

Recognition, Antiracism & Indigenous Futures: A View from Connecticut

Amy E. Den Ouden

Abstract: This essay is offered as a tribute to Golden Hill Paugussett Chief Big Eagle and his defiance of the entrenched racism to which his tribal community has been subjected. I situate this analysis in Connecticut in the early 1970s at a moment of particular historical significance in tribal nations' centuries-long struggles to assert their sovereignty, defend reservation lands, and ensure their futures. I analyze how the racialization of Native peoples in Connecticut informed the state's management of "Indian affairs" in this period and argue that the virulent racism of the state's antirecognition policy in the late twentieth century reflects a long history of institutionally embedded racist policies and practices. In this essay, I call for politically engaged, antiracist research that is concerned with understanding the complexities of tribal sovereignty asserted in local contexts in which governmental control of Indian affairs reproduces and validates White-supremacist ideology.

AMY E. DEN OUDEN is Associate Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She is the author of *Beyond Conquest: Native Peoples and the Struggle for History in New England* (2005) and editor of *Recognition, Sovereignty Struggles, and Indigenous Rights in the United States* (with Jean M. O'Brien, 2013). Her essays on Indigenous land rights, Native New England, and tribal sovereignty have appeared in such journals as *History and Anthropology* and *American Anthropologist* and the recent volumes *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies* and *The World of Indigenous North America*.

Chief Big Eagle (Aurelius H. Piper, Sr.) died in August of 2008 on the one-quarter-acre reservation of the Golden Hill Paugussett Tribe in Trumbull, Connecticut. He was ninety-two and had been the Paugussetts' hereditary tribal leader for over four decades. Those who knew him likely remember him as a force for justice who spoke in unvarnished terms about Native people's everyday experiences of oppression and racism in Connecticut.¹ His fight for the future of his tribal nation drew broad public attention in the mid-1970s, well before federal acknowledgment petitions and tribally owned casinos became the focus of racist hostility in southern New England.² In March 1974, *The New York Times* published an interview with Chief Big Eagle entitled "Connecticut Indians Act to Reclaim Reservation," which detailed the Paugussetts' legal effort to reclaim nineteen and three-fourths acres of historical reservation land of which they had been wrongfully dispossessed. Those among the *Times*' national readership who had

followed media coverage of Indian activism at Alcatraz and Wounded Knee may not have imagined Connecticut as a site of Indian resistance (or even, perhaps, of living Indian people). Yet in this article, the *Times* directed wider public attention to the Chief of “the 100-member Golden Hill Tribe” defending “the nation’s smallest reservation,” and asserting the Tribe’s rights to other Paugussett ancestral lands.³ In their essential study of the Indian resistance movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior write that when Indians of All Tribes occupied Alcatraz Island in November of 1969, the press recognized it as “history in the making.” The *Times* depicted the Paugussetts’ land rights struggle in a similar light. Accompanying the article was a striking photograph of Chief Big Eagle sitting on a tree stump in front of the sole house on the reservation.⁴ Looking away from the camera, his hat resting on his knee and his arms folded, he appears relaxed, certain, and focused on the land.

This essay is offered as a tribute to the life of Chief Big Eagle and his leadership, particularly his defiance of the virulent racism to which his tribal community has been subjected. The cultural and political foundations of the idea of “race” are ancient, but the ways in which racial categories and racist practices have been bureaucratically produced and normalized in the modern era indicate that race remains central to governmental tactics of control. In this essay, *racialization* refers to the imposition of politically calculated and fictitious notions of racial identity on Native individuals and Native communities. Connecticut history stands as an archetypal example of this practice. “Indian Affairs” – the official government apparatus created primarily to manage Native peoples’ reservation lands and to administrate the state’s understanding of Indigenous issues – must be investigated as a domain of strategic racialization

of Indianness and of the rights of tribal nations. The moment when Chief Big Eagle was interviewed by *The New York Times* in 1974 marked a crucial juncture in Paugussett tribal history and the state-tribal relationship in Connecticut. Chief Big Eagle, along with other tribal leaders and activists, directly and publicly challenged Connecticut’s twentieth-century governmental regime of Indian Affairs.

Racialization obscures and undermines the legal rights of Native peoples as well as their existence as sovereign political bodies.⁵ In Connecticut, racialization has presented tribal sovereignty as a threat and a fiction. For example, governmental scrutiny of tribal identities fosters White-supremacist notions of racial “illegitimacy,” which inform public assumptions about Indianness and the rights of tribes. Racialization operates in federal recognition struggles and is especially pernicious in its attacks on tribal communities whose members have African American ancestry. As Indigenous studies scholar Brian Klopotek has shown, “a complicated tangle of racial projects and colonialism [are] at work” in such cases, impacting tribal well-being and sometimes stoking racism within tribal communities themselves. Yet unfolding histories of tribal sovereignty in the United States also demonstrate the ways in which Native people have contested and exposed racialization projects.⁶

Connecticut’s policies and practices of “managing” Indians and suppressing tribal sovereignty prior to federal recognition struggles provide a case study of the racialized targeting of state-recognized tribes. Connecticut’s “Indian affairs” agenda has promoted racialized notions of Indian identity based on the foundational White-supremacist construct of “racial purity” and the assessment of Native identities according to spurious calculations of “Indian blood” (commonly known as “blood



Source: Edward Hausner, *The New York Times*.

quantum”). Examples of governmental debate and policy formation in Connecticut demonstrate how anti-Indian, anti-African American, and anti-“minority group” White-supremacist thought underlies the state’s attempts to trivialize and undermine Native peoples’ rights to their homelands and to their existence as tribal communities.

The early 1970s marked a significant turn in Connecticut’s tribal nations’ centuries-long struggle to defend their reservation lands and ensure their futures. The state of Connecticut transferred Indian Affairs from its Welfare Department to the Department of Environmental Protection. The change was due in large part to tribal nations’ political mobilization and assertion of their right to live on their reservation lands. Native activism brought wider public attention to tribal communities and

to reservation lands as sites of resistance to state-sponsored injustice and racist practices. In Connecticut, however, entrenched racialization sanctioned the state’s anti-federal recognition policy of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, which targeted Golden Hill Paugussetts and other tribal communities as “illegitimate” tribes and “frauds.” Chief Big Eagle’s account of the injustice his tribe endured demonstrates that Connecticut reservation lands are central to an analysis of twentieth-century struggles for Indigenous self-determination.

These struggles for self-determination in the face of state genocide stretch back to the seventeenth century. The original eighty-acre Golden Hill reservation was established in 1659 in Fairfield, a town founded two years after the May 1637 massacre

of hundreds of Pequots – including many women and children – at their fort in Mystic, Connecticut.⁷ Colonizers valorized the attempt to annihilate the Pequot nation as a supreme moment of conquest whose brutal violence would cow all Native peoples within the territory claimed by Connecticut. Major John Mason, an infamous leader of the massacre, extolled its horrors, describing the Pequots' suffering as their fort was set on fire: "God was above them," he boasted, "making them as a fiery Oven . . . filling the Place with dead Bodies. . . . And thus in little more than one Hour's space was their impregnable Fort with themselves utterly destroyed."⁸

Paugussetts, Mohegans, Western Niantics, and Pequot survivors struggled to remain within their homelands in the aftermath of the massacre. Pequots' refusal to relinquish their homeland defied the 1638 Treaty of Hartford, which declared that Pequots had ceased to exist. Their resistance led to the creation of three Pequot reservations: at Noank (1651), Mashantucket (1666), and Stonington (1683).⁹ In 1680, leaders from Paugussett, Pequot, Mohegan, and Western Niantic tribal communities met with Connecticut officials, seeking government protection for their reservations. The resulting law stipulated that reservation lands were to be preserved in perpetuity for tribal communities and forbade any attempt to sell or purchase reserved lands.

By 1680, the colony institutionalized a reservation system, along with government surveillance of tribal communities holding collective rights to reservation lands.¹⁰ The colony appointed Anglo men as reservation "guardians," but they often perpetrated or facilitated the theft of reservation lands. Native people in eighteenth-century Connecticut sought justice in the colonial legal system nevertheless, documenting aggressions and invasions by Anglo "neighbors" and their livestock.

Tribal communities' petitions recounted destruction of agricultural plots, threats and acts of violence against reservation communities, and extreme poverty. In the context of the reservation system, however, colonial legality was a refuge for colonial lawlessness.¹¹ During the Mohegan land case (*Mohegan Indians v. Connecticut*), colonial officials introduced the notion of impending "extinction" to legalize dispossession of the Mohegan people. A 1721 act of the Connecticut General Assembly proclaimed that what remained of the reservation would be turned over to the town of New London "when the whole nation, or stock of said Indians are extinct."

A 1774 report of Mohegan reservation overseers reflects the racial notions that shaped the monitoring of reservation land and tribal communities at that time: "interlopers from other Tribes & Stragglng Indians & Molattoes have cro[w]ded themselves in" the remaining Mohegan reservation, they claimed. Mohegan Zachary Johnson, who had allied with the colony against the land suit and "incurd ye Dislike of many" Mohegans, was described by officials in 1783 as "of pure Mohegan Blood," "almost the only inveterate opposer" of the land suit, and "a staunch Friend to the colony or State." Thus, the colonial classification of racial "purity" was to have been Johnson's reward for disavowing his tribal community and urging that Mohegans who supported the land suit "ought to be cast off" the reservation.¹²

The examples above demonstrate that notions of "purity of blood" were deployed in Connecticut well before the U.S. federal government imposed the notion of "blood quantum" in the 1887 General Allotment Act, or Dawes Act.¹³ From the colonial period into the twenty-first century, Connecticut has been a critical location of governmental racialization of Indian identity.

In the late twentieth century, racialization operated as a weapon intended to

deny the legitimacy of tribal communities petitioning for federal acknowledgment as well as federally acknowledged tribes planning to establish casinos. One example is Donald Trump's widely publicized racist slander against the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, uttered during his 1993 testimony before a Congressional committee scrutinizing Indian gaming: "They don't look like Indians to me." As former Connecticut Attorney General (now Senator) Richard Blumenthal led the state's efforts to oppose the federal acknowledgment petitions of Paugussetts, Eastern Pequots, and Schaghticokes, Trump targeted the Mashantucket Pequots and their right as a federally acknowledged tribe to establish a casino in accordance with the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988. In 2016, a *Washington Post* article argued that Trump's belief that "dark-skinned Native Americans in Connecticut were faking their ancestry" reflected his racism.¹⁴ The interlinkage of Trump's anti-Black and anti-Indian racism and his promotion of the fallacy of "racial purity" echoes the state's entrenched strategy of denigrating tribal communities petitioning for federal recognition.

In July 1993, a Golden Hill Paugussett land claim was in the courts and the Tribe's federal acknowledgment petition was about to be reviewed by the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs. That month, the *Hartford Courant*, Connecticut's largest newspaper, ran a cartoon by Robert Englehart titled "The Golden Hill Paugussetts (A Very Small Tribe of African-American Native Americans)." The image includes six heads, grossly caricatured according to the cartoonist's racist conceptualization of "Blackness," under which six names are assigned: "Chief Dances With Lawyers," "Chief Lotta Bull," "Chief Running Joke," "Chief Flipping Bird," "Chief Rolling Dice," and "Chief So Sioux Me."¹⁵ The cartoon's appallingly racist language and imagery constitute a concrete form of violence – an intentional

assault on Native lives and identities, striking at core principles of kinship and community. Such assaults are not random, nor are they merely a "reaction" or "backlash" against tribal sovereignty; they are historically embedded, normalized, and government-sanctioned tactics of domination, tied to the routine practices of White rule in the bureaucratic "management" of Indian tribes and their land rights.

The *Times* story on Chief Big Eagle opens with a summary of "Indian affairs" in Connecticut during the early 1970s that reflects the complex and troubling ways in which Indian identity and Indian existence within the state were framed and validated for a non-Native public audience:

The beginnings of a legal effort to reclaim Indian lands in Connecticut is under way now, the result of a recent administrative shakeup in the state's handling of Indian affairs, the creation for the first time of a tribal council [the intertribal Connecticut Indian Affairs Council], and the nationwide reawakening among Indians. There are 2,222 people who told 1970 Census takers in Connecticut that they were Indians.¹⁶

The trope "Indian reawakening" is misleading; the suggestion that the political consciousness of Native people had ever been "asleep" is now widely considered a projection of the jostled consciousness of White Americans becoming aware of Native resistance while perhaps not yet recognizing the long history and multiple forms of violence employed to thwart that resistance. The idea that a "nationwide reawakening among Indians" propelled the actions of Native peoples in Connecticut at the time also undercuts the significance of the deep local roots of Indian activism in the region. Perhaps most significant in this opening passage from the *Times* article is the reference to the 1970 Census, which conveys the power of bureaucratic accounting of Indian

existence, foreshadowing how that power would be employed in Native peoples' future struggles to assert their rights as tribal nations. The *Times'* use of the population statistic draws attention to the political agency of Native people, but only those made "officially" visible as Native by the state.

As noted above, in 1973, Public Act 73-660 established the Connecticut Indian Affairs Council (CIAC), defining the five state-recognized tribes as "self-governing entities possessing powers and duties over tribal members and reservations" and transferring Indian Affairs to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).¹⁷ Schaghticoke Elder and activist Trudie Lamb Richmond noted that tribal citizens seeking to protect their reservations and "take control out of the hands of the Department of Welfare" worked with legislators to craft an earlier bill that would have established an Indian Affairs *Commission* rather than Council. The Commission was planned as a state agency headed by Indians and empowered to "tak[e] many of the old state statutes off the books, which had discouraged Indians from remaining on the reservations." That bill was passed in 1971, but Connecticut Governor Thomas Meskill "refused to sign the bill" because "he did not feel there were a sufficient number of Indians" to "justify the creation of another agency."¹⁸

While the passage of PA 73-660 two years later seems to have marked a policy shift in a positive direction, we must consider what legislators said they wanted to accomplish. Some supporters expressed the desire for what might be viewed as progressive policy on Indian rights. Perhaps such sentiments were to be expected of legislators in Connecticut, the first state in the country to establish a Civil Rights commission (in 1943). However, can we say that the legislative debate in 1973 reflected "White consciousness" of the racism that impacted the lives of Native peo-

ple in the state? Did the legislative debate imply the emergence of antiracism in the state's approach to its relationship with tribal communities?¹⁹ There was a tone of serious commitment in some of the legislators' remarks:

I rise in support of this amendment primarily because we have lived in a century of dishonor in relationship with our Indians. The Wounded Knee that currently gathered a headline should be ample evidence that there is need for Indians to control their affairs. Let us not live in another century of dishonor on this particular piece of legislation.²⁰

Another described the bill as a way to "bring recognition to an area of our minority population which has gone unheralded and unnoticed for many years." Such phrases as "our Indians" and "our minority population" might be described merely as patronizing, but a discourse of White supremacy runs more starkly throughout the record of the debate, and on both sides of it. One supporter of the bill prefaced his remarks with "I'm sorry I don't have my feathers this morning." Another identified himself as "a past Sachem of the approved order of Redmen, where no red men need apply."²¹ His position: "if after some three hundred years we can't raise the status of the Indian to a first-class citizen . . . I'll sit down." This legislator may have been engaged in some examination of his previously held beliefs, perhaps even mocking the White-supremacist organization "Improved Order of Redmen," which continues to exist today.²² But the transcript of the debate suggests that it was difficult for the legislators to talk about Native people in ways that explicitly condemned and rejected racial ideology and racist ridicule.

The legislators' banter even suggests exuberance, as if some had anticipated such a forum in which to publicly employ caricatures of Indianness and outdo each other in making such comments:

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The gentleman from the 104th wants to shoot again.

REP. AJELLO: (104th)

I will support the bill but I just want to correct one error. . . . The Indians had first class status before we got here and took it away, sir.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The gentleman from the 70th.

REP. AVCOLLIE: (70th)

Mr. Speaker, I'll support the bill. . . but one question through you –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Please state your question.

REP. AVCOLLIE: (70th)

[D]oes this make the Governor an Indian giver?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Maybe the gentleman from the 104th ought to shoot you with the arrow. All members take their seats please. The aisles be cleared. Anyone care to do an Indian dance, let them come down here.²³

To examine this record today is to gain insight into how deeply embedded racial ideology and outright racism shaped the state's conception of "Indian affairs" at the end of the Civil Rights era, even in the context of what some might deem a "pro-Indian" political agenda.

The discourse of the legislative debate discussed above did not represent a racism new to Connecticut; it was certainly not new to members of tribal communities who sought to live on their reservations in the twentieth century. Chief Big Eagle knew all too well what it meant to be "under the thumb of the Welfare Department," as he put it, and how tribal members' efforts to maintain their connection to their reservations were routinely thwarted:

They decided who was Indian and who wasn't, who could live on reservations and who couldn't. You couldn't tell them any-

thing because they didn't care, and you couldn't ask them anything because they didn't know anything. Every time you'd write, the answer would come back that so and so isn't handling Indians anymore.

From the *Times'* perspective, "the Indians won a major victory" by "getting control of the state reservations transferred to the more friendly hands" of the Department of Environmental Protection.²⁴ However, according to Lamb Richmond, the victory lay in collaborations among tribal nations in the state; alliance-building with the United Auto Workers union, the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union, and the Connecticut Civic Action Group; continuous discussions with legislators; and vigilance in using the local press to educate Connecticut's non-Native citizenry. But, she concluded, the fact that another state agency had assumed "jurisdiction over Indian people and Indian land," allowing tribal communities an advisory capacity only, was a call to Indian people to work toward more revolutionary changes.²⁵

In 1969, renowned scholar Vine Deloria Jr. – known by many as "the leading indigenous intellectual of the past century"²⁶ – wrote that the Indian civil rights initiatives developed under the Johnson administration constituted "a minor adjustment in the massive legal machinery that had been created over a period of three hundred years."²⁷ He argued that the White civil rights agenda for Indian people would not deter exploitation of Indian homelands or Indian people, nor would it compel White people to confront the fact that "[land] has been the basis on which racial relations have been defined ever since the first settlers got off the boat."²⁸

Deloria's argument is pertinent to my analysis of the routine state-level enforcement of racist ideology. In December 1971, an internal Connecticut DEP memo an-

nouncing the change underway in the state's administration of Indian Affairs stated that "the Welfare Department looks upon this as essentially a land management, rather than a people management problem, since there are not too many Indians in the State." The DEP official added, in parentheses: "Of course, one may take the view, with General Custer, that even one Indian is too many Indians."²⁹ The remark is deeply sinister, endorsing racist violence with a humorous tone. The depth of its destructive power is evident in how comfortably it was expressed – and presumably condoned – in a governmental memo now housed in the State Archives. The archive serves to distance the author of the memo and the state agency from accountability in the present, but research conducted in the late twentieth century as part of tribal communities' petitions for federal acknowledgment exposes many such archival records to scrutiny. These records remain important to analyses of state-sponsored racism, and to documentation of the transformational work accomplished by Native peoples defending their rights and forging their futures in the twentieth century.

The archival records of "Indian Affairs" in Connecticut contain egregious examples of racist ideology targeting tribal communities at their most vulnerable. In 1939, for instance, when the State Park and Forest Commission (PFC) was the "overseer" of "the Indian reservation population,"³⁰ the legislature held a hearing on a bill introduced by a Representative from Groton, "An Act Concerning Certain Land" (H.B. No. 347). The bill proposed to permit the Park and Forest Commission to sell "a portion of the reservation of the eastern tribe of the Pequot Indians" to "three white families" whom the state had allowed to lease the land.³¹ The White families were described as "campers" who lived on the reservation "just in the summer," but who

were nonetheless industrious and deserving of the land because they had "built cottages and good fireplaces." The White campers clearly used the reservation voluntarily to vacation, but claimed the PFC increasing their leasing fee "placed a burden" on them. The Groton Representative insisted that the Whites "did not think the land worth that much money," because "it is rocky and of no value except for camping purposes." When asked if the PFC had "authority to sell this land," the Groton Representative replied: "This land is held in trust as an Indian Reservation. There are a few Indians living there, and they earn most of their livelihood by working for the white people . . . by doing odd jobs for them." As the Chair continued to raise questions, the Groton Representative suddenly changed his assessment of Eastern Pequots on the reservation:

There are no Indians, only six colored families living there. So far as the so-called Indians are concerned, they derive more benefits from the white people, who rent the land, than from any other source. I am at a loss to see any objection to the passage of this bill. The only opposition would be the desire to preserve the land for our fast declining race, but the white people are offering a fair price for this area.³²

Another Representative asked: "Are these Indians pure blooded Indians?" A Representative from Southington replied: "I should say not. Their hair is quite curly."

Racialization operates here as a ruthless political strategy, which is the essence of White supremacy. A government official, speaking on the record, shifts in an instant from acknowledging the presence of Indians to insisting there are no Indians living on the reservation. The insertion of "colored families" into the narrative is intended to justify dispossession and erase Indianness, serving the political motive to exploit the reservation for profit.

Nevertheless, the Eastern Pequots persist as a tribal nation, and their homeland – the 224-acre reservation in North Stonington, established in 1683 – remains central to their struggles to defend their rights as a Native people. The very presence of tribal communities on their reservations has always been both a symbol and an enactment of defiance: in ceremonial contexts, in everyday attempts to make a living on reservation land (even when working for White vacationers who sought to take the land), and in continuous efforts to establish residence on that land in the face of racist policies and practices.

It is no surprise that state opposition to federal recognition in the late twentieth century became a domain of racialization, perpetuating a White-supremacist discourse that promoted an interwoven anti-Indian/anti-Black racism, so publicly expressed in the 1993 Trump remark and the *Hartford Courant* cartoon. The racialization of Native identities and tribal communities in Connecticut’s management of Indian Affairs in the twentieth century cannot be detached from the long histories of violence against Native peoples, just as the ongoing history of White-supremacist ideology in the United States has shown itself to be steeped in a tradition of violence. Non-Natives, even those who are committed to antiracist research, may never fully comprehend the violence done to Native peoples by White supremacy and state-sanctioned racist practices. But antiracist researchers can work to expose and track the routine ways in which racialization and its violence operate, while also recognizing and writing about the power of Indigenous defiance.

In 2004, then Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal referred to Golden Hill Paugussetts’ federal acknowledgment effort as a “doomed quest” that had officially been laid “on its deathbed.” The

grandiose terminology of righteous victories over purportedly “doomed” Indian tribes runs through the state’s antirecognition discourse, which is grounded in an ancient colonial quest of self-legitimization – the very basis of White supremacy.³³ Nonetheless, the Paugussetts continue to resist the state’s attempts at erasure. In a 2014 Connecticut Public Radio report about the Paugussetts, Chief Big Eagle’s daughter and Golden Hill Paugusset Clan Mother Shoran Piper gave a tribute to her father: “[He] never, never gave up,” she said. ‘Always fought, and continued to fight for his people.’”³⁴ The report featured a photo of Piper surrounded by her three children, at home on the one-quarter-acre Golden Hill Reservation. Whether or not the photographer knew it at the time, that 2014 image of the Piper family evokes the 1974 *New York Times* photo of Chief Big Eagle, rooted in and overseeing the Golden Hill Paugussett homeland.

The United States must confront the racialization of tribal communities. In this essay, I have analyzed its destructive, tenacious fallacies, particularly the idea of “racial purity,” which has been deployed to measure the presumed “dissolution” of Indianness and deny Native rights. Antiracist research is essential to documenting histories of tribal recognition struggles and the ways in which White supremacy has operated to undermine tribal communities. The need for this research in the United States is as urgent now as it was in Connecticut in 1939, 1974, and 1993. As sociologist France Winddance Twine has written, antiracist research requires grappling with “the particular dilemmas racial ideologies and racialized fields generate for researchers,” and with what it means to work in “racialized fields of power specifically as antiracists.”³⁵ Thus, antiracist methodology calls for academics, educators, and advocates to acknowledge the ways they are enmeshed

in struggles against racialization and White supremacy, as well as the potentially transformational impact of their research.

Commitment to justice lies at the core of scholarship focused on the rights and futures of tribal nations. Indigenous principles and knowledges that sustain community life, including relationships to ancestors and to land, must be respected as central to analyses of self-determination and resis-

tance to racialization. For non-Native academics, commitment to learning from tribal communities, including attending and participating in conferences at tribal colleges, is crucial. Politically engaged, community-based, and antiracist research initiatives require support from conventional academic institutions, and perhaps also a fundamental transformation in their priorities.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ During the early 1990s, I worked as a researcher and writer for the Golden Hill Paugussetts' federal acknowledgment petition.
- ² Anthropologist Katherine Spilde coined the term "rich Indian racism" to describe the particular character of racism directed at economically successful tribal nations in the aftermath of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988. Jeff Corntassel and Richard C. Witmer define it as "false images related to indigenous gaming [that] are created and propagated by governmental and media entities." Corntassel and Witmer explain that "rich Indian racism places indigenous peoples in a precarious position, where they constantly have to justify their existence both in terms of the legitimacy of their self-determination powers and proof of the 'authenticity' of their identities." Jeff Corntassel and Richard Witmer II, *Forced Federalism: Contemporary Challenges to Indigenous Nationhood* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 4.
- ³ Michael Knight, "Connecticut Indians Act to Reclaim Reservation," *The New York Times*, March 15, 1974.
- ⁴ At the time, the Golden Hill reservation in Trumbull was the Tribe's only reservation; in 1980, an additional eighty-acre reservation was established in Colchester, Connecticut.
- ⁵ Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy's formulation of Tribal Critical Race Theory is an essential theoretical framework in this essay. As he explains, it "provides a way to address the complicated relationship between American Indians and the United States federal government" and a means of analyzing how "American Indians' liminality as both racial and legal/political groups and individuals" has been constructed. Here, I seek to build from this analytical approach, but focusing on state rather than federal government, since Connecticut has asserted itself as an influential authority (both regionally and nationally) on tribal federal acknowledgment and "legitimate tribes." See Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, "Toward A Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education," *The Urban Review* 37 (5) (2005): 425–446. In a previous essay, I addressed the state's role in the racist targeting of tribal nations petitioning for federal acknowledgment during the 1990s and 2000s. See Amy E. Den Ouden, "Altered State? Indian Policy Narratives, Federal Recognition, and the 'New' War on Native Rights in Connecticut," in *Recognition, Sovereignty Struggles and Indigenous Rights in the United States*, ed. Amy E. Den Ouden and Jean M. O'Brien (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).
- ⁶ Brian Klopotek, *Recognition Odysseys: Indigeneity, Race, and Federal Tribal Recognition Policy in Three Louisiana Communities* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 11.
- ⁷ As historian Benjamin Madley explains, the Connecticut colonists explicitly articulated their genocidal intentions, and the attempt to annihilate the Pequot nation was not confined to the massacre committed against Pequots at their fort in Mystic. Enslavement of surviving Pequots was also used as "an attempt to destroy the surviving Pequot community." Benjamin Madley, "Reexamining the American Genocide Debate: Meaning, Historiography, and New Methods," *The American Historical Review* 120 (1) (2015): 120–126. Likewise, historian Ben Ki-

ernan explains that “the English targeted any and all Pequots for destruction,” since the “English policy was to ‘utterly root them out.’” Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 232.

- ⁸ John Mason, *Brief History of the Pequot War* (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1736), 9. Mason’s account was published at the height of the Mohegan land suit against the colony of Connecticut, in which Mohegans sought restoration of their illegally appropriated reserved lands in New London. In that context, Connecticut promoted the notion that “Pequot Conquest” stood for the conquest of Mohegan people and Mohegan lands as well. See Amy E. Den Ouden, *Beyond Conquest: Native Peoples and the Struggle for History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 11–15, 108–111, 169–176.
- ⁹ Den Ouden, *Beyond Conquest*, 20–29, 143–180.
- ¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of the implications of Connecticut’s 1680 reservation law in the eighteenth century, see *ibid.*
- ¹¹ In their essential analysis of the land theft tactics European Americans employed beyond the colonial period, legal scholars Wenona Singel and Matthew Fletcher explain that “pure brute force” and “abuse of apparent legal authority” – that is, both “physical and political power” – were primary means “of dispossessing Indians and Indian tribes from their lands.” Both are “a product of an abandonment of the rule of law.” Wenona T. Singel and Matthew L. M. Fletcher, “Power, Authority, and Tribal Property,” *Tulsa Law Review* 41 (1) (2005): 35–36.
- ¹² Den Ouden, *Beyond Conquest*, 189, 193.
- ¹³ The General Allotment or Dawes Act was a vehicle for imposing and normalizing the racist notion that Indian identity must be quantified numerically. This federal legislation has been widely discussed in the scholarly literature. One of the most important analyses of “blood quantum” in the aftermath of the Dawes Act is that of Indigenous studies scholar Circe Sturm in her groundbreaking book *Blood Politics: Race, Culture and Identity in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
- ¹⁴ Shawn Boburg, “Donald Trump’s Long History of Clashes with Native Americans,” *The Washington Post*, July 25, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/donald-trumps-long-history-of-clashes-with-native-americans/2016/07/25/80ea91ca-3d77-11e6-80bc-d06711fd2125_story.html?utm_term=.fe24a555da34.
- ¹⁵ Robert Englehart, “The Golden Hill Paugussetts,” *The Hartford Courant*, July 21, 1993. See also my discussion of the image in Den Ouden, *Beyond Conquest*, 201–208.
- ¹⁶ Knight, “Connecticut Indians Act to Reclaim Reservation.”
- ¹⁷ For further details on PA 73-660, see General Statutes of Connecticut, Chapter 824, *Indians* (Secs. 47-57 to 47-66j), available at https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_824.htm. Connecticut’s Welfare Department was charged with “the care of the Indian reservation population,” as one state official described it, from 1941 until October 1, 1973, when PA 73-660 came into effect. Assistant Commissioner Kenneth A. Wood, Jr., Department of Environmental Protection Interdepartmental Message, August 16, 1973, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, Connecticut.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*; and Trudie Lamb Richmond, “A Study of the Development of Indian Affairs in Connecticut: The Basis of Social Change,” paper submitted for graduate seminar in Sociocultural Dynamics, Department of Anthropology, University of Connecticut, April 1974 (personal copy given to the author by Trudie Lamb Richmond).
- ¹⁹ Here I draw from sociologists Joe R. Feagin and Vera Hernan’s analysis of White antiracism as emerging from “a realistic consciousness of a racist self.” Joe R. Feagin and Vera Hernan, *White Racism: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 235.
- ²⁰ Connecticut General Assembly, House Proceedings, Vol. 16, Part 13, 1973 Session, 6729. The amendment (House Amendment B) referred to House Bill 9191, “An Act Establishing an In-

dian Affairs Council,” which would allow the CIAC to have control of its own funds, rather than the Commissioner of the DEP.

²¹ Ibid., 6721, 6724.

²² See “Improved Order of Redmen – Connecticut” at http://redmenct.org/about_redmen. The website gives a description of the organization as follows: “a patriotic fraternity started by Congress,” which “started in 1765 as the Sons of Liberty, who were the group involved in the Boston Tea Party. They adopted native american clothing, terms, and election system [sic] to run their organization. In 1834 the organization changed its name to the Improved Order of Redmen . . . and still uses native american terminology in our meetings, just like the original order.” The organization’s “national office” is in Waco, Texas.

²³ Connecticut General Assembly, House Proceedings, Vol. 16, Part 15, 1973 Special Session, 7581.

²⁴ Knight, “Connecticut Indians Act to Reclaim Reservation.”

²⁵ Richmond, “A Study of the Development of Indian Affairs in Connecticut.”

²⁶ David E. Wilkins, “Vine Deloria Jr. and Indigenous Americans,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 21 (2006): 151.

²⁷ Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 185.

²⁸ Ibid., 178.

²⁹ Memo from Russell Brenneman to Rita Bowlby, Department of Environmental Protection, December 6, 1971, Rita Bowlby, Assistant to the Commissioner, 1973 – 1975, Box 16-2, Record Group 079:001, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, Connecticut.

³⁰ This is the language used by Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Assistant Commissioner Kenneth A. Wood, Jr. in an August 16, 1973, memo to DEP Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners. Wood discusses the impending transfer of Indian Affairs from the Welfare Department to the DEP. The memo includes a brief section describing the role of the DEP’s Indian Affairs predecessors, the State Park and Forest Commission (1935 – 1941) and the Welfare Department (1941 – 1973). Department of Environmental Protection, Rita Bowlby, Assistant to the Commissioner, 1973 – 1975, Box 16-2, Record Group 079:001, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, Connecticut.

³¹ “Transcript of Legislative Hearing Regarding H.B. 347, February 28, 1939,” Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 079:018, Box 18, 33, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, Connecticut.

³² Ibid., 36.

³³ Michelle Tuccitto, “Golden Hill Paugussetts Lose Bid for Recognition,” *New Haven Register*, October 23, 2004, <http://www.nhregister.com/news/article/Golden-Hill-Paugussetts-lose-bid-for-recognition-11671339.php>.

³⁴ Davis Dunavin, “Federal Rule Change Raises Questions about Federal Recognition in Conn.,” WSHU Public Radio, July 30, 2014, <http://wshu.org/post/federal-rule-change-raises-questions-about-tribal-recognition-conn#stream/0>.

³⁵ France Winddance Twine, “Racial Ideology and Racial Methodology,” in *Racing Research, Researching Race: Methodological Dilemmas in Critical Race Studies*, ed. France Winddance Twine and Jonathan Warren (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 27.