

Center for Northern Studies

Spring 2000 Lecture Series

Wednesday, March 8, Adrian Tanner

James Bay Cree: Culture, Land Tenure & the Environment

Dr. Adrian Tanner, a member of the Anthropology Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland and Russell Visiting Professor of Native American Studies at Dartmouth College, has conducted extensive field research with Canadian Inuit groups, James Bay Cree, Mistassini Cree, Labrador Innu, the Mi'kmaq of Newfoundland, and the Ojibway of Northern Ontario. The James Bay Cree have figured significantly within the controversy surrounding contemporary interpretations of the role played by Indians in environmental stewardship. This talk will review the role of hunting territories in the subarctic Cree hunter's land management practices. Dr. Tanner will discuss the issue in the historical context of the fur trade as well as the contemporary situation which has developed since the signing of the James Bay Agreement.

March 15, George Wenzel

Traditional Ecological Knowledge:

Content, Context and Process

In recent years, the knowledge gained by indigenous groups from experience and observation, from the land or from spiritual teachings, and passed down through the generations, has been defined as traditional ecological knowledge. This traditional knowledge, and its apparent conflicts with Western science, has become an increasingly political topic in the contemporary North. This talk will address some of the issues involved in the on-going dialogue over traditional knowledge and scientific research. Dr. George Wenzel, a member of the Geography Department at McGill University, has conducted extensive fieldwork with the Inuit in the Canadian Arctic and is perhaps best known for his discussions of the economic crises in Inuit villages resulting from the collapse of the sealskin market following the controversies over the seal harvest.

April 4, Jesse Tatum

Technology & Patterns of Life:

An Illustration from the Home Power Movement

Technology (from hand-crafted kayak to mass-produced automatic garage door opener) can be thought of in terms of the ways in which it facilitates certain patterns of life and, at least in relative terms, undermines others. This talk will focus on the unexpected emergence of the "home power movement" in the US and on the photovoltaic, small wind, and micro-hydroelectric power systems that facilitate its patterns at the relative expense of more traditional modes of electric power production and use in private homes. Illustrating the untapped range of material and socio-cultural possibility with this case study, the intention will be to raise questions about the more general possibility of technology design for the facilitation of differently conceived patterns of life. Dr. Jesse Tatum, a member of the Department of Science and Technology Studies at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, is the author of the recent book *Muted Voices: The Recovery of Democracy in the Shaping of Technology*.

April 19, Kathleen Osgood Dana

Sámi and Community

Traditional Sámi were organized in siidas, extended family groupings based on reindeer herding practices. In the last quarter of the 20th century, Sámi have banded together to create a homeland, known as Sápmi, which extends across Norway, Sweden and Finland but not into the Kola Peninsula of Russia. This talk will focus on the reflections of siida life found in the political and cultural institutions of contemporary Sápmi. Kathleen Osgood Dana is Director of the Russian School and an Assistant Professor of Humanities at Norwich University. Now a Ph.D. candidate at the university of Oulu, Finland, Dana's focus is on the ecology of Sámi literature, a topic on which she frequently lectures and writes.

April 25, Kenn Harper

Give Me My Father's Body:

The Life of Minik, The New York Eskimo

Recently re-issued by Steerforth Press, *Give Me My Father's Body* is the story of Minik, a young Inuit boy brought from Greenland to New York by Robert Peary in 1897. Author Kenn Harper tells the story, based on original research conducted in Greenland, Denmark and the US, of Minik's 12 year stay in the US, including the harrowing experience of discovering his father's skeleton on display in the American Museum of Natural History, and of Minik's return to Greenland where he had to relearn his native language and the hunting skills necessary for survival.