

Wisconsin First Nations Ethno-History: Ho-chunk and Ethnic Studies

S'aak Wahara Portfolio (Part 1)

S'aak Wahara is Ho-chunk for “My Ancestors.” All of us have been deeply influenced by our ancestors through the lives they led and the decisions they made. Some of you may have been raised in an environment where this was highlighted and you have “always been aware of it.” Others of you may not have had that experience.

One of the great things about studying history is that we grow in our self-awareness of our place in the world. You have grown up in a country that is very diverse. This diversity has its roots centuries back in time. First Nations people, for example, were incredibly diverse in language, cultural practices, religion, and geographic location. The interaction of indigenous people with European and African people, of course, only added to this diversity.

Throughout the semester you will be developing a portfolio that will document your exploration of your heritage. I will be prompting you with some specific activities for the project, but will also leave room for your own creativity and individual exploration. The portfolio will is an important part of your grade and it's important that you take it seriously and do quality work.

COMPONENTS OF THE PROJECT FOR TERM 1

Note: The project will be different for native and non-native students in some respects and I will note that throughout the description if necessary.

These will be completed during first term:

1. The kinship chart (if Ho-chunk ancestry) or family tree (or both?)

I will give you forms for doing this that you will be able to scan into your portfolio.

- Be as accurate as possible with names. If Ho-chunk (or other tribal affiliation), feel free to use Ho-chunk names.
- Include year of birth (and death if the person is deceased)
- Include where the person was born if possible
- *NOTE: I will also share a link with you that you can utilize for this portion of your report – it enables you to do this part of the project on-line.*

2. Elder Interview: For this portion of the portfolio you will need to interview an elder member of your family (let me know if that is difficult for you to do for some reason). The purpose of the interview is for you to gain insight into your family history from the perspective of someone who is older and would have special knowledge of things that you don't have. As with every other aspect of this project,

the elder interview is personal and individualized. The interview should last roughly 45-60 minutes. It's important when doing oral history that you allow for time and reflection. Think of it as a guided conversation. We will practice some of the skills for interviewing in class. Use the following questions as a guide for your interview (you may create your own questions also):

FOR NATIVE STUDENTS

- When and where were you born?
- When and where were your parents and grandparents born?
- Who was the oldest family relative you met or knew when you were a child?
- If you were going to describe “our family” to someone, what would you say?
- Would you describe your upbringing as “traditional” or “non-traditional?”
- Were customs and traditions important in your upbringing? If so, could you give a couple examples?
- Was Ho-chunk (or another native language if applicable) spoken in your home while growing up?
- What was your educational experience like?
- Did you experience frustrations in school due to your racial heritage? Were you welcomed in school? Do you look back on school as a positive experience?
- Have you been affected by “race” in your lifetime? Why or why not?
- Do you perceive our society being more tolerant of diversity today than when you were growing up?
- Did you have any teachers while in school that stand out to you as being important?
- Did you travel at all while growing up? If so, where?
- Were you into music at all while growing up? If so, what music did you listen to?
- Did you have favorite movies or TV shows while growing up?
- Who were your close friends while growing up? Did you have friends who were non-native?
- What did you do after you completed schooling?
- What kinds of jobs have you had during your lifetime? Did you set out with a certain career in mind?
- Were you (or are you) married? Do you have children?
- What are the biggest changes you have seen in your lifetime, as far as the Ho-chunk people are concerned? Do any of the changes you have seen bother you or make you uncomfortable in any way?
- Based on your experiences in life, what advice do you have for young people growing up today? What are the biggest challenges you see facing young people today?

FOR STUDENTS WITH EUROPEAN (or other) BACKGROUND

- When and where were you born? What is your current age?
- When and where were your parents and grandparents born?
- Who was the oldest family relative you met or knew when you were a child?
- Where did our family originate (nation)?
- Who was the original “immigrant” in our family? Do you know what year they arrived in America? Where did they first settle?
- If you were going to describe “our family” to someone, what would you say?
- Were customs and traditions from our nation of origin important in your upbringing? If so, could you give a couple examples?
- Did you ever hear relatives speaking the language of the “home country”?
- What was your educational experience like?
- Do you look back on school as a positive experience?
- Was “ethnicity” important while you were growing up? In other words, did people seem to have a connection to the family “nation of origin?” If so, can you provide examples?
- Did you have any teachers while in school that stand out to you as being important?
- Did you travel at all while growing up? If so, where?
- Were you into music at all while growing up? If so, what music did you listen to?
- Did you have favorite movies or TV shows while growing up?
- Who were your close friends while growing up?
- What did you do after you completed schooling?
- What kinds of jobs have you had during your lifetime? Did you set out with a certain career in mind?
- Were you (or are you) married? Do you have children?
- What are the biggest changes you have witnessed in your lifetime? Do you see mostly positive changes, or are there things happening that really bother you?
- Based on your experiences in life, what advice do you have for young people growing up today? What are the biggest challenges you see facing young people today?

COMMENTS CONERNING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS AND FORMAT

Again, think of the interview as a guided conversation and have some fun with it. It is important that you DOCUMENT the interview and place it in the PORTFOLIO you have created for the project. You will need to access the interview during 2nd term! You can document the conversation in one of three ways:

- 1. Produce a transcript that reflects the conversation as accurately as possible. This would involve taking notes during the process that can then be “written up” and placed in your portfolio.**
- 2. Do an audio recording that can be uploaded to the portfolio. Along with the audio recording, I expect to see a document that provides me with what you consider to be the highlights from the interview.**
- 3. Do a video/audio recording that can be uploaded to the portfolio. Along with the audio recording, I expect to see a document that provides me with what you consider to be the highlights from the interview.**

**** Note: Due to some changes with Canvas this year, listen for further details about how to submit your final product.**

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S'aak Wahara Portfolio (Part 2)

During the second half of the course you will be completing the Ancestors Project. To this point you have completed a Kinship Chart or Family Tree and conducted an interview with an Elder. The focus now will shift to your place within your family and the role that ethnicity plays in your identity. I am presenting two versions of the assignment here, one that is tailored more toward students with Native American heritage and one designed for students with Euro-American heritage. If you are a student of mixed race, it is up to you to choose the part of your heritage that you want to focus on here.

The FINISHED PRODUCT for Part 2 of this project is a WRITTEN PAPER that “tells your story” and is structured around the questions posed in the descriptions below. The paper does not require documentation and is simply your account. Since this is a long-term project, I expect you to be reasonably thorough and it should be evident to me that you reflected on the information in a thoughtful way. My expectation is that you work on this gradually throughout the second half of the course.

FOR NATIVE STUDENTS

PART 1: IDENTITY

- Name and Indian Name if applicable
- Where and when were you born?
- The name of your parents and any relevant background that you want to include on them?
- Your relationship with your parents?
- Your earliest memory from childhood?
- Your years in school and where? Any important memories from elementary school?
- Anything noticeably different from your childhood than children today?

PART 2: RACE AND ETHNICITY

- Did you live in a situation where there were others of your race?
- Did your parents – or those that raised you – talk about race?
- Would you say that “race” is central to your identity, or not? Explain.
- Do you recall your first encounters with people of another race? Was that something that seemed natural to you, or did it make you uncomfortable?
- Did you ever have experiences that made you feel like you were on the wrong end of a racial slur, or people exhibiting negative feelings about Native people? How did you react to that?
- While growing up, did race impact your attitudes about education? Politics? Other people? Your future?
- When you think about the topic of race, how do you think it has been presented to you in school? Is it an area of life that you believe students

should talk about more than they do within classrooms? Why or why not?

- Were you raised with definite ideas about interracial dating? Or, was that subject never really talked about?
- Do you primarily hang out with people of your own race? Or, is your crowd mixed?
- Do you view the community you have grown up in (for example, Black River Falls) as a racially tolerant place, or not? Explain.

PART 3: HISTORY AND JOURNEY FORWARD

- What are three things that you are proud of, related to your heritage? Explain.
- What are two things that are most disturbing to you about the history of indigenous people? Explain.
- What are the three greatest challenges for native people going forward, in your estimation? Explain.
- What are your plans for the future? Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? What are your greatest fears going forward? What are you most excited about?

FOR EURO-AMERICAN STUDENTS

PART 1: IDENTITY

- Name
- Where and when were you born?
- The name of your parents and any relevant background that you want to include on them?
- Your relationship with your parents?
- Your earliest memory from childhood?
- Your years in school and where? Any important memories from elementary school?
- Anything noticeably different from your childhood than children today?

PART 2: ETHNIC HERITAGE AND RACE CONSCIOUSNESS

- Where did your ancestors come from?
- When and where did they enter the United States? Who was the original immigrant in your family? (Use the “Ethnicity in Wisconsin” link that I have posted with the Unit 5 materials)
- Did your parents – or those that raised you – talk about ethnic heritage at all? Were you aware from a young age about your ancestry?
- Are there members of your family (i.e. grandparents) that seem more “connected” to family roots in Europe? (or elsewhere)
- Do you recall your first encounters with people of another race? Was that something that seemed natural to you, or did it make you uncomfortable?
- When you think about the topic of race and ethnicity, how do you think it has been presented to you in school? Is it an area of life that you believe students should talk about more than they do within classrooms? Why or why not?

- Were you raised with definite ideas about interracial dating? Or, was that subject never really talked about?
- Do you primarily hang out with people of your own race? Or, is your crowd more mixed?
- Do you view the community you have grown up in (for example, Black River Falls) as a racially tolerant place, or not? Explain.

PART 3: HISTORY AND JOURNEY FORWARD

- What are three things that you are proud of, related to your ethnic heritage, or more generally about the story of immigration in American history?
- In the process of exploring the topics we have in this class, what are two things that you would change in history regarding the interactions between European immigrants and Native people? Explain.
- From what you have learned, what are the three greatest challenges for native people going forward, in your estimation? Explain.
- What are your plans for the future? Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? What are your greatest fears going forward? What are you most excited about?

A WORD OR TWO ABOUT STRUCTURE OF YOUR PAPER AND FINAL PRODUCT

My expectation is that you will take pride in your final product. Keep in mind that you are producing something here that may be valuable to you and/or members of your family 50 years from now. Write a rough draft and revise accordingly. **I will start doing graded progress checks for this in December! You will need to show me your progress!**

I suggest dividing your paper into three parts, as indicated by the questions above. Please double space the papers and thoroughly spell-check the final product.

They should be placed in the S'aak Wahara Porfolio that you created at the beginning of the semester.

PAPERS WILL BE DUE THE WEEK PRIOR TO FINAL EXAMS – LISTEN FOR DETAILS!