

EVER TOWARDS THE SETTING SUN THEY PUSH US:
AMERICAN INDIAN IDENTITY IN THE WRITINGS OF MARY ALICIA OWEN

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ABSTRACT

Mary Alicia Owen (1850-1935) is best known as a folklorist who studied and wrote about the culture, legends, and folkways of Missouri's African Americans and American Indians. While she is best remembered as the author of two major works of folklore and ethnography, *Olde Rabbit, the Voodoo and Other Sorcerers* (1893) and *Folk-lore of the Musquakie Indians of North America* (1904) she was also the author of several short stories and at least one novel and one play.

In her fiction Owen often portrayed American Indian people as a part of the lively ethnic melting pot that characterized her hometown of St. Joseph, Missouri in the mid nineteenth century. Yet, despite the years of contact Owen had with members of this vibrant mixed community, she ultimately resorted to many of the same stereotypical conventions that many European-Americans of the Victorian era relied on to portray native people. Many of these same stereotypes can be seen her ethnographic work as well. This thesis examines Owen's relationship with the American Indian people she studied and her use of stereotypes—most prominently the Noble Savage and the Vanishing Indian—in characterizing them.

About half of the Indians in the United States live in large cities and rural areas throughout the country. The rest of them live in about 300 federal reservations (land set for their use). Today, there are about 1,4 million Native Americans, which is believed to be more than there were when the first European explorers arrived in the New World. True or False? 1. The story of the Native Americans is one of the funniest in the history of the mankind. 2. The Indians were the original inhabitants of the American continent. 3. The Native Americans have managed to retain their identity and culture. Indiansâ€™ collusion with the British during the American Revolution and the War of 1812 exacerbated American hostility and suspicion toward them. Even more fundamentally, indigenous people were just too different: Their skin was dark. Their languages were foreign. One of the most bitterly debated issues on the floor of Congress was the Indian Removal Bill of 1830, pushed hard by then-President Andrew Jackson. Despite being assailed by many legislators as immoral, the bill finally passed in the Senate by nine votes, 29 to 17, and by an even smaller margin in the House. And as whites pushed ever westward, the Indian-designated territory continued to shrink. Execution of Dakota Sioux Indians in Mankato, Minnesota, 1862. Start your review of *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity*. Write a review. Aug 14, 2008 David Sasaki rated it liked it. India, the largest democracy in the world, is being criticised for the on going Hindutva movement which threatens the acceptance of non-Hindus particularly Muslims. The BJP's powerful role in the mainstream Indian politics have further st *The Argumentative Indian* by Amartya Sen is a book which talks about public reasoning and how it is closely linked to the roots of democracy. The book comprises of 16 essays written on various themes over a period of time and then compiled together as this book.