

subcultures where wealth is not measured in dollars—scientific labs, for example.

For the past year I followed a few scientific programs doing fieldwork, in biology and archaeology. I found the successful ones work through a system similar to the reciprocity of the potlatch. The Principal Investigator (the PI) is the “heh goos,” (in the Tla’amin language that’s “head man”) who has access to knowledge, equipment, funds, and other “elite” PIs in the field. A PI generously shares with students access to resources. In turn, the students cooperate with the PI and each other to add to that lab’s body of knowledge, which adds to the lab’s prestige. Successful labs have generous PIs, who recruit elite students, in turn establishing their own labs while keeping ties with their old labs (that’s the intermarriage part). This generosity and reciprocity leads to resilience. As long as the knowledge remains valuable, the lab and its prestigious status remain stable. (This is sometimes why

scientific theories that need to die might take a long time to do so—they come from a resilient lab. The theory only dies when the investigators die.)

The biggest difference in these two economies is that knowledge is not a finite resource. The biggest problem with knowledge is that it sometimes gets lost, especially if it’s not written down. Trosper has gone to the trouble to draw a road map of how a culture can include stewardship of the land within their economic and social systems.

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BOOK REVIEW:

Being and Becoming Indigenous Archaeologists

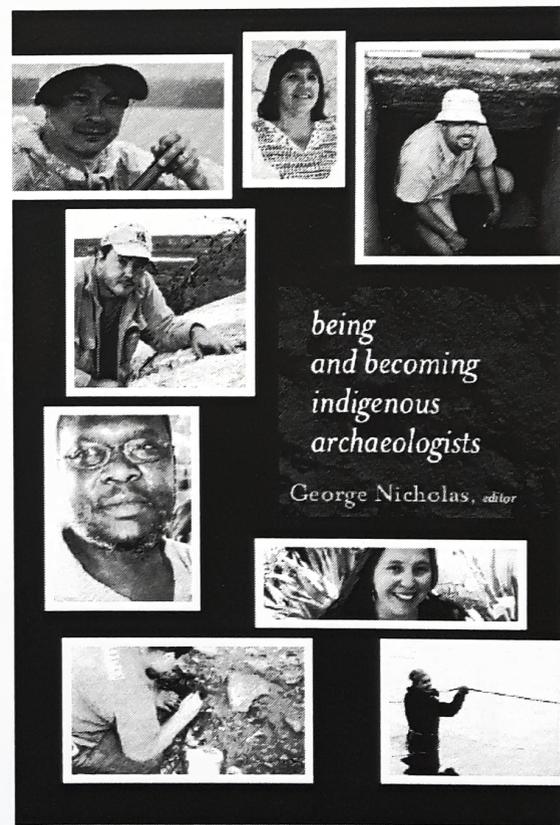
George Nicholas (editor). Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, CA. 352 pp., ISBN: 978-1-59874-498-9 (paperback), 978-1-59874-497-2 (hardcover). \$34.85 p/b, \$69.00 h/c. 2010.

“It is precisely in this uncharted interface between abstract principles and real-life events that things happen.”

(Augustine F.C. Holl, 131)

Indigenous archaeology, like feminist archaeology, is a consciously political framework that is closely aligned with global civil rights movements. These days, it is widely acknowledged as a key theoretical development in archaeology and is included in university curricula. In *Being and Becoming Indigenous Archaeologists* the contributors, along with editor George Nicholas, personalize this theoretical development by showing that Indigenous archaeology is also an experience and identity shared by a diverse group of individuals. This collection of short autobiographical stories recounts the archaeological careers of 36 self-identified Indigenous peoples from North America, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific. These essays are introduced by Nicholas, who initially coined the term “Indigenous archaeology” in 1997 to refer to “archaeology with, for, and by Indigenous peoples” (Nicholas and Andrews 1997). This collection highlights the “by” portion of this definition by presenting the experiences of Indigenous practitioners of archaeology along with the surprisingly engaging descriptions of their paths to professional archaeology careers.

Contributors were contacted by Nicholas and asked to write their own stories in their own words. The result is a diverse collection of interesting perspectives from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. Nicholas did not edit for style or cohesion, and thus the stories range from casual to academic, with some humour and irony thrown in for good measure. The addition of photographic portraits of each writer allows each author’s character a place within this volume, adding an intimate quality to the book. Nicholas notes that the variety that defines the collection is also what defines Indigenous archaeology as a whole. Yet it is the



similarities between the encounters of the individual archaeologists that convince the reader that there is a shared “Indigenous” experience.

Unfortunately, this shared experience of Indigenous archaeology is based as much on the challenge of confronting racism as it is on the complexity of balancing traditional beliefs with

archaeology. The authors describe instances of discrimination that present a challenge to the current practice of archaeology. Each story contains examples of how ignorance, stereotyping and/or outright racism affect Indigenous archaeologists on a personal level. These are good lessons for non-Indigenous archaeologists, who may not realize the impact of their own assumptions, nor that this experience of discrimination still exists in both the academy and the field. These stories show that there is still a great deal of misunderstanding between archaeologists and Indigenous communities, and emphasize the importance of continued dialogue and mutual education. While it is not an easy path, the authors manage to balance their worldviews and beliefs with their archaeological careers, demonstrating that they are not mutually exclusive as some have believed in the past; all of these authors successfully practice an interdisciplinary archaeology that incorporates traditional knowledge, ethnohistory and Indigenous law, to the benefit of their careers.

As a reader, I enjoyed the diversity of the stories and connected with the personal styles of the authors; on a basic level, it is interesting to hear the story of someone's life. As a non-Indigenous person engaged in Indigenous archaeology, I find it interesting to consider the similarities and differences between my career path and those of the authors. While Rika-Heke's description of her early interest in archaeology was similar to my own, her descriptions of her Maori heritage helped me understand the complicated challenges of balancing beliefs with career. These personal stories also include plenty of information about the historical and archaeological background of each author's area of expertise along with information about the traditional beliefs of the author's people. Through each author's recognition and recounting of their personal cultural context, I learned about Aboriginal/colonial history in New England (Gould), cultural hybridization in Hawai'i (Kawelu) and the history of archaeological research in Mexico (Garcia), to name a few examples.

What does editor George Nicholas seek to accomplish with this collection? Other than putting a personal face on Indigenous archaeology and facilitating a medium for Indigenous people to tell their own stories, he seeks to encourage young Indigenous peoples to pursue archaeology. He writes, "what these stories make abundantly clear is that archaeology is a viable career option for Indigenous persons" (12). Several of the contributions offer recommendations for would-be Indigenous archaeologists and the archaeological discipline as a whole. By collecting and presenting these stories, Nicholas is enacting what he describes (both in the introduction of this volume and in his 2008 contribution to the *Encyclopedia of Archaeology*) as the second goal of Indigenous archaeology: to "redress real and perceived inequalities in the practice of archaeology" (11, after Nicholas 2008: 1660). By presenting these experiences, he demonstrates that racism and discrimination still exist within the discipline. Yet, the individuals in this volume are proof of changing attitudes. By telling their stories, it becomes easier for others who come after them and continue to develop Indigenous archaeology as a practice. By asking each contributor what being and becoming archaeologists means to them, this collection activates Nicholas' academic theory by presenting examples of lived experience.

A key theme not mentioned by Nicholas in the introduction is the importance of mentorship. While many of the authors

note struggles with school and/or economics, almost all name one or two people—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—who provided encouragement to help them achieve their goals. These authors seem to relish the opportunity to thank the people who supported them while expressing hope to similarly inspire youth by presenting and sharing their stories. The experiences of the authors show that consistent and positive encouragement from a key mentor can help students overcome challenges that may otherwise stop them from following their passions and realizing their potential.

Some may find this volume too political but, as Atalay notes, Indigenous people have no choice other than to engage with the political nature of the discipline (49). These stories emphasize the nature of archaeology as a practice in the present with implications for living people. It presents some outstanding issues that still need to be addressed, such as lack of funding and institutional support, which would help to balance the disadvantages faced by Indigenous peoples wishing to pursue archaeological careers. Ideally, an Indigenous person who practices archaeology should not be a political statement that requires unpacking or justification. At this early stage of development of Indigenous archaeology, however, discrimination has not yet been fully eliminated from the discipline.

This book is a valuable teaching tool, either in its entirety as a textbook about Indigenous archaeology, or taken as individual stories to explore stories of settler/Aboriginal relations, decolonizing academia, or learning about how an individual came to study archaeology. Personally, this volume and the "Indigenous archaeology movement" bring to mind a time when the presence of women in science or archaeology was rarer than today, with women struggling against sexism and discouragement from their male superiors. Given that my entire graduate cohort at Simon Fraser University is female, I would say that the tables have certainly turned. Hopefully, the feminist wave in archaeology that made room for women to pursue this work will be paralleled by the current Indigenous rights struggle in archaeology and elsewhere. Perhaps, within a few years, *Being and Becoming Indigenous Archaeologists* will seem a quaint and old-fashioned collection of tales from the time before Indigenous people were treated as equals. As a movement toward that time, I encourage all archaeologists to open this book and read one of the stories within.

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