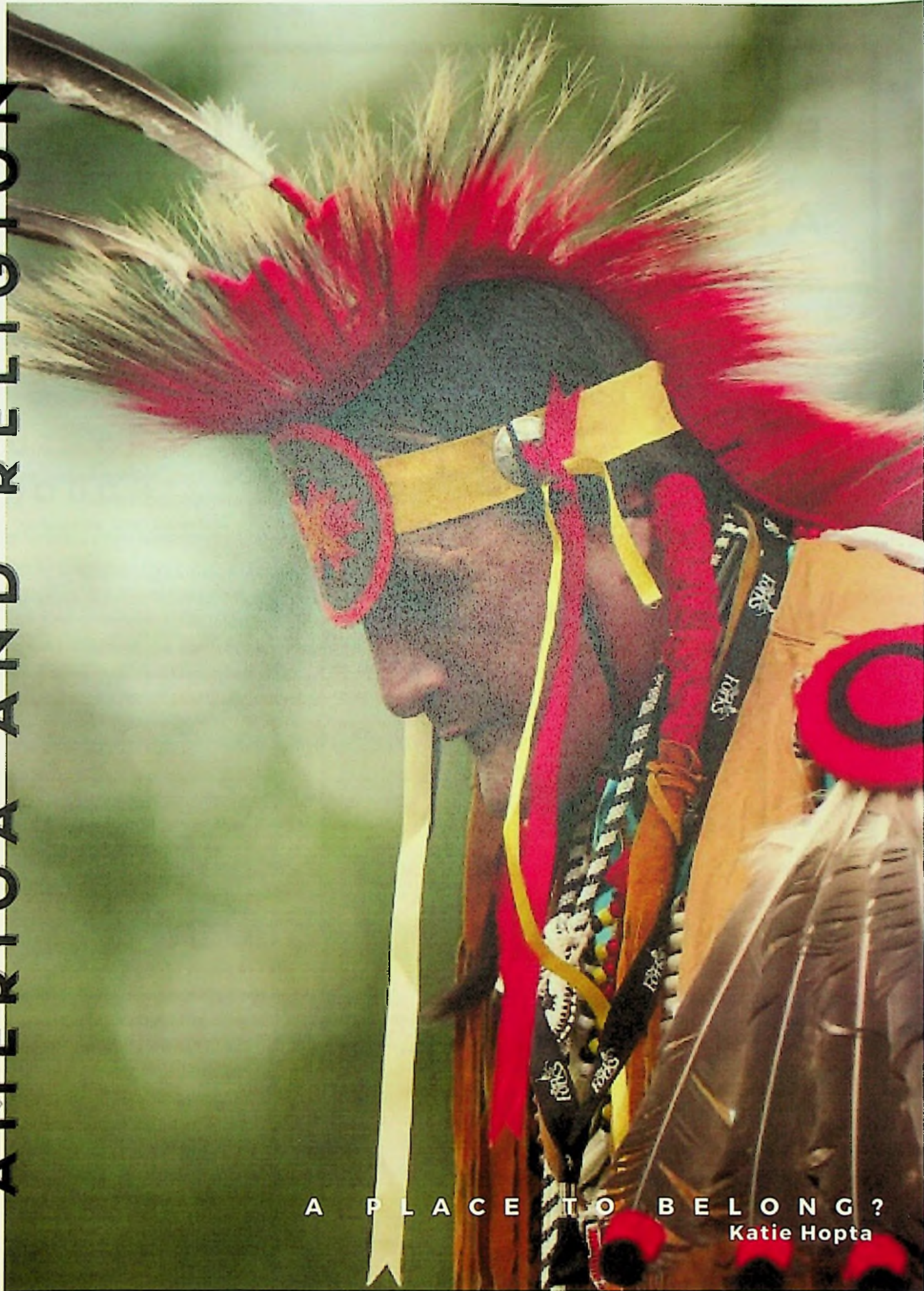


AMERICA AND RELIGION

A PLACE TO BELONG?
Katie Hopta



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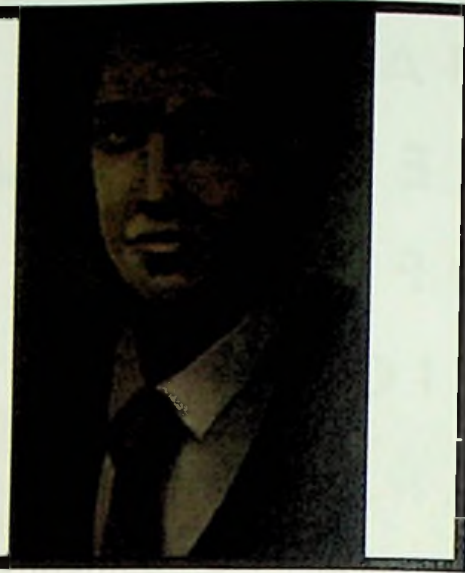
DOES AMERICA GIVE FREEDOM IN RELIGION?

AUTHOR'S THOUGHTS

Does America allow people who believe in different religions to feel welcomed and accepted? I think the answer is no. now this is a strong opinion, especially as a writer it is hard to write I. But I really wanted to make a point that this is my own personal collection of thoughts on this matter. As someone who practices witchcraft, I feel like I personally should be putting in input on this. The religious tolerance of people in America is growing, but unfortunately it is still not at a point that I feel comfortable saying is acceptable. People are still scared of the poor woman wearing a hijab on the train. People try to pray the devil out of me when I tell them that I practice witchcraft. People in the middle of Salem are preaching God because they think that everybody on Halloween is of the devil. My claim here is that the religious views taken from England and brought over to the United States have tainted everyone's religious tolerance, even though texts may state otherwise.



CODE OF HANDSOME LAKE



The Code of Handsome Lake is a direct result of the judgment and fear that white Christian Europeans placed over the indigenous peoples of America. Handsome Lake's code meshed Christian values and Iroquois beliefs to create a safe way to practice their own religion without being ostracized and snuffed out by European Christians. The code of Handsome Lake created a little bit of a divide within his people, as some of them completely accepted his code and started working with it immediately. Others were a little bit upset and wanted to continue to follow more of their traditional beliefs. The number one word connected to this code is definitely survival. It is really unfortunate that that is what is associated with it, and a lot of people do practice this and keep it as their own, but it was come about by Christian Europeans affecting Handsome Lake. His code was officially published in 1850.



1. CLAY FIGURE FROM AN OLD BATHING SPRING IN THE VALLEY OF OHIO. 2. CLAY FIGURE FROM A BATHING SPRING IN THE VALLEY OF OHIO. PERU. MAXIMUM HEIGHT OF HEAD 6.5 CM. THE MUSEUM, S. C. O.

Higginson's text in context to religion states that "the company of honest Christians bring with them horses, kine, and sheep to make use of the fruitful land". (Higginson) He also states that Native Americans worship two gods and that he "neither fear(s) them nor trust(s) them, for forty of our Musketeers will drive five hundred of them out the field." (Higginson)



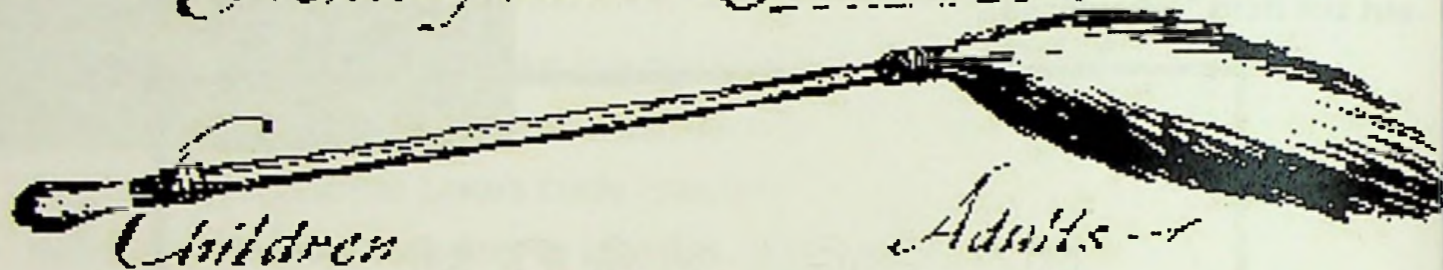
HIGGINSON NEW ENGLAND'S PLANTATION - 1629



When you begin to read this sentence, you think that he is being kind and at least tolerating the peoples that owned the land before he. Unfortunately, that is not the case. As you can see, it seems that text says one thing and does another. Wow this predates the Declaration of Independence, this mentality is quite clearly maintained during and after the Declaration of Independence's creation.

" CHURCH STICK "
DOCUMENTED 1956

Tithing-man's Church-stick



The church stick, held by the tithing man, was used to keep people within the church at attention. Most children would be struck with the hard end of the stick while most adults and women were tickled on the nose by the fluffy end of the stick. What this relates to in the context of religious tolerance is the idea that you must pay attention to be accepted in your religion. There's this idea that if you don't or if you're having a bad day say mentally, you will be punished. I also want to make note that a lot of people felt forced into Christianity because that is what is widely accepted. And unfortunately if you feel forced into your religion you are going to nod off more or stop paying attention more often, and get hit by the stick.

This was documented in 1956 and claimed to be used in "New England Colonial times", meaning this was used around the times of Handsome Lake and the like.

Within this Time article, they released statistics of how much church expenditures dropped and how much value the church dropped within the 1940s. The section is titled "sad statistics" which indicates that it is bad that the numbers for each of the different religions, mostly Christian, to drop. There is no mention of any other religion then Jewish. There is then under that an article called "Salem revival" which praises a group of civilians that went to the old Salem campground in Georgia, speaking about how great it was that they attended a little camp for Christianity. When looking through to find any other articles on any other religions, I have not found many as in-depth as these. It is quite odd that the numbers in churches were dropping in that they thought that was a bad thing. To be so focused on churches and their monetary values is a little bit concerning and really fits well into this idea that a lot of the United States was hyper focused and is still hyper focused on Christianity, and in this creates a sort of religious intolerance.



TIME

1940'S
RELIGION

INDIGINOUS PEOPLE'S DAY

Even now, we are working for not only religious tolerance but racial equality by changing Columbus Day to indigenous peoples day Officially. Recently, the name has been changed in some social dynamics, but within the eyes of the government and most states it is still Columbus Day.

You would think if religious tolerance what is as the Declaration of Independence says it was, we would already be recognizing indigenous peoples day. Unfortunately, this is not the case. I have linked the website from our reading For more information.

<http://www.indigenouspeoplesdayma.org/>



THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY

How I've connected the danger of a single story to religious intolerance is this idea that Christians most stereotypically have been feared into not learning or opening their mind 2 other religions. I have personally heard many a story about Christian peoples that R so horrified to go to hell that they ignore or look down upon things like sexuality and other religions just to be able to get into heaven. What they don't realize, is this danger of a single story. The danger that no knowledge is not power. If closed-minded Christians and other closed minded people took the time to study and learn to respect others religions, they would see that not only in their eyes would they still be going to heaven, but the world and themselves as a whole would be more at peace. Living in fear of something is tiring.



01 - Support the Indigenous People's Day Bill yearly until it's passed. This empowers and gives voice to the Indigenous peoples affected by the actions of colonizers.

02 - Check your town's community pages for IPD campaigns.

03 - Volunteer for your local IPD campaign



WHAT **Can** YOU DO?



04 - Learn and be open minded to other's religions.

05 - Respect when someone wants to or doesn't want to teach you.