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Podcast Transcript

Version 1.1, 30 June 2018



The Gods of Indian Country

Podcast with **Jennifer Graber** (17 September 2018).

Interviewed by **Daniel Gorman Jr.**

Transcribed by **Helen Bradstock.**

Audio and transcript available at:

<http://www.religiousstudiesproject.com/podcast/the-gods-of-indian-country/>

Daniel Gorman (DG): *So I understand it's very hot in Texas, Dr Graber!*

Jennifer Graber (JG): It is! It's about 100 degrees here, today!

DG: Now it's making me wish for a never-ending winter. I'm calling from, practically, Canada!

JG: OK. That's right!

DG: *So today we're going to be talking about your new book, The God's of Indian Country: Religion and the Struggle for the American West. Could you tell us a little bit about how you got involved in studying Native American history – particularly since your previous project was looking at Quakers and prisons?*

JG: So the connection actually is prisons. And when I was doing research for my first book, which is on Antebellum prisons, I came across several stories in which I'd read about Native people being incarcerated after they had participated in uprisings, or other sorts of military uprisings, with the Americans. And the more I read into these stories I became curious about following up on them, after my first book was finished. And as I began to read a little bit about some of these episodes I found that religious reformers and missionaries were often active in forms of ministry to incarcerated Native people. And so that actually sounded a lot like some of the stories from my first book. And so, actually, prison was really the connection. But then I also . . . my very first job at a liberal arts college, I was asked to teach a course on Native American Religions. My predecessor in the job had taught such a class and it was really popular – and when you're a young untenured faculty member you kind-

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of say “yes” to a lot of things!

DG: *Yes!*

JG: So I agreed to teach a semester-long class on Native American religions, which meant I needed to do a lot of research to prepare. And what I found was that the more research I did to prepare for that class, it helped me to understand a little bit more about what was going on in these episodes of Native incarceration that I was already interested in. And that's kind-of how those two things came together.

DG: *I see. So, well, this is jumping more to the topical elements of your book. We're talking about the experience of incarcerated persons - I was seeing on the news this morning about the incarceration of migrant children at the border, and this sort-of perverted school that they make the children attend, where they're inculcating them with American values, even while they can't leave these prison camps. And I was just curious, with this book about reservations, do you see it as having import for what we're going through right now?*

JG: I do and there's a very kind-of particular element, because I think we talk about the connection between incarceration and education in a couple of different ways, currently. The way that you're talking about, in terms of children who are either seeking asylum or who have immigration cases being adjudicated while they're being incarcerated, they have experience of educational structures kind-of put in place: forms of incarceration for migrants. But then also we talk about the connections between education and incarceration when we talk about the school-to-prison pipeline. When it comes to youth in cities, especially folks who are African American or Latino, who'll find themselves disciplined in their educational settings, and being moved into forms of disciplined . . . or actually through the legal structure in the United States, or through policing. And I think there's a precedent in the 19th century and you can see it in Native history, but it's actually reversed. One thing I noticed about the 19th century, and the way that these things are connected to Native people, is that it's a prison-to-school pipeline, instead.

DG: *Interesting.*

JG: Insofar as some Native people who are incarcerated – in a particular instance in my book they're incarcerated after the [1874 Red River War](#) – they were sent to a military prison, in this case. And an officer in the army administrated this prison, and put in place several forms of discipline that he thought to be very effective. He changed people's hairstyles, he changed people's clothing, he made

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people go to church, he made people go to class. And then, after this period of incarceration was over, he found this experiment to be so successful and so compelling that he then bought a military barracks and opened the very first off-reservation boarding school. He modelled that boarding school on the military prison that he had administered in earlier years. So it's actually a kind of reversal. It's a prison-to-school pipeline instead. But you can see how those structures are connected.

DG: *Absolutely. And one thing I've been thinking about in some of my own research, looking at Philadelphia: you had the ethnic Jewish neighbourhood near the docks, but not far from that was one of the major boarding schools for Native Americans. So one thing that's always struck me was that you had these children being transported thousands of miles to a completely new urban environment. I can't imagine what the dislocation would be like.*

JG: Right, and actually there's one thing we have evidence of – which I find very compelling and really heart-breaking – we have some examples of letters that Native students in off-reservation boarding schools wrote back to their families on reservations. And then letters that families sent to them, in school. And these are letters in which people are trying to update one another about, you know, who is sick and who is healthy; who has a job; who's actually living and who might have died – because such periods of times happened between these families being able to be in actual physical contact with each other. And so, there's a kind-of heart-breaking archive of materials that go back and forth between the reservation and the off-reservation school. And the loneliness that pervades those letters is really . . . it's very palpable.

DG: *Now the story you're telling – as you mentioned – with Indian Country, is this idea . . . it's at the intersection of a couple of crumbling empires, France and Spain, and also the New American Empire. So I am curious – these letters that were coming back: what language were they being written in?*

JG: So, it's interesting. I look particularly, in this book, at the Kiowa Indians and at this point of time they don't have a written language for spoken Kiowa. That doesn't develop until the 20th century. So when they write letters home some of them were written in English and would have been sent back to the reservation, where they could be read by someone with English-speaking skills – which were just starting to kind-of be more widely held across the population in the last two decades of the 19th century. Sometimes they also wrote them in this pictorial language that mimicked, and put on paper, the motions of [Plains Indian sign language](#). So you could see these visual records, or non-alphabetic writing. And then, of course, for other Indian nations . . . There were other Indian nations that already

had written languages and so they could write back in those languages. Or they could write back in

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English. But there's a real variety of ways that people communicated with each other. And then people would also send each other drawings, and sometimes artefacts like moccasins, or other pieces of clothing. So lots of things were circulating between that loop between reservation and off-reservation boarding school.

DG: *So, with this book, you mentioned in other interviews that this is a real contribution to material culture – which is, I guess, what historians have been calling archaeology lately. One theory I've thought about, when reading your book, was [Jules Prown](#) who's talked about the importance of empathy in writing history: you actually handle the objects, you gain the sensory information, you figure out how they were used. In what environments were you finding these objects? Did you have to go to the Kiowa reservation? Were these in archives across the country?*

JG: So, many of these things are actually not in the hands of Kiowa people. There is a [tribal museum](#) and there are some artefacts from the 19th century in that museum, but actually very few. So most of the things that I was looking at – things like drawings; tepee covers; shields; calendars, which is this form of historical remembered keeping – they're in museums. So I spend a lot of time at the [National Anthropological Archives](#), which is part of the [Smithsonian](#) institution. They have enormous holding in what we would think of as Plains Indian material culture. So it was there where I interacted with a lot of these materials. But then, other museums around the country have just hundreds and hundreds of Plains Indian drawings. And you can go. And some of those places you're actually allowed to handle those objects yourself, sometimes those are really restricted – you might only be able to look at them while you're wearing gloves. Or you might not – they might only make facsimiles available if the items are really very delicate. But they're all over the place – except in Indian Country.

DG: *So what are your views on repatriation, then?*

JG: I would . . . I'm a person who would love to see more repatriation of objects and the support of the Native communities repatriating them within their own spaces and on their own terms. There are folks at the Kiowa tribal museum who interact with the Smithsonian, and do work on kind-of some cultural preservation kinds of projects. But there are a lot of Kiowa materials that are very far away from Kiowa people. So, one thing I try to do in my own research is gather digital images of objects that are in other places. And I'm working with the tribal museum to make some of those accessible. And, right now, digital might be one of the forms where we can do that most easily. Repatriation has been a really thorny issue, ever since [NAGPRA](#) was passed in the '90s. And I think we still have a long way to go.

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DG: So we're talking about this idea of repatriation. This then calls to mind the related concept of, I guess, decentring our narratives about American history. So when I think back to my . . . well, I'm not that old! But when I think of just a few years ago, when I was in High School, there really was no Native American history being taught to us. Even though the narrative of American religion has expanded to include other faiths, Native American religions really aren't a part of that. I was curious if you've thought at all about how we should be teaching Native American religions to children?

JG: Oh that's great. And I have. So I think there's a couple of levels on which I could respond to that question. When I teach at UTE, the University of Texas, I have lots and lots of students who also have had very little background in their . . . at least their high school years, with Native American history. Many of them do a unit in their Texas history class about Native nations that had either occupied or moved through what became Texas – but it's very much a pre-colonial story. And then, once there are kind-of Texans here, Native people disappear from that story – which is part of Texas history, actually. So what I find is that students are really eager to learn more. And one thing I've done in my classes at UTE is just up the number of lectures and syllabus content percentage that cover Native materials. So, I begin my class on American Religious history at [Cahokia](#), in the high middle ages, and we start with a major Native city along the Mississippian. Many of my student are really surprised that we start, you know, in the year 1100. But that's where we start. And I actually, this past year, ended the class with the [protest at Standing Rock](#). So I wanted to try to push deeper into Native past in North America, but also not allow Native people to disappear, once we get into the 20th and 21st century. But I can also think about this question . . . Both my children, who just finished 4th and 7th grade, just finished Texas History in public school. And both of them had units that interacted with Native history in Texas. And that's one where I think, you know, Texas has a particular and really difficult history around Native people. And I think some real honesty about Texans and their real effort to rid the state of Native people in the mid-19th century – we have to grapple with that when we teach this as a part of Texas history. It is Texas history. And I'd love to see a little bit more kind-of grappling with that story.

DG: *Well it's interesting, with you living in Texas. And I'm thinking that many of the major high school textbook companies are also based in Texas. And they're advancing, well – shall we say, a conservative reading of American history?*

JG: Yes. That's right. And Texas, of course, is a textbook market that then shapes the national market. There are other states that are interested in the same sort of narrative crafted for Texas. That narrative is also favoured in other places. So what happens in Texas textbooks then happens elsewhere, as well.

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So actually reshaping that story here, and thinking about that story, has been an important part of a lot of historians who work in universities here in Texas. There's a kind-of network of us who, at times, go and talk at the [Texas Board of Education](#) meetings, at their public hearings, kind-of working on these questions about who is represented, how the past is represented. It's an uphill battle here.

DG: *I was thinking that in April I was in Oklahoma City, and I went to the [National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum](#).*

JG: Yes.

DG: *And you can see there that this battle is being fought in the museum. Because you can tell that it very clearly started as the Cowboy Museum – and now they're bringing in the Native American exhibits.*

JG: Yes. And that's a really amazing museum, insofar as you're absolutely right; for a long, long time it was the Cowboy Museum – the National Cowboy Museum.

DG: A story they tell well.

JG: And they have really ... the name change that adds Western Heritage, and then kind-of tries to broaden and be more inclusive about who's within that Western heritage, kind-of mirrors much bigger trends in public history that are really important. You know . . . and that museum actually had a ton of incredible Plains Indian material culture in their archive! It's one of the places I went to do research. They have amazing holdings!

DG: *That's not on display.*

JG: But it's not on display – you're absolutely right. That's another place where I think they're taking baby steps, or initial steps, to make a more inclusive story. But there's still a long way to go.

DG: *While I was at the museum they had an exhibition of painting by – I believe he was Muscogee Creek Seminole - his name was [Jerome Tiger](#). He painted in the mid-20th century. And his paintings are distinctive because the figures are . . . it's a flat background. There's no sense of depth to the picture. And when I was reading your book and looking at the many photographs of – well, I guess they're digital scans – of these drawings that Kiowa people made, it's very similar design with this lack of depth, this flat image.*

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JG: Yes.

DG: *I was curious, have you looked at Kiowa art since the reservation . . . well, I guess we're still in the reservation period. Rather, have you looked at paintings made in the last 100 years? The art forms that were developing in the 19th century – do they continue?*

JG: They do. Actually so . . . there was a set of artists – that have been called by some folks “The Kiowa Five” and, eventually, there was a realisation that there was also a female artist there, and she's now part of a group called “The Kiowa Six” – artists who grew up and were young children at the end of the 19th century/ turn of the 20th century, and who kind-of inherited many of the artistic traditions. They would have seen people drawing; they would have seen people painting on tepees; they would have seen Kiowa calendars, where people did history; and they would have seen these kinds of artistic practices. They then were sent to school. And one of the places they were sent to school there was a teacher who really tried to help them develop artistic skills, without having them, necessarily, abandon the particular Plains Indian visual style that they had learned as young people. And so there was a kind of school of artists, really popular in the 1920s and 30s, called the Kiowa Five. And there are actually now, in the contemporary period, many Native artists who have a Plains Indian background who kind-of riff on Native art. And they take the kind-of flat presentation that you're talking about and they bring that into . . . they combine that with contemporary materials. So this idea – that style, that developed on the plains in the 18th and 19th century, on tepees and later on paper – is still being riffed on by Native artists. And it's pretty exciting.

DG: I remember in the book you don't talk too much about the materiality of how the drawings were made, so I was curious if you might elaborate a little bit? They're creating drawings, they're sending them back from school. Previously they would have been making drawings on buffalo hide. Do you have any information about this transition of Kiowa art forms being done on natural materials, to on the materials that are provided by the American Empire?

JG: Yes. And so . . . it's that critical moment with contact with the American that brings these new drawing materials into play. There's an anthropologist at the Smithsonian who has been trying to find if we have any examples of Kiowa drawing on paper, really, prior to the reservation period. And she has not been able to find any, even though we have ample examples of shields, tepees, buffalo hide – as you suggested. But it was really contact with the Americans, first through the establishment of the reservation, but then also for some Kiowa in the period of incarceration. The man who ran the military prison, where many Kiowas were sent after the Red River War, gave out paper and pencils and

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coloured pencils as a way for people to pass the time, and later noticed that the Native men were creating these drawings with one another. And then he encouraged them to sell drawing to tourists – which is one of the reasons that they show up in Eastern Seaboard museums so often. So really it's that contact with Americans that makes paper and pencil available. And, in some ways, there's a sort of . . . I mean, paper and pencils are just easier to use than buffalo hide! So, in some ways, it just becomes easier to draw, and to paint with these new materials. And the artists just really take up those new materials with gusto.

DG: *So I'd like to transition a little bit from the theoretical material to talk about the narrative of the book, in particular.*

JG: OK

DG: *You begin The Gods of Indian Country with this evocative description of the 1873 Sun Dance on the Sweetwater Reservation, which is newly created in what's modern Oklahoma. I was thinking of past books on Native American history, for instance, Anthony Wallace's [Death and Rebirth of the Seneca](#) or Tracy Leavelle's' [The Catholic Calumet](#) – those also start in the middle of a ritual, the way you do. Were you consciously trying . . . Is this a trope that you were working with? Or is that kind-of an accidental comparison?*

JG: You know, that's interesting that both of those books also begin with a ritual. Actually, my inspiration for this was the beginning of Robert Orsi's [The Madonna of 115th Street!](#) (Laughs).

DG: Oh, right! That would be the street possession.

JG: Which also began with a ritual and what I remember, when I was trying to figure out how to start the book . . . Because it's a book that technically begins in 1803, but I didn't think actually starting in 1803 was the place to start, because there really wasn't much contact between Americans and Kiowa, like there's no contact in that period. So I was thinking about, “How do I set up all that's at stake in this contact, at least potentially would be at stake, with this contact between Kiowas and Americans?” And this particular Sundance had a lot of witnesses – or not witnesses, necessarily . . . in some ways – witness documents left over, and a lot of anthropological material, ethnographic interviews, where people reflected back on it. So there was a lot of shall-we-say evidence about this particular one. And to me it had a lot of interpretive potential, because it was one where we have the first American – or, at least, the one that we know for sure there's an American witnessing the ritual. And he wrote so much

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about it, about his experiences of it. So I started to think that it could be a really great place to start. But I also didn't want to foreground the Quaker who witnessed it. I didn't want to foreground his experience. I wanted to try to kind-of make the reader go into the Kiowa world, and not just the Quaker's world as he experienced the Kiowa. And that made me think about Bob Orsi and how effectively in his book he brings the reader, with this kind-of dramatic story, into the world of the Catholics who are celebrating the Festa for Mount Carmel, in Harlem. And I know people have lots of things to say about the beginning of that book, but I found that book really effective in drawing readers in and bringing them into this question about intercultural encounter. And so, yes, he's really the inspiration there.

JG: *You know, I was not expecting Italian Catholics in Manhattan. But now that you mention it, it does work.*

JG: But that's the joy of Religious Studies, right? You can take reflections on a ritual somewhere and use those tools in a ritual in different part of the world.

DG: *Yes, but comparison is tricky. For instance, when I mention the flat drawing without the sense of perspective that you see in European art, my mind originally went to, actually, the drawings that you see in Ancient Egyptian artefacts. And then I was thinking, "Well, is that a fair . . . you know – is that a fair a comparison to make, since they're so far apart?"*

JG: Well it's interesting. Art historians have really done a lot of heavy-lifting when it comes to interpreting and understanding, Plain Indian visual art. And I think one of the things that they have really argued is to take this art very seriously as art, despite it's having a different sense of perspective, and despite Because in the 19th century there were many people, many Americans, when they encountered this art they thought it was childlike and simplistic. And actually, early anthropologists were not interested in it because they wanted to see works on buffalo hide, not paper, right? They didn't want Native people to be changing. They wanted to preserve this kind-of timeless and older idea that they thought Native people had been performing. They didn't want to look at this paper stuff which they considered an innovation. So it's been art historians who have really tried to say, "This is art and we need to take it seriously as art." In the same way that we, you know – we don't even question any more whether what ancient Egyptians were creating was art. It's art, right?

DG: *Right.*

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JG: But it took a longer time for folks to be able to talk that way about Plains Indian art.

DG: *One thing I appreciate about your book is that you're using these You're not only using the drawings and paintings as validations of Native American art, you're also using it to show that they're recording their history as it's happening. For instance, you have, after the [Osage Indians attack](#), in 1823 I believe, you have these drawings showing the Kiowa memorialising their dead.*

JG: Yes. And that is Oh sorry, I won't interrupt!

DG: *No it's alright. I was just getting excited about this! As the book goes on you have just example after example into the reservation period, as their land is being taken away, they're interpreting their history in a completely different language from the Americans.*

JG: Right. And that's one of the most kind-of pervasive ideas that is part of the whole complex that we talk about in terms of the “vanishing Indian”. The way that Americans were kind-of writing Native people out of the future. And one of the kind-of tropes that would be constantly kind-of brought up in the vanishing Indian rhetoric was, “These are people with no history. They have no sense of their own history.” This would be one of the many reasons that these folks would see that there would be an eventual disappearance of Native people. And so part of what I . . . and I think this is a bit perpetuated by historians who are kind-of unwilling to deal with non-alphabetic sources. There are sources outside of alphabetic and textual sources. And so what I really wanted to do was to push against, or at least show how hard Americans were working to vanish Indians, while at the same time Native People were absolutely creating . . . they were historicising themselves. And they had debates about, “Which events do you memorialise? What's going to go into the calendar as the most significant event of the year?” And different calendars have different events memorialised. So not only are they keeping that history, they debate that history. Yes. So it was important to me to really frontload those sources and then also kind-of send the message to historians – who often say that it's difficult to work on Native materials if you don't have textual or written language in any period – like, “Yes, you can!” You just have to be creative about it.

DG: *In designing the layout of book, did you select the position of the images, or did your editors do that?*

JG: We kind-of worked together. I usually suggested a placement. And sometimes they took the suggestion and just went with it. And other times we negotiated where things might go. I feel really

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lucky. From the beginning I asked them for colour plates, like, a section of colour plates. And I was really shocked when they said, “Yes”. So unfortunately the plates can't be interspersed in the text, just because that would make production very difficult. But I'm really glad they're there. They mean you have to kind-of tunnel through the text a little bit, when one of those plates comes up. But I'm really glad that it's present. And one of the things I found early on, with the editors and the outside reviewers, is that they were very open to the placement of especially Kiowa drawings, and Kiowa calendar examples, as ways to reinforce this message that they are documenting themselves, remembering their past, and interpreting their new situations.

DG: *There's an encyclopaedic component to the book, I suppose, in that you're bringing these images to a wider audience. You also supply an extensive appendix of historical figures from the Kiowa community. I forget the word Wikipedia uses. I think its “disambiguating”. Because you say there are all these name variations. And you put them all in one place for the first time.*

JG: Yes. And actually, I worked with an anthropologist who's been active in Kiowa country for a very long time, and he was very generous. He has worked for a long, long time to collect not only all the possible Kiowa name variations that are possible – because they appear in lots of different ways in different kinds of sources So he was really vital in my effort to get names spelt correctly, and represented correctly. Because there's just so many ways, and there's a long history of Native names being mangled by American authors. So I just wanted to be as careful as I possibly could, and do the best work around naming, and making sure that I could give the best and most thorough account of naming that I could. Because naming is one of the places where I think there's been shortcuts taken in the work of American history.

DG: *What would you say the book's thesis is?*

JG: I'd say it has two. I have a thesis about the Americans who were involved in the process of colonising the Kiowa, and then a thesis about the Kiowa themselves. In terms of the Americans who were operating to colonise Kiowas, I was interested in the folks who saw themselves as a peaceful vanguard coming into Indian country. These were folks who decried what was happening with the military, and when there were the military attacks on Native people, they hated [Andrew Jackson](#) and the [Indian Removal Bill](#). But they were absolutely kind-of foundational and crucial to American expansion. And I think that their effort to designate expansion as a potentially peaceful enterprise was very effective. And it really . . . they very effectively masked other kinds of colonial violence. They weren't Andrew Jackson, they weren't [Sherman](#), they didn't operate in those ways, but they were

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absolutely essential to the occupation and suppression of Kiowa people, and somehow, very successfully, made that a peaceful process. So that was what I wanted to study about that. Like, how did they effectively take something violent and name it peace, and convince everybody? Because I think they did. I think they convinced other people that this was peaceful. So that's my main kind-of concern with those folks. I think the thesis in terms of the Kiowa response – I wanted to show that religion was one of the central ways and one of the central places that Kiowas could draw on traditions, but also create these new sorts of rituals to address changing situations. So I wanted to show that there were ways of riffing on the past, and bringing the past into the present. But also those kind-of incredible ritual effects of credibility and creativity that helped them as they tried to resist occupation.

DG: *In terms of resistance – you don't use the word “prophetic” to describe the sort of religious practices that are happening on the reservation: the Sun Dance, the Ghost Dance, eventually experiments with [peyote](#), even interpretations of Christianity. What was your choice not to use the word “prophetic”?*

JG: There are a couple of reasons for it. Partly because in the 19th century, and this happened with movements around the United States, that word could be used derisively by Americans. They would talk about maybe a tribal nation that had some sort of revitalisation movement in direct response to American occupation. And they would talk derisively about a prophet who was at the centre of it, right? And usually be meaning “prophet” in scare quotes, like, not a *real* prophet, but a prophet to these people with bad religion. So I wanted to get away from it because it had been used pejoratively. And then, I think, also there's so much great work in Religious Studies about varieties of movements in colonial settings where religion is kind-of reimagined to address a colonial situation, that I wanted to draw on language from that work. I felt that those writings – whether they be about colonial era, occupations of parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, or in Australia – that work was really, to me, way more useful, and the language out of those projects was so much more compelling and rich that I thought, “You know what, I just don't need this word prophet.” It would have been a little easier, right? Like I think when you say, Native American prophecy it communicates something to readers, right. They might think of [Tecumseh's brother](#) and they might think of [Handsome Lake](#). So there's some effectiveness and usefulness to it but I was willing to kind-of give that up, because I wanted to see if we could do something else with some other kinds of language.

DG: *So we're just about out of time, but we're almost up to the present, talking about the endurance of*

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Kiowa religion. At the close of your book in the epilogue, you talk about your own journey to Kiowa country in Oklahoma, and witnessing these ceremonies. And, you know, you're seeing things that outsiders typically don't. And it's very fraught to be white person to be present there. How do Kiowa people respond to you wanting to tell their story without being a full member of the community?

JG: Well, when I went to visit, one of the things I always tried to make clear was that I was not an anthropologist: I wasn't doing interviews, I wasn't going to quote, I wasn't taking big observations, I wasn't trying to be a kind-of classic participant observer. So, in some ways, I didn't necessarily bear the burden I think that anthropologists often bear, when they go to work within Native communities. I have some friends who are anthropologists in Kiowa communities, and they are people who have these kind-of decades-long sets of relationships. So one thing I tried to make clear was that my story is studying historical sources, but that anyone working in Native American history today also talks about how there's a responsibility to the present. And you know, [Peter Nabokov](#) in his books talks about this: there's no Native history that doesn't have a connection to today. So I think one of the things I felt like I needed to do was just to try my best to understand the present, without really asking anything. So when I would go there, I just would do things like show up at church and if folks wanted to talk to me – great! If not – great! And that kind-of helped me. I just started by showing up. I really wanted to be clear about, “I'm not asking for anything”. And I think I just kept showing up enough that I made some friends. And I think, along with that, I've always tried to signal that my hope is I will, if anything is desired of me, I will give it back. So you know, I think it's a different . . . I think when historians are dealing with Native communities, even though you have this kind-of project that's related on documents from the past and you don't necessarily ever have to . . . You know – I could have written this book and never gone to the reservation. But I also feel that by going there, I was able to write about the past with an eye toward the present. Especially because I can see those communal values that I write about in the past, those are still operative, and I witnessed those things. And that was really kind-of powerful, and I think it helped me write a better book.

DG: *We have been speaking to Jennifer Graber at the University of Texas, Austin. Thank you very much for your time!*

JG: Thanks so much. I had fun!

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