

The U of A Students' Union PRESENTS

IN PERSON  
**PETER N. JAMES**

**SPY**

AUTHOR  
PHYSICIST  
ADVENTURER  
WORLD TRAVELER  
MUCKRAKER

SUB THEATRE  
OCTOBER 4  
7:30 pm

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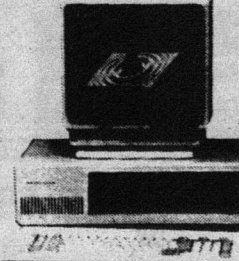


Little Buffalo community profile (Lubicon Lake)

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**COMPUTER**  
*Alternatives*

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alternative*

by Sheila Barry

Indian. The word evokes thoughts of cheap whiskey in paper bags, sleazy bars and run-down government housing.

"Indian" is a word not to be spoken around anyone under the age of 12 or over 65.

Indians are a people misunderstood.

Native American Indians are plagued by an ill reputation brought about not by their personal weakness but by circumstance. This one-time people-of-nature has been transported from the great plains to slum housing and make-shift reservations and are expected to be happy with what they are given.

Self respect and independence gone, the Indians turn to alcohol, crippling despair and absolute self-destruction. One must wonder why these people are devastated. Lack of intelligence? Lack of motivation? Lack of initiative, enthusiasm, gusto, gumption, pizzazz, what-it-takes? No. Lack of favorable circumstance and equal opportunity are to blame.

We must come to know the Indians not for who they are today but for who they were and who they should have been had it not been for the total destruction of their socio-economic, familial, and political basis by the European explorers in the early

In 1789, the U.S. Congress signed a written oath stating:

The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and

property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress."

What followed this oath of congress was a century-long breach of promise. By 1900, American native peoples had been confined to reservations amounting to 4% of the land in the USA. Today Indian reservations consume a whopping 2% of the mainland United States.

Canadian Indians are blessed with a generous 0.25% of the nation's land. These people have been treated like secondary life forms since Columbus (the wrongly famed discoverer of America).

The Indians are given no credit for their discovery of and contribution to the Americas.

Ten thousand years before the birth of Christ, Asiatic Indians crossed what was then the 1,000 mile wide Bering Ice Bridge linking Siberia to Alaska. These logically proclaimed American Indians were not loin-cloth-clad barbaric carnivores; they were a civilization at peace with nature, revolutionary in the arts and fluent in mathematics and astronomy. They lived off the land, hunting animals for food, clothing and trade. Their developing economic and political base was barter-structured, family oriented, and elder approved.

Their community thrived until the introduction of Europeans initiated by Christopher Columbus, October 11, 1492. Subsequent European exploration and exploitation of American Indian and soil would lead to the total destruction of the Indian's well established way of life.

By the 1750's, European explorers docked on Canada's east coast to extend the fur trade. With the extended fur trade came the Hudson Bay Company which eventually controlled the area populated predominantly by Indians, halfbreeds, and Metis (half Indian, half French).

## SECOND WIND

# Indians misunderstood

The Indians were hired for little more than a bottle of moonshine and a pat on the back to track, trap and kill animals that would provide the Hudson Bay Company with valuable furs, furs from animals that once provided the Indians with their way of life. Many animals were threatened with extinction.

Like the animals, our native people's way of life had been completely annihilated by 1870. Perpetual migration to and settlement in Alberta began a European-style ranching economy which left no room for barter, family, and elder's advice. European disease devastated the tribal populations and the Indian's one time great provider, the buffalo, became a provider of fashionable wall hangings, gloves, and overcoats for the Europeans.

The European settlers stuffed their way of life down the throats of Indians who could only spit it up for fear of choking. In Alberta, as in all of North America, the Europeans continue to stuff and the Indians continue to choke.

One hundred kilometers north-east of Peace River is Lubicon Lake, home of the Lubicon Cree, a people suffering at the hand of persistent cultural arrogance. History repeats itself.

The Lubicon Crees were officially recognized as a band in 1940. This honorary proclamation entitled the Lubicon people to, among other things, a land base. However, red tape, paper work and general government subtlety prevented any finalizations of a

### The European settlers stuffed their way of life down Indians' throats.

land deal. The hearty promise of land yielded nothing but hot air. Twelve years of "umming" and "ahhing" followed; the Lubicon Crees remained a patient nomadic people.

In 1952, the land promised to the Lubicon Indians was proclaimed oil-rich, the provincial government stepped in to request legal seizure and ultimate possession of the base.

One name after another was eliminated from the list of government-authorized bona fide band members. The percentage of welfare recipients among the Lubicon people leaped from 10 to 90 percent. The Lubicons were decimated by Albertan monetary disease.

The Lubicon Cree's band status was renewed in 1973 supposedly securing again their right to a land base. In spite of this historic event, the land was gutted and drained. Construction roads made a labyrinth of the land. Traplines were destroyed and animals were driven away. The Lubicon's way of life is devastated.

The Lubicon Cree's land base has been declared a Provincial hamlet; the natives remain without a home.

Whatever happened to "the utmost good faith" that was supposed to "be observed towards the Indians?" Didn't the man say that "their lands [would] never be taken from them without their consent?" Our own bill of rights guarantees "the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians." Why and how should this exclude the Indians — the founders of our country?

We must not see the Indians solely as that which they have become. We must see their suppressed potential. We must unveil our eyes of prejudice, believe in them as a people, and work with and for them to reconstruct the way of life that was (perhaps unknowingly) destroyed October 11, 1492.

The Gateway will run a feature on the Lubicon Cree in the next few weeks.

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