

Sabbatical Leave Report**Fall 2014****Chad Barbour, School of Arts and Letters****"White Blood Turns Red": The Frontier, Playing Indian, and American Culture**

This sabbatical was highly useful in allowing me to complete the manuscript of my book. I am grateful for the time and support Lake Superior State University has provided in assisting me in the completion of this manuscript. As well, one of my major career goals has been to publish a book of literary criticism and this sabbatical played an important part in achieving that goal.

General Overview of Sabbatical Activity

At the beginning of my sabbatical semester, I had around 40,000 words written for the manuscript in the form of dissertation chapters, conference presentations, and journal articles. I had two major goals for the sabbatical: 1) Expand the manuscript to around 75,000 words and 2) Revise and organize my writing and research into a coherent book-length argument. At the end of the sabbatical, I had produced an additional 40,000 words bringing my overall word count to 80,000 and was able to effectively connect the various pieces into a unified whole.

Revision Process and Details

I began the sabbatical with the manuscript as basically a collection of two dissertation chapters, two journal articles, and various pieces of analysis. A top priority was to transform these various pieces into a coherent whole (as was recommended by one of the outside readers of the manuscript proposal). While the following is not a fully exhaustive account of the work I completed during the sabbatical, it provides representative examples of the writing and research achieved during that semester.

The introduction was a completely new piece of writing, drawing on research I had done concerning Charles S. Peirce's semiotic theory, especially as it applied to comics, as demonstrated by Charles Hatfield.

Chapters 1 and 2 were significant revisions of material from my dissertation. One important aspect of this revision was updating the research. As well, I worked to cut irrelevant materials and hone the focus of each chapter to better fit the book's overall argument. I revised these chapters to provide a historical foundation of 19th century images and perceptions of Native Americans and the frontier that would be influential for later depictions in the 20th century and beyond. These chapters involved research into nineteenth-century American art and literature and significant scholarship on the frontier in American culture.

Chapter 3 consists of mostly new material composed during the sabbatical. There may have been bits and pieces floating around beforehand, but the bulk of this chapter formed during the sabbatical. This chapter necessitated reading multiple comics adaptations of *The Last of the Mohicans* and Parkman's *The Oregon Trail*. It was also necessary to

refresh my memory of these original texts. I located and studied various comics about Daniel Boone while conducting further research on Boone and Simon Girty. In addition, I consulted scholarship on dime novels and their place in American culture in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Chapter 4 expanded upon the ideas and research in my article, "Playing Indian and Performing Gender in 1940s and 1950s United States Comics." I conducted research on post-war American history and culture, especially looking at perceptions of masculinity, of communism and patriotism, and debates about comic books during this time. I fine-tuned the organization and, as with other chapters, worked to bring it into line with the book's argument.

Chapter 5 is also based on a journal article, "When Captain America Was an Indian: Heroic Masculinity, National Identity, and Appropriation." A similar revision process as chapter 4 occurred here. During the sabbatical, I was able to gain access to other comics featuring superheroes playing Indian, such as Captain Marvel, Superman, and Batman while conducting further research on the role of comics in American culture.

In addition, I also located and scanned images for inclusion in the book. While this may seem a mundane task on paper, sometimes the technical aspects of such an endeavor can be trickier than expected.

I finished the sabbatical with multiple read-throughs of the entire manuscript, carefully proofreading and copyediting.

Post-Sabbatical Results

At the beginning of January 2015, I submitted a complete manuscript of approximately 80,000 words to the press. The manuscript underwent a second round of peer review by two outside readers and was recommended for publication in April. In July 2015, I submitted the revised manuscript. By the end of September, the copyediting was completed. As this time, I am awaiting the page proof and will be completing the indexing of the book by January 2016. The book is scheduled to be published in July 2016 by the University Press of Mississippi. In addition, the book title has been changed; it is now *From Daniel Boone to Captain America: Playing Indian in American Popular Culture*.

Benefits to Instruction

In the semesters since my return I have found opportunities to share my research in my American literature classes. For example, in ENGL 232, during a discussion of 1950s-era literature, I found my research on perceptions of masculinity during that time period to be useful. This past semester in ENGL 231, I have shared my work on *The Last of the Mohicans* and depictions of Native Americans when relevant to our course material. The work done during the sabbatical has invigorated and enhanced my research and my knowledge of American culture, providing me with additional confidence and expertise in teaching American literature courses. As I prepare to teach Native American literature in Spring 2016, the benefits of my research should be apparent. As well, I hope that my

research and work provides a positive example for our English majors, demonstrating the type of work performed by literary scholars. Furthermore, this substantial engagement with research writing invigorates my teaching of composition. As I teach research and academic writing in 110 and 111, I do so with increased experience and expertise. On a more personal note, this sabbatical has reenergized me and allowed me to strengthen my connection to areas of research that I sincerely love and enjoy.

Supplemental Materials

On the following pages, I include the book cover, a scan of the book description from the press's Spring/Summer 2016 catalog, and the book's table of contents.

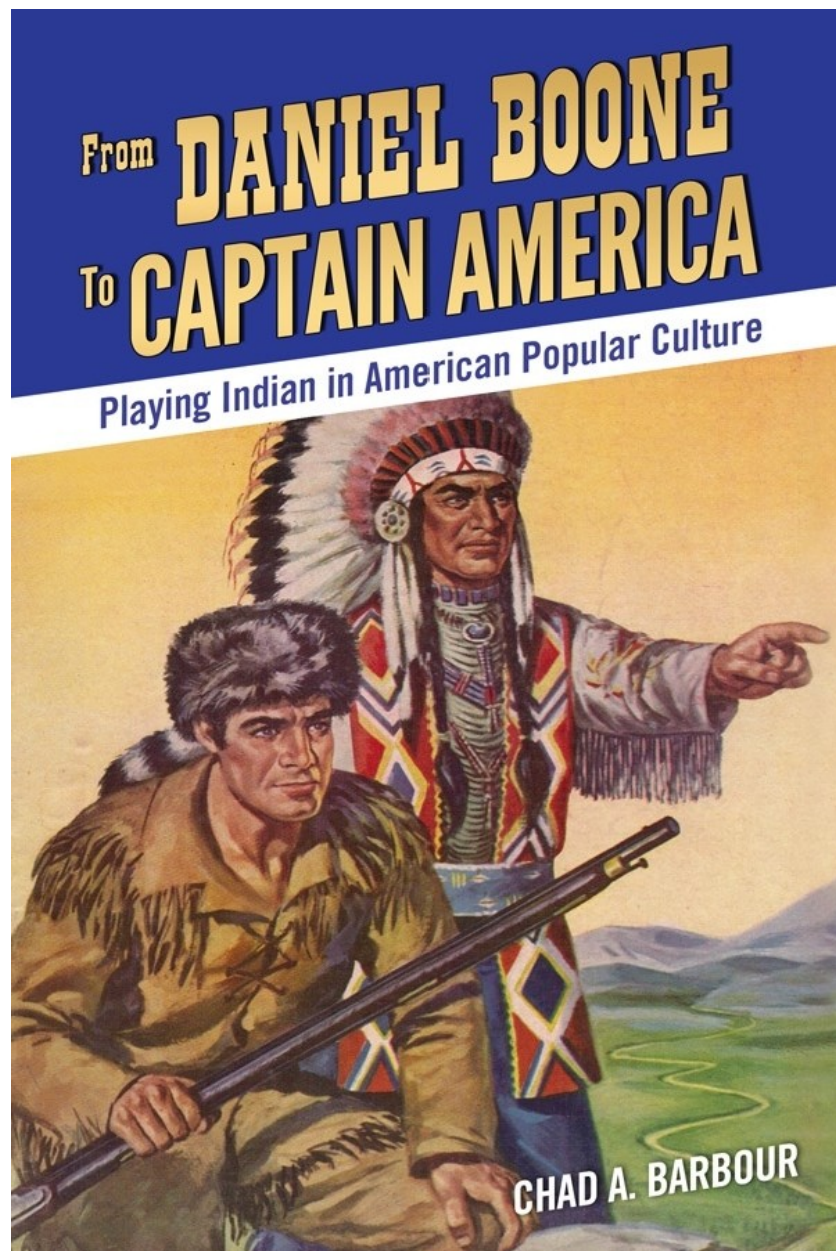


Figure 1: Book cover

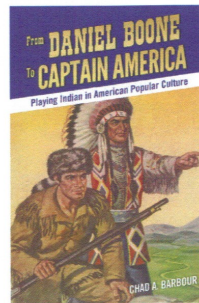
COMICS STUDIES | NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES | POPULAR CULTURE

From Daniel Boone to Captain America

Playing Indian in American Popular Culture

CHAD A. BARBOUR

An exploration of whites posing as Native Americans from nineteenth-century literature to comic books



From nineteenth-century American art and literature to comic books of the twentieth century and afterwards, Chad A. Barbour examines in *From Daniel Boone to Captain America* the transmission of the ideals and myths of the frontier and playing Indian in American culture. In the nineteenth century, American art and literature developed images of the Indian and the frontiersman that exemplified ideals of heroism, bravery, and manhood, as well as embodying fears of betrayal, loss of civilization, and weakness.

In the twentieth century, comic books, among other popular forms of media, would inherit these images. The Western genre of comic books participated fully in the common conventions, replicating and perpetuating the myths and ideals long associated with the frontier in the United States. A fascination with Native Americans also emerged in comic books devoted to depicting the Indian past of the US. In such stories, the Indian remains a figure of the past, romanticized as a lost segment of US history, ignoring contemporary and actual Native peoples.

Playing Indian occupies a definite subgenre of Western comics, especially during the postwar period when a host of comics featuring a "white Indian" as the hero were being published. Playing Indian migrates into superhero comics, a phenomenon that heightens and amplifies the notions of heroism, bravery, and manhood already attached to the white Indian trope. Instances of superheroes like Batman and Superman playing Indian correspond with depictions found in the strictly Western comics. The superhero as Indian returned in the twenty-first century via Captain America, attesting to the continuing power of this ideal and image.

Chad A. Barbour, Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan, is associate professor in the School of Arts and Letters at Lake Superior State University. He teaches courses in American studies, Native American studies, children's literature, and comics and graphic novels. His work has appeared in the *Journal of Popular Culture* and the *International Journal of Comic Art*.

JULY, 208 pages (approx.), 6 x 9 inches, 32 b&w photographs, bibliography, index
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Ebook available

Figure 2: Description from catalog

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