent

"O Nay Wah O Hent" is a song believed to have been written by CRS counselor and musician Roland Sundown of the Tonawanda Band of Seneca. The song was most likely written and introduced to campers between 1933-1934. Given his specific knowledge of Seneca language and music, the song is believed to include Seneca phonemes.

The following notes are from musician and alumnus, Johnny Reinhardt (CRS '79, '04). Full comments are available in "Notes from Johnny Reinhardt on O Nay Wah O Hent and Roland Sundown" (Reinhardt, 2018):

- "O Nay Wah O Hent is a hymn based on phonemes, a common idea among musicians."
- "...hymn divined for the late-night huddle around the campfire that is council... designed to give maximum effect to council, with a full measure of nature resonating."
- "...O Nay Wah O Hent is not an Indian song. It is not claimed by any nation. There were few surviving Tanawanda [sic] Seneca when Roland Sundown (1901-1982) was at Camp, starting in 1932."

Director Emeritus, Michael Engber (CRS '57, '58) counters Reinhardt's assertions, noting that "In a Camp newspaper from the early '30's, I read, 'Sunny led us in the Indian Ghost Song.' When I asked a camper from that era what the Indian Ghost Song was, he told me it was Oh Nay Wah Hent" (Engber, 2018). According to Engber (2018), Roy Wright, of Mohawk heritage, identifies the song as having Seneca words, and not phonemes.

Reflections from alumnus, George Wright, indicate a similar assumption that the song is "Indian." As Wright recounted of Council, "The group was likely then to sing an Indian song, probably 'O nay wah O hent,'" (Wright, 2014).

Despite Dying Race assumptions, it is vital to note that the Tonawanda Band of Seneca remains a thriving community in western New York. According to the 2010 Census, nearly 700 people reside on the Tonawanda Creek Reservation. Several Seneca language groups still teach Seneca. Continued efforts should be made to contact Seneca linguists and musicians to consult on the meaning of "O Nay Wah O Hent." The Tonawanda Reservation Historical Society should also be contacted in these efforts.

The White Dawn

"The White Dawn is Stealing" was written as part of a series of *Four American Indian Songs* by Charles Cadman in 1909. The series was written during the *Indianist Movement* of American composition, in which non-Indigenous composers imitated Indigenous music to create an Indigenous American genre that was distinctly American as opposed to European (Thomas, 2010). Cadman idealized American Indian music in romanticized Western harmonization (Collins, 2014).

The original melody and transcription of "The White Dawn is Stealing" are believed to have come from a Dakota love song, from page 140, no. 4 in Baker's dissertation, *On the Music of the North American Indians* (Collins, 2014). Nelle Richmond

Eberhart wrote the lyrics for the song, which are not a true translation of the original melody (Collins, 2014). More details on the original translation of the Dakota love song and Cadman's role in the Indianist music movement can be found in Collins' (2014) *An Annotated Survey of the Indianist Movement Represented by Arthur Farwell and Charles Wakefield Cadman: A Performance Guide to 20th Century American Art Songs Based on American Indian Melodies.*

Key Expressions

Sachem

Sachem stems from Algonquian language groups and refers to a leader or chief most often in the highest-level political position within a regional or local polity. Merriam-Webster dictionary refers specifically to "a North American Indian chief." A Sachem is often elected and represents a tribe or group of bands. Other definitions also associate Sachem with a member of the ruling council of the Iroquois confederacy or the leader of a confederation of Algonquian tribes.

- Introduced as a camper leadership role in the first season of CRS
- Referenced in camper newspapers in 1930; Sundown was not hired until 1931
- Referenced in *Camping and Character* (Dimock & Hendry, 1929), *The Woodcraft Manual for Boys* (Seton, 1917), and *The Book of Indian Crafts and Indian Lore* (Salomon, 1929)

Native Circle deems "chief" an offensive word that should not be used by non-Indigenous people as nicknames, especially about Native Americans ("Learning Respect: Offensive Words," n.d.). Skidmore (2017) explains how mimicking the role of "chief" at camps perpetuates harmful stereotypes. "When a youth camp invokes the wisdom of the 'chief,' Native Americans are once again being relegated to the position of 'other.' Organizations across the US continue to teach 'primitive skills' and invoke wisdom which is clearly Native American in origin" (p. 9).

Assigning campers to a Sachem role ("Sachem of the Day," "Kitchen Sachem," etc.) trivializes the status of a Sachem as a high-level leader while perpetuating the "Noble Savage" stereotype through attempts to emulate mythicized Native American wisdom.

How-How

Hau originates from the Sioux languages, used as a greeting or approval, specifically among men (Palmer, 2010; Brooks, 2016; Sinte Gleska University, 2015). *How-how*, as used in American camps, is likely an Anglicization of the Lakota/Dakota Sioux word, *hau*. At CRS, how-how was introduced in the first season of camp as a way to indicate approval and agreement, as referenced in a camper newspaper from 1930. The term was likely adopted by Freddie from references in early camping literature. Throughout the years, alumni and LAJF staff have alternated spellings between how-how and hau-hau.

How is associated with stereotypical misrepresentations of Indigenous Peoples throughout popular culture:

- Novels (e.g. those by James Feinimore Cooper (1789-1851) and Karl Friedrich May (1842-1912)
- The "Hollywood Indian" imagined throughout the "Wild West" and Western genre
- "Ugh" and "How" used in 1953 song "What Makes a Red Man Red" in Walt Disney's *Peter Pan*

LAJF Board Member and Program Committee Chair Kathleen Stringer (personal communication, October 1, 2019) summarizes the implications of continued use of how-how at CRS: "Such popular derivations are disrespectful and do not accurately reflect the language and culture of Indigenous groups like the Dakota and Lakota Sioux. The use of such terms can negatively impact the lives of Indigenous Peoples by perpetuating stereotypes and forestalling examination of the racial inequities to which Indigenous Peoples have been subjected both historically and today."

Even if used with respectful intentions, the use of how-how and Sachem at CRS imply a true representation of Indigenous cultures that is not accurate. Additionally, their use is commonly trivialized by modern campers in a tone of lightheartedness. Any oversimplification of who Native Americans are can perpetuate our long

history of disregarding or devaluing Indigenous Peoples. This weakens the power of Indigenous Peoples and makes it harder for their true voices to be heard (K. Stringer, personal communication, October 1, 2019).

Artifacts

Two types of artifacts are found at CRS: one being culturally accurate and authentic artifacts left as gifts from campers, the other being artifacts created, or otherwise obtained, in imitation of cultural examples. The latter often misrepresent other cultures. The following provides a brief overview of the cultural significance and implications of select artifacts at CRS as they pertain to Indigenous cultures. This list is not exhaustive.

Thunderbird Tapestry

The Thunderbird is a widespread figure in Native American mythologies across the United States and Canada. It is the most powerful of all spirits, representing power, protection, and strength. In the Pacific North Western Mountains, it appears atop many Northwest Coast totem poles and only the most powerful and successful leaders and families use the Thunderbird in their crest ("The Thunderbird Symbol," n.d.). According to Algonquian Peoples, Thunderbirds were ancestors of the human race and played a part in the creation of the universe (Geller, 2018; "The Thunderbird of Native Americans," n.d.).

At CRS, the Thunderbird is depicted on a tapestry listing the original camp tent names. The tapestry was hung at the Council Ring each week. It now hangs on the wall in the entryway of the Clinton main building.

Totem Poles

"Totem poles are monuments created by First Nations of the Pacific Northwest to represent and commemorate ancestry, histories, people, or events" ("Totem Poles," n.d.). Most totem poles display family lineage with animal crests. Other poles may be used as memorials or to shame neighboring groups. A ceremony of gratitude is often performed before a new cedar tree is carved.

In efforts to preserve and recreate Native American life, totem poles emerged as one of the ultimate expressions of emulating native culture in the early 20th century (Lewis, 2018). Totem poles were used as a project across summer camps in a way similar to mascots (Lewis, 2018).

According to Lewis (2018), while some totem poles represented caricatures and others were quite well-done, "they are all examples of a stolen and appropriated culture." Totem poles became a symbol of the loss and repression of Indigenous nations and culture. "At tribal centers the art-forms were repressed and dying, while at the same time white Americas felt empowered to take native culture and use it anyway they wanted to" (Lewis, 2018).

Zuni and Wildcat Placards

Zuni and Wildcat placards hang on opposite walls of the dining hall at Red Hook. These are the two "tribes" to which campers were assigned in the early years. They depict stereotypical Native Americans. The Zuni are Pueblo peoples native to the Zuni River Valley in the southwestern United States. The Zuni language is distinct and has no relation to any other native, or non-native, language. The connection between Zuni and Wildcats is not entirely clear. However, one site suggests that the wildcat is seen as selfish and greedy in some Southwestern tribes; however, Zuni peoples are said to believe the wildcat represents good luck in hunting ("Native American Wildcat Mythology," n.d.). The source of this information is not clear.

Hogan

A Hogan is the primary, traditional dwelling of the Navajo people with a door facing east to welcome the rising sun and good fortune. While Hogan construction is still very popular among Navajo peoples, it is less commonly used as the primary home. A Hogan was built as a camper project on the Red Hook campus. The camper who led the project was of Navajo heritage (M. Engber, personal communication, January 7, 2020).

Drums

The drum is sacred and carries cultural and symbolic power for the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people (Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center, n.d.). According to traditional accounts, Wiyaka Sinte Win or Tail Feather Woman, a

Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota woman, received a vision from the Creator on the drum's construction and ceremonial use (White, n.d.). White recounts that Tail Feather Woman's teachings were passed on to other tribal nations, including the Ojibwe and Menominee in the 19th century. In many Native American cultures, the drum represents the heartbeat of Mother Earth and provides strong spiritual connections to the Creator in various ceremonies, celebrations, and spiritual festivals (Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center, n.d.; "Native American Drums," n.d.; White, n.d.).

There are several drums that have been used in Council at both Red Hook and Clinton. Three Council drums, including one presumably West African Djemba drum, are in the office at Clinton. The origins of these drums are unknown. In addition to their use at Council, one drum has been used for morning wake-ups, using the beat to the words, "Listen to the heartbeat, heartbeat, heartbeat, listen to the heartbeat of the drum."

Implications

Derogatory representations of Indigenous Peoples through artifacts, team names, and mascots can create unwelcome and hostile learning environments, reaffirm stereotypes, and have a direct negative impact on the self-esteem of Native American youth (Stegman & Phillips, 2014). Misappropriated and misrepresented artifacts also act as environmental microaggressions, which create an unwelcoming space for Indigenous campers by conveying an underlying message of outsider status. A 2019 camper from the Dakota tribe felt unwelcome at CRS after being placed in the "TeePee" tent on the first day. According to the camper, "When I realized which tent I was put into, and saw the mockery and misspelling of the word, I didn't feel like my culture was respected, and I didn't feel welcome as a Native American," (Eagle & Lubamba, 2019).

These microaggressions can also have serious negative impacts on the mental and physical health of members of marginalized groups, including depression and thoughts of suicide (Torino, 2017). This is especially true for Native Americans and Alaska Natives, whose suicide rates are the highest in the United States, impacting Indigenous youth ages 15 to 24 at a rate 3 times higher than White students of the same age (Leavitt et al., 2018).

Actions Taken So Far

Camp traditions have naturally changed over the years with shifts in staff and campers. Within the first few decades of Camp, Freddie had eliminated the division of "tribes" and the commendation of feathers. Hiawatha's Farewell and the "breech clouts" described by Wright (2014) have long been removed. New traditions have also been introduced, including the "This is a Good Place" proclamation and singing "Lean on Me" after Council. With changes in leadership, concerns over Camp's Native-inspired traditions resurfaced in recent years. Full details on these processes are available in "Processes Taken by Camp Staff to Examine 'Native-inspired' Traditions" (Schilmoeller & Wondra, 2019).

2016-2017:

- Directors did not feel comfortable continuing certain council practices without further information on cultural origins and meaning, including: O Nay Wah O Hent, Zuni Call to Council, the totem pole, and eventually the Thunderbird tapestry and Council drum
- Leadership staff facilitated conversations with 2nd year campers during training to discuss Camp traditions and their meanings

2018:

- All campers attended an evening program on cultural appreciation and appropriation
- Sachem and how-how were two examples among broader global scenarios
- 2nd year boys decided not to use Sachem or how-how with 1st year campers

2019:

- An all-camp instruction block added more space for camper discussion in addition to the existing evening program
- Both groups of 2nd years decided not to use the terms Sachem or how-how with 1st year campers

Camper Discussions

All 2018 and 2019 campers attended evening programs on cultural appreciation and appropriation organized by the Instructional Coordinators each season. Rigorous dialogue ensued in each session and is summarized below:

2018 Girls Session - Session 1

- Campers expressed multiple views on the use of the terms Sachem and how-how
- Some campers, including a camper of Blackfoot heritage, took offense to the use of the terms
- Some campers stopped using the terms and others continued

2018 Boys Session - Session 2

- 2nd years decided not to use Sachem and how-how with the first years during week one
- All campers participated in an evening program on cultural appreciation and appropriation
- 2nd years summarized their decision in a document titled "2018 Boys' Second Year Team Decision on the Use of Traditional Camp Terms" (Second Year Campers, 2018)

2019 Girls Session - Session 1

- 2nd years did not use Sachem and how-how with 1st year campers citing historical relationship and power dynamics between majority and minority culture as indicators of appropriation
- 2nd years wrote a letter titled, "On the Terms Sachem and How How and Why We Decided to Remove Them from Camp Vocabulary" (Second Year Campers, 2019)

2019 Boys Session - Session 2

- All campers agreed that how-how should not be used
- Campers were *unanimous* that since some Native American campers have expressed distress over the use of the term Sachem, another word should be found
- A camper from the Dakota tribe raised several issues of Indigenous appropriation and led a project to change the name of the "TeePee" tent. Read more in the CRS Times: CRS '19 Week 8 (Eagle & Lubamba, 2019)

Time and again, these conversations on cultural appropriation among campers and staff came back to the basic tenets of LAJF's mission to inspire a lifelong commitment to compassionate and responsible leadership as justification for the removal of Native-inspired traditions that cause harm to members of the camp community and beyond. Campers and staff have requested that LAJF formalize policies to address appropriation in order to alleviate the weight placed on campers to make these decisions annually, especially the heavy burden on campers of marginalized Indigenous identities in these discussions.

Recommendations

Indigenous Peoples are actively struggling, including through legal channels, to reclaim certain ceremonies that are openly being appropriated by colonizing cultures, including the summer camp industry. In line with an organizational mission to develop an appreciation for common humanity and promote the pursuit of humanitarian goals, LAJF must support the international struggle of Indigenous communities to reclaim human rights and fight against appropriated cultural practices. The following section provides an overview of recommendations from the Program Committee and recent campers to support these efforts.

Program Committee

After a discussion and review of relevant research, the LAJF Program Committee put forth the following recommendations to the Board of Directors in October 2019.

1. Support the campers' desires to find lasting alternatives to how-how and Sachem. These decisions are a result of rigorous debate in the context of the CRS program designed to develop compassionate and responsible leadership.
2. Continue to consider alternatives to the current use of "leader."
3. Keep artifacts as educational pieces, but do not use them in daily programs. Create honest, critical, accurate information guides to accompany them wherever they are displayed at camp, preferably in a gallery or designated space. This includes adding historical information to the songbook page for O Nay Wah O Hent, and placards next to

the Thunderbird tapestry in the main building, at the Hogan, any existing totem poles, etc.

4. Keep the elements of our community Council that are valuable for community building, storytelling, and self-reflection while finding appropriate alternatives to "Native-inspired" imagery and rituals in Council which include totem poles, invocation of the cardinal directions, Zuni Call to Council, "Oh Great Sachem" call/response and "Hiawatha's Farewell"
5. Reintroduce O Nay Wah O Hent (Roland Sundown, composer) in an appropriate, mindful, and respectful manner.

Director Emeritus Michael Engber (CRS '57, '58) also submitted comments to the program committee detailing thoughts and recommendations on the future of Camp's Native-inspired traditions. Engber's (2018) "Cultural Appropriation Notes" follow fairly closely those of the program committee.

Collaboration with Indigenous communities

In addition to recommendations from CRS campers and the LAJF Program Committee, efforts must be made to seek input and collaboration from Indigenous scholars, activists, and local nations in the Hudson Valley.

Camp Ahmek, featured in *Camping and Character* (Dimock & Hendry, 1929), is an example of a program that has consulted with Indigenous educators to amend problematic traditions and educate campers about its history (Hamilton, 2003; Wilkes, 2011). However, scholars caution that quick fixes or the simple elimination of Indian programming could further tokenize marginalized groups; new programs that build alliances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples are recommended (Shore, 2015).

The two CRS properties in Rhinebeck, New York were likely built on Mohican & Lenape land (Native Land Digital, n.d.). As such, the Historic Preservation Department of the Stockbridge Munsee Band of Mohican Indians community in New York should be consulted on the Native-inspired practices that have occurred on this land. Consultation with Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Oyate law professor and Indigenous legal scholar, Angelique EagleWoman, has also led to contacts with the Akwesasne Cultural Center and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Historical Preservation Officer in upstate New York.

Article 15 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN, 2008), asserts that Indigenous Peoples "have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories, and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information." The efforts of Native American activists in the late 1960s also brought renewed energy in recent decades to the struggle of Indigenous Peoples for social justice. In support of Indigenous human rights worldwide, LAJF must take necessary steps to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination "*in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned*," as dictated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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