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Afterword to Life and Traditions of the Red Man by Joseph Nicolar

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THE
LIFE AND TRADITIONS
OF THE RED MAN

* *by* *

Joseph Nicolar

*Edited, Annotated, and with a History of the Penobscot
Nation and an Introduction by ANNETTE KOLODNY*

Duke University Press
Durham and London

2007

known, the stuff of many legends as before, became a powerful symbolic in that earthquake-prone land, his describing.

century, the Mohawks are known villages near the Mohawk River in a (from *kahnawā-ke*, meaning at r, the same name was "also given the Saint Lawrence in 1676 by the Mohawk Valley Caughnawaga" ("Mo- 470, that the Saint Lawrence Mo- main neutral as relations between became increasingly strained in the they were eventually "drawn into y explains why the Mohawk village e grand council fire. In recognition ers of the eastern door of the Iro- of that council fire—the victorious drawn into an alliance with the Iro- wks who had themselves been al- tinue their traditional role as the council fire, only now that council the Mohawks are obligated.

ON *

ings. The state was once known for ight to produce water with medic- f these was Poland Springs (a min- was constructed in the nineteenth spring in the Portland area, how- n, of the town of Deering, Maine." Deering family owned considerable tland. Following a devastating fire Deering deeded a portion of his land- became the city of Portland. There ties, and, as was the custom of the d after their owners—hence, Nico- ne." The town of Deering no longer rtland area still bear the name of

AFTERWORD

The republication of this book marks a significant milestone for the Penobscot Nation. It epitomizes the cyclic process of history. As a Penobscot person, Joseph Nicolar took control of how his tribe was represented through the written word. Today, the Penobscot Nation again seeks to take control of how we are presented to the public. We work with scholars and researchers, both Native and non-Native, to ensure that the errors and distortions of the past are not perpetuated.

After several months of telephone and written communications with several tribal members, including Chief of the Penobscot Nation, James Sappier, in June 2005 Annette Kolodny came to Indian Island and approached the tribe about republishing *The Life and Traditions of the Red Man*. Professor Kolodny asked to meet with members of the Nicolar family. In keeping with Penobscot tradition, we supported that request because we view a scholar's consultation with the family as part of the appropriate protocol for this type of project. In our view, it was necessary for Nicolar family members to consider whether or not republication of *The Life and Traditions of the Red Man* was in the best interests of the family and tribe. Not everyone agreed that this book should be republished. There were many issues to consider. First of all, Professor Kolodny was unknown to most people in our community. Could we in good conscience support a stranger republishing the work of a tribal member? Could we trust her to represent the tribe appropriately and convey the spirit of the Penobscot people accurately through her writing? All of these questions had to be addressed and a certain level of trust had to be earned by Professor Kolodny before any kind of collaborative project could move forward.

These concerns arise from the fact that many publications about Native American tribes occur without consultation with the appropriate tribe. As a result, Native Americans have been repeatedly misunderstood and misrepresented in the works of many scholars. Would Professor Kolodny choose to move forward without our endorsement of and/or participation in the project? If we chose not to participate, what kind of product would be produced?

In the end, all these questions were resolved through months of careful and mutually respectful consultation and cooperation. Professor Kolodny sent drafts of her introductory materials to family members and to the Penobscot Nation's Department of Cultural and Historic Preservation. We reviewed her materials and gave her feedback and comment, most of which she was able to incorporate into her subsequent drafts.

This process began in June 2005, when Professor Kolodny first visited Indian Island. After a series of meetings and a thorough consideration of all these

issues, Charles Norman Shay, Joseph Nicolar's grandson, determined that republication of the book was important at this time. We, as a tribal government, honored his decision. However, the family and tribe made certain specific requests. Charles Norman Shay asked if a history of the Penobscot Nation might be included in the republication. The most important request from the tribe, however, was for the inclusion of a contemporary Penobscot voice. Professor Kolodny welcomed both suggestions.

For the tribe to endorse the republication of Nicolar's book, the tribal voice must be a prominent part of the product. In our view, the most logical and qualified individual to be that voice was Charles Norman Shay. Charles Norman Shay's contribution to this project represents true indigenous scholarship. It is as valuable to us as Nicolar's original book. Charles Norman Shay's preface represents more than the contextual information it presents. It represents a rebirth of Joseph Nicolar's commitment to take control of how the Penobscot people are presented publicly.

Finally, one question remains unanswered: what would Joseph Nicolar have wanted? Would he have been satisfied with a non-tribal member taking the lead on republication? If he were alive today, would he republish his book himself in light of the tribe's current political, cultural, social, and economic status? Nicolar's grandson, Charles Norman Shay, suspects he would, because, in Shay's opinion, "authors produce their material for the widest dissemination to readers and scholars and in this way make the public aware of other cultures." That said, we will never definitively know if Joseph Nicolar would have approved of this republishing of *The Life and Traditions of the Red Man*. However, through the Penobscot Nation's endorsement of this republication, we want to make clear how highly we value his contribution to the literary world. We hope this republication will prove an inspiration for other tribal members to continue his legacy of indigenous scholarship and self-representation.

We wish to thank Professor Kolodny for her extensive research, her cooperation with us, and for her efforts to get this important book back into print. We wish to thank Duke University Press for taking up the project.

BONNIE D. NEWSOM,
Director, Cultural and Historic Preservation,
Penobscot Nation, Indian Island, Maine
February 6th, 2006