Chapter 2

Literature Review

The investigation being conducted in this project challenges Western academia’s understanding of what constitutes “factual knowledge” with regard to the history of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas and the horse. In addition, it also challenges the predominant theory regarding the derivative nature of horse history and culture throughout Indigenous societies within the Americas, as well as the origin of such horses. This chapter seeks to examine some of the ways in which conducting a standard literature review on this topic is compromised, demonstrate why a deconstruction of the current theory regarding this topic can help to replace incorrect and biased assumptions of the past with more accurate and comprehensive knowledge, offer a review of certain relevant research and literature on this topic, and address the importance of this general “issue” to academia.

2.1 Challenges in Conducting a Relevant Literature Review

Performing a standard, academic literary review in this field is compromised by the nature of the methodologies and methods that have been historically used to assemble the majority of the prior work that has been published on the subject, as well as by the fact that the majority of Indigenous societies in the Americas preferred to preserve and pass their TK forward orally, rather than in the written format preferred by the dominant Western culture. This is explained further by Ted Palys:

... the European (and academic) bias toward paper documentation, coupled with the fact that Aboriginal cultures have been oral and/or used other media (e.g., warumpum belts) to transmit information from generation to generation, have left aboriginal peoples among those peoples who, from the European perspective, have no history." 57 58

Up until the latter part of the 1900’s, traditional knowledge (TK) and Indigenous systems


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of learning were largely disregarded, forbidden, and/or denigrated by the dominant Western culture and academia. Indeed, the Canadian and United States governments deemed many traditional Indigenous spiritual and religious practices - or aspects of these practices - illegal. In the following quote of the article by Daniel Zielske titled “Tolerance and Subjection in Native American Religious Practices,” a summary of what occurred in the United States regarding this issue is provided:

The United States of America prides itself on the ideal of “freedom of religion,” yet Native American religions were outlawed until 1978, when then President Jimmy Carter signed the Freedom of Religion Act. For the first time, Native Americans were allowed to practice their religion openly.  

A description of what occurred in Canada regarding this issue can be found in Palys’s article:

The history of Indian administration in Canada ... is one of increasing control by government over natives. A partial list includes: (a) attempts to suppress “pagan rituals” and promote Christian religions by banning important cultural festivals such as the Potlach, Thirst Dance, and Sundance; ...  

Ceremonies, such as the Sundance, received “special treatment” in the United States, as well. The following is an excerpt from a policy that the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs issued to its agents in 1921:

The Sundance, and all other similar dances and so-called religious ceremonies are considered “Indian offenses” under existing regulations, and corrective penalties are provided. I regard such restrictions as applicable to any religious dance which involves ... the reckless giving away of property ... frequent or prolonged periods of celebration ... in fact any disorderly or plainly excessive performance that promotes superstitious cruelty, licentiousness, idleness, danger to health, and shiftless indifference to family welfare.

In addition, the educational institutions and governments of both Canada and the United

States also forbade Indigenous Peoples to speak their own languages. Indeed, Andrea Smith describes the following regarding the colonialists’ viewpoint of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas and their traditional languages in her book titled *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*:

Colonialists saw the cultural assimilation and missionization processes as part of the same project. From their point of view, Indians not only lacked the Scripture, they lacked the language that would allow them to comprehend God. Complained Jonathan Edwards, “The Indian languages are extremely barbarous and barren, and are very ill fitted for communicating things moral and divine, or even things speculative and abstract. In short, they are wholly unfit for a people processed of civilization, knowledge, and refinement.” Missionaries also complained that indigenous languages were unable to communicate the concepts of “Lord, Saviour, salvation, sinner, justice, condemnation, faith, repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, grace, glory, and heaven.”

Statements such as these by non-Native language speakers are particularly strange, as those making such determinations would have no way of knowing what these Indigenous languages entailed or did not entail concept-wise, since they had largely not studied them, did not speak them, and likely did not have the trust of Native Peoples who would have felt safe enough to explain the spiritual nuances of their languages to them.

Likewise, in his article titled “The Survival and Sustainability of the Blackfoot Nation and Culture,” a paper presented at the 16th Congress of IUAES, Kunning, China, James Craven also brings forth the following concept:

It is very clear from the internal documents of the U.S. and Canadian Governments, as well as from the internal documents, diaries and memoirs of the missionaries and “Indian Agents”, that the core and defining values, institutions, practices, priorities, relationships and other dimensions of the culture of the Blackfoot, with many aspects in common with the cultures of other Indigenous nations, were not simply regarded and dismissed as “inferior” or backward; rather, they were first and foremost regarded as direct challenges (without any evangelical intentions by Indigenous peoples to do so) to the core values, practices, relations, theologies and institutions—cultures—of capitalism and those of the settlers … so Indigenous cultures and systems, with definite communalist and non-capitalist practices and values, were regarded as existential threats and banned. Even many Indigenous prayers, with communalist values, were seen as a threat to cultures—and interests—built on capitalism.

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With the combination of circumstances described above, it was virtually impossible for the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas to pass on or record traditional knowledge in any format that Western academia would consider to be “acceptable” for a literary review. Due to these circumstances, the lack of literature by Indigenous Peoples that incorporates their TK regarding the horse in the Americas from the 1500s through the 1900s is not surprising.

However, despite severe punishments and repercussions there was Indigenous resistance to these colonizing forces. Palys (1996) offers the following description of this:

But if history can be revised once, then it must be open to further reconsideration, and the last two decades have seen considerable transition in how aboriginals have been perceived in historical context. Part of this is due to aboriginals themselves, who must be acknowledged for the way they have continued asserting their past, even in the face of considerable suppression for more than a century. \(^{65}\)

Likewise, within their article titled “Revitalizing Indigenous Languages Through Indigenous Immersion Education,” Mary Hermes and Keiki Kawai‘ae’a describe the “intentional political resistance to the dominant colonizing forces” \(^{66}\) that occurred in the case of many of Americas Indigenous Peoples regarding the preservation of their languages, as follows:

Elders retained their languages in spite of physical and emotional punishment, traumatic encounters of children being torn away from home, and systematic abuse that was by design intended to extinguish the language and culture of its indigenous populations and assimilate indigenous identity to that of its colonizer. \(^{67}\)

The following quote regarding what occurred within the United States educational system is found within Britnae Purdy’s article titled “Three Horrendous Anti-Indigenous Laws”:

By 1909, there were 25 off-reservation boarding schools, 157 on-reservation boarding schools, and 307 day schools. 100 of these were run by the federal government, with others run by churches and missionaries … [Children] were subjected to physical labor, abuse, and were not allowed to speak their native language, use their original names, or practice cultural activities. \(^{68}\)

Purdy also offers the following summary of Canada’s treatment of First Nations’ children within

\(^{67}\) Ibid, 303.
the educational system:

Canada modeled their residential schools after those in the United States, with the first opening in 1880 and the last not closing until 1984, nearly four decades after the law was repealed in the United States ... It is estimated that at least 50,000 Native children died at these residential schools from starvation, disease, harsh conditions such as forced labor and cold, and abuse.  

Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley and Ray Barnhardt provide a succinct history of the relationship between the formal, Western educational system and Indigenous knowledge systems within Alaska in their work titled “Culture, Chaos, and Complexity: Catalysts for Change in Indigenous Education.” They define the period of the late 1700s (with the arrival of Russian fur traders) to the early 1900’s as a “dual system,” by which “two mutually independent systems [had] little if any contact.”  

The period from the early 1900s to the 1950s is described as a “one-way transaction,” and Kawagley and Barnhardt state the following:

Schooling ... was strictly a one-way process at that time, mostly in distant boarding schools with the main purpose being to assimilate Native people into Western society, as practiced by the missionaries and school teachers (who were often one and the same.) Given the total disregard (and often derogatory attitude) toward the indigenous knowledge and belief systems in the Native communities, the relationship between the two systems was limited to a one-way flow of communication and interaction up through the 1950s ...

In light of these official government policies and the stereotypes held by the dominant Western culture and academia toward the TK held by the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, the disturbingly large void that exists with regard to the contributions of Indigenous Peoples regarding their own history is to be expected. Indeed, the cultural eradication of Indigenous Peoples’ was the colonizer’s intended outcome, all along. Donald L. Fixico addresses this issue in his article titled “Ethics in Writing American Indian History.” He states:

Whether racially prejudiced or guilt-ridden, patronizing, paternalistic, or romantic, Indian history mainly has been perceived from a white perspective, based on the idea that “the conquerors write the history.” More than 30,000 manuscripts have been published about American Indians, and more than 90 percent of that literature has been written by non-

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71 Ibid., 2.  
72 Ibid., 2.
Indians. 73

Devon Abbott Mihesuah expands upon this topic by expressing the following point:

... why aren’t more Indians consulted about their versions of their peoples’ past? Despite the expertise of numerous Indians about their tribe’s history and culture, many are not university educated and are not taken seriously by most members of the academic community ... but are not some written records fantasy? Are not some writings of some army officers, missionaries, explorers, and pioneers who encountered Indians exaggerated and biased? ... Using the Native voice exclusively may not yield a precise picture of past events, but neither will the sole use of skeletal remains, midden heaps, or non-Indians’ diaries, government reports, and letters. 74

In addition to the dominant Western culture’s disregard for Native perspectives and Indigenous TK, another challenge in conducting a valid literature review on this topic involves the preference that Indigenous cultures have for preserving and passing their traditions, history, and culture forward orally, combined with Western academia’s belief that “facts” must be represented in a written format in order to be considered true. Julie Cruikshank describes what has occurred throughout the world in this regard in her work titled Reading Voices Dän Dhá Ts’edénnîth’e Oral and Written Interpretations of the Yukon’s Past:

Storytelling may be the oldest of the arts. We know that every culture on earth has passed essential ideas from one generation to the next by word of mouth. But in many parts of the world, the power of the written word has displaced the power of the spoken word. 75

This privileging of the written word over oral history by the dominant Western culture gives European-based observations, pre-dispositions, perspectives, and conclusions a clear advantage in determining historical fact. As a practical matter, only Europeans could write their perceptions during the early conquest periods. Today, this early recorded information (which supported a Eurocentric worldview) has become widely accepted as truth, despite the fact that many of the earliest explorers and conquistadors had limited formal education, limited geographical exposure to the Americas, and limited cultural exposure to its inhabitants.

75 Julie Cruikshank, Reading Voices Dan Dhá Ts’edénnîth’e Oral and Written Interpretations of the Yukon’s Past (Vancouver: Douglas & MacIntyre, 1991), 11.
Furthermore, many of their observations were made and recorded as they were simply passing through an area or after only having been there for a matter of days. Zandra Kambysellis explains what occurs during this forced transition brought on by colonialism in her essay, “Language: Spoken or Written?”:

When an imperialist country enters another and subjects the people to a new language (think of the written word as a language distinct from the spoken word), a change that can be considered purely ‘post-colonial’ occurs … The old tradition of orality is questioned, and the newer, foreign convention of writing attempts to take its place.  

The following description of the effect of colonialism upon an individual is offered by Don McCaskill in his article titled “Native People and the Justice System”:

Colonialism involves a relationship which leaves one side dependent on the other to define the world. At this individual level, colonialism involves a situation where one individual is forced to relate to another on terms unilaterally defined by the other.”

Indeed, some modern-day experts have conducted their own research and discovered that their findings are often not aligned with many of the early historical claims. As Cruikshank explains: “Throughout the world, archaeologists and historians are becoming aware that accounts of the past often pay too much attention to Europeans and too little to the viewpoints of people who were living on the other five continents – North America, South America, Asia, Africa and Australia – when Europeans first arrived.”

As Indigenous scholars rise through academia, their voices are being heard. In the “language of the conqueror” they bring forth explanations of their traditions that have the power to erase historical misconceptions. In particular, Indigenous researchers have focused on ensuring that oral tradition is validated. As Gregory Cajete explains in his book titled Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence:

This process can be compared to the process in which a book is written and then disseminated to the public in published form. Oral storytelling and the use of mythological symbols are used to communicate important information in the same way.

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78 Cruikshank, Reading Voices, 44.
79 Gregory Cajete, Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light, 2000), 43.
Indeed, in his work titled *History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians*, Horatio Bardwell Cushman addresses the issue of oral traditions within these cultures. Born in Choctaw, Mississippi in the early 1800s to a missionary family that was sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to work amongst the Native Peoples, he shares his firsthand observations as follows:

In their ancient councils and great national assemblies, the Choctaws always observed the utmost order and decorum, which, however, is universally characteristic of the Indians everywhere. In those grave and imposing deliberations of years ago convened at night, all sat on the ground in a circle around a blazing fire called “The Council Fire” ... The old men, beginning with the oldest patriarch, would then in regular succession state to the attentive audience all that had been told them by their fathers, and what they themselves had learned in the experience of an eventful life – the past history of their nation; their vicissitudes and changes; what difficulties they had encountered, and how overcome; their various successes in war and their defeats; the character and kind of enemies whom they had defeated and by whom they had been defeated, the mighty deeds of their renowned chiefs and famous warriors in days past ... and when we consider the extent to which all Indians cultivated that one faculty, memory, their connections in the history of the past is not so astonishing. I will here relate a little incident ... it is said of Red Jacket [the Indian Chief], that he never forgot anything he once learned. On a certain occasion, a dispute arose in a council with his tribe and the whites, concerning the stipulations made and agreed upon in a certain treaty. “You have forgotten,” said the agent, “We have it written on paper.” “The paper then tells a lie,” replied Red Jacket. “I have it written down here,” he added, placing his hand with great dignity on his brow. “This is the book the Great Spirit has given the Indian; it does not lie.” A reference was immediately made to the treaty in question, when, to the astonishment of all present, the document confirmed every word the unlettered warrior and statesman had uttered.  

Although literacy and written historical accounts are considered paramount today, many scholars have pointed out that widespread literacy is a fairly new phenomenon, not just in the Americas, but throughout the world. Indeed, J. Michael Francis corroborates this and describes the literacy range for the conquistadors at this time in history within his book titled *Iberia and the Americas: Culture, Politics, and History: A Multidisciplinary Encyclopedia, Volume 1*. Francis states:

In terms of education, again the range was broad, from men who were completely illiterate and uneducated to the occasional man of considerable learning. Although the availability of and attention given to conquistador narratives certainly give the impression

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that the conquerors were handy with a pen if not well read, the fully literate were among
the minority in Spain as among conquest expeditions. 81

Indeed, Francis goes on to offer more details regarding specific conquistadors and their
levels of literacy at the time of conquest in South America:

Nor was the correlation between social status and literacy among conquistadors as close
as might be expected; the colonial chronicler Juan Rodríguez Freyle, a Santafé de Bogotá
native, claimed that some city council members of the New Granada settlements used
branding irons to sign documents. Among the ten leaders of the famous 1532-1534
invasion of Peru, including the … Pizarro brothers, four were literate, three were semi-
literate (they could sign their names), and three were illiterate (including Francisco
Pizarro). 82

As many of the conquistadors and/or early explorers who witnessed accounts firsthand in
the Americas were not able to write their own experiences, their renditions were transcribed,
interpreted, reinterpreted and/or edited, by others. An example of this can be seen with the first
reported sighting of Native Peoples with horses in the Americas. Although historians generally
claim that the Indians of the Southeast first acquired horses in the 1690s from the Spanish, there
is written Spanish record of the Southeastern Indians having been seen with horses as early as
1521 in what is now Georgia and the Carolinas. This is particularly interesting as it would have
been impossible for the first horses that the Spanish brought to the mainland (what is now
Mexico) in 1519 to have escaped unnoticed, “make it” to the Georgia and Carolinas area, and
have multiplied in two years’ time. The Spanish recorded the name of this province as “Duhare”
and its inhabitants are thought to be the ancestors of the people known today as the Creek
Indians. According to Richard Thornton in his work titled “490-Year-Old Spanish Documents
Describe an Irish Province in South Carolina,” he states: “They raised many types of livestock
including chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese and deer… Several Spanish sources, including de
Ayllón, stated that the Duhare owned some horses.” 83

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82 Ibid.
The two Spaniards who reported that the Peoples of “Duhare” had horses were Francisco Gordillo, a Captain, and Pedro de Quejo, a Spanish slave trader, who were the first known Europeans recorded to have sailed along the Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia coasts. In 1520, Peter Martyr d’Anghiera was appointed by Carlos V to be chronicler for the new Council of the Indies. Thornton describes this further in the following statement:

In 1522, [Martyr d’Anghiera] interviewed Francisco de Chicora [a captured Indian slave boy from the Americas], Gordillo, Quejo and Ayllón [the businessman to whom Gordillo and Quejo reported] for weeks then submitted a detailed report ... The passages concerning the land that would become Georgia and the Carolinas were always included, but generally ignored. ⁸⁴

It is Peter Martyr d’Anghiera’s account that was considered “official,” not the one initially given by the men who actually visited “Duhare” and witnessed the Peoples with their horses. This chronicler, who was not brought to the area to observe for himself, concluded the following: “Could I act as arbitrator, I would say that according to the investigations I have made, these people were too barbarous and uncivilized to have horses.” ⁸⁵

However, despite the dominant Western culture’s original view that oral history was somehow inferior to the written word, the culture of oral tradition was precise and storytellers were highly skilled at their crafts. As Lois J. Einhorn states within the work titled *The Native American Oral Tradition: Voices of the Spirit and Soul*:

Native Americans have passed the oral tradition on from generation to generation. The speeches, stories, prayers, and songs we have today have passed a rigorous test — the test of time. The words have been remembered, collected, integrated, told, retold, enhanced, refined, and tested by human experience over thousands of years. ⁸⁶

According to these scholars, oral tradition, the art of storytelling, and Indigenous languages were able to convey depth and detail in a way that many modern-day languages and records are unable to do. In *Red Earth, White Lies*, Vine Deloria, Jr. explains:

Storytelling was a precise art because of the nature of Indian languages. Some tribal languages had as many as twenty words to describe rain, snow, wind, and other natural elements; languages had precise words to describe the various states of human emotion, the intensity of human physical efforts, and the serenity of the land itself... they quickly

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⁸⁴ Ibid.
gave the listener a completely accurate rendering of a specific experience which Western languages could not possibly duplicate. 87

Along with the ability to be highly specific due to the depth and capacity of the languages used, a storyteller was expected to be exact in his or her rendering of historical knowledge. The storyteller’s ability to memorize stories and information accurately was critical, as it was understood that in doing so the storyteller was honoring his or her ancestors.

This is something Keith H. Basso discovered in his time spent with the Apache people when he attempted to document place-names in their native language and had difficulty with pronunciation. He states, “... never had I suspected that using Apache place-names might be heard by those who use them as repeating verbatim – actually quoting – the speech of their early ancestors” 88

Although the focus of oral history was often different than the focus of the written word, the information garnered has great value in understanding a culture, the experience of a people, and their feelings about the issues they faced. In fact, Cruikshank reveals this by noting, “Oral traditions sometimes telescope events, or collapse the chronology... Again, oral traditions may not actually make it easier to date events, but they deepen our understanding of what these events must have meant in people’s lives.” 89 In spite of these strengths, the knowledge and wisdom contained in oral historical accounts has historically been absent from any literary review about the topic.

Indeed, there are numerous instances in academic literature where Native oral history regarding the horse is not treated as “historical fact.” One such instance occurs in this statement regarding the “far less popular theory” as written on A. Tadlock’s webpage titled “Section 2 – The Extinction of the Horse”:

... one would expect Native Americans to have passed down some sort of stories of these wild horses. None seem to exist ... Hope Ryden’s book, “America’s Last Wild Horses,” says of the Pryor Mountain herd in Montana, “No one knows for certain where these particular horses came from, or how long they have lived here. Indians from the adjacent Crow Reservation tell of wild horses in the region before the coming of the white man.” Since there are no written accounts left by Native Americans, we may never know. 90

89 Cruikshank, Reading Voices, 37.
In this case, despite the fact that the author states that the Crow Indians reported that there had been wild horses in their area “before the coming of the white man,” Tadlock concludes that since there are “no written accounts left by Native Americans,” there is no evidence that the horse existed in the Americas before the arrival of the Spanish.

2.2 Deconstructing the Dominant Culture Theory

The claim that the Indigenous horse of the Americas died out during the last “Ice Age” and, therefore, was reintroduced to the Americas - and to the Native Peoples - by the colonizing cultures, still serves as the foundation for most historical, academic, and modern-day equine-related publications. Western academia supports this claim despite the following: statements from some Indigenous Peoples that they had horses prior to the arrival of the Spanish to the Americas in the late 1400s; 91 numerous recorded sightings of vast herds of horses in both North and South America by early explorers; no scientific proof to support the claim that the Indigenous horse of the Americas became extinct during the last “Ice Age” (Wisconsin Glaciation); and scientific and genetic proof indicating the presence of Equus remains during the proposed extinction period within the Americas. 92 An example of this dominant culture theory can be found in Neil Clarkson’s work titled, “Why Did Horses Die Out in North America?” He states the following:

The end of the Pleistocene epoch – the geological period roughly spanning 12,000 to 2.5 million years ago, coincided with a global cooling event and the extinction of many large mammals. Evidence suggests that North America was hardest hit by extinctions. This extinction saw the demise of the horse in North America. 93

Ian M. Lange also puts forth this claim and alludes to the confusion that it has created in his book titled Ice Age Mammals of North America: A Guide to the Big, the Hairy, and the Bizarre. He states:

Native horses became extinct in North America about 8,000 years ago, in Holocene time, with the youngest remains found in several localities in Alberta, Canada. Why horses

91 Claire Henderson, The Aboriginal North American Horse (Quebec City, Canada: Laval University, 1991).
92 Graham and Lundelius, FAUNMAP.
died out is unclear, particularly since they have flourished in the wild since the Spaniards reintroduced them into North America five centuries ago.\textsuperscript{94}

However, according to the abstract of a study published by Dale A. Russell, \textit{et al.}, titled “A Warm Thermal Enclave in the Late Pleistocene of the South-eastern United States,” the following is explained:

Physical and biological evidence supports the probable existence of an enclave of relatively warm climate located between the Southern Appalachian Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean in the United States during the Last Glacial Maximum. The region supported a mosaic of forest and prairie habitats inhabited by a ‘Floridian’ Ice Age biota.\textsuperscript{95}

The article goes on to clarify that, “As noted before, the Appalachians remained free of glacial ice throughout the Pleistocene time.”\textsuperscript{96} If this research is correct, it would mean that from the \textit{Paleo-Indian} period (ending roughly between 10,000 to 8,000 years ago) until first contact (the late 1400s for the Virgin Islands and other Caribbean islands, and the early 1500s for the continent), any horses living in this Southeastern region of what is now the United States would not have been adversely affected by the colder temperatures that affected the northern most parts of North America. Likewise, it would have been possible for horses that were living in those more northern areas to have migrated further south, rather than to have stayed in one place, freeze and/or starve to death, and become extinct.

Russell \textit{et al.} provide the following map (Figure 2) of the Southeastern region of the United States. They utilize the thick, grey line (toward the top of the map) to indicate the border of the glacier during the Last Glacial Maximum. This border runs through current day Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It did not extend further south than the Ohio River and Long Island, New York.

\textsuperscript{94} Ian M. Lang, \textit{Ice Age Mammals of North America: A Guide to the Big, the Hairy, and the Bizarre} (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press, 2002), 131.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 191.
If what Russell, et al. discovered is accurate, it is possible that the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas and the Indigenous horse of the Americas co-existed and had a continuous relationship before the arrival of the first load of horses that were brought to the Americas (to what are now the Caribbean Islands) by the Spanish in 1493, and the first horses to be brought by the Spanish to the mainland (to the area now known as Mexico) in 1519. The following information regarding the first load of horses that were brought to the Caribbean is offered by Gloria Farley in her book titled *In Plain Sight: Old World Records in Ancient America*. She states:

Denhardt reports the total number of horses brought on this expedition [Columbus’ second voyage to the West Indies in 1493] was twenty-five, including ten mares and fifteen stallions ... Columbus wrote in 1494 to the King and Queen of Spain saying, ‘Each time there is sent here any type of boat, there should be included some brood mares.’

Red Oak Tree organization website provides the following details and the conquistadors’ assumptions regarding the Native Peoples’ perceptions of the first load of horses brought by the Spanish to the mainland:

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97 Ibid., 175.
Cortez lands on the mainland and marches to Mexico City with 16 horses. Bernal Diaz del Castillo, who recorded the expedition wrote, ‘The natives had not seen horses up to this time and thought that the horse and rider were all one animal.’ 99

As we can see, the numbers of horses that the Spanish were able to bring with them on their ships were fairly small compared to the vast herds of horses that were documented only decades later. Indeed, in his book titled *The Horses the Indians Rode*, Sigmund A. Lavine offers the following estimates of horse numbers in the 1700s:

It is estimated that a million mustangs ranged in Texas during the last years of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century. Father Morfi, and early missionary, reported to his superiors in 1777 that “bands of wild horses were so abundant that their trails made the country, utterly uninhabited by people, like as if it were the most populated in the world.” 100

If the evidence of modern research - such as the study by Russell *et al*. on the conditions during the Last Glacial Maximum or the evaluation of herd numbers - offer us information that deviates from early assumptions, then correcting such assumptions would serve to transform and liberate many related areas of study. This provides potential benefits to academia, as a whole.

2.3 A Review of Available Literature of the Subject Matter

Despite the release of research such as the above study, the theory that the Indigenous horse of the Americas became extinct during the last “Ice Age,” and that the Native Peoples had no prior knowledge of horses before the arrival of the Spanish, still dominates Western academia. This theory is so entrenched, that modern day researchers circle back to it, even when the “facts” do not “add up.” An example of this occurs in an account recorded by Don Juan de Oñate and cited by John S. Hockensmith in his book titled *Spanish Mustangs in the Great American West: Return of the Horse*. In this account King Philip II of Spain gave de Oñate, the son of a Spanish conquistador, orders in 1596 to lead an expedition as far north as New Mexico. By 1598, when de Oñate and those accompanying him reached New Mexico, he reported that vast herds of wild horses already occupied New Mexico. De Oñate noted, “The country is so immense and so full of wild mares.” Hockensmith continues on to say, “Oñate also reported that

he lost 300 horses and mules in a 30-day period, partly due to the inability to contain animals while wild horses were roaming nearby.”  

In addition, the textbook titled Discovering Our Past: A History of the United States (Early Years) by Joyce Appleby, et al credits de Oñate with having “introduced cattle and horses to the Pueblo people.” However, this claim is not supported by de Oñate’s own account of having seen herds “of wild mares” upon his arrival to New Mexico.

It is important to note that before de Oñate’s expedition, there had been a handful of earlier expeditions crossing New Mexico territory by the Spanish. The most well known of these were led by Francisco Vasquez de Coronado and Hernando de Soto. However, in DeSoto’s case it is not historically accepted that his expedition lost live horses anywhere near New Mexico or Texas. In Coronado’s expedition, none of the horses were reported lost, and his records show only one mare was included in the expedition. This mare returned with the group to Mexico.

Indeed, John Canfield Ewers charts historians’ debate regarding the idea that the Plains Indians, in particular, got their horses from these same expeditions in his book titled The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture. He states the following:

Haines’ major contributions were to point out that the Plains Indians acquired their first horses from a different source and at a considerably later date than Wissler had considered probable. Wissler gave credence to the theory that the first horses obtained by Plains Indians were animals lost or abandoned by the Spanish exploring expeditions led by De Soto and Coronado in 1541… However, another historian, Morris Bishop, who had made a critical study of early Spanish explorations, termed this theory, “a pretty legend.” Haines virtually laid the old theory to rest. After a careful review of the evidence he concluded that “the chance of strays from the horse herds of either De Soto or Coronado having furnished the horses of the Plains Indians is so remote that is should be discarded.”

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There were two smaller expeditions to New Mexico some fourteen and fifteen years earlier than de Oñate's, but it is not recorded in either case that they lost any live horses. In fact, de Oñate's loss of horses is described as "the first band of horses, of record, in what is now the United States of America to run free."  

The following description of "escaped horses" is offered from Red Oak Tree's website:

After a brief severe winter at San Juan Pueblo, Oñate resettled his people at San Gabriel across the river from the original settlement. Very few documents relate to the livestock of the settlers however one incident occurred where a report was made, it was a military event. In 1599 during the month of October a patrol that was going to the pueblo of Zuni encountered a freak snowstorm that caused a halt to the march and forced the patrol to set up camp approximately twelve leagues west of the pueblo of Acoma. During the evening in blizzard like conditions, almost thirty head of horses managed to break out of the temporary corrals set up by the soldiers. The next day when it was found that the horses had escaped the soldiers mounted a search but to no avail.

De Oñate was being relied upon to provide accurate information to the Spanish Crown about his expedition. How is it that those reading his reports did not at least consider the idea that the horse may have already existed in the Americas previous to European contact? Where do they believe these "immense" herds came from? How is it that such sightings, combined with historical statements from Indigenous Peoples that they "always had the horse," would not be considered enough to cause modern-day researchers to at least question the predominant European theory regarding the origin of the horse in the Americas?

Within his book titled The Indian and the Horse, Frank Gilbert Roe addresses what he calls "The Stray Legend," or the theory that escaped or stray horses from early expeditions were the origin of the herds of "wild horses" found throughout North America. He states as follows:

The very precise accounts of leaders' horses slain on such occasions, as well as deaths of horses from other causes, compel us to conclude that such animals as our hypothetical strays, missing and unaccounted for, would not escape mention. With respect to the horses of common troops, their chances of escape and of producing offspring — sex conditions even permitting — were virtually nonexistent. In this connection, Frances Haines draws attention to some vital considerations that might easily be overlooked in

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110 Ibid.
glib generalization about "strayed Spanish horses." The hypothetical strays must wander away (or be lost in battle, hunting, or what not) in combinations of not less than two together, and necessarily be of both sexes on each of such occasions. Haines furthermore points out that while a pair, sire and dam could mathematically produce some three hundred or so progeny in the course of twenty years or thereabouts, in actual conditions in an unfamiliar environment this would not be possible.¹¹¹

Yet, despite facts such as these, the dominant Western academic theory persists. Instances where Indigenous accounts are distorted and made to fit into the Western accepted theory with regard to the horse are prevalent. Hockensmith continues on to describe the Apache Indians and their relationship with the horse. To do this, he quotes an 1889 article written by Frederic Remington titled "Horses of the Plains" within his book. He quotes the following:

The Apaches were never 'horse Indians,' and always readily abandoned their stock to follow the mountains on foot. In early times, their stock-stealing raids into Mexico were simply foraging expeditions, as they ate horses, mules, cattle and sheep alike.¹¹²

Immediately after using this quote, Hockensmith goes on to state, "Yet Apache myths make it clear that they regarded horses as infused with supernatural powers. They believed these animals came as gifts from their gods, who guarded them long before bestowing them on man for his use."¹¹³ Although such a belief system would have been inconsistent with a recent re-introduction of horses by Europeans, Hockensmith goes on to state the following in his book:

It is believed that an Apache group encountered Coronado's expedition and horses in 1541. Rather than reacting with amazed horror, as did Zuñi and other Pueblo tribes who believed that horses would eat people, the Apache calmly surveyed Coronado's horses, according to Spanish accounts. Their reaction perhaps indicates they had already gained some knowledge of the animals from other tribes or earlier contact with conquistadors.¹¹⁴

I feel it is important to offer an alternative and more culturally relevant interpretation of what may have constituted the look of "amazed horror" that the Zuñi Peoples presumably had upon viewing the Spanish mounted on their horses. It is possible that this reaction of "horror" that the Zuñi and some of the other Pueblo tribes were noted to have had upon seeing the Spanish with their horses, had to do more with the manner in which this sacred animal was being treated by the Spanish than because they had never before seen horses. Indeed, if the Natives

¹¹² Hockensmith, Spanish Mustang, 50.
¹¹³ Ibid.
¹¹⁴ Ibid., 49-50.
were seeing horses for the first time ever, a look of fear or wonder would have been a more likely reaction.

However, according to Hockensmith's own extensive research, there were no earlier tribes allowed by Spanish law to have horses, and Coronado was the first conquistador to travel through Apache territory. Therefore, if Spanish records are correct, there were no earlier opportunities for the Apache to have had contact with conquistadors. Despite these facts, Hockensmith concludes by fitting this information into the European-accepted timeframe. He states, "After the Apaches acquired horses and gained Spanish weapons ..." 115 thereby continuing the Eurocentric myth that horses did not exist in the Americas before the Spanish. It appears that for Hockensmith, the inconsistencies he uncovered while performing his own research were not strong enough for him to feel comfortable challenging the accepted Western academic claim that the Spanish were responsible for introducing the horse to the Americas and it's Native Peoples.

The Spanish conquistadors were not the only European explorers to have noticed and recorded early sightings of horses in the Americas. In 1579, the Queen of England sent Sir Francis Drake to "The New World." Drake also recorded having seen herds of horses in the Americas during his voyage off the coasts of what are now known as California and Oregon. An account given of Drake's landing in the geographic areas now known as Northern California and Southern Oregon includes the English explorer's description of the homes of the Native Peoples, as well as the animals that he encountered. "It related his wonder at seeing so many wild horses, because he had heard that the Spaniards had found no native horses in America, save those of the Arab breed which they had introduced." 116

In addition to accounts from explorers appointed by European kings and queens, there are accounts of native horses in South America in the area now known as Argentina. One such account even includes an explanation as to why the Spanish may have been motivated to hide the fact that the Indigenous horse of the Americas existed and had a relationship with Native Peoples.

According to an article entitled Antigüedad del Caballo En El Plata (The Antiquity of the Horse in the River Plate) by Aníbal Cardoso as cited by Austin Whittall on his blog site article

115 Ibid., 53.
titled “Extant Native American Horses Part II,” at the time that the explorer Cabeza de Vaca arrived in Argentina in 1542, horses were worth a great deal of money:

Cabeza de Vaca brought 27 horses with him. And they were an expensive item, worth 4,000 gold Reales. A fortune. In 1547 only 26 were still alive. But in 1553 Asunción had 130 horses! These must have been provided by the natives in exchange for Spanish goods. The horses were native ones, from the Pampas. 117

Whittall goes on to explain that in 1580, when the Spaniards returned to the area to battle the locals, they “came across the horses, vast quantities of them. Native American horses.” 118 According to Cardosa, however, the Spanish explorers in Argentina had reasons for denying to their compatriots back home in Europe that these horses were native to the Americas. Had they admitted this, by Spanish law those horses would have been deemed to be property of the Spanish King:

The Spaniards however, said that these horses were the offspring of the ones left behind by Mendoza.119 Why? To avoid paying taxes to the Spanish King. The Royal Tax Collectors said that the horses belonged to the King as they were part of his domains. But, after going to court, the judge found in 1596 that since they were descendants of the horses brought by Mendoza in 1536, they were not “of the land” but feral horses,120 and therefore exempt of taxation. 121

In light of possible motives—such as the one provided in Whittall’s research—it is important to delve more closely into the claims made in the literature that has been published in this area. In the case of the Southeast Native Peoples, the first potential opportunity for the Southeastern Indians to actually acquire horses from the Europeans—from the perspective of written historical record—would have occurred in 1541 when the ancestors of the Chickasaw people defeated the Spanish explorer, Hernando DeSoto. As Richard Green describes in an essay on his web page titled “DeSoto and the Chickasaw Horse”:

... the Chickasaw’s [sic] undoubtedly captured some of the spoils of victory, which eventually changed their lives and their descendant’s [sic] lives as well ... It isn’t known

118 Ibid.
119 This reference refers to Pedro de Mendoza, a Spanish explorer who founded a town in Argentina in 1536.
120 Here the term “feral” refers to animals that were domesticated by the Spanish and subsequently became wild.
for sure that Chickasaws captured any of the 200 or so horses because these warriors didn’t write reports and the Spanish were not around to witness it.\textsuperscript{122}

Likewise, the following account is provided by Holmes Willis Lemon titled “The Chickasaw Horse: Grandfather to the Quarterhorse”:

On the Chickasaws [sic] first encounter with the horse, some accounts claim that the tribe captured some of De Soto’s horses. Later, English traders introduced the horse to the tribe in trading pack trains and the horse is physically described as being ‘small, about 13 hands’ and having had ‘a very short neck, and some even had to spread their front legs to graze as some wild horses and zebras do.’ \textsuperscript{123}

According to Judith Dutson’s book titled \textit{Storey’s Illustrated Guide to 96 Horse Breeds of North America}, there is written record of horses being sighted in Virginia and linked to the Chickasaw by the early to mid-1600s:

By the early to mid-1600s, there were horses of Spanish descent in the backwoods of Virginia, some wild and some owned by Indians, including the Chickasaw, who were known as having small horses of excellent quality. A traveler from England described the horses as being “not very tall, but hardy, strong, and fleet.” \textsuperscript{124}

Today, some of the descendants of these ponies still populate Assateague Island, which is located off of the coast of Maryland and Virginia. Although these ponies were reported to have already been there upon the arrival of the colonial settlers, the assumption was made that they must have been Spanish horses, and their obvious phenotypical differences were explained away as having been a result of degeneration due to environmental conditions. According to the website assateagueisland.com, “Some people believe the horses arrived on Assateague’s shores when a Spanish galleon ship (with a cargo of horses) sank offshore.” \textsuperscript{125} However, \textit{La Galga}, the Spanish galleon at issue is purported to have wrecked in 1750, more than 100 years after these ponies were first reported having been seen in large numbers. \textsuperscript{126}

As the Pueblo Revolt, which occurred in what is now present-day New Mexico in 1680, is proclaimed by most historians to have been the year that horses were introduced to the Native


American people in any significant number, it would not be possible for Spanish horses to have already “gone wild” and be living in large herds in Virginia by the early to mid-1600s.

Hockensmith describes the Tewa, Picuris, and Taos Pueblo revolt as follows:

[The Taos Pueblos] revolted against the colonists] and struck with fear, the settlers fled so hastily that they left most of the property behind, including more than 3,000 horses on the open plains around Santa Fé ... This was the end of the Spanish conquistador horse and the beginning of the Indian horse. 127

Indeed, as Chapter 7 of Philip Alexander Bruce’s book titled Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century states, by 1685 there were so many wild horses reported in the Virginia area that colonists began to hunt them:

So numerous had the wild horses grown to be at the close of the century that one of the principal sports of the young men of the Colony was to hunt them, not infrequently with the assistance of dogs. Saddle horses were trained especially for the purpose of threading the heavy timber of the forests at a high rate of speed. In consequence of the extraordinary fleetness of these wild animals, it was often impossible to catch them... Owing to the large number of foals born in the woods and remaining unmarked, the hunting of wild animals was not unprofitable, as to the captors belonged those upon which no brand had been placed. 128

However, whether the horse was reintroduced to the Southeastern Native Peoples by the Europeans as the dominant Western view claims, or whether these Native Peoples continuously lived with the creature over thousands of years before first-contact, it is clear from written records that this four-legged animal was an integral part of their society and culture. For example, the Choctaw have a traditional story about their people's acquisition of the horse, which today is often referred to as “The Tale of the Wind Horse.” This story begins at the time when “day and night were still deciding who came first.” 129 It does not record that the horse was obtained from the Spanish, but rather that a wild and free horse made the decision to love and connect with a young boy. As a result, “... with Wind Horse’s prayer, the Horse was given to the Indian People as friends.” 130

127 Hockensmith, Spanish Mustangs, 45.
130 Ibid.
According Jerry Self's (2013) web article titled *Choctaw and Cherokee Horses*, the Southeastern Natives traded horses amongst each other regularly:

The Five Tribes (Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole) were breeding their own line of horses early on. These tribes traded horses with each other and bred to other tribes' horses, making the breeds very similar.131

As James Taylor Carson explains in his article titled, “Horses and the Economy and Culture of the Choctaw Indians, 1690-1840,” the horse was significant to the Southeastern Indians in many ways:

[Scholars] have largely overlooked the importance of horses in the economic and cultural life of the Southeastern Indians... as horses were important in activities ranging from ball games to funerary rituals, and they were essential in the development of the deerskin trade, the Choctaw market economy, and the cattle economy that flourished in Indian Territory.132

Not only did the Choctaw have their own word for the horse “isuba,” which has been translated into English as “deer-reebler” and is clearly not derivative from the Spanish word *caballo*,133 they also used the word for horse in the naming of geographical places:

Traveling from Mobile into the Choctaw Nation in the early 1730s, Régis du Roullet reported two such toponyms. The first, *condak ou soublie* (canebrake where a horse drowned) ... The second, *Bouk ite tchue souba* (the bayou where there is a tree that marks a horsepath) indicated the regular passage of horses along the route from the Choctaw Nation to Mobile and bore testimony to the substantial horse traffic between the two.134

Geographical place names in Native American cultures were not given or changed easily, and they traditionally referenced a time long before written records when the People first arrived and settled in the area. Therefore, the assumption that these Choctaw place-names were given as late as the time when colonists were living in the area is likely faulty. In his book titled *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*, Keith Basso shares what

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133 Ibid., 498.
134 Ibid.
he learned while researching place-names in Western Apache territory. He explains that such names are often not changed over time, even when the physical characteristics of such a geographical place have been altered so much that they no longer obviously describe the place. He says of a place called “Snakes’ Water,” that, “there are more places like it ... that have undergone physical changes and no longer conform to the way their names describe them.”

Yet, the names will remain unchanged by the local native community, as they serve as important historical, cultural, and spiritual reference points.

In the book *Life Among the Choctaw Indians and Sketches of the South-West*, Henry Clark Benson describes the relationship between the Native men, women, and children of the Southeast and their ponies:

They were all equestrians, men, women, and children; each had his pony and saddle, and to ride on horseback was the first lesson ever learned. They rode in a gallop, and usually at the utmost speed of which the pony was capable. Young girls would leap from the ground into the saddle with the greatest facility, and dash off at full speed of the horse in the most reckless manner; but we never knew a man, woman, or child to be thrown from the saddle or to receive any injury in their equestrian performances. Their horses were all of the mustang or native stock, small, well-formed, and hardy creatures.

The Southeastern Indians’ relationship with their horses was so intimate that the people trusted their infants and young children with these gentle ponies. The Choctaw pony was described by Cushman as a “chubby little pony” whose “unwearied patience, and his seemingly untiring endurance of hardships and fatigue, were truly astonishing - surprising, according to his inches ...”

According to Cushman, these ponies were used to help mothers to care-take the toddlers in the tribe:

When the little chap had grown to such proportions as to be no longer easily thus transported (on his mother’s back), he was fastened to the saddle upon the back of a docile pony, which followed the company at pleasure; ... When [the child] arrived at the age of four or five years, he was considered as having passed through his fourth and last chrysalis stage, and was then untied from the saddle and bid ride for himself.

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138 Ibid., 176.
It is important to note that these practices were not ones that the Natives Peoples would have witnessed from the Spanish or any other European culture that would have been familiar to them at that time in history. The Native Peoples' horse husbandry practices were uniquely their own.

The horse also played a prominent role in the ballgame, one of the Choctaw’s most important ritualistic games. This game, which often involved hundreds of participants, was played up until the early 1900s. The following description of the Choctaw ballgame, as detailed on the Choctaw Nation’s website, was based upon the artist George Catlin’s observations in the 1830s:

Players with no experience would dress themselves in ball costume, and apokshiama (breech cloth) plus the tail of some animal, perhaps a horse or a raccoon, attached behind in the belt. Each novice, endeavoring to represent some animal, a white horse swift of foot, or a fighting “coon” did his best to make himself noticed by the leaders of his team in hopes that he would be chosen to play the next day.  

As described by ChoctawNation.com, the following connection was made at the time:

The ballgame which Catlin beheld involved some six or seven hundred players, with ‘five or six times’ that number of spectators and aroused in his mind comparisons with the Greek Olympic games or contests of the Roman Forum.

Carson also noted the importance of the symbolism of the horse to these ballplayers as follows:

Visiting the Choctaws in 1820, Adam Hodgson, an Englishman who traveled through Mississippi while visiting the Choctaw missionary stations, noted the males wore long white horsetails, rather that wildeat tails and white bird feathers, as part of their game dress.

The significance of the horse in the Southeastern Indian culture can also be noted by observing its role in traditional Choctaw funeral rituals. He refers to a time period when the horse was killed in order that its spirit accompany its owner in the afterlife. Carson offers an interpretation of this ritual by Louis Leclerc de Milford in the following passage:

Choctaws placed the bodies of the dead on open-air scaffolds until they had decayed sufficiently for bonepickers to remove the flesh. The bones were then bundled for

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140 Ibid.
presentation to the deceased’s clan and internment in the village bonehouse. After the bonepickers completed their task, they slaughtered the deceased’s horse(s) and roasted the carcass(es) for a feast. 142

Forty years later, in the late 1700s, it was noted by an Englishman named Adam Hodgson that the Choctaw had “begun to bury their dead with their guns, tomahawks, and favorite horses, so that they would have something to ride to the afterlife” 143 and that by the 1820s “Choctaws instead preferred to believe that the horse’s spirit accompanied the deceased into the afterworld while its body remained to render useful live service on earth to the deceased’s kinfolk or community.” 144

2.4 Importance of This General Issue to Academia

Deconstructing – and finally truthfully reconstructing – the history of the horse in the Americas may prove to be temporarily uncomfortable for many Western scientists, academics, and historians, as a large amount of academic research across disciplines has utilized the current accepted theory as its base. However, the world can only benefit from unearthing the truth. If this can be done, archeologists would no longer need to fear “site contamination” upon the discovery of horse bones while excavating, as Dr. John Clark, Director of the New World Archeological Foundation, describes in the next chapter of this research project. Nor would paleontologists have to continue to attempt to explain away their results by concluding that “rodent tunneling” might be responsible for intermixing horse bones and remains in soil samples and excavation levels that have been dated within the supposed extinction period. An example of this occurred at some excavations in the Yucatan peninsula, which were publicized in the 1950s. The following description of this is offered on the FairMormon website:

Two Mexican archeologists carried out a project that included a complete survey of the complex system of subterranean cavities (made by underground water that had dissolved the subsurface limestone). They also did stratigraphic excavation in areas in the Loltun complex not previously visited. The pits they excavated revealed a sequence of 16 layers, which they numbered from the surface downward. Bones of extinct animals (including mammoth) appear in the lowest layers. Pottery and other cultural materials were found in levels VII and above. But in some of those artifact-bearing strata there were horse bones, even in level II. A radiocarbon date for the beginning of VII turned out to be around 1800 BC. The pottery fragments above that would place some portions in the range of at least

142 Ibid., 498.
143 Ibid., 504.
144 Ibid.
900-400 BC and possibly later. The report on this work concludes with the observation that "something went on here that is still difficult to explain. Some archeologists have suggested that the horse bones were stirred upward from lower to higher levels by the action of tunneling rodents, but they admit that this explanation is not easy to accept. The statement has also been made that paleontologists will not be pleased at the idea that horses survived to such a late date as to be involved with civilized or near-civilized people whose remains are seen in the ceramic-using levels. Surprisingly, the Mexican researchers show no awareness of the horse teeth discovered in 1957 by Carnegie Institution scientists Pollock and Ray. 145

Another example showing how such presumptions have affected the field of archeology, can be seen in Gloria Farley's book titled In Plain Sight: Old World Records in Ancient America. In this work Farley describes numerous examples of artifact evidence of pre-Columbian horses in America, each of which were discovered in the southeastern region of the United States. She details her interaction with Dr. Joseph B. Mahan of Columbus, Georgia at a symposium where she was showing slides of what she states are pre-Columbian horse petroglyphs found in Arkansas and Oklahoma. 146 Dr. Mahan is a former member of the National Historical Sites Commission who "spent thirty years researching the origin of the Yuchi Indians, formerly of Georgia and Alabama, now removed to Sapulpa, Oklahoma." 147 Farley states:

Mahan said, "We kept finding small sculpted horses in nearby Alabama in a site we thought was older that the sixteenth century but attached no great importance to them because of the 1540 concept [i.e. the belief that no horses could have been there before 1540]. 148

Farley also notes that Dr. Mahan showed her a clay statuette (Figure 3) of a pre-Columbian "3-inch horse effigy that was found on Roods Creek, about 2 miles from the Chattahoochee River" 149 (which was housed at the time in the Columbus Museum of Arts and Sciences in Georgia), and that "Manford Metcalfe of Columbus, Georgia, put into my hand a small stone effigy which resembled a horse head," which was found in a 1974 dig "near the Yuchi Creek near Fort Benning, Georgia." 150

146 Farley, In Plain Sight, 342.
147 Ibid., 349.
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid., 342.
150 Ibid.
Had the archeologists in this situation simply been open to allowing the evidence to shape their research, rather than closing their minds to their findings in order to conform to what they were taught in their Western classrooms, their discoveries could have opened an entirely new realm of knowledge with regard to academia’s understanding of the history of the Americas and its Peoples. However, in order to do this, academia must grant researchers permission to trust the results of their investigations – even when they do not conform to a pre-established paradigm that makes the dominant Western culture comfortable.

2.5 Summary

This chapter highlights some of the ways in which performing a standard literature review on this subject is compromised, demonstrates why a deconstruction of the current theory regarding this topic can help to replace biased assumptions of the past with more accurate and comprehensive knowledge, offers a review of certain available and relevant research and literature on the subject, and addresses the significance of this general issue to academia.

Yes, it has been said that the “conquerors write the history.”\textsuperscript{152} However, in order for a “conqueror” to exist, the battle must be over. The presence of Indigenous Peoples throughout the

\textsuperscript{151} Farley, \textit{In Plain Sight}, 342.
Americas (and indeed, throughout the world), who are rising in support of their heritage and to attest to the validity of their Peoples’ traditional knowledge, is proof that the battle has yet to be won. If Western academia and the TK of Indigenous Peoples can merge to offer a more complete and accurate story of “what was” for the Native Peoples, flora, and fauna of the Americas at the time of first contact, rather than rely on the promotion of a version of history that was created out of fear, prejudice, and misconception, then the end of the battle in this portion of the world can be glorious for “both sides.” It is time that we allow the evidence to guide us as researchers, and not rely upon Western history’s preconceived notions of what is acceptable, possible, or comfortable. Such continued reliance upon illusion will do nothing more than support the Eurocentric myth, harm Native Peoples by denying them critical aspects of their culture, and cause more confusion for academic scholars.
