PORTRAITURE OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

IN THE NOVELS OF COOPER,

BIRD, AND SIMMS

By

NADINE EATON FIELDS

Bachelor of Arts

Panhandle Agricultural and Mechanical College

Goodwell, Oklahoma

1949

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of
the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
May, 1957

PORTRAITURE OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN IN THE NOVELS OF COOPER, BIRD, AND SIMMS

Thesis Approved:

Cecil B. Williams
Thesis Adviser

Clinton Keeler

Laban Maudsen
Dean of the Graduate School

PREFACE

The exact nature of the early American Indian has been the subject of literary controversy since the days of colonization in North America. The Indian has been portrayed in various ways by numerous writers, but James Fenimore Cooper is probably his most famous portraitist. Two of Cooper's literary contemporaries, Robert Montgomery Bird and William Gilmore Simms, also wrote some novels which revealed their concepts of the Indian. This paper is an attempt to show and compare these three writers' treatments of the American Indian through examination of the critics' analyses, the writers' remarks, and their novels which deal most specifically and fully with the Indian.

It was somewhat difficult to determine the exact attitudes of Cooper, Bird, and Simms toward the Indians by reading their novels, because they often incorporated historical events into their fiction and attempted to describe actual personalities. Thus, in order to arrive at conclusions concerning their true attitudes and opinions, I have also given careful attention to their personal comments and to those of their critics.

I gratefully acknowledge indebtedness to Dr. Cecil B. Williams, Professor of English, Oklahoma A. and M. College, for his valuable guidance and suggestions as my adviser; to Dr. Clinton C. Keeler, Associate Professor of English, Oklahoma A. and M. College; to Dr. Hans H. Andersen, Head of the Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Speech, Oklahoma A. and M. College; to the staff of the Oklahoma A. and M. College Library; to the staff of the Mary E. Bivins Memorial Library,

Amarillo, Texas, for their assistance in locating several of the rare volumes utilized in this study; and especially to my husband, Norval D. Fields, for his patience and assistance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The America of James Fenimore Cooper and his literary contemporaries was just beginning to feel its significance as a new and growing nation. It had achieved its independence from England, and the winning of the War of 1812 had brought about a much needed national unification.[1]

By 1783 the United States had claimed all of the territory east of the Mississippi, with the exception of the Spanish-held Florida, and by 1803 it had possession of nearly two-thirds of its present area. In spite of its holdings, however, the real frontier as late as 1830 still lay east of the Mississippi River. Kentucky was admitted to statehood by 1792, and Tennessee, another frontier state, came into the Union in 1796. Other crucial border states, such as Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Alabama, had been admitted by 1819, but it was not until 1837 that Michigan became a state.

The controversial region of Kentucky, the scene of Bird's Nick of the Woods, has a history unlike that of any of its neighbors. To the Indians it was known as the "Dark and Bloody ground" because of the constant wars between the Iroquois and the Cherokees for its possession. Each tribe wanted it for a hunting ground and used every known method of

---

[1]The historical information in Chapter I was obtained primarily from the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Chicago, 1955) and James Hart, Oxford Companion to American Literature (New York, 1941).

warfare to gain possession. So deadly were their struggles that early explorers of the region spoke of it as a beautiful country practically devoid of inhabitants.

Both the French and the English showed early interest in the region. In 1669 LaSalle journeyed down the Ohio to the point where the city of Louisville now stands. There is evidence that the Frenchman Longueril discovered Big Bone Lick in 1739. Ten years later Celeron de Bienville was sent by French authorities into the Ohio valley to take formal possession of the area.

In 1671, just two years after LaSalle's visit, Thomas Batts, an Englishman, and his party entered the area in search of a river leading to the Pacific. In 1750 Thomas Walker, representing the Loyal Land Company, passed through the Cumberland gap in search of a suitable site for settlement. That same year Christopher Gist entered the area on a similar mission for the Ohio Company. In 1752 John Finley, an Indian trader, visited the present site of Louisville. His descriptions of the region attracted Daniel Boone, who visited it in 1767. After that travelers and settlers in the Kentucky region became numerous. The Indians were still giving trouble as late as the 1790's, but their power was finally broken in 1794 by General Anthony Wayne's victory in the battle of Fallen Timbers.

After Boone's first visit to the region of Kentucky in 1767, he made an extended exploration of it from 1769 to 1771. He led a group of colonists along the Wilderness Road through the Cumberland gap to the site of Boonesborough, where a fort was erected in 1775. The legend of Boone as the discoverer of Kentucky and the greatest of frontiersmen was begun with the biography written by John Filson. Boone was also lauded

in contemporary literature and tall tales, and his adventures served as a pattern for writers of frontier novels.

Though not so well-known as Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton (1755-1836) also contributed to the opening of the West for settlement. He was a Kentucky and Ohio frontiersman, an Indian fighter, and a scout under Boone. He participated in attacks on the Indians in Kentucky and served with the Kentucky volunteers in the War of 1812.

As late as 1760 eastern Tennessee was claimed by the Cherokees, Creeks, Miamis, and other tribes as a common hunting ground. The Iroquois of New York claimed the central portion, and the western part was the home of the Chickasaws. In 1768 the Iroquois by the treaty of Fort Stanwix ceded their claim to the English. Indian titles to an immense tract of land in the Cumberland, Kentucky, and Ohio River valleys were extinguished in 1775. So many settlers then pushed into the region that by the turn of the century the fear of Indian attacks in Tennessee had been greatly reduced.

The famous frontiersman, David Crockett (1786-1836), is closely affiliated with the early history of Tennessee. His life and activities were well known to the writers of his time. Doubtless, some of the exploits of fictional heroes were based on the many legends associated with "Davy" Crockett. Crockett's education was obtained primarily in the "school of experience" in the Tennessee backwoods, and he gained a wide reputation as a hunter, trapper, and marksman. He participated in state and national politics from 1816 to 1835. After being defeated in the race for national representative, he emigrated to Texas and became one of the heroes of the Alamo. His popularity resulted in several books, purportedly written by him, but probably written by some Whig journalists:

Sketches and Eccentricities of Col. David Crockett (1833), An Account of Col. Crockett's Tour to the North and Down East (1835), and Col. Crockett's Exploits and Adventures in Texas (1836). A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett, of the State of Tennessee (1834) passes as his autobiography, although the claim has often been disputed.[2]

Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton, Davy Crockett, and other frontier heroes must have been known to Cooper, Bird, and Simms. It is logical to assume that the numerous accounts of their adventures supplied the novelists with ideas for some of their exciting frontier tales. Cooper tacitly acknowledged his debt to the legendary and historical figure of Boone in a footnote to the revised edition of The Prairie.[3]

Alabama, another southern state which played a crucial part in the early development of the nation, was not admitted to the Union until 1819, twenty-three years after Tennessee. The Indian problem was important in that area the first part of the nineteenth century, but in the battle of Horseshoe Bend, Governor Andrew Jackson broke forever the power of the Creeks. By the treaty of Fort Jackson (1814) the Creeks ceded their claim to about one-half of the present state of Alabama, and further cessions by the Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Choctaws left the Indians with only about one-fourth of Alabama. Later, a series of treaties with the Indians from 1830 to 1835 arranged for their removal to the west.

The midwest states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan were the scenes of mumerous Indian battles even after the Revolutionary War.

---

[2]Hart, pp. 169-70.

[3]James Fenimore Cooper, The Prairie (Red Rover ed., New York, n.d.), p. 3, n.

In Ohio the Indians caused trouble until they were subdued in 1794. In the treaty of Greenville (1795) they ceded their claims to practically the whole of eastern and southern Ohio. After achieving statehood in 1803, Ohio secured through cessions and purchase all the lands of the Indians except their immediate homes. These were finally exchanged for territory west of the Mississippi, and by 1841 the region was free of Indians.

The area now known as Indiana was also plagued with Indian battles after the Revolutionary War, and it was not until 1795 that there was any respite from Indian wars. Settlers then began to pour into the region. The last great Indian war in the area, led by the Shawnee chief, Tecumseh, terminated in the defeat of the Indians by Governor Harrison at Tippecanoe in 1811. In 1816 Indiana became the nineteenth state to be admitted to the Union.

The present state of Illinois was the scene of Indian conflict in the early 1800's. The Indians resisted the measures taken to extinguish their claims in this region. Their dissatisfaction with the treaties of 1795 and 1804 caused them to side with the British in 1812. For a number of years after the War the Indians were comparatively peaceful, but in 1832, the Sac leader, Black Hawk, led the Indians in an unsuccessful uprising in northern Illinois and Wisconsin. By 1833, fifteen years after statehood had been granted, all the Indians in Illinois had been removed from the state.

Until about 1815 the territory now within the borders of Michigan had remained for the most part a wilderness. The large number of hostile Indians remaining in this area was one of the primary reasons it had not been settled, but during the efficient administration of Lewis Cass, governor of the territory from 1813 to 1831, many of the Indians were

removed to the region west of the Mississippi River. After this was accomplished Michigan rapidly ceased to be a frontier state, and by 1837 it had become sufficiently organized to be admitted to the Union.

Between the relatively short period of years from approximately 1790 to 1840, practically all of the border area east of the Mississippi River had been wrested from the hostile Indians and settled by the pioneers. A combination of battles, treaties, and cessions accounted for the change. Probably the greatest forced migration of the Indians during this time was the result of the Removal Act of 1830. Under the provisions of this act almost the entire population of perhaps 100,000 Indians was removed within the next decade to lands west of the Mississippi.

By 1840 the Union had grown to a strong twenty-six states. Cooper had written most of his frontier tales and his two contemporaries, Robert Montgomery Bird and William Gilmore Simms, had each written his most important frontier novel. These outstanding Indian portraitists reflected in their novels the significance of the events of the past half-century. Their novels not only revealed the horror of Indian warfare, the methods of torture, and the massacres, but they also showed the pathos of the mistreatment of the Indians at the hands of the whites, the broken promises, and the forced removal of the Indians from the lands of their fathers.

Although these writers were born during the expansion of the frontier, each of them grew to maturity in relatively civilized regions. Much of their information about the frontier they had to obtain from available written sources. Cooper relied almost altogether on information gained from research and from tales his father told of earlier days. Probably Cooper's greatest single source of information was the writings

of John Heckewelder (1743-1823), a Moravian missionary among the Indians. Heckewelder spent much of his life among the Indians and his knowledge of them is recorded in the two writings, Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania (1819), and A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians (1820). Cooper drew strongly on these works and was later criticized for following Heckewelder's generally romantic interpretation.[4]

The writings of Timothy Flint (1780-1840) reflected the West of the early 1800's. He was a clergyman and writer whose observations on life and manners of the frontier were recorded in his Recollections of the Last Ten Years Passed in the Valley of the Mississippi (1826). It is considered one of the most valuable accounts of the West at this period. He edited the Western Monthly Review in Cincinnati from 1827 to 1830. It was a literary and critical journal in which he attempted to interpret the West to the East.[5] He also wrote several books which gave distinctive accounts of frontier life: George Mason, the Young Backwoodsman (1829); Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone (1833); and Indian Wars in the West (1833).[6] There is evidence that Bird was aware of Flint's productions and made use of the information in his own writings.

James Hall (1793-1868) was a circuit judge, banker, and editor in frontier Illinois. He edited the Illinois Gazette (1820-22), the Illinois Intelligencer (1829-32), and founded the Illinois Monthly Magazine, the

---

[4]Hart, p. 316.

[5]Ibid., p. 246.

[6]Encyclopaedia Britannica, IX, 380.

first literary periodical west of Ohio. His records of pioneer life and legends include Letters from the West (1828); Legends of the West (1832); Sketches of History, Life and Manners in the West (1834); and a History of the Indian Tribes (1836-44), with T. L. McKenney.[7] His short stories show "a delicate humour, an imaginative charm and an ease and grace of style" that reveal him as a significant figure in the development of the American short story.[8] Hall's writings were another very likely source of information for the novelists.

One of Bird's most important sources for Nick of the Woods was John McClung's Sketches of Western Adventure (1832). It served as a basis for several of the incidents in Bird's novel. In conjunction with McClung's Sketches, Bird also made use of Humphrey Marshall's The History of Kentucky (1824). It served as his principal source for the historical authenticity of Nick of the Woods.[9]

Cooper in particular could have been influenced by the writings of the French romantic author, Francois Rene Chateaubriand (1768-1848). He visited America in 1791 and wrote as a result of his visit Natchez (1826), a prose epic portraying the life of the Red Indians; Atala (1801), a romantic tale illustrating the Rousseauistic concept of primitive man as nobler and more sensitive than the civilized European society; and Rene (1802).[10]

All in all, the era in which Cooper, Bird, and Simms wrote was one

---

[7]Hart, p. 300.

[8]Encyclopaedia Britannica, XI, 101.

[9]Robert Montgomery Bird, Nick of the Woods, ed. Cecil B. Williams (New York, 1939), pp. xxxvi-xl.

[10]Hart, pp. 514, 42, 632.

which saw a rapid increase in the strength and size of the nation. States were rapidly being admitted to the Union and, for the most part, the Indians within the new states had been brought under control or removed to another area. The frontier had been pushed westward toward the Mississippi River. The brave deeds of the frontier heroes had been recounted time and again, and their thrilling adventures stirred the imagination of these writers. Contemporary historians, realizing the significance of the Indians in the development of the nation, began to devote much study to the Indians and wrote numerous articles and books about them. Cooper and his contemporaries, who had recourse to the habits of the aborigines either directly or through the written sources, had chosen an intriguing subject, as the continued popularity of their writings for over a century indicates. The purpose of the following chapters is to determine the attitude of each portraitist toward the Indian by examining the pertinent writings of each and to make a comparative estimate of their respective portraits.

CHAPTER II

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

This chapter undertakes to determine Cooper's attitude toward the American Indian by reviewing the studies of his critics and by carefully analyzing his treatment of Indians in those of his novels in which Indians figure importantly. A comparison of the attitudes of Cooper and two of his contemporaries, Bird and Simms, has been made in various instances throughout the chapter. A brief biographical sketch will show Cooper's preparation for his role as an American author.

Life and Works of Cooper

James Fenimore Cooper was one of the most prolific writers of his time. He wrote more than thirty novels, several books of travel, and a large number of controversial articles and tracts.[1] He must be given much credit for enlightening America and the world concerning the habits and customs of the aborigines and the frontiersmen. William Lyon Phelps, among others, has recognized his outstanding position as an interpreter of American life.

> . . . in his masterpieces he was, of all early American writers, the most truly and consistently American. We can see this more clearly than it was perceived by his contemporaries. He created an American literature out of American materials. It had in its robust tones no echoes of Europe. He was less influenced by foreign authors and foreign topics than any other American writer of his time. He was a path-maker.[2]

---

[1]William Lyon Phelps, "James Fenimore Cooper," Encyclopaedia Britannica, (Chicago, 1955), VI, 390.

[2]Ibid.

James Fenimore Cooper was born in Burlington, New Jersey, in 1789, but when he was a year old his father bought a tract of land near Otsego Lake in upper New York state. Here his father developed a manorial estate, building Cooperstown for his tenants and Otsego Hall for himself.[3] It was here that Cooper grew up. When he was thirteen he entered Yale, but his reluctance to yield to its discipline resulted in his being expelled for insubordination.[4] In his junior year he had exploded a charge of gunpowder in the keyhole of a hallmaster's door.[5]

At the age of sixteen he went to sea on a merchant vessel. In 1808 he became a midshipman in the United States Navy but retired in 1811 to marry Susan Augusta Delancey. They settled at Mamaroneck, New York, near her family, but later moved to Scarsdale, where Cooper lived the life of a country gentleman. He spent from 1826 until 1833 in Europe. Then he and his family returned to Cooperstown, where he lived until his death in 1851.[6] It was not until 1820, when he was thirty years old, that he published his first novel. He had been reading a current English novel and made the statement to his wife that he could write a better one. She, perhaps knowing what she was about, dared him to do just that. The result was Precaution, which was considered a failure by the critics. Nevertheless, Cooper had gotten ink in his blood and was launched on a fruitful writing career.

His first novel pertaining to the frontier was The Pioneers, written

---

[3]James Fenimore Cooper, The Deerslayer (New York, 1952), Foreword.

[4]Encyclopaedia Britannica, VI, 389.

[5]Robert Fulton Richards, ed., Concise Dictionary of American Literature (New York, 1955), p. 31.

[6]Encyclopaedia Britannica, VI, 390.

in 1823. This was the first of his Leatherstocking Tales to be published, but it was not the first with respect to the age of its characters.[7] The others appeared in the following order: The Last of the Mohicans, 1826; The Prairie, 1827; The Pathfinder, 1840; The Deerslayer, 1841.[8] In addition to these tales, he wrote Satanstoe, The Chainbearer, The Redskins, The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish, Wyandotte, and The Oak Openings, a total of eleven frontier novels. Those treated in detail in this paper are The Deerslayer, The Last of the Mohicans, Satanstoe, and The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish, which it is felt adequately represent his treatment of the Indians.

Critical Reaction to Cooper's Treatment

Cooper became one of the world's best-known writers. His books were published in thirty-four different places in Europe.[9] As a result of his popularity he was subject to much criticism concerning his treatment of the American Indian in his writings of the frontier.

Mark Twain, America's great humorist, satirized Cooper and his supporters in his amusing essay, "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses."[10] He remarked that it seemed far from right for certain critics "to deliver opinions on Cooper's literature without having read some of it. It would have been much more decorous to keep silent and let persons talk who have read Cooper."[11]

---

[7]Cooper, The Deerslayer, Foreword.

[8]Encyclopaedia Britannica, VI, 390.

[9]Cooper, The Deerslayer, Foreword.

[10]Bernard DeVoto, ed., The Portable Mark Twain (New York, 1950), pp. 541-56.

[11]Ibid., p. 541.

He meticulously recorded the rules of literary art and reported that The Deerslayer violated all but one of them. He ridiculed the woodcraft of Cooper's characters to the point of saying that "even the eternal laws of Nature have to vacate when Cooper wants to put up a delicate job of woodcraft on the reader."[12]

His caustic discussion of the episode of the ark and the narrow stream in The Deerslayer is hilarious. After describing the boat and the Indians' inability to board it, he sarcastically stated that "the difference between a Cooper Indian and the Indian that stands in front of the cigar-shop is not spacious."[13]

In his commentary on The Pathfinder he humorously revealed some of Cooper's errors. In a shooting match Pathfinder was able to see and hit a nail head at one hundred yards. Twain pointed out that a fly, the same size, was quite difficult to see at fifty yards. He reported numerous other discrepancies and ridiculous situations in Cooper's tales. His descriptions made them both absurd and amusing. He summed up his discussion by saying:

> I may be mistaken, but it does seem to me that Deerslayer is not a work of art in any sense; it does seem to me that it is destitute of every detail that goes to the making of a work of art; in truth, it seems to me that Deerslayer is just simply a literary delirium tremens.
>
> A work of art? It has no invention; it has no order, system, sequence, or result; it has no lifelikeness, no thrill, no stir, no seeming of reality; its characters are confusedly drawn and by their acts and words they prove that they are not the sort of people the author claims that they are; its humor is pathetic; its pathos is funny; its conversations are--oh! indescribable; its love scenes odious; its English a crime against the language.[14]

---

[12] Ibid., p. 546.

[13] Ibid., p. 549.

[14] Ibid., pp. 555-56.

This humorous tirade against Cooper's "Broken-Twig Series" serves as an introduction to the more staid comments of other critics.

It has been reiterated time and again that Cooper's Indians were greatly romanticized replicas of the Indians portrayed by the Moravian missionary, John Heckewelder (1743-1825). General Lewis Cass (1782-1866) was perhaps one of Cooper's most severe critics in regard to this. Appointed governor of the territory of Michigan in 1813, he was constantly in contact with the Indians of that area for eighteen years. When The Last of the Mohicans was published in 1826, he remarked that Uncas was a replica of the missionary Heckewelder's Indians, as described in his history.[15] Cass felt that the missionary's knowledge of Indians was confined to the semi-peaceful and easily converted Delawares.

His contacts were purely political, however. Cooper retaliated in his "Preface to the Leather-Stocking Tales" by saying that Cass was familiar with the Indians, but only as they were seen at councils for signing treaties. Cooper felt that under those circumstances the domestic qualities of the Indians were obscured and their evil passions magnified. "As just would it be to draw conclusions of the general state of American society from the scenes of the capital, as to suppose that the negotiating of one of those treaties is a fair picture of Indian life."[16]

In Scribner's Magazine, April, 1906, the American critic, William Crary Brownell, brought out a new thought concerning Cooper's Indians.

---

[15]John Heckewelder, An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States, (Philadelphia, 1819).

[16]Cooper, The Deerslayer, Preface.

Previously, the critics had expressed the idea that Cooper had created a "noble savage," but Brownell maintained that Cooper's Indians were a portraiture of racial types, not just romantic creations.[17]

W. P. Trent and John Erskine expressed an opinion of Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales that is somewhat contrary to the popular conception[18] They contended that the character of Leatherstocking and not the Indians depicts Cooper's love of the woods. Cooper's Indians were skilled in scouting and trailing, but he refrained from representing them as lovers of nature. To keep from idealizing them, he showed their treachery and cruelty. It is interesting to note the critics' comment about Cooper's Indians. ". . . this much truth is in the familiar criticism of Cooper's Indians, that though he may not idealize them, his readers do, the world over."[19]

Gregory Lansing Paine in his article, "The Indians of the Leather-Stocking Tales," points out that Cooper was inconsistent in his portrayal of the Indians. Cooper started his series of tales with a realistic treatment in The Pioneers (1823) to an increasing idealization through The Last of the Mohicans (1826), The Pathfinder (1840), and The Deerslayer (1841).[20] Paine gives his reasons for this progressive idealization of the red man:

. . . although he had slight first-hand knowledge of the Indians, he availed himself of every opportunity to obtain what he considered

---

[17] Gregory Lansing Paine, "The Indians of the Leather-Stocking Tales," Studies in Philology, XXIII (January, 1926), 37.

[18] Great American Writers (New York, 1912), pp. 47-48.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Paine, p. 37.

accurate information. In basing his early Indian characters, Chingachgook and Uncas, upon Heckewelder, he was following, according to his belief, the most reliable authority known at that time. Then, in the course of years, his creative imagination worked upon the character of Chingachgook, until this Indian hero assumed epic proportions and became the noble representative of a wronged and vanishing race, which, in Cooper's view, actually possessed qualities enabling it to assimilate the highest mental and moral attributes and attainments of the white man.[21]

Paine concedes that the Indians' good qualities were magnified, but not beyond reason. He feels that Cooper was delineating a race worthy of recognition.

Paine was convinced that Cooper based his characters on Heckewelder's Indians and wrote at length to show it. He delved into Heckewelder's History and pulled out paragraphs pertaining to Indian customs and beliefs that were paralleled in the Leather-Stocking tales. His article proved almost conclusively that Cooper relied heavily on Heckewelder's description of Indian customs and habits. He undoubtedly felt that Heckewelder's history was a reliable source of information.[22]

Francis Parkman, the famed historian, pointed out the defects in what he considered otherwise the most original and thoroughly national of American writers. He felt that the Indian characters were either superficially or falsely drawn and that their long conversations were truthless and tiresome. To him, Magua, the villain, rather than Uncas, was more truthfully drawn.[23]

In spite of adverse criticism, however, Cooper's delineation of the red man has achieved for him a position of extreme importance in American and world literature. George Bird Grinnell, whose knowledge of the

---

[21]Ibid., p. 39.

[22]Ibid., pp. 24-33.

[23]Albert Keiser, The Indian in American Literature (New York, 1933), pp. 142-43.

plains Indian was both comprehensive and minute, made the following observation:

> The Indian of Cooper--with his bravery, his endurance, his acuteness, his high qualities of honesty, generosity, courtesy, and hospitality--has been laughed at for half a century. Yet every man who has mingled much with the Indians in their homes has known individuals who might have sat for the portraits which Cooper drew of some of his aboriginal heroes.[24]

Albert Keiser, while presenting a cross section of views on Cooper's treatment of Indians, indicated that Cooper's treatment on the whole was fair. He showed that in several of the Indian characters the novelist had magnified the noble qualities within the bounds permissible in romantic writings. However, practically all of Cooper's Indian tales were also full of cruel, bloodthirsty savages. Keiser felt that the general truthfulness of Cooper's Indian portraits had been generally accepted and that criticism had not affected his popularity.[25] He remarked that merely reading Cooper's tales would "refute the claim of excessive idealization advanced by critics either limited in their viewpoint or only slightly acquainted with the great novelist."[26]

In his research Keiser found that Cooper had little first-hand acquaintance with the Indian. The Indians, except for roving bands of degenerate half-breeds, had left the Cooperstown area before he was born. In fact, Cooper admitted that all he knew about them was what he had read and had heard his father tell.[27] His reading, however, had been quite extensive. He painstakingly learned the accurate details

---

[24]Ibid., p. 143.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., p. 101.

[27]Ibid., pp. 101-102.

from what he considered authentic sources. His daughter Susan stated that he studied Heckewelder, Charlevoix, Penn, Smith, Eliot, and Colden and also the narratives of Long, Mackenzie, and Lewis and Clark.[28] Keiser asserts that Cooper drew much of his material from Heckewelder's History. Heckewelder was a Moravian missionary among the Delawares and Mohegans and became their greatest historian.

Van Wyck Brooks, the well-known literary critic, feels that Cooper's novels as a whole are praiseworthy.

> A noble nature shone through Cooper's novels, and, roughly written as most of them were, full of improbabilities, as rudely built as cabins of the pioneers, they lived very largely by virtue of this and the wonderful eye for the forest . . . that made Cooper . . . the master of literary landscape painters . . . . Cooper deeply understood the passion for a solitary life that went with a feeling for the vastness and freshness of the forest and that sometimes bred elevated characters, steady as the pines, humble and grand at once, with head erect.[29]

George Snell, another admirer of Cooper's, considers him the greatest shaper of American romance and Natty Bumppo one of the great creations of American fiction. He had high praise for Cooper's imagination:

> For what he lacked in concentration of effect, artistic purpose, and purely technical ability, Cooper easily made up in sheer imaginative power. It was not for nothing that whole generations have kept his work alive and gone on to imitate him to the last installment of our popular magazines.[30]

Ernest Leisy, a recent critic, said Cooper romanticized the Indians but did not falsify them. He felt that Uncas was portrayed as the noble savage and Magua as the evil degenerate merely for the sake of contrast.

---

[28] Ibid., p. 103.

[29] Van Wyck Brooks, "The World of Washington Irving," The Atlantic Monthly, July, 1944, p. 144.

[30] George Snell, "The Shaper of American Romance," The Yale Review, XXXIV (1945), 482-94.

It is interesting to note that Leisy believed Cooper subtly emphasized certain barbaric virtues in order to rebuke the particular type of democracy practiced by his countrymen.[31]

On the whole, it appears that Cooper in the Leather-Stocking Tales portrayed some of his Indians favorably partly because he found them so in his sources and partly because he felt justice required such presentation. In the following pages, Cooper's portraiture of the Indian will be re-examined in detail, with the more favorable qualities considered first.

Cooper's Treatment of the Indian

The Indians of Cooper's tales were, as a whole, people who depended upon the forest to provide their livelihood. They were not slow to realize that the whites were taking over their lands and means of subsistence. In the beginning most of them had been peaceful and readily agreed to white proposals for lands, but when the whites repeatedly broke the treaties and promises, they resorted to the best means of defense they knew--warfare. The type of warfare they waged was very savage, brutal, and merciless, and, in some instances, without any justification whatsoever, except the lust for blood. Generally speaking, however, the Indians were fighting for self-preservation. Cooper's reason for presenting this conflict between the red man and the white man is eloquently expressed by Paine:

> . . . his romantic interest in the early native American, together with his rigid conception of right and justice, led him to consider the Indians not as obstacles in the pathway of civilization, but as people

---

[31] Ernest E. Leisy, The American Historical Novel (Norman, 1950), p. 58.

of native abilities and virtues that warranted preservation.[32]

With this strong interest in the Indians' welfare, Cooper was inclined to either justify or overlook many of their bloody deeds. He portrayed the individual Indian as a creature with high ideals and a great sense of moral values. His praise throughout his frontier novels is a sharp contrast to Bird's attitude toward the savages. Bird showed little interest in the Indians beyond their cruelty and barbarism. Even Simms, who revealed more sympathy toward the Indians than Bird, did not dwell on their virtues, but made his points primarily by showing how the whites were partially responsible for the vicious acts of the Indians.

Cooper dealt primarily with the somewhat peaceful Delaware Indians and the war-like Iroquois. Because of this he was able to make such distinct contrasts in the nature of different Indian tribes. He turned his Indian into the "noble savage" by employing a number of devices. He emphasized the pride of the Indian as one of his finer characteristics. Time after time he told of the Indian's ability to withstand pain and torture without a murmur because he was too proud to complain.[33]

In Satanstoe, Cooper commended an Indian who had withstood a beating without a murmur by comparing him to a pine of the forest. "Muss . . . neither flinched nor cried. The pine stands not more erect or unyielding, in a summer's noontide, than he bore up under the pain."[34]

In The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish, the boy Conanchet, although only fifteen, became a symbol of Indian pride by the manner in which he

---

[32]Paine, p. 16.

[33]Cooper, The Deerslayer, p. 517.

[34]James Fenimore Cooper, Satanstoe, ed. Robert E. Spiller and Joseph D. Coppock (New York, 1937), p. 323.

reacted to being bound:

> . . . the boy glided from his [white captor's] grasp, and . . . . turned quietly and proudly to his captor, and, with an eye in which scorn and haughtiness were alike glowing, seemed to defy the fulness of his anger.[35]

Conanchet, who became an Indian chief, retained his pride and self-control when he was captured by the Mohicans. Keiser's comment on him indicated that his sympathy was with the Indian and hence with Cooper. "He dies as he had lived, noble, proud, and inflexible, devoted to his faithful wife but true to his conception of duty."[36]

To the Indians the breaking of a promise was a sign of unforgivable weakness. One of the reasons they were filled with such a hatred for the whites was because they made promises and agreements and then failed to fulfill them. Deerslayer was an exception, however. They trusted him to the extent that he was granted a furlough after his capture, even though his return might mean torture and ultimate death. " . . . it was a point of honor with the Indian warrior to redeem his word, when pledged to return and meet his death at a given hour."[37]

Pride and self-control was displayed in The Last of the Mohicans by an old Indian whose only son had been killed by his tribe because of cowardice:

> "It was a lie," he said; "I had no son. He who was called by that name is forgotten; his blood was pale, and it came not from the veins of a Huron; the wicked Chippewas cheated my squaw. The Great Spirit has said, that the family of Wiss-entush should end; he is happy who knows

---

[35]James Fenimore Cooper, The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish, Mohawk ed. (New York and London), p. 60.

[36]Keiser, p. 110.

[37]Cooper, The Deerslayer, pp. 482-83.

that the evil of his race dies with himself. I have done."[38]

It was considered womanish to let anyone see a display of feelings. Control of the emotions among the Indians was a requisite and was stressed even in the very early training of the warrior.

Indian skills and pride were so closely correlated as to be almost identical. Uncas, one of Cooper's outstanding Indian characters, displayed a notable example of Indian skill.

> Bounding forward like a deer, he sprang up the side of a little acclivity, a few rods in advance, and stood exultingly over a spot of fresh earth that looked as though it had been recently upturned by the passage of some heavy animal. The eyes of the whole party followed the unexpected movement, and read their success in the air of triumph that the youth assumed.[39]

Uncas' woodcraft is further illustrated in another search to find the lost trail:

> Uncas . . . raked the earth across the turbid little rill which ran from the spring, and diverted its course into another channel. So soon as its narrow bed below the dam was dry, he stooped over it with keen and curious eyes. A cry of exultation immediately announced the success of the young warrior. The whole party crowded to the spot where Uncas pointed out the impression of a moccasin in the moist alluvion.[40]

Susquesus, in Satanstoe, was another Indian who was an able woodsman. He could distinguish a footprint from another type of impression and determine whether it was made by an Indian or a white man.[41]

The self-control manifested by Uncas and other Indian heroes is one of their most conspicuous and admirable traits. When Uncas, in The Last of the Mohicans, became a captive of the Hurons, an irate savage

---

[38]James Fenimore Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans (New York, 1951), p. 258.

[39]Ibid., p. 221.

[40]Ibid., p. 224.

[41]Cooper, Satanstoe, p. 340.

hurled a tomahawk at him, but the aim was diverted by another Huron who wanted Uncas to undergo torture before being put to death. Instead of trembling at his narrow escape, Uncas merely stood still

> . . . looking his enemy in the eye with features that seemed superior to emotion. Marble could not be colder, calmer, or steadier than the countenance he put upon this sudden and vindictive attack. Then, as if pitying a want of skill which had proved so fortunate to himself, he smiled, and muttered a few words of contempt in his own tongue.[42]

Satanstoe reveals other incidents which show the Indian's patience and self-control. On a trek through the woods a white had declared that he could lead the group to a certain spot with his compass and eye, but a later check with three compasses proved that they were going in the opposite direction. He was then compelled to turn the leadership back to the guide. The Indian, instead of showing impatience, betrayed no emotion whatsoever.[43]

Cooper subtly captured his readers' admiration by flattering descriptions of his Indian heroes. A favorable impression of Uncas at the first meeting is given in The Last of the Mohicans.

> . . . the upright, flexible figure of the young Mohican [was] graceful and unrestrained in the attitudes and movements of nature. Though his person was . . . screened by a . . . hunting-shirt . . . there was no concealment to his dark, glancing, fearless eye, alike terrible and calm; the bold outline of his high, haughty features, pure in their native red; or to the dignified elevation of his receding forehead, together with all the finest proportions of a noble head, bared to the generous scalping tuft.[44]

According to Keiser, such detailed descriptions have helped to make Cooper's Indian a permanent figure in literature.[45]

---

[42] Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, p. 262.

[43] Cooper, Satanstoe, p. 304.

[44] Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, pp. 47-48.

[45] Keiser, p. 114.

Cooper was more concerned with the Indian in his natural habitat than with the Indian who had been influenced by the white man. He dealt with the very personal feelings of the Indian, which included his religious beliefs and the behavior which resulted from those beliefs. He emphasized through the character of Natty Bumppo and some of the main Indian characters how significant the Great Spirit was in the lives of the Indians. In The Last of the Mohicans Cooper had Hawkeye defend the Indians' beliefs:

". . . the Mingo adores but the true and living God. 'Tis a wicked fabrication of the whites, and I say it to the shame of my color, that would make the warrior bow down before images of his own creation. It is true, they endeavor to make truces with the wicked one--as who would not with an enemy he cannot conquer!--but they look up for favor and assistance to the Great and Good Spirit only.[46]

Emphasis was placed on the fact that the Indians never mistreated a demented person. They felt that the Great Spirit had disarmed them by depriving them of their greatest defense--reason. Therefore it was up to the Indians to offer them protection by never harming them. The Indians' forbearance in this matter was illustrated in The Deerslayer. The young white maiden, Hetty Hunter, who was somewhat demented, was free to move among the Indians without any danger to herself because of her condition.[47] Cooper, who was considered somewhat of a cynic, especially in later years when he wrote The Deerslayer, 1841, pointed out the contrast between this policy of the Indians and that of the whites:

. . . in many tribes the mentally imbecile and the mad were held in a species of religious reverence, receiving from the untutored inhabitants of the forest respect and honors, instead of the contumely and neglect that it is their fortune to meet with among the more pretending and sophisticated.[48]

---

[46]Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, p. 235.

[47]Cooper, The Deerslayer, pp. 177-78.

[48]Ibid., p. 178.

In describing the funeral rites held for Cora and Uncas by the Delaware Indians, Cooper found the opportunity to delve further into the religious beliefs and customs of the Delaware Indians. He devoted a number of pages in The Last of the Mohicans to this, succeeding very well in impressing the reader with the depth and significance of the Indians' faith. As noted in most biographies of Cooper, his descriptive powers of things and people belonging to the forest was superb. The general feeling that pervaded the scene was one of extreme sorrow and great sympathy. He described the ritualistic chants of the ceremony, the flowers, and the tenderness of the maidens toward the dead Cora and Uncas and those who were left to grieve. He told of the elaborate and yet tender preparation of the bodies for burial.[49] His description leaves the reader feeling much more tolerant of the Indians because of the sincerity of their beliefs and their kindnesses. Here again Cooper scores in favor of the Indian.

Cooper conceded that the Indians believed in an actual physical existence in a heaven rather than a spiritual one, but stressed that the significant thing was their sharing with the White Man sincere belief in a Supreme Being, even though they delegated to Him seemingly different powers and called Him by a different name.

The depth of the grief of Chingachgook for his son Uncas is impressed upon the reader as Cooper writes:

> . . . the Mohican warrior had kept a steady, anxious look on the cold and senseless countenance of his son. So riveted and intense had been that gaze, and so changeless his attitude, that a stranger might not have told the living from the dead, but for the occasional gleamings of a troubled spirit that shot athwart the dark visage of one, and the

---

[49]Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, pp. 359-363.

death-like calm that had forever settled on the lineaments of the other.[50] Even though Chingachgook was grief-stricken, he maintained his composure and was finally able to participate in the funeral ceremony:

"Why do my brothers mourn! . . . why do my daughters weep! that a young man has gone to the happy hunting-grounds; that a chief has filled his time with honor! He was good; he was dutiful; he was brave. Who can deny it? The Manitou had need of such a warrior, and He has called him away."[51]

This evidence of the deep and real grief of Chingachgook, despite his singular self-control, creates a feeling of kinship and sympathy.

A strong undertone in Cooper's tales is the Indians' love for their nation and the countryside. Through a feeble-minded character in The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish Cooper conveyed the Indians' feelings and also revealed his own feelings:

"Tall trees and shady woods, rivers and lakes filled with fish, and deer and beaver plentiful as the sands on the sea-shore. All this land and water the Great Spirit gave to men of red skins; for them he loved, since they spoke truth in their tribes, were true to their friends, hated their enemies, and knew how to take scalps . . . . Then the Great Spirit grew angry . . . . Big canoes came out of the rising sun, and brought a hungry and wicked people into the land. At first, the strangers spoke soft and complaining like women. They begged room for a few wigwams, and said if the warriors would give them ground to plant they would ask their God to look upon the redmen. But when they grew strong they forgot their words and made liars of themselves. Oh, they are wicked knaves!"[52]

This is one of the most direct statements Cooper made pertaining to the Indian's love for his land. For the most part, this love was an undercurrent felt in the actions of the Indians, in their skills of the woods, and in their customs.

---

[50] Ibid., pp. 359-60.

[51] Ibid., p. 369.

[52] Cooper, The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish, pp. 248-49.

Cooper devoted a number of pages to love among the Indians. He dwelt on it to the extent that the reader becomes aware that the Indian was quite human after all. The love displayed by Chingachgook and Hist for each other was as restrained and as refined as that found in the highest segments of society. Yet it is apparent through Cooper's description of their actions and suppressed emotions that their love was deep and true.[53]

The story of the love expressed by Conanchet for his white wife in The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish is another example of Cooper's attempt to humanize the Indian. Conanchet, a stern, reserved leader of his people, showed his great love for Ruth, or Narra-mattah, by obtaining permission from his captors to spend one day with her. He realized that he was showing a weakness, but his love was stronger than his desire to appear untouched by his fate.[54]

Cooper again exemplifies the Indian as a creature worthy of equal treatment and consideration by commending his high moral standards. He makes several references to the courtesy shown to equals as well as superiors by the Indians.

Cooper makes no implication that the Indians ever seduced their female captives. Some were taken to be wives, in the Indian sense of the word, while others were held for ransom or slain and scalped outright; but apparently they were not captured purely for the sake of molestation. In the words of Hawkeye, ". . . he who thinks that even a Mingo would ill-treat a woman, unless it be to tomahawk her, knows

---

[53]Cooper, The Deerslayer, p. 339.

[54]Cooper, The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish, p. 326.

nothing of Indian natur', or the laws of the woods."[55] As cruel and brutal as the Indians appeared in their treatment of captives, Cooper felt they should be given recognition for their respect for women.

Throughout all of the frontier novels Cooper praised the Indians through his own comments or those of various white characters. Natty Bumppo was the most frequent spokesman. He either praised the red man or found excuses for his infamous acts.[56]

Cora, the white daughter of Munro, showed racial tolerance by suggesting that the Indians should not be distrusted because of their manners or skin.[57] Alice, her sister, in reference to Uncas, said that she could sleep peacefully while he stood guard. She felt that he was incapable of any heinous crime.[58]

Cooper artfully described the reverence with which the ancient leader of the Delawares, Tamenund, was held. Although he was so old he was quite feeble physically and senile in his thinking, he was respected by the younger members of the tribe for his years of experience and great wisdom. This illustration of reverence was a contrast to the general attitude of the white man, who did not regard infirmity with this much respect.[59]

Cooper paused frequently in his tales to exonerate his warriors. He regarded many of the Indians as basically noble individuals corrupted

---

[55]Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, p. 223.

[56]Cooper, The Deerslayer, pp. 36, 115.

[57]Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, p. 12.

[58]Ibid., p. 48.

[59]Ibid., pp. 307-309.

by the frontier whites.[60] He felt that the average frontiersman, typified by Harry March, was too coarse to appreciate or even detect the finer qualities of the Indians.[61]

Cooper for the most part depicted the American Indian as an individual worthy in his own right of praise and consideration. His frontier tales were liberally sprinkled with praise for the red man, but they were not necessarily Pollyanna-type novels. They were realistic to the extent that they also related the surprise attacks, the methods of torture, the scalping techniques, and the other savage acts of the Indian.

The cunning and the savagery of the Indians in Satanstoe were shown by the murder and scalping of the surveyors. After the foul deed was committed, the Indians placed the bodies in lifelike positions to horribly surprise those who found them.[62]

Another instance of their savagery was the suspension of the negro between two saplings which had been pulled together. The victim had apparently been suspended thus and then scalped while still alive. The white man who found the negro recalled having heard pleading cries in the forest and remarked, in reference to the murdering Indians, that "the heart must have been of stone that could resist those cries."[63]

The Indian's desire to seek revenge for any wrong was strong. Those who knew the nature of the Indian were aware of this trait. An example of revenge was the slaying and scalping of several innocents in

---

[60]Cooper, The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish, p. 363.

[61]Cooper, The Deerslayer, pp. 329-30.

[62]Cooper, Satanstoe, pp. 358-59.

[63]Ibid., pp. 347-50.

retaliation for a beating given to an Indian captive before he was released by the whites.[64]

One of the most striking and repulsive scenes concerning the Indians was that of the massacre of Fort Henry. Cooper presented a panoramic view of it in the following description:

> . . . the gaudy colors of a shawl attracted the eyes of a wild and untutored Huron. He advanced to seize it, without the least hesitation. The woman, more in terror than through love of the ornament, wrapped her child in the coveted article, and folded both more closely to her bosom . . . . the savage relinquished his hold of the shawl, and tore the screaming infant from her arms . . . . his bantering but sullen smile changing to a gleam of ferocity, he dashed the head of the infant against a rock, and cast its quivering remains to her very feet . . . . maddened at his disappointment, and excited at the sight of blood, the Huron mercifully drove his tomahawk into her own brain . . . .
>
> At that dangerous moment Magua placed his hands to his mouth, and raised the fatal and appalling whoop . . . . there arose such a yell along the plain, and through the arches of the wood, as seldom burst from human lips before . . . .
>
> More than two thousand raving savages broke from the forest at the signal, and threw themselves across the fatal plain with instinctive alacrity. . . . Death was everywhere, and in his most terrific and disgusting aspects. Resistance only served to inflame the murderers, who inflicted their furious blows long after their victims were beyond the power of their resentment. The flow of blood might be likened to the outbreaking of a torrent; and, as the natives became heated and maddened by the sight, many among them even kneeled to the earth, and drank freely, exultingly, hellishly, of the crimson tide.[65]

This scene shows the fully aroused savage engaged in bloody warfare. These acts of the Indians as portrayed by Cooper modify considerably the lavish praise he gave to Uncas, Chingachgook, and other Indians.

Final Estimate of Cooper's Treatment

This study of Cooper's representative novels indicates that on the whole he can be considered a eulogist of the early American Indian. He

---

[64] Ibid., pp. 347-48.

[65] Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans, pp. 179-81.

wrote carefully, deviating little from the information he had gathered from the earlier historians. Many critics and even laymen suggested that he had modified the savagery of the Indian and overemphasized the desirable qualities.

The Indians' reputation had suffered because of their external actions and habits. The traders and frontiersmen who were bold enough to live near and among the Indians were often characters of low morals, whose improbity automatically drew out the more loathsome qualities of the Indians. The tales of horror resulting from this contact account in part for the Indians' notoriety.

The Indian that Cooper preferred to delineate was the one who was undefiled by yielding to the temptation to retaliate against the inroads and the broken promises of the whites, and against some of the despicable whites he encountered. Cooper did not deny the fact that the Indians were capable of horrible crimes. He did not sanction their atrocities; he only attempted to show the complex nature of the early American Indian by offsetting his faults by his virtues. In several instances, however, he introduced an evil Indian such as Magua because he needed a villain for a particular story, and not basically because he was delineating Indian nature. Cooper's extended portrayal of the aborigine resulted in numerous lively and interesting frontier tales.

CHAPTER III

ROBERT MONTGOMERY BIRD

The purpose of this chapter is to show Robert Montgomery Bird's attitude toward the Indian of frontier America, as compared with Cooper's and Simms' attitudes. Conclusions have been arrived at by reviewing the opinions of some of his critics, by studying his own statements concerning the topic, and by careful reading and analysis of his writings that pertain to the Indian.

Life and Works of Bird

Robert Montgomery Bird was one of Cooper's literary contemporaries. Though he was not as prolific a writer as Cooper, he made several important contributions to American literature.

Bird, one of seven children, was born in 1806 at New Castle, Delaware. His father died when he was four, so he was sent to live with his uncle, the Honorable Nicholas Van Dyke, a lawyer.[1]

He attended the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, where he received his degree in medicine in 1827. He was not particularly interested in medicine, but felt he should choose a vocation. His attraction to writing became evident early in his life, for by the time he was graduated from medical school, he had written four plays. He practiced medicine for a short time after graduation, but soon put it aside in

---

[1]Robert Montgomery Bird, Nick of the Woods, ed. Cecil B. Williams (New York, 1939), pp. xi-xii.

favor of his first love, literature.[2]

During Bird's short but fruitful life he wrote a number of plays, including four winners of prizes offered by Edwin Forrest.[3]

In 1829 he made the first of three trips to the West to gather materials for his writing. The second trip was made in 1833 and in 1835 he made his third journey to the West to gather materials for Nick of the Woods and other proposed frontier tales.[4] Nick of the Woods, his best known work of fiction, was published in 1837, which was also the year of his marriage to Miss Mary Mayer. They made their home in Philadelphia. The next year, 1838, he published Peter Pilgrim, which was compiled from a collection of miscellaneous travel notes, and in 1839 appeared The Adventures of Robin Day, which was his last completed work of fiction.[5]

Bird's health began to break because of his strenuous writing schedule and worry over finances. In 1840 he retired to a farm in eastern Maryland, where he spent much time during the last fourteen years of his life. These years were spent in comparative quiet, his chief outside activity being that of editor for two different publications for a short time. He died in 1854, rather unsuccessful financially, but leaving behind a definite and important contribution to the literature of America.[6]

---

[2]Ibid., pp. xii-xiii.

[3]Ibid., p. lxiv.

[4]Ibid., pp. xiii-xiv.

[5]Ibid., pp. xv-xvi.

[6]Ibid., pp. xvi-xvii.

The only frontier novel he wrote was Nick of the Woods, which compares favorably with Cooper's tales of the frontier.[7] In it Bird vividly described the conflict between the Indians and the white settlers in Kentucky. Peter Pilgrim, 1838,[8] a miscellany based primarily on his western travels, contains only one account of actual conflict with the Indians.[9] It was valuable, however, in that it partially revealed Bird's opinion of the Indian. A third book, the novel The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow, 1835,[10] proved slightly useful because there were several indirect allusions to the habits and nature of the Indians, who were former inhabitants of the area. This novel, along with Calavar, is rated next to Nick of the Woods.[11]

Bird stated in his preface to the revision of 1853 that he had written Nick of the Woods primarily to entertain himself and the public.[12] Even so, he was such a meticulous writer that he wanted his tale based on actual historical events and apparently studied at length to make the background authentic. This novel was considered one of the outstanding novels of the nineteenth century. In the year of its completion, 1837, it was published in both England and America, with a number of subsequent editions. It was also published in several other languages.[13]

---

[7]Albert Keiser, The Indian in American Literature (New York, 1933) p. 144.

[8]Robert Montgomery Bird, Peter Pilgrim (London, 1839), II.

[9]Ibid., pp. 143-260.

[10]Robert Montgomery Bird, The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow (London, 1839).

[11]Bird, Nick of the Woods, p. xxi.

[12]Ibid., p. 6.

[13]Keiser, p. 144.

Altogether, there have been nearly thirty editions of Nick of the Woods, a figure which testifies to its popularity. Even so, the criticism it received was not so extensive as that given to Cooper's Leather-Stocking Tales.

Critical Reaction to Bird's Treatment

Nick of the Woods presents the Indians in roles almost the exact opposite of Cooper's. In it the Indians are portrayed as villainous and evil, with few if any redeeming qualities. This point has been the target of Bird's critics. Albert Keiser in The Indian in American Literature, 1933, made several notable comments concerning Bird's attitude toward the Indian. He believed that Bird's interest in the settlers' welfare and his desire to see an established society in the frontier area induced him to paint a dark picture of the Indian.[14] Keiser said that Bird's

> . . . viewpoint is that of the settler who wrested from the savage the garden-land of his domain, and his frontier exploits are glorified at the expense of the native who is looked upon as a wild beast, to be exterminated like the wolf, the bear, and the panther.[15]

In his rather detailed report on Nick of the Woods, Keiser maintained that Bird portrayed the Indian and often the settler as creatures without any of the gentler or more humane traits. To him the delineation was hard and cruel, and one that left little doubt about Bird's attitude. "It is stark realism without a vestige of the romantic, devoid of poetry and sentiment."[16]

---

[14]Ibid., p. 144.

[15]Ibid., p. 145.

[16]Ibid., pp. 145-153.

Dr. Cecil B. Williams, editor of the 1939 edition of Nick of the Woods, presented a more moderate view of Bird and his writings. To him Bird portrayed frontier life and incidents much as they had actually existed, even though the picture was grim in many instances. He felt that Bird's Indian was painted in a much less favorable light than was Cooper's or Simms' because Bird was not concerned with glorifying the savage or bemoaning the passing of the colorful Indian.[17] His object was to depict the history of Western colonization.[18] Dr. Williams concluded from the novels and manuscript notes that Bird accepted the settler's right to progress westward and establish a "settled and productive state of society."[19]

Dr. Williams pointed out that Bird's feeling of antipathy toward the Indian was not altogether racial. On the frontier all, both Indian and white, were brutal, and Bird meant to do justice to both the Indians and the whites in presenting his version of the frontier.[20]

Another critic, Ernest E. Leisy, author of The American Historical Novel, 1950, also noted the contrast in Cooper's and Bird's approaches. He, however, felt that Bird and Simms were more nearly alike in their treatment of the Indian.[21]

In Richards' discussion of Bird's life, he said that Bird's best book, Nick of the Woods, presented "realistic Indians to contradict

---

[17]Bird, Nick of the Woods, p. lviii.

[18]Ibid., p. xxxi.

[19]Ibid., p. liv.

[20]Ibid., p. lxi.

[21]Ernest E. Leisy, The American Historical Novel (Norman, 1950), p. 116.

Cooper's 'noble savage.' "[22]

The critics cited were fairly well in accord on Bird's treatment of the Indian. They agreed that his Indian was a realistic one. Their primary point of difference was in the degree of realism, some believing that Nick of the Woods was a true and justifiable portrayal of the Indian, and others believing that it pictured him as a savage incapable of human feeling or emotion.

Bird's Treatment of the Indian

The fact that Bird's attitude enters into Nick of the Woods can hardly be denied, since it is almost impossible for a writer to be entirely impersonal in any type of writing. Therefore, in this study it will be necessary to carefully analyze his prefaces and writings for indications of Bird's true feelings toward the Shawnees and other Indian tribes.

Bird, anticipating criticism of the novel because of his harsh portrayal of the inhabitants of the frontier, explained his motives in the preface to the first edition of Nick of the Woods. He also realized that his Indian delineations were offensive, and apologized to some degree:

> . . . the North American savage has never appeared to us the gallant and heroic personage he seems to others. The single fact that he wages war--systematic war--upon beings incapable of resistance or defence,--upon women and children, whom all other races in the world, no matter how barbarous, consent to spare,--has . . . been . . . a stumbling-block to our imagination: we look into the woods for the mighty warrior . . . rushing to meet his foe, and behold him retiring, laden with the scalps of miserable squaws and their babes.[23]

---

[22]Robert Fulton Richards, ed., Concise Dictionary of American Literature (New York, 1955), p. 16.

[23]Bird, Nick of the Woods, p. 5.

Sixteen years later, in his preface to the 1853 revision of Nick of the Woods, he again felt compelled to explain his views concerning some of the various aspects of frontier life, and particularly those involving the Indians. He carefully and more fully explained in this preface that he had chosen characters and events that would illustrate the more outstanding features of the frontier. ". . .he aimed to give, not the appearance of truth, but truth itself—or what he held to be truth—to the picture."[24]

Bird rather severely reprimanded Cooper and other writers for picturing the Indians as "the embodiments of grand and tender sentiment—a new style of the beau-ideal—brave, gentle, loving, refined, honorable, romantic personages—nature's nobles, the chivalry of the forest."[25] He felt that the Indians could not possibly have fit those descriptions. To him the Indian was

> . . . a gentleman who wears a very dirty shirt, and lives a very miserable life, having nothing to employ him or keep him alive except the pleasures of the chase and of the scalp-hunt—which we dignify with the name of war.[26]

He pointed out that the Indian was still a barbarian and could be portrayed as nothing else. His own words clearly reflect his purpose and his attitude toward the frontier Indian:

> The purposes of the author, in his book, confined him to real Indians. He drew them as, in his judgment, they existed—and as, according to all observation, they still exist wherever not softened by cultivation, —ignorant, violent, debased, brutal: he drew them, too, as they appeared, and still appear, in war—or the scalp-hunt—when all the worst deformities of the savage temperament receive their strongest and fiercest development.[27]

---

[24]Ibid., p. 7.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., pp. 7-8.

It can be concluded from Bird's own statements, then, that his interest was in presenting a realistic picture of the frontier. In order to do this he felt compelled to emphasize the more brutal aspects of the Indians' and whites' behavior as typical of the time and area. He felt that the Indians were barbarians and should be depicted as such.

Compared with Cooper's tales, Nick of the Woods was almost altogether discrediting to the Indian. Even Simms presented a more sympathetic picture, as will be shown later. Bird's descriptions of the numerous savage acts of the Indians, often coupled with his own angry comments, presented the Indian in an unfavorable light.

The first real evidence of the Indians' brutality in Nick of the Woods is Colonel Bruce's account of the massacre of Colonel Crawford's company: " '. . . thar war dozens of prisoners beaten to death by the squaws and children, and . . . old Cunnel Crawford himself war put to the double torture and roasted alive.' "[28] Colonel Bruce's mention of the Ashburn incident is another reminder of the Indians' savagery.[29] Bruce's accounts set the keynote for the entire tale by emphasizing the ruthlessness of the savages, which is the dominant theme of Nick of the Woods.

Nathan Slaughter, a meek, mild-mannered Quaker, perhaps reveals more of the Indians' savagery through his mild remarks than does Colonel Bruce with his brusqueness. Nathan, to all appearances, was a feeble-minded old hunter who refused to kill Indians, and aimlessly roamed the forest with his little dog Peter. Nathan's remarks concerning the

---

[28]Ibid., p. 33.

[29]Ibid., pp. 79-80.

Indians seemed all the more significant because they came from one whose religious belief was pacifistic. "'. . . the Injuns have no regard for men . . . and an honest, quiet, peace-loving man can no more roam the wood . . . without the fear of being murdered, than a fighting man in search of his prey.'"[30]

While attempting to help some whites escape from the Indians, he calmly remarks to Roland Forrester that the Shawnees "'will think no more of taking the scalps of thee two poor women than of digging off thee own.'"[31]

Nathan relates the horrifying story of the Ashburn massacre to Roland while they are still trying to escape the Indians pursuing them. He had been an eyewitness to the slaying.[32] Bird's use of this horrifying episode helps to serve his purpose of portraying a realistic picture of the Indian. The horror of the event is emphasized by Nathan's extreme anguish while relating it to Forrester.

Ambush, a favorite war tactic of the Indians, was frequent in Nick of the Woods. The Indians used this method of surprise along with the midnight attacks in their attempts to drive back the settlers. An illustration of their method of ambush was the attack they made on the would-be rescuers of Roland's party.[33] This type of warfare was very familiar to the frontiersmen, who went out even anticipating ambush.

Bird showed in a number of instances the extremes of anger and rage that could be reached by the Indians. Their expression of their

---

[30]Ibid., pp. 125-26.

[31]Ibid., p. 133.

[32]Ibid., pp. 150-51.

[33]Ibid., pp. 206-9.

uncontrollable emotion was one of their ways of showing their hatred for the whites. Their animosity was vividly illustrated by the shrieks of rage and the acts of mutilation performed on the corpses of some whites they had earlier ambushed and killed.[34] It is interesting and also revealing to note Bird's reflection in reference to these acts:

> Individual virtues may be, and indeed frequently are, found among men in a natural state; but honor, justice, and generosity, as characteristics of the mass, are refinements belonging only to an advanced stage of civilization.[35]

This statement served to exemplify Bird's view that the only desirable state of society was one that was advanced and orderly.[36]

Roland's captors, some Piankeshaw Indians, proved quite unpredictable in their treatment of him as a captive. Part of the time they were kind and friendly, and at other times they were on the verge of slaying him mercilessly.[37]

The first vivid Indian portrait drawn by Bird is that of the old Piankeshaw Indian. Through him and Wenonga, the Black Vulture, Bird epitomized the Indians of the early frontier as he saw them. The Piankeshaw bragged excessively of his evil deeds of the past—scalping white men, women, and children, because he loved white blood better than whiskey. He claimed he had no heart, only an interior of stone.[38] The pitying look given to Roland by his Indian captors as he was handed

---

[34] Ibid., p. 219.

[35] Ibid., p. 220.

[36] Ibid., p. liv.

[37] Ibid., p. 228.

[38] Ibid., p. 223.

over to this old Indian as a prize trophy of the ambush was testimony to the fact that the old Piankeshaw was as cruel as he claimed to be.[39]

Bird's account of the journey toward the Piankeshaw camp revealed more of the nature of the Indians. The old Indian's free indulgence in a keg of whiskey resulted in a vacillation between a strong desire to slay Roland on the spot and a fanciful notion to adopt him as a son.[40]

Bird's striking description of the actions of the drunken old Piankeshaw gives a concept of the Indian that is in almost direct contrast to most of Cooper's Indian portraiture. Where Cooper was concerned with the liquor-ridden Indian only to the extent of blaming the white man for supplying him with the firewater, Bird dwelt on the Indian's inability to resist liquor and the resultant actions.

Even though Roland had suffered much mental and physical agony during the day's travel, perhaps the cruelest treatment he received from the Piankeshaws was the manner in which he was bound that night. He was placed on his back and his arms, neck, and feet were secured to the four ends of a cross crudely fashioned from branches. In this position, under a cross, he was forced to lie so that his captors might rest. He suffered intense physical discomfort when he was unable to move for hours.[41]

Bird showed the old Piankeshaw in a drunken stupor by the campfire, lamenting the death of his son, and grumbling over the loss of the whiskey keg, which had been destroyed earlier by the younger Indians in

---

[39] Ibid., p. 225.

[40] Ibid., pp. 231-33.

[41] Ibid., pp. 235-36.

a fit of anger. Intermingled with these complaints was the account he gave Roland of the fire torture awaiting him.[42] The old Piankeshaw was morbid and self-centered, with nothing uplifting whatsoever in his actions or thoughts.

The timely rescue of Roland from his would-be murderers by Nathan Slaughter resulted in the death of the Indian captors. The old Piankeshaw Indian, who did not succumb immediately to the death blow, spent his dying moments attempting to slay the helpless Roland. The description of the old Indian's last desperate and gruesome attempt to slay the bound prisoner reveals to the reader a great deal more of the cruel nature of Bird's Indian.[43]

Nathan Slaughter, the central figure in Nick of the Woods, was secretly the Jibbenainosay, the dreaded Indian killer. Openly, however, he was considered only a befuddled old hunter who refused to kill Indians. His dual personality was the result of a horrible episode earlier in his life. He had been a Quaker, a "man of a peaceful faith," who had befriended Wenonga, or Black Vulture, a Shawnee chief. Nathan had handed his gun over to Wenonga as evidence of his peaceful motives, only to watch his family be cruelly slain before his eyes.[44] Because of this incident his entire outlook and course of life was completely changed. From a peace-loving man who wanted to befriend all, he turned to a venomous "Indian-hater," obsessed with the desire to kill and kill until he had found the one responsible for the slaying of his family—

---

[42]Ibid., p. 236.

[43]Ibid., pp. 240-41.

[44]Ibid., p. 262.

Wenonga. In reference to the complete turnabout in Nathan's attitude, Bird in his 1853 preface said, "That passion is the mightiest which overcomes the most powerful restraints and prostrates the strongest barriers."[45]

Because of Wenonga's role in the slaying of Nathan's family, he was an important figure in this frontier tale, and Bird wrote at length to describe him in all of his evil propensities. The first introduction to Wenonga was given by the mild-spoken Nathan Slaughter:

> Wenonga, the Shawnee . . . [is] a man that has left the mark of his axe on many a ruined cabin along the frontier . . . . He is the chief that boasts he has no heart: and, truly, he has none, being a man that has drunk the blood of women and children.[46]

The next scene in which Wenonga appeared also presented him in an undesirable light. Nathan accidentally happened across the form of a sleeping Indian

> . . . and it was no less a man than Wenonga himself, the oldest, most famous, and, at one time, the most powerful chief of his tribe, who thus lay, a wretched, squalid sot, before the doors of his own wigwam which he had been unable to reach.[47]

Nathan later confronted Wenonga with the evil deed of slaying his family. Wenonga, not realizing who Nathan was, boasted:

> "The white-men are dogs and robbers! . . . the Quakel was my brother; but I killed him. I am an Indian—I love white-man's blood . . . . I am a warrior with no heart. I killed them: their scalps are hanging to my fire-post! I am not sorry; I am not afraid."[48]

Wenonga's boastful declaration produces the realization that he was not

---

[45]Ibid., p. 9.

[46]Ibid., p. 254.

[47]Ibid., p. 321.

[48]Ibid., p. 374.

the least remorseful for his foul deeds, but actually proud of his bloody reputation. Bird's depiction of the cruel acts and thoughts of Wenonga seems to typify his attitude toward the frontier savage.

Bird did not actually show many torture scenes in Nick of the Woods, but those that were described induce in the reader a strong aversion to the deeds and a feeling of sympathy for the victim. Ralph Stackpole, a notorious horse thief among the Indians as well as the whites, was the first torture victim of the Shawnees. Five Shawnee warriors had captured Stackpole and had bound his legs to a tree. They were striking him with rods and switches. To the Indians this was great sport; the air was ringing with laughter and merriment at their captor's extreme discomfort.[49]

The fury of the Shawnees at finding their leader, Wenonga, slain by the Jibbenainosay was vented by their attempting to slay Roland, who had been made a captive. The young warriors attempted to slay him with their hatchets, but their blows were diverted by the older Indians, who, however, were not being merciful; they wanted to save him from immediate death so that he could be slowly and cruelly tortured to death with fire at the stake.[50]

The final torture scene in Nick of the Woods is that in which Roland Forrester and Ralph Stackpole were bound to stakes, in preparation for death by fire. In this scene there is a composite picture of the two men at the stake, the Indians yelling impatiently for the torture to begin, and the infuriated widow of Wenonga kneeling in an attempt to

---

[49]Ibid., p. 279.

[50]Ibid., pp. 379-80.

start the fires.[51] Edith's shrieks at the sight of Roland tied to the stake arouse no feeling in the Indians whatsoever. This lack of compassion served as a goad to Bird. He vehemently condemned them for this insensitiveness:

> . . . Indians, engaged in the delights of torturing a prisoner, are . . . without heart. Pity, which the Indian can feel at another moment . . . seems then . . . as if it had never entered into his nature. His mind is then voluntarily given up to the drunkenness of passion; and cruelty, in its most atrocious and fiendish character, reigns predominant. The familiar of a Spanish Inquisition has sometimes moistened the lips of a heretic stretched upon the rack,—the Buccaneer of the tropics has relented over the contumacious prisoner gasping to death under his lashes and heated pincers; but we know of no instance where an Indian, torturing a prisoner at the stake, the torture once begun, has ever been moved to compassionate, to regard with any feelings but those of exultation and joy, the agonies of the thrice-wretched victim.[52]

Bird did not permit his victims to undergo the extremes of torture as Simms did in The Yemassee. However, his descriptions of the torture scenes are so distinct that the reader can easily imagine what horrors were about to ensue. In this particular instance Roland and Stackpole were spared at the last minute by the sudden onslaught of the whites, who had been summoned by Nathan Slaughter.

Bird's description of Indian villainy was not limited to the warriors only. The feelings and acts of the squaws contributed to the over-all picture Bird portrayed of frontier life. His commentary concerning Wenonga's wife, as representative of the squaws' attitudes, reveals his opinion of them:

> . . . the old hag . . . sat . . . with her eyes fastened upon the captive, over whom they wandered with the fierce and unappeasable malice, that was in those days seen rankling in the breast of many an Indian mother, and expended upon prisoners at the stake with a savage, nay, a demoniacal

---

[51] Ibid., p. 382.

[52] Ibid., pp. 382-83.

zeal that might have put warriors to shame. In truth, the unlucky captive had always more to apprehend from the squaws of a tribe than from its warriors; and their cries for vengeance often gave to the torture wretches whom even their cruel husbands were inclined to spare.[53]

This same old squaw, in her fury at the sight of her husband's mutilated body, started the fire at Roland and Stackpole's feet. She was beside herself with rage and sought vengeance at the most logical source.

Many of the frontier whites adopted the Indians' practice of scalping their victims. It is apparent that Bird deplored this barbaric custom which the supposedly civilized white men had absorbed, but he resigned himself to its inevitableness. "It . . . is . . . a measure of retaliation, compelled, if not justified, by the ferocious example of the red man. Brutality ever begets brutality."[54]

Nick of the Woods was Bird's only novel that dealt primarily with the Indians. However, there were a sufficient number of allusions to the Indians in The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow to justify some comment.

The setting was in the 1870's in Pennsylvania. It is concerned primarily with the Gilberts, a father and his seven sons. They acquired the sobriquet of the Hawks because of their murderous habits. Oran Gilbert, the oldest son, had turned into a "white Indian." His activities while associated with the Delawares were anything but desirable, hence suggesting the evil Indian influence. ". . . he acquired a singular reputation as a bold and successful scalp hunter."[55]

---

[53] Ibid., p. 326.

[54] Ibid., p. 291.

[55] Robert Montgomery Bird, The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow (London, 1839), p. 23.

A speech by one of the characters, "'I like that doctrine of the savages which teaches one who has a wrong to revenge, how unnecessary it is to be particular as to the individual he is to retaliate on,'" shows the reputation left behind by the former inhabitants of the area.[56]

Another speech, linking the Hawks' habits with the Indians, also shows the opinion held by the inhabitants, and, it may be assumed, also by Bird. "'They say they scalp women and children, as if they were no more than great Indians!'"[57]

Bird's description of the notorious Oran Gilbert suggests once again that he held the Indian in very little esteem:

> . . . the features /were/ of a man of middle age, very dark and fierce of aspect, with long black locks of hair hanging from his temples, wild, Indian-looking eyes, and a mouth expressive of as much inherent ferocity as was ever betrayed by the visage even of a red-man.[58]

The only aspect of Indian nature that Bird revealed in Peter Pilgrim was that of treachery. The broadhorn, a popular-type boat in the 1830's, was traveling down the Ohio River when it was hailed by a voice from the shore. Those in charge of the boat had been warned of renegade whites betraying them to the Indians, so they demanded identification. The answer they received seemed sufficient identification to cause them to send a boat ashore to receive a "wounded officer." As the boat was launched there was heard

> . . . the yell of a hundred savages, who suddenly started to life, leaping from among stones and bushes; and, giving out such whoops as were never before heard but from the lungs of devils incarnate, poured a sudden fire of rifles upon us, which, aimed at us, all clustered together on the narrow deck, and from the distance of only a few paces,

---

[56] Ibid., p. 66.

[57] Ibid., p. 90.

[58] Ibid., p. 65.

wrought the most horrible carnage, killing, I verily believe, one half of our whole number, and wounding, with but two or three exceptions, every other soul on board . . . .[59]

Final Estimate of Bird's Treatment

Judging from Bird's own writings, it is evident that he was undeniably a harsh critic of the frontier. His position regarding the Indians can be summed up in the quotation—"Brutality ever begets brutality." He reacted to Cooper and the other romanticists by maintaining that the Indian was a savage and should be depicted as such. He accomplished this by accentuating his savage characteristics. The white man's brutality on the frontier was, according to Bird's belief, the only weapon that could be used to combat the Indians successfully. Unlike Cooper, who often lamented the deterioration of the Indians who came in contact with the whites, Bird accepted as a natural course of action in a progressing world the advance of civilization.

Bird stated that his object was to write realistically of frontier life. It would seem that he succeeded very well in his undertaking, for Nick of the Woods has in it no element of the romantic Indian such as may be found in numerous instances in Cooper's Leather-Stocking Tales and, to some extent, even in Simms' writings. His tale is cold and blunt and leaves little doubt in the mind of the reader that the conquest of the West was a protracted bloody and heartless battle between the aborigines and the whites.

---

[59]Ibid., pp. 235-36.

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS

The purpose of this chapter is to show Simms' attitude toward the American Indian and to compare his treatment with those of Cooper and Bird. The elements in his personal life which contributed to his position regarding the Indians have been carefully considered, and his novels, The Yemassee (1835) and The Cassique of Kiawah (1859), have been carefully analyzed to show his feelings. Critical reactions have been utilized to further determine his attitude.

Life and Works of Simms

William Gilmore Simms was born in Charleston, South Carolina, on April 17, 1806. His mother died in his infancy, leaving him to be reared by his grandmother. She apprenticed him to a druggist to prepare him for a career in medicine, but she also encouraged his belletristic interests by relating to him old Southern legends, superstitions, and historical episodes.[1]

After the death of Simms' mother, his father went west to seek his fortune, finally settling in Mississippi. The tall tales he related on a return trip aroused in Simms the spirit of adventure, and a few years later he went west to see first hand the conditions of the frontier.

---

[1]William Gilmore Simms, The Yemassee, ed. Alexander Cowie (New York, 1937), p. x.

His observations were reflected in his border romances and his Indian tales.[2]

Simms returned to Charleston after his tour of the West and studied law. He did not give up his love for literature, however. In 1827, in addition to being admitted to the bar, he published two volumes of verse. He figured somewhat in politics and journalism, but was not successful in these ventures. Charleston was considered the Boston of the South, but he was unable to break through the social barrier because of his humble birth. Therefore, after the death of his wife, father, and grandmother, he left his daughter in the care of a relative and went to New York to try his hand at literature. He later moved to New Haven, where he wrote two successful novels, Martin Faber and Guy Rivers. After this he rapidly wrote stories, articles, poems, plays, history, and biography. He was also noted as an eloquent as well as energetic orator.[3]

In later years the popularity of his work began to wane, but he became the acknowledged leader of a new group of young Southern writers. His last years were saddened and somewhat embittered by personal losses and the effects of the Civil War. He died in his home town, Charleston, June 11, 1870.[4]

Critical Reaction to Simms' Treatment

Simms' critics compared him with Cooper in numerous instances.

---

[2]Albert Keiser, The Indian in American Literature (New York, 1933), p. 154.

[3]Simms, The Yemassee, pp. xi-xii.

[4]Ibid., p. xiii.

His two themes, the frontier and the Revolution, helped him to gain the reputation of a "Southern Cooper," and he has been ranked next to Cooper in his depiction of frontier life.[5] His themes, his flowing romantic style, his melodramatic plots, and his use of stock figures resemble Cooper's. Even though he did not achieve the poetic quality of Cooper in the depiction of nature, his works did not have many of the faults of Cooper's. In general, he was considered a more active delineator of life and was more capable of creating realistic detail.[6] His style of writing and his two Indian novels have drawn comments from several sources. Albert Keiser evidenced quite an interest in Simms. His detailed reviews of these novels showed a remarkable insight into Simms' narrative and descriptive abilities.

Keiser supported Simms' assertion that his portrayal of the Indians was correct. Simms contended that the Indian as he appeared in his degraded condition in connection with the whites was not the Indian as he was found in his natural environment. Simms' writings, which were carefully based on historical and geographical facts, were "definite, accurate, and original, uninfluenced by Cooper."[7] His Indians, unlike Bird's, were pictured as the victims in the struggle by the whites for supremacy, with more emphasis placed on the home life of the Indian. The woodcraft of Cooper's Indians was practically absent in Simms' Indians, who were more like ordinary human beings.[8]

---

[5]"William Gilmore Simms," Encyclopaedia Britannica (Chicago, 1955), XX, 696.

[6]James D. Hart, The Oxford Companion to American Literature (New York, 1956), p. 692.

[7]Keiser, p. 163.

[8]Ibid.

Keiser criticized Simms' plot structures but felt that he had compensated for this weakness by the use of the wealth of background material at his disposal and by the omission of the sordid details of "drunken debauches and wholesale scalping."[9] His tale of The Yemassee was made plausible by allowing some of the Indians to "sell their birthright for a mess of pottage," while others, under the guidance of the strong Sanutee, fought to the end against white domination.[10]

Keiser expressed a feeling of sympathy for the tragic figure of Occonestoga in The Yemassee. He felt the pity of the destruction wrought by the white man's poison. Occonestoga had fallen so low that only occasionally could he rise above his despair. Keiser praised Simms' excellent characterization of the youth by saying that the young Indian was "finely and consistently drawn with a denouement both relentless and satisfying."[11] Simms' successful conveyance of Occonestoga's feeling of horror and despair at his fate made memorable the scene of the ceremony for the removal of his badge of the Yemassee.[12]

The stern resolution of the gentle Matiwan to save her son from eternal doom made her one of the strongest and most memorable characters in the novel. Keiser said that Simms had "created a character probably without a peer in the annals of Indian womanhood."[13]

Keiser considered Sanutee a "kind husband and a good father with something of the sternness and austerity of the Roman." He believed

---

[9]Ibid., p. 164.

[10]Ibid., pp. 164-65.

[11]Ibid., p. 165.

[12]Ibid., p. 166.

[13]Ibid., p. 169.

that the chief was fair to the whites even though he finally felt compelled to rise up against them.[14]

It is evident from Keiser's analysis that he sanctioned Simms' realistic but somewhat sympathetic treatment of the Indian. He specifically praised his characterizations of Sanutee, Matiwan, and Occonestoga.[15] Keiser stated why he felt that Simms was justified in not blaming the Indians altogether for their treachery:

> . . . the Yemassees are said to have been originally a generous and gallant race, gentle and forbearing; but provoked by the repeated aggression and abuse of the newcomers, they chose strife and hostility in preference to becoming the slaves of a superior people. That they should have employed all available means in this their struggle for existence, whether treachery, deception, or savage vengeance, was only what might be expected of a proud and outraged people.[16]

In The Cassique of Kiawah, which took place in 1684 in the coastal area near Charleston, the Indians were only beginning to suspect the dangerous nature of their white neighbors. They did not play a prominent part in the tale, but Keiser felt their role was significant because it foreshadowed the tragic conflict that was to take place thirty years later.[17]

Keiser noted that Simms viewed the Indian with sympathy because he was "a savage rather in his simplicity than in his corruption, with a brutality of barbarism rather than vice."[18] This attitude was contrary to that expressed by Bird.

---

[14] Ibid., pp. 169-70.

[15] Ibid., pp. 165-70.

[16] Ibid., p. 173.

[17] Ibid., p. 157.

[18] Ibid.

In fairness to Simms, Keiser reported the treacherous acts of the old Indian chief Cussoboe, which counterbalanced his rather dark presentation of the whites and made the portrayal more realistic.[19]

Alexander Cowie, editor of the 1937 edition of The Yemassee, felt that Simms valued factual accuracy more than most romantic writers. He considered Simms a "zealous student of history" who went to the original sources, if possible, for the basis of his stories.[20]

Simms' attitude toward the Indian, according to Cowie, was largely non-partisan. He thought Simms' opinion of the Indian, however, was much higher than Bird's and even higher than Cooper's. He felt Simms was generous in his treatment of the Indians, because along with reporting their vices, he made the most of their virtues. As a storyteller, though, he accepted the fact that the savages must retreat before the advance of the whites.[21]

Cowie's opinion of Simms' writings was different in some respects from Keiser's. He criticized Simms' dwelling on the blood and violence of battles and on the grisly murders and tortures. He felt that Simms tended to be too melodramatic and that his style was rather flat. His accounts of military maneuvers were also tedious.[22] With the exception of Sanutee and Matiwan, Cowie felt that many of Simms' characters lacked individuality. These two ill-fated Indians added "significance and beauty to a story that otherwise would have been little more than a

---

[19]Ibid., p. 158.

[20]Simms, The Yemassee, p. xxiii.

[21]Ibid., pp. xxvii-xxix.

[22]Ibid., pp. xix-xx.

good tale of exciting adventure."[23]

On the positive side, Cowie praised Simms' mastery of suspense and climax, his authentic settings, and his fascinating array of low-life characters. He believed that Simms' narrative ability had seldom been equaled and that his literary faults were less obvious than Cooper's. He praised Simms' skill in painting realistic pictures in his works of fiction, saying that "he sought to invest every exciting situation with as much verisimilitude as he could. He well knew the value of the careful treatment of detail."[24] As a whole, then, Cowie considered The Yemassee, though somewhat marred by carelessness and repetition, a successful work of fiction that would be cherished for years to come.[25]

Ernest E. Leisy felt that Simms in his realistic accounts of the guerrilla warfare in the swamps and forests evinced a more convincing portraiture of the Indians than Cooper.[26] Simms' first-hand experiences on the border as a youth gave him a wealth of information concerning character types and speech habits of the frontiersmen. Because of this his stories are more convincing than Cooper's, whose information was obtained primarily from research. Leisy said Simms' Indians, like Cooper's, lamented their fate in a metaphorical language, but were more realistic, ferocious, and shrewder than Cooper's. He gave credit to Simms' alert personal observation for the vividness of his settings.[27]

---

[23]Ibid., pp. xxiv-xxxv.

[24]Ibid., p. xxiv.

[25]Ibid., pp. xxxiv-xxxv.

[26]Ernest E. Leisy, The American Historical Novel (Norman, 1950), p. 12.

[27]Ibid., pp. 35-36.

Leisy's primary criticism was much the same as Cowie's. He thought Simms tended to be too melodramatic and that he repeated his character types and situations in his novels. He incorporated accurate historical facts, but failed to blend them into his tales.[28]

These critical reviews of Simms' treatment of the Indian, combined with a careful study of his Indian novels, will give a composite picture of his attitude, as compared with the attitudes of Cooper and Bird.

Simms' Treatment of the Indian

Simms' critics, for the most part, felt that he painted the Indians as he had actually seen them in their natural environment and as they responded to the influence of the whites. They judged from the various comments he had made in his novels and elsewhere, that he was also sympathetic toward the Indians. His letter to Professor Samuel Henry Dickson, M. D., of South Carolina, is a confirmation, to some degree, of his sympathy:

> . . . the rude portraits of the red man, as given by those who see him in degrading attitudes only, and in humiliating relation with the whites, must not be taken as a just delineation of the same being in his native woods, unsubdued, a fearless hunter, and without any degrading consciousness of inferiority, and still more degrading habits, to make him wretched and ashamed. My portraits, I contend, are true to the Indian as our ancestors knew him at early periods, and as our people, in certain situations, may know him still.[29]

Simms felt the tragedy of the Indians' plight in relinquishing their ancestral holdings to the white men. He showed this feeling through his portrayal of their national and personal pride. In The Yemassee, his earlier Indian novel, he remarked at length on the growing suspicion in

---

[28]Ibid., p. 13.

[29]Simms, The Yemassee, p. 4.

the minds of the Indians at the steady infiltration of the whites. The Yemassees in the early days of the white settlements were a strong nation and had little fear of the European intruder, but as more and more came, they grew suspicious and sullen. They began to realize the increasing superiority of the whites. Through the actions and speeches of Sanutee, his people were made aware of what was happening to them. He and some of his countrymen became forcibly aware through assumptions and injuries on the part of the whites "that a people once conscious of their superiority, will never be found to hesitate long in its despotic exercise over their neighbours."[30] Finally, fearing for their very existence, the Indians busied their minds with those "subtle schemes and stratagems with which, in his nakedness, the savage usually seeks to neutralize the superiority of European armour."[31]

Sanutee and his family were undoubtedly Simms' strongest and most memorable characters. His artful delineation of these three Indians gave an excellent picture of their different responses to white influence. Sanutee had turned from a peaceful and conciliating chief to one filled with indignation and hatred over the whites' increasing domination. He was reluctant to wage war against the whites but knew they would not leave of their own will. When the majority of the Yemassee chiefs agreed to sell more lands to the whites, the enraged exhortations of Sanutee and the chiefs who sided with him incited the Yemassees against all the whites and those chiefs who had sold the lands. Sanutee realized that the success of the decision to wage a large-scale attack against the whites

---

[30]Ibid., p. 22.

[31]Ibid., pp. 10-12.

depended on the element of complete surprise. He slyly attempted to quiet the suspicions of the white commissioners by pretending friendship.[32] His slyness and plans to make a surprise attack on the whites showed the complete turnabout in his character. Simms makes a point in favor of the Indians through the reader's realization that Sanutee was obligated to follow this course of action in order to protect his people.

The Yemassees, under the influential leadership of Sanutee, captured the traitorous chiefs and deprived them of their symbols of nationality. This punishment revealed how desperate the Indians were to retain their lands. After a Yemassee was deprived of his symbol of nationality, he was forbidden to belong to any tribe and was evendenied the solace of the Indian heaven.

Sanutee, disregarding the fact that Occonestoga was his only son, considered him a traitor to the Yemassee nation because he had yielded to the weakening influence of the whites' liquor and had caused some of the other Yemassee chiefs to yield. The supreme test of Sanutee's leadership and national pride was his sanction for the removal of the badge from his degenerate son:

> The old man had tasked all the energies of the patriot, not less than of the stoic, and having once determined upon the necessity of the sacrifice, he had no hesitating fears or scruples palsying his determination. He seemed not to regard the imploring glance of his son . . . but, with a voice entirely unaffected by the circumstances of his position, he spoke forth the doom of the victim . . . .[33]

Without a doubt this was a task for which Sanutee had no heart, but he did not interfere.

---

[32]Ibid., p. 101.

[33]Ibid., pp. 193-94.

His wife, Matiwan, showed an entirely different approach to the matter. Her deeds and thoughts were altogether maternalistic as she sought to save her beloved though errant son from perdition. On the pretense of bidding Occonestoga farewell, she approached him just as he was about to undergo the ceremony and crushed his skull with a concealed tomahawk. In this manner she saved him from the fate she considered worse than death, for the badge of honor could not be removed from any but a living victim.[34]

This dreadful act was in direct conflict with Matiwan's gentle nature and the impact of what she had done left her in a dazed condition. Here again Simms showed the effect of the whites on the lives and actions of the Indian. But for the influence of the white man's poison, Matiwan would never have been compelled to revolt against her nature and destroy her son.

The love and tenderness between Sanutee and Matiwan is evident throughout most of the novel. Sanutee, concerned with the fate of his nation, did not always show the interest and concern of the gentle Matiwan. Nevertheless, his later approval of her act to save Occonestoga indicated his feeling for her and for their son.[35] Though a proud chief of his people, he could not disregard his personal feelings. All of Matiwan's acts resulted from her strong love for her husband and son. There is no resemblance in her nature to the hideous squaw of the Black Vulture in Bird's Nick of the Woods. Even Matiwan's impulsive act to save her son from eternal doom can be looked upon with compassion. Her simple motive justified the action in her eyes.

---

[34]Ibid., pp. 199-200.

[35]Ibid., p. 401.

Simms' comments and descriptions showed his interest and remorse in the tragic deterioration of Occonestoga. The young chief, well aware of his degradation, lived a tormented life.

> Originally he had been highly popular. His courage had been greatly admired, and admirably consorted with the strength and beauty of his person. Even now, bloated and blasted as he was, there was something highly prepossessing in his general appearance. He was tall and graceful, broad and full across the breast, and straight as an arrow. But the soul was debased within him; and there were moments when he felt all his wretched humiliations--moments when he felt how much better it would be to strike the knife to his own heart, and lose the deadly and degrading consciousness which made him ashamed to meet the gaze of his people.[36]

Regardless of his besotted condition, however, Occonestoga still retained enough of his former training and prowess to elude his pursuers.[37] Under the partial influence of drink offered to him by some of the more notable whites, he promised to spy on his people in order to learn of their plans for an insurrection. His later awareness of the fact that his capture probably meant death did not keep him from his promise.[38] This episode indicated Simms' belief in the basic integrity of the Indian, even a corrupted one.

Ultimately, Occonestoga was captured by the Yemassees and bound for the purpose of removing his badge of honor. His first response to the realization of his fate and especially his father's stand on the matter, was that of despair. This was immediately replaced by an attitude of pride and defiance as he heard the derisive shouts of the Yemassees.[39] Though horrified at the thought of his mother slaying him, he received

---

[36]Ibid., p. 148.

[37]Ibid., pp. 146-48.

[38]Ibid., p. 173.

[39]Ibid., p. 195.

her death blow with considerable tranquillity.[40] All in all, Simms' delineation of Occonestoga was a favorable one and one of his strongest arguments for the Indian. Through him Simms showed how a strong, upright character could be destroyed through the wrong contacts, which, in this case, were "lowly whites" and their "poison."

The only torture scene in The Yemassee was startling in the extent of its barbarity and pitilessness. The Yemassee leaders felt the necessity of seizing a white victim for the fire torture before their uprising so that they might rouse to the highest pitch the savages' desire for white blood. The victim was a young Irish settler who was bound to a tree while his body was pierced with arrows and tomahawks. Blazing torches were thrust into the wounds inflicted by the savages.[41] The absence of adverse criticism of the Indians' activities, though not an endorsement, indicated that Simms was more neutral in his attitude than Bird.

The uprising proved a failure in the end because the Indian forces were finally subdued. However, many isolated settlers were brutally murdered by the bloodthirsty Indians before they were finally overcome by the whites. The midnight surprise attack, the war whoop, the sudden onslaught, and the scalp-song were considered Indian war tactics used to counteract the superior arms of the whites.

> . . . plying their way from house to house in their progress, with all the stealthy silence of the cat, the Indians drove their tomahawks into many of the defenceless cotters . . . . their aim was indiscriminate slaughter, and one bed of death not unfrequently comprised the forms of an entire family--husband, wife, and children. Sometimes they fired the dwelling into which caution denied them entrance, and as the inmates

---

[40] Ibid., pp. 199-200.

[41] Ibid., pp. 259-61.

fled from the flames, stood in watch and shot them down with their arrows.[42]

Though Simms was reputed among his critics to be sympathetic toward the Indians, he did not gain this distinction by lauding his Indian characters or excusing their acts. His approach was more subtle than Cooper's in this respect. The realistic descriptions of the villainous acts of his Indians in The Yemassee create a feeling of strong pity as well as horror. Simms effectively conveyed the idea that they were compelled to commit these desperate acts as a last ditch attempt to save their lands and nation.

Though written nearly a quarter of a century after The Yemassee, Simms' second Indian novel, The Cassique of Kiawah, had a setting in South Carolina in 1684. In it the Indians were just beginning to realize their ultimate fate and were conspiring to strike back.

Early in his novel Simms made evident part of the reason for their fear and hatred by his rather vehement denunciation of the practices of the early whites:

> Smith's people, when he founded Jamestown, were great rapscallions; and the puritans, shod with holiness, though covered with hypocrisy, were the most atrocious barbarians that ever cut throats, bought scalps, burned witches, pilloried quakers, and sold the women and children of the red princes into slavery, after they had butchered their papas and husbands![43]

Here again Simms indirectly asserted his opinion of the Indian by his condemnation of the whites' actions.

The actions and beliefs of Edward Berkeley, Simms' only philanthropic character in this novel, seemed futile when the final results

---

[42] Ibid., pp. 284-85.

[43] William Gilmore Simms, The Cassique of Kiawah (New York, 1859), p. 133.

were viewed. Yet it must be noted that he was the only white in the entire area who believed that the Indians would respond favorably to kind treatment. This was hardly enough to convince the Indians that the whites meant no harm.

His kind treatment of Iswattee, the son of the Indian chief, was more rewarding than was at first apparent. The lad, who grew to love the baron and his family, felt great remorse over his assigned task to betray his master's confidence.[44]

The fierce resistance of the Indian to the white invasion was characterized in Cussoboe, the Indian chief. He retaliated against the whites by placing his son in a position to obtain the keys to Edward Berkeley's barony, which he planned to attack at an opportune time. The actual assault was a failure because of vigilance on the part of some whites, but through persuasive speeches such as the following by Cussoboe, they were goaded on to desperate acts:

"Ha! do you fear the white man? Do not be afraid. Be strong! Be strong! Kill! kill! Let us drink the blood of the pale-faces; let us tear off the scalps from their skulls! Kill! kill!"[45]

The Iawa, or Indian magician, displayed perhaps the most outstanding example of Indian stamina and courage in the battle. His actions and blood-curdling yells served as a stimulant to the Indians. When he finally fell, it was found that he had fought with three musket-balls in his body. An interesting comment by Simms concerning the hand-to-hand battle between the Iawa and the white leader shows his admiration for bravery and chivalry, regardless of the source:

---

[44]Ibid., p. 515.

[45]Ibid., p. 582.

> It was a curious illustration of that chivalrous instinct which characterized all truly brave people, that no one, of either side, sought to meddle in the fight between Calvert and the Lawa. It was seemingly a tacit understanding that the two champions should have fair play. No single stroke or shot was aimed at either. Their conflict constituted the closing scene of the contest. All was fairly over, in the rest of the field, ere it closed with them.[46]

A casual, superficial reading of The Cassique of Kiawah gives the impression that Simms believed the Indian was a wicked creature. Careful analysis, however, rectifies this conclusion to a certain degree. According to his delineation of the Indian characters, he did consider them merciless savages in many respects, but by necessity, not by choice. Here again his theme was that of white conquest versus savage resistance.

Final Estimate of Simms' Treatment

By Simms' own admission, the conclusions of his critics, and the evidence found in his novels, he was a realistic yet sympathetic portraitist of the American Indian. His first-hand observations and experiences among the Indians served as a basis for his portrayal of the Indians. His critics had practically unanimous praise for his vivid descriptive powers and his ability to portray characters. These qualities have been noted in The Yemassee and The Cassique of Kiawah. His excellent portraits of Sanutee, Matiwan, and Occonestoga make them outstanding characters in his Indian novels and also in American frontier literature.

Simms, though admittedly sympathetic toward the Indian, was not as obvious with his feelings as Cooper. As a whole he had little open praise for the Indian. He revealed his feeling for the Indian's plight by showing how the white invasion had necessitated the Indian's savage

---

[46]Ibid., p. 585.

warfare. Simms felt, however, that civilization should and would advance, even at the expense of certain groups. He believed that if the Indians were to escape the inferiority they felt in their relation to the civilized whites, and its degrading influence, they would have to be removed from any contact with the whites.[47] In brief, he regretted a situation which he recognized as necessary in a progressing world.

Summary of Findings

Analysis of the portraiture of the early American Indian in the novels of Cooper, Bird, and Simms has been the purpose of this thesis. The approach has been through a careful study of the lives and comments of these writers, the reactions of critics to their Indian novels, and the novels themselves.

Cooper's treatment of the Indians was considered first. From his eleven frontier novels, four were selected and carefully studied to determine his attitude toward the Indian. Though Cooper was accused of creating the "noble savage" through his glorification of the Indian, a study of his novels indicates that his treatment of the Indian was just and fair, for the most part. He was attempting to show the virtues of the Indians that had hitherto been concealed. Cooper portrayed the Indian who was undefiled by the lowly whites found in the border area. He depicted the Indian whose anger had not been roused by the whites' treachery and broken promises. Contrary to the severe remarks made by some of Cooper's critics, however, not all of his Indian portrayals paid homage to the savage. There were numerous scenes showing the

---

[47]Simms, The Yemassee, pp. 291-92.

treacherous acts of ambush, scalping, and torture.

Robert Montgomery Bird presented the least favorable picture of the Indian. He admitted that he felt little sympathy toward the savage, and his novel, Nick of the Woods, showed his anger toward the Indians' brutal resistance to the necessary advance of civilization. His descriptions of the Shawnee Indians are always unfavorable. They are vicious, drunken, indolent, or treacherous in all instances. His depiction of the American Indian is a definite contrast to Cooper's portrayal.

The third writer, William Gilmore Simms, earned the title of the Cooper of the South partly by his Indian portrayals in The Yemassee and The Cassique of Kiawah. Although Simms' accounts of the savage acts of the Indians seem in some instances more harsh than Bird's, there is an underlying note of sympathy in his portrayal. He realized that the advance of civilization was necessary, even though certain groups had to suffer because of it. He revealed his pity for the Indians' plight by suggesting in various ways that the savage acts were their means of retaliation against the white invasion.

A brief statement will summarize the positions of these writers concerning the Indians. Cooper presented a favorable, romantic picture, while Bird showed little, if any, sympathy toward the Indian. Simms' attitude was definitely more friendly toward the Indian than Bird's, but not quite as favorable as Cooper's.

This study has proved very worthwhile in that it has given the writer a new perspective on a type of early American literature and has created a deeper appreciation for the contributions of these writers to the literature of the world. Perhaps it will also enable other readers of the three authors discussed to understand certain of their books better and thus obtain a truer picture of the first Americans.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beatty, Richmond, Floyd C. Watkins, Thomas Young, and Randall Stewart, eds. The Literature of the South. Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1952.

Bird, Robert Montgomery. Nick of the Woods: The Jibbenainosay. Ed. Cecil B. Williams. New York: American Book Company, 1939.

_____. Peter Pilgrim. London: Richard Bentley, 1839. 2 vols.

_____. The Hawks of Hawk-Hollow: A Tradition of Pennsylvania. London: J. Cunningham, 1839.

Brooks, Van Wyck. "The World of Washington Irving." The Atlantic Monthly, CLXXIV (July, 1944), 135-44.

Cooper, James Fenimore. The Deerslayer. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1952.

_____. The Last of the Mohicans. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1951.

_____. The Pioneers: The Sources of the Susquehanna. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912.

_____. The Prairie. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912.

_____. Satanstoe. Ed. Robert E. Spiller and Joseph D. Coppock. New York: American Book Company, 1937.

_____. The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish. Mohawk ed. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, n.d.

DeVoto, Bernard, ed. The Portable Mark Twain. New York: Viking, 1950.

Encyclopaedia Britannica: A New Survey of Universal Knowledge. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1955. 24 vols.

Hart, James D. The Oxford Companion to American Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.

_____. The Oxford Companion to American Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956.

Keiser, Albert. The Indian in American Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Leisy, Ernest E. The American Historical Novel. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950.

Paine, Gregory Lansing. "The Indians of the Leather-Stocking Tales." Studies in Philology, XXIII (January, 1926), 16-39.

Richards, Robert Fulton, ed. Concise Dictionary of American Literature. New York: Philosophical Library, 1955.

Simms, William Gilmore, Esq. The Cassique of Kiawah. New York: Redfield, 1859.

_____. The Yemassee. Ed. Alexander Cowie. New York: American Book Company, 1937.

Snell, George. "The Shaper of American Romance." The Yale Review, XXXIV (March, 1945), 482-94.

Trent, W. P., and John Erskine. Great American Writers. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1912.

VITA

Nadine Eaton Fields

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: PORTRAITURE OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN IN THE NOVELS OF COOPER, BIRD, AND SIMMS

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Personal data: Born in Liberal, Kansas, August 4, 1928, the daughter of Jerry C. and Maude C. Eaton.

Education: Attended grade school in Hooker, Oklahoma; graduated from Hooker High School in 1946; received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Panhandle Agricultural and Mechanical College, Goodwell, Oklahoma, with a major in English, in August, 1949; completed requirements for the Master of Arts degree in May, 1957.

Professional experience: Taught three years in the elementary schools of Texhoma, Oklahoma, and Yarbrough Consolidated School, Texas County, Oklahoma; taught high school English two and one-half years in Elkhart, Kansas, and Gage, Oklahoma. Former member of the National Education Association, the Oklahoma Education Association, and the Kansas Teachers Association.