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**\*Potawatomi Relations with British and American Governance\***

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Jack Boland  
Senior Thesis Library Research Award Essay

My senior thesis would not have been possible without the Hesburgh Library. The help of Mark Robison, the Political Science Librarian, the library's vast collections of books and articles, and the study spaces it provided were instrumental in supporting my research. If I did not extensively use the library, I would not have had the resources available to me to write a comprehensive thesis on Potawatomi relations with British and American colonialism in the 18th and 19th centuries, and I would not have been awarded the John Roos Award for best senior honors thesis in American politics.

My senior thesis journey unknowingly began my freshman year when my Research Advisor at the time, Professor Dianne Pinderhughes, encouraged me, as a Native student, to conduct research on Notre Dame's history with its local Native American tribe, the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi. The research started slowly as I interviewed Potawatomi members and school officials like Rev. Thomas E. Blantz, who was finishing up his book *The University of Notre Dame: A History*, but I consistently read relevant materials related to the Potawatomi for the next two years and worked with professors like Dr. Brian Collier to uncover this history. I even worked with university archivists in the Notre Dame Archives to research historical documents related to the founding of the university including its land grants. During the spring semester of my junior year, the decolonizing magazine *Accomplice*, which is associated with the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, heard of my preliminary research through professors and Native students, so they asked me to write a short article on the history of the Potawatomi. My research quickly turned more serious, so I turned to the Hesburgh Library.

Two books that I found at the Hesburgh Library that supplemented my article were Pokagon member Dr. John Low's *Imprints: The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and the*

*City of Chicago*, and Dr. Christopher Wetzel's *Gathering the Potawatomi Nation*. I found these books through a simple search on the library's website, and they provided needed background information on the Potawatomi Nation from a modern perspective. They included oral histories and conversations with actual Potawatomi members. All the other sources I had previously found were at least forty years old and often relied primarily on colonial sources. After I finished my article for *Accomplice*, questions beyond Notre Dame's relationship with the Potawatomi lingered. What was the relationship between the Potawatomi and wider colonialism? Why was the Pokagon Band never removed from their homeland? I had my senior thesis questions, and I would not have come to them without those books from the library.

I only realized how little information I had encountered in my preliminary research after my conversation with Robison during fall semester my senior year. As part of my Senior Thesis class for Political Science, I was encouraged to meet with Robison, and my meeting with him changed my entire perspective on what was available to me through the Hesburgh Library. In this meeting, he showed me how to use the Political Science and Social Science Databases, the Oxford Handbooks, and the citation management tools which changed the way I conducted my research. I found more relevant sources to my thesis over the week after this conversation than in my previous two weeks searching the internet. Moreover, Robison's constant questioning about what I was truly interested in narrowed down my thesis to make it more possible for me to complete. I originally wanted to research all bands of the Potawatomi and their reaction to colonialism after the Europeans arrived, but this would have been impossible to complete in the amount of time I would have. I successfully narrowed down my thesis to three specific villages of the Potawatomi from 1754, the start of the French & Indian War, to 1841, the last major attempt of the American government to remove the Pokagon Band in Leopold Pokagon's

lifetime. Because of my conversation with Robison, I was able to find more materials for my research and narrow down my topic.

The Hesburgh Library provided dozens of books and articles for my research. In my thesis, I cited sixty-three sources, and forty-one of these sources were materials I gained access to from the library. The costs to acquire these books and articles from other sources would have been too exorbitant for my research, and I would have had to drastically change my topic to fit these constraints. Luckily, I did not have to sacrifice my ideas for my thesis due to the considerable size of the library's subscriptions and collections. During the fall semester of my senior year and into the spring semester, I was constantly reading sources I found through my newfound research skills. Reading the bibliographies and indexes of these books and articles then led to more pertinent books and articles I could read. As I began writing my thesis during that spring semester, I found the collaboration spaces and reserved rooms to be immensely useful in helping me focus. I wrote much more efficiently in the library than in my dorm since it had less distractions and seeing others write next to me kept me motivated.

If I could put a second author to my thesis, I would put the Hesburgh Library. Any success I found through my thesis was only possible because of the resources provided by the library and its staff.