

NDAKINNA EDUCATION CENTER
23 Middle Grove Road, Greenfield Center, New York

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**Continuing Algonkian Histories:
Lisa Brooks, Marge Bruchac, and Evan Pritchard to Speak
at the Ndakinna Education Center**

On March 22, 2008, at 7:30 pm, the Ndakinna Education Center in Greenfield Center, New York, will host a panel discussion with three Algonkian Indian scholars: Lisa Brooks, Ph.D. (Abenaki), Marge Bruchac, Ph.D. (Abenaki), and Evan Pritchard (Algonquin and Mi'kmaq). This event is part of the "Continuing Histories, Native American Views of Northeastern Native History" lecture series funded by the New York State Council for the Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Each of these scholars is noted for innovative writings that challenge colonial representations of Native American people. Each will discuss how their research projects in history, literature, and folklore contribute to regional processes of recovering and reclaiming Algonkian Indian histories.

Lisa Brooks

Dr. Lisa Brooks is an Assistant Professor of History and Literature and of Folklore and Mythology at Harvard University. She has a doctorate in English, with a minor in American Indian Studies, from Cornell University, where she was honored with the Guilford Dissertation Prize for Highest Excellence in English Prose. At Harvard, she teaches courses in Native American literature, with an emphasis on historical, political, and geographic contexts. Brooks spent a number of years working on recognition research for the Abenaki Nation of Vermont, St. Francis Sokoki Band, in Swanton, Vermont. She also serves on the Advisory Board of Gedakina, a non-profit organization focused on indigenous cultural revitalization, educational outreach, and community wellness in northern New England.

Dr. Brooks' dissertation, "The Common Pot: Indigenous Writing and the Reconstruction of Native Space in the Northeast" (forthcoming from University of Minnesota Press), highlights the writing of 18th century Abenaki, Mohican, and Mohegan authors, and the influence of their writings on Native forms of government, social organization, and land reclamation. She has published essays in The Boundaries Between Us: Natives and Newcomers Along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest and Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective.

In the afterword to Jace Weaver, Craig S. Womack, and Robert Warrior's book, American Indian Literary Nationalism, Brooks notes the parallels between recent forest regeneration and cultural recovery:

"Over the last few decades, we have seen a remarkable change in the landscape here in northern New England, a recovery that has paralleled the regathering of families in this place. I look out now on a forest that hosts nearly every animal and plant that is indigenous

to this land, with many additions that are well adapted to its changing form. There are enduring threats to its continuance, to be sure, but who could have envisioned, a hundred years ago, that the forests would return to claim the towns and fields?... Who could have predicted, in that moment of nadir, that Abenaki families would gather together in old village places to reclaim their place as a nation? There will be stories told about this remarkable time, I am sure, for generations to come.”

- Lisa Brooks, “At the Gathering Place” (2006)

Marge Bruchac

Dr. Margaret (Marge) Bruchac is a professional museum consultant and performer with a doctorate in Anthropology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is currently a Visiting Native American Lecturer in the American Studies Department at Tufts University. In 2006, she was a Visiting Indigenous Fellow at Harvard, and in 2007, she was the McLellan Visiting Professor in North Country History at the State University of New York at Plattsburgh. Bruchac serves as a Trustee of Historic Northampton, a Trustee of Plimoth Plantation, and an advisor to the Wampanoag Indigenous Program. She has presented traditional and contemporary Abenaki songs, stories, and dances in more than 300 venues, and also performs with the “Dawnland Singers,” “W’Abenaki Dancers,” and “Hand in Hand.”

Much of Dr. Bruchac’s research, writing, and performance work focuses on Native family stories from the Adirondack Mountains and the Connecticut River Valley. Her published articles include “Earthshapers and Placemakers: Algonkian Indian Stories and the Landscape,” in Indigenous Archaeologies: Decolonizing Theory and Practice, and “Abenaki Connections to 1704: The Sadoques Families and Deerfield, 2004” in Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney’s Captive Histories: Captivity Narratives, French Relations and Native Stories of the 1704 Deerfield Raid, among others. She has received several awards from the Wordcraft Circle of Native American Writers and Storytellers, and her children’s book Malian’s Song for Vermont Folklife Center won the American Folklore Society Aesop Award.

In a talk for the Adirondack Museum, Bruchac noted the local relevance of her research on “hidden histories”:

“During the darkneses of Indian removals, boarding schools, and eugenic sterilizations, the Adirondacks were a sort of safe haven. During the 1800s and early 1900s, in rural enclaves and tourist towns like Saratoga Springs, Native people could continue their traditional lifeways of hunting, trapping, fishing, and seasonal traveling. Some were “Indian Doctors,” dispensing herbal medicines; some worked as guides and lumberjacks; others were picturesque basketmakers, like Sam Hill, who used to walk down the Greenfield-Corinth Road (Route 9N) so loaded up with baskets he could barely be seen. Despite their deep roots in the region, however, Native people were often misidentified by local historians as “gypsies.” Thus, the savvy nature of their survival strategies is often misunderstood.”

- Marge Bruchac, “Hidden Histories: Native Families in the Adirondacks” (2006)

Evan Pritchard

Evan Pritchard, a descendant of the Acadian Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, is a Professor of Native American History and Culture at Pace University and Marist College. He has been a consultant in Native American studies to the New York State Board Of Education's special panel on Social Studies reform, and has lectured at the Museum of Natural History in New York City. His "Touring Native New York" video is shown frequently on Manhattan Cable. As Director of the "Center for Algonquin Culture" in Woodstock, New York, Pritchard has worked with tribal leaders to preserve their beautiful cultures and philosophical insights. He shares this rich heritage with school children in public and private schools. The Center has also helped preserve endangered Native American languages by developing phrase books for the Mi'kmaq and Munsee nations, and Wappinger and Penobscot books are in progress.

Pritchard was first shown the ways of the earth by his Great Aunt Helen Perley, a renowned Mi'kmaq herbalist from Maine. He has worked as an assistant to Mi'kmaq healers Grandfather Turtle and Grandfather Eagle, and to Algonquin Wisdom Keeper William Commanda. During the summer, he works at the Kumic Center, the Iskotew Lodge, Health Canada, Natural Resources Canada and other aboriginal resource centers near Ottawa. In 2007, he conducted opening prayer ceremonies for the Bureau of Northern and Indian Affairs annual meetings, and counselled aboriginal employees of the Canadian government, helping them preserve Canada's rich native culture.

Pritchard is the author of Native New Yorkers, Native American Stories of the Sacred, and No Word For Time, among other books. He has lectured at the Museum of Natural History in New York City, and his "Touring Native New York" video is shown frequently on Manhattan Cable. He notes that Native culture and language are linked:

I have learned much about Native American wisdom through the exploration of Algonquin speech - not only through its words and phrases, but through the context in which they are spoken and the way of seeing the world they convey. Algonquin speech is a fine art, expressing a natural philosophy to which people from all paths and nations can relate. The title "No Word for Time" alludes to the gap between traditional and modern lifestyles, and to the fact that the Algonquin view is not easily expressed in English and vice versa. It is a world view in which time is measured in experiences and "things take as long as they take."
Evan Pritchard, No Word For Time (1997)

"Continuing Histories, Native American Views of Northeastern Native History" Speakers:

Each of the "Continuing Histories" speakers has been instrumental in promoting better understanding of specific Native American tribal communities, and preserving Indigenous knowledges. Rather than just looking at the past through non-Native eyes, these speakers examine the past and the present from Indigenous perspectives.

Other speakers in the "Continuing Histories" series have included: Chief Jake Tekaronianeken Swamp (Wolf Clan, Akwesasne Mohawk Nation), director of the "Tree of Peace Society"; Tom Sakokwenionkwaw Porter (Bear Clan, Akwesasne Mohawk Nation), spiritual leader of the

Mohawk Community of Kanatsiohareke in Fonda, New York; Trudie Lamb Richmond (Schaghticoke Tribal Nation), Director of Education for the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center; Steve Comer (Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans), Mohican historian; Doug George Kanentiio (Akwesasne Mohawk Nation), Native American journalist and coordinator for Onehtah:kowa-Haudenosaunee University; Ernest M. Kaientaronkwen Benedict, (Wolf Clan, Akwesasne Mohawk Nation), founder of the journal *Akwesasne Notes*, and serves as a Life Chief of the Akwesasne Mohawk Nation; and Salli Benedict (Akwesasne Mohawk Nation), manager of the Aboriginal Rights and Research office at Akwesasne.

The Ndakinna Education Center, an affiliate of the Greenfield Review Literary Center, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and charitable organization, based at the Marion F. Bowman Bruchac Memorial Nature Preserve in Greenfield Center, New York. The Center offers programs, performances, camps, and special events focusing on regional Native American understandings, Adirondack culture, wilderness skills and awareness of the natural world. More information is available at <http://www.ndakinnacenter.org/index.php>

For further information, call:

Jim Bruchac at the Ndakinna Education Center (518) 583-9958

Joseph Bruchac (518) 584-1728

Marge Bruchac (413) 584-2195