

Report on the Word ‘Skraeling’, its meanings and potential usage by Hate Groups

Prepared for the Skraeling Althing Baronial Council
Baron Colyne Stewart, OP
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Introduction

This paper is to document the word ‘Skraeling’ as per its historical meaning(s) and current real world usage, and to assist Baronial Council in deciding if the Barony should change its name. This paper was prompted by commentary from Colyne Stewart (before he was part of the Council) during the term of Baroness Avelyn and Baron Dafydd (2020).

Origin and connotations of "Skraeling(ar)"

Although debate continues as to the actual meaning, etymology, and intent behind the word ‘Skraeling’, used by the Norse to refer to the Native populations of what is now called Canada. The majority of sources agree that the term loosely means ‘barbarian’ (though there are a few who believe otherwise). ‘Barbarian’ is in itself a problematic and condescending word to apply to people, as it means “a person from an alien land, culture, or group believed to be inferior, uncivilized, or violent.”¹ More specifically, in the case of the word ‘skraeling’ it is thought to mean ‘wretched,’ ‘monstrous,’ ‘withered,’ and ‘small.’ (See the Appendices for full examples.)

Origin of our Barony’s Name

According to Baroness Tsivia bas Tamara v’Amberview, in emails collected in 2020 and 2023, when the Barony chose its name it did so as a play on words to refer to Canada’s Parliament (‘Skraeling Althing’ meaning ‘gathering of barbarians’). In an email to this author, Tsivia said,

I did consult about 20 years ago with two dear friends (one from the East and the other now in Ansteorra) about the history and connotation of the word in period. Countess Brynhildr Kormaksdottir (OL, Rose), mka Dr. Sandra Straubhaar holds a PhD in Scandinavian Studies (now mostly retired from teaching University), and Mistress Arwen Evaine fetch Rhys ap Gwynnedd (OL, OP), mka Jane Sibley, who holds a graduate degree somewhere between an MA and PhD from a Scandinavian university. Both are available via Facebook under their mundane names.

This author would like to go on record at this point to state that there was no malice in the choice of the barony’s name, as at the time the word ‘skraeling’ was thought to be benign.

The cop-opting of History by Hate Groups

Unfortunately, the meaning and usage of words and phrases can change over time, and though Skraeling may have been felt to be a harmless term when it was first applied to our founding canton so many years ago, over the decades this has apparently changed as white supremacists

¹ Merriam Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/barbarian>

continue in a concentrated effort to literally "white wash" history. For example in an article published in 2017, the Washington Post stated:

American white supremacists want to make Vinland great again, laying out an imagined past in which Vikings are the rightful conquerors of North America, locked in eternal battle with the Skraelings, the Viking slur for indigenous people.

According to the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, in their monitoring of hate groups they do not see the word used often but “when we do, it's in quite obscure, somewhat white nationalist-adjacent Viking/Europe history chats on Telegram.”

Further:

The alleged improvement furthers the colonizing argument that “pure” Indigenous peoples, as encountered by Old World visitors (including the pesky skraelings of the Vinland sagas), were innately inferior, and that their displacement by white newcomers was (and is) inevitable and just.

<https://earlycanadianhistory.ca/2016/04/11/white-tribism-viking-explorations-and-indigenous-erasures/>

As part of preparing this paper, the author reached out to the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition for their perspective and this was their take on the word:

Thank you for reaching out to the OAC. To be honest we are not sure about this but as you continue your research, we would love to be updated. (Email to the author, Jan 10, 2023)

Past Investigations into Changing the Barony's Name

According to anecdotal evidence, the issue of the barony's name has arisen before in the past, though so far this author has found no evidence of it, except in 2020 when the Honourable Constance Payne collected emails from Baroness Tsivia on the subject.

Current Concerns Regarding the Term

Three members of Baronial Council stressed their concerns in an online meeting held in 2022 that continued use of the word 'skraeling' may be seen as a dog whistle to hate groups and as a deterrent to new players. Two of those Council members said they have initial reservations regarding joining the SCA upon hearing the name of our Barony.

Continued use of our current name therefore may be problematic on several fronts, including:

1. Potentially disrespecting Indigenous peoples (see the Appendices for at least one list of Indigenous slurs that includes 'skraeling'.)
2. Being seen as a place perpetrating white-nationalist revisionist history
3. Having our membership affected by deterring new players

Appendices

Email from Tsvia bas Tamara v' Amberview to Colyne Stewart, Nov 23, 2022

Well met Colyne from TSivia.

On the question of the term "Skraeling" in the name of our easternmost Barony in Ealdormere, I don't recall much of the historical research regarding the word having been immortalized for posterity in writing, quite frankly. None of us ever expected the word to become such an issue 40+ years down the line.

I did consult about 20 years ago with two dear friends (one from the East and the other now in Ansteorra) about the history and connotation of the word in period. Countess Brynhildr Kormaksdottir (OL, Rose), mka Dr. Sandra Straubhaar holds a PhD in Scandinavian Studies (now mostly retired from teaching University), and Mistress Arwen Evaine fetch Rhys ap Gwynnedd (OL, OP), mka Jane Sibley, who holds a graduate degree somewhere between an MA and PhD from a Scandinavian university. Both are available via Facebook under their mundane names.

What I have been able to find about "skraeling/skraelingar" is still somewhat thin on the ground regarding whether it is offensive today. A good academic article about interactions between Scandinavians and Indigenous Peoples from this continent doesn't really address the term as much as it addresses the Euro-Centric Columbus revisions (<https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1068&context=ojur>).

To this day, Skraeling Island (off Ellesmere Island) still carries that name.

An excellent Indigenous language site postulates that the Beothuk were probably the Skraelings, but does not flag it as a derogatory term (as opposed to "Red Indian", still used to this day across the U.K. to differentiate First Peoples of the W Hemisphere from the population of the Indian subcontinent).

<http://www.native-languages.org/beothuk.htm>

Another academic looks at 'skraeling' and equates it to a more general name-calling slur (also describing the insults thrown by the Indigenous towards the Norse) as people do today. "For example, it is theorized that interaction between the Norse and Inuit was more influential than previously thought. This is due to two plausible reasons. First, there is evidence that demonstrates that the relationship between the two groups was hostile, and ultimately damaged Norse settlements. In Erik the Red's Saga written in the 13th century, the word Skraeling is used for the Inuit, which translates to "wretched." According to Thisted's findings on oral and written records, they were described as small, ill-favored men with ugly hair on their heads, big eyes, and broad cheeks (272). This could be interpreted as blatantly racism were it not for the Inuit's equally dismal recount of the Norse. An Indigenous tale entitled Oqaluttuaq Uunngortumik recounts the Southern Greenlandic encounter between the Thule Inuit and the Norsemen. It states that the Norsemen were attacked just as in the Nuuk story, which is another version of the Inuit-Norse tale. Uunngortoq fled to Igaliku—the Norse bishopric in the Eastern Settlement—when Qasapi, an Inuit, followed and later killed the Norse chief (Thisted 270). The northern Indigenous tale entitled Navarannaq also confirms this. Although the Indigenous tales differ in

some regards, such as how exactly the two groups made contact, they all end in conflicts that eliminated the Norse populations. Second, even if Norse and Inuit stories were slightly exaggerated and the contact was not violent, this means that the Norse had plenty of opportunities to learn from Inuit technology and simply refused to adapt to their successful means of survival. If the Norse were willing, the Thule Inuit could have offered expanded mobility on both water and ice, winter survival gear, and access to the meat and fat of both ringed seal and bowhead whale. From recent work on the Danish colonial sites of the 1720s, it is clear that the later Scandinavian settlers used umiaks by choice and learned more about harpoons and ringed seals in three years of contact than the Norse did in 30 decades (McGovern 94). In either scenario, whether contact was violent or peaceful, Norse settlers rejected coexistence with the Inuit which led to their downfall."

<https://remake.wustl.edu/issue2/lemborg-reverse-colonization>

Since race wasn't a concept pre-1500 or so, it's certainly unfair to attribute a racist intention to the term IN PERIOD.

"And although modern racists since the later nineteenth century have made much of the supposed whiteness of the Norse in Vinland some thousand years ago, the Vinland sagas themselves don't think of this encounter between the Norse and the "Skraelings" as an encounter of white and, say, "red." As my students and I regularly discover, whatever so-called "white" America's interest in these sagas, they actually and primarily concern the thirteenth-century Icelandic difficulty with their own religious heritage: how is it possible to praise one's pagan ancestors? As for the "Skraelings," one of the sagas describes a their leader as "tall and handsome [vænn]," which is precisely the same language the sagas as a whole use to describe any martial hero, Icelandic or otherwise. The Vinland sagas say that the rest of the "Skraelings" have tangled hair and enormous eyes and are – presumably apart from the leader – "ugly" [jilligir], and either "dark" (svartir) or "pale" (folleitt), without, that is, any obvious singularly distinctive hair or skin color, though they are still marked as somehow different." Dr. Karl Steel, <https://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2016/01/not-back-then-they-werent-still-more-on.html?m=1>

I have seen a couple of people reference the children's book "Skraelings" as an example of the current Indigenous view on the word. Although in part informed by the oral histories of Indigenous Peoples and their early contact with Norse settlers, it simply doesn't seem to be a mainstream point of view on the word within Indigenous cultures.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/562035>

When the incipient Canton of Skraeling Althing in the incipient Barony of Septentria was named (1977 or so), "Skraeling" was understood to be an Old Norse term for "Barbarians" (regardless/devoid of racial connotation). The place where the Ottawa, Gatineau, and Rideau Rivers was dubbed "Skraeling Althing" because Canada's Parliament frequently acts like barbaroi - barbarians. We were named "the Barbarian's Parliament" as a humorous reference to federal MPs acting badly, not as any reference to Indigenous Peoples living here

If the term Skraeling is considered a racist slur by First Nations or Inuit people today, then "Skraeling" should absolutely be changed. I am not wed to the term, and I am sure something prosaic would replace the word.

I have never heard a single Indigenous person use the word in a list of offensive racist terms to this day. Master Naon, mundanely the Cultural Affairs Officer for the Assembly of First Nations in the 1980s/1990s and son of a Mohawk Clan Mother from Kahnawake, absolutely went off with terms such as "s*uaw" (ultimately forcing the National Gallery of Canada rename a painting which had that word in its title). He never once indicated Skraeling was a racist or offensive term in his experience.

No single person can speak for all Indigenous People. My voice is as a non-Western Hemisphere Indigenous woman, a scholar, and someone who does Ceremony with and has family who are Algonquin, James Bay Cree, Mohawk, Mik'maq, Apache, and Navajo. I cannot speak for them, and will not.

I am intrigued as to what type of expert might be hired by/paid to do research on this question.

I offer what I was able to find about the question, since (quite frankly) there is a paucity of trustworthy sources either saying "yes, it is offensive today", or "no, it is not considered offensive."

Feel free to reach out to Jane and Sandra. I expect that, having looked all this up before, it might not be an onerous task today.

Sorry for such a long letter. As a scholar, I really am interested in whether we carry an offensive Baronial name or not.

Cheers
TSivia

[Email from the Canadian Anti-Hate Network to Colyne Stewart, Nov 30, 2022](#)

Thanks for reaching out.

We have not see it often, and when we do, it's in quite obscure, somewhat white nationalist-adjacent Viking/Europe history chats on Telegram.

A quick search does indicate it's considered derogatory, and even if it's not actively being used by the white nationalist movements in any frequency, there is still a possibility of it being co-opted and used as a slur that is less likely to be noticed by people not already aware of it.

You may want to check in with the Indigenous community on the land in which the re-enactments are taking place. Perhaps reach out to some local Indigenous social justice or community organizations. We'd recommend taking their lead on this.

Hope this helps,

Elizabeth

Collection of Quotations Regarding the Term

• The origin of the word *skraeling* has been debated, but there is agreement that the Norse meaning was “wretched person.” Most historians interpret the word to be a designation given to any of the various Native peoples the Vikings encountered. In Greenland these could have been the Inuit or Eskimo peoples; in North America it might have applied to Micmacs, Beothuks, or an Algonquian-speaking people. In Europe it surfaced as a Danish word used to distinguish the Celtic people. The term did not, therefore, imply that those being referred to were barely more evolved than Stone Age hominids.

Interestingly, the Greeks had typically called foreigners Barbarians because their language made as much sense to the Greeks as the braying of sheep: *baa-baa*. The term was therefore a joke word that became a slang word that became the root of our word *barbarian*.

The Lost Colony of the Templars: Verrazano's Secret Mission to America
By Steven Sora, footnote 7

When the Norse Greenlanders encountered the Dorset people in Greenland, they referred to them with the derogatory term “*skraeling*,” meaning “screamers,” and, by connotation, wretched or uncultured. They used the same word to refer to the Natives they found in Vinland. The sagas make clear that the Norse feared the *skraelings* and believed them to be dangerous, possibly supernatural beings. As a result, there was limited interaction and exchange between the groups and the Norse were known to kill Natives with little provocation. According to the sagas, such behavior resulted in vengeance attacks by the Natives, whose weapons were essentially the same as those used by the Vikings but whose population vastly outnumbered that of the Norse settlers.

Encyclopedia of American Indian History [4 volumes]
edited by Bruce E. Johansen, Barry M. Pritzker , p 206

The Vinland sagas' description of the Skraelings does not emphasize what is, in any obvious way, a racial difference. They describe a Skraeling leader as "tall and handsome [*vænn*]," which is precisely the same language the sagas as a whole use to describe any martial hero. The Skraelings themselves have tangled hair and enormous eyes and are – presumably apart from the leader – "ugly" [*illiligir*], and either "pale" (*folleit*) or "dark" (*svartir*), without, that is, any obvious singularly distinctive hair or skin color. The description of the Skraeling leader belongs to a medieval tradition of visible class difference, which often describes nobles as light-skinned, brave, intelligent, and beautiful, and peasants as their opposites (Pelteret). For example, the Old Norse *Rígsþula* gives an account of the origins of farmers, warrior earls, and slaves, the latter of which are "swarthy" [*svartan*], "repulsive" [*fülligt*], and "sun-burnt" [*sólbrunnin*], while calling the earls *hvíta*, white (Orchard 241–47). Differences in skin color, with all this implies about "natural" hierarchies, here justify internal social differentiation rather than dividing the Norse from other people. As for Rig himself, his name may come from the Irish for king (Orchard 337; Pelteret 83–84), making this god of human variation and hierarchy far from suitable for representing any 'pure' strain of Nordic identity.

Though many elements in the Vinland sagas attest to actual contact between the Norse and Native Americans – most notably the unmistakable description of pemmican – their descriptions of the skraelings as a whole, and even the word "skraeling" itself, belong to the medieval belief that the far reaches of the world were inhabited by monsters. A host of medieval European texts populated an almost wholly imaginary India and Ethiopia with Cyclops, Cynocephali (dog-headed humans), and Blemmyae (headless humans with faces in their chests) (Friedman and Steel). Norse texts spoke of the fearsome *blámaðr* ("Blackmen"), located either in Africa or Finland, who were, according to one text, bald and yellow-eyed, with sharp teeth and a tendency towards piglike squealing when exited (Cole 349–50). More importantly for the Vinland sagas, Pygmies were thought to inhabit the far North, as were Unipods, humans with one leg terminating in one gigantic foot: both appear on the upper edges of the early fifteenth-century Nancy map of the Danish geographer Claudius Clavus (in Danish, Claudius Claussøn Swart). In *Erik the Red's Saga*, Thorvald is killed by a Unipod's arrow, while the

word “Skraeling” may simply be the Old Norse translation of the Latin *Pygmaei* (Seaver).

The still larger point is that believing in the “barbarian Viking,” so common among modern Viking enthusiasts, is to take on the viewpoint of the Vikings’ Christian or Muslim enemies and trading partners: the Norse did not think of themselves as rugged barbarians but as the civilized norm, who distinguished themselves, in the twelfth-century *Historiae Norwegiae*, for example, from the rough Finns and ancient Picts of the Orkneys, identified as the descendants of African Jews (Ekrem and Mortensen 59, 66). They did tend to think of the Skraelings as “other” but not as racially other in any modern sense. This is not an encounter of Nordic barbarians with noble, doomed savages, as modern literature often portrays it, but instead an encounter common in medieval travel literature between humans and dubiously human monsters, located exactly where the writers of the texts expected monsters to be. This is not a discourse of ‘Eurocentrism’ (contra Frakes 168–69), but rather a discourse of center and margin adaptable to a variety of contexts.⁷

DEcolonial Heritage: Natures, Cultures, and the Asymmetries of Memory
edited by Aníbal Arregui, Gesa Mackenthun, Stephanie Wodianka, pp 85-86

* Once contact was fully established, the Norse found that the Eskimos posed no physical threat to them. There is no clear record of any on-going Norse-Eskimo strife. The Norse looked upon the Eskimos as merely primitive; the very word *Skraeling* has connotations of “wretched.”

Erikson, Eskimos, and Columbus: Medieval European Knowledge of America
By James Robert Enterline

The earliest cited mention of the *Scraelinger*, or *Skrælings*, occurs in the accounts of the Norse visits to North America, at the end of the tenth century ; and the people thus referred to are generally identified with the Esquimaux. “ The Northmen were used to call the Esquimaux *Skrælings*, a term of contempt, meaning, says Crantz, ‘ chips, parings, *i.e.*, dwarfs.’ ” And the North American *Skrælings* of the tenth century, who are described as paddling about in skin-canoes, “ skimming the surface of the water in their swift flight,” are quite obviously either of the same race as the modern Eskimos, or else closely allied to them.³ In the course of eight or nine centuries, the “ *Skrælings* ” may have become modified to some extent ; and, indeed, modern travellers⁴ are wonderfully unanimous in remarking upon the effect that nineteenth-century intermixture has had upon Asiatic and Greenland Eskimos, and upon the Ainos. But whatever the exact

The Testimony of Tradition
By David MacRitchie, p 174

The **Skraelings** were ancestors of the Micmac or Malisee tribes who occupied the Vinland area. **Skraelings** is a mysterious Norse word whose meaning is unknown . We do know that it was not a flattering term. The Vikings described the people ... No preview available for this page. [Buy this book.](#)

American Archaeology Uncovers the Vikings
By Lois Miner Huey

American white supremacists want to make Vinland great again, laying out an imagined past in which Vikings are the rightful conquerors of North America, locked in eternal battle with the Skraelings, the Viking slur for indigenous people.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/05/31/white-supremacists-love-vikings-but-theyve-got-history-all-wrong/>

Some scholars have speculated that skrælingi came from the Scandinavian word skral or the Icelandic word skrælna. The word skral connotes "thin" or "scrawny". In the [Scandinavian languages](#), it is often used as a synonym for feeling sick or weak, but this speculation is probably a case of [folk etymology](#) or linguistic "[false friend](#)"; the word skral does not exist in medieval Norse texts (for example the [Icelandic sagas](#)) nor in modern [Icelandic](#). It is a 17th-century [loanword](#) from [Low German](#) into the Scandinavian languages: [Danish](#), [Norwegian](#) and [Swedish](#). Skræling or skrælling means weakling in modern Norwegian and Danish.^{[3][4]} Skrælna refers to shrinking or drying (plants for example). The term is moderately pejorative in [Erik the Red's Saga](#) as it is first used after a negative description of [Native Americans](#) encountered in [Vinland](#). [First Nations](#) people in Canada consider it offensive.
<http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/skr%C3%A6lingar>

From Skræling(j)ar, the Old Norse word for the indigenous people of Canada. The literal meaning of the word has still not been defined. In Norwegian it means 'weakling, wretch' and in modern Icelandic 'barbarian' (See [Germanic Language Studies – Scandinavian Loanwords in English](#)).
<https://www.thevikingarchive.com/skraeling/>

The alleged improvement furthers the colonizing argument that "pure" Indigenous peoples, as encountered by Old World visitors (including the pesky skraelings of the Vinland sagas), were innately inferior, and that their displacement by white newcomers was (and is) inevitable and just.
<https://earlycanadianhistory.ca/2016/04/11/white-tribism-viking-explorations-and-indigenous-erasures/>

The Norse called the Beothuk Skraelings (taken from the Norwegian word skraelingjar meaning "small and withered"). The Beothuk apparently reminded the Norse of trolls and were described as "ill-favored men with ugly hair on their heads."
https://www.vcanada2.com/section_1/1.2arrivalandcontact.htm

But at other settlements, the Vikings had several bloody encounters with the Indians, whom they called Skraelings, a derogatory Old Norse word meaning wretch.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/05/09/science/ancient-site-offers-clues-to-vikings-in-america.html>

Lewis-Simpson doubts the word Skraelings refers to rock formations as Wiedman suggests. "No one really know what skraelings means, but the usage of the word in Old Norse seems to suggest an origin meaning wrinkled or dried out leather, perhaps referring to the skin boats or

clothing used by indigenous people: it does not refer to rock," she said. "His arguments are based on translations of the sagas, and not the original Old Norse as far as I can tell."

<https://www.saltwire.com/lifestyles/toronto-blogger-interprets-vinland-sagas-as-oral-map-141571/?location=corner-brook>

The Vikings dubbed their enemies Skraelings, which means either "barbarian" or "foreigner" in the old Norse tongue. It could have also meant "weak" or "sickly" or even "false friend".

<https://militaryhistorynow.com/2013/02/20/old-world-vs-new-the-first-battles-between-native-north-americans-and-europeans/>

The Norse had nothing good to say about the people they met: skraelings means "little men" or "barbarians" in Icelandic, and in the historical records of the Norse, the skraelings are referred to as poor [traders](#), primitive people who were easily scared off by Viking prowess.

Skraelings: The Viking Name for the Inuits of Greenland

<https://www.thoughtco.com/skraelings-viking-name-for-the-inuit-172664>

The word skræling is from [Greenlandic Norse](#), the [Old Norse dialect](#) spoken by the medieval Norse Greenlanders. In modern [Icelandic](#), [skrælingi](#) means "barbarian", whereas the Danish descendant, [skrælling](#), means "weakling". The origin of the word is not certain. William Thalbitzer (1932: 14) speculates that skræling might have been derived from the Old Norse verb skrækja, meaning "bawl, shout, or yell".^[4] An etymology by Michael Fortescue et al. (1994) proposes that the Icelandic word skrælingi (savage) may be related to the word [skrá](#), meaning "dried skin", in reference to the animal pelts worn by the Inuit.^[4]

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skr%C3%A6ling>

The Norse simply called them Skraelings, not making any distinction between them. To the Norse the term Skræling indicated that these people looked, lived, and spoke differently from themselves, the same way the Greek called everyone not speaking Greek barbarians.

Undoubtedly there was a negative connotation to the word.

<https://www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/vinland/othermysteries/skraelings/indexen.html>

The origin of the word skraeling is uncertain. It came to mean "barbarian" or "heathen," but that is not the original meaning of the word in Old Norse. It may have been related to the Norse word for "scream," referring to the war cries uttered by the Beothuks. It may also have been related to a word for "scrawny" or a word for "hides."

<http://www.native-languages.org/definitions/skraeling.htm>

1767, Norse name for inhabitants of Greenland encountered by the Viking settlers there, from Old Norse Skræingjar (plural), apparently literally "little men" (compare Icelandic skrælna "shrink"); another term for them was smair menn. The name may have been

used first in reference to the inhabitants of Vineland (who would have been Indians), then transferred to Eskimos, who adopted it into their own language as Kalaleq.

Hans Egede, who published a dictionary of Greenland Eskimo in 1739, says that the Eskimos themselves told him that they got the name from the Norsemen who once lived in Greenland. [Gordon, p.217-8]

<https://www.etymonline.com/word/skraeling>

A negative connotation referring to [native americans](#). A very offensive term used by the [vikings](#) to describe [the red](#) indians.

<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=skraeling>

The Norse referred to the indigenous peoples they encountered in Greenland and the New World as skraeling, a derogatory term meaning wretch or scared weakling, and the sagas make it clear that the Norse considered the natives hostile.

<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,996836-7,00.html>

skrelling m1 (beslektet med skral) skral person, svekling [weakling]

<https://ordbok.uib.no/SKRELLING>

However, the expeditions ran into increasing difficulties with the native Americans, whom the Norse called skrælingjar (which might be translated "coarse fellows", or perhaps as "sub-humans"). At first, the skrælingjar were trade partners, trading their pelts and furs for dairy products and red cloth. The skrælingjar had never seen iron tools and weapons before, but must have realized their value. (Chapter 6 of Grænlinga saga describes how one of the skrælingjar picked up an unattended Norse axe and struck and killed one his comrades. He then threw it out to sea as far as he could.) The Norse refused to trade their iron weapons for skrælingjar goods.

http://www.hurstwic.org/history/articles/society/text/North_American_exploration.htm

(This is what they call us)

Los Indios, Indio, Indian, Indianner, injuns, Americans, American Race, redman, redskin, redstick, redbone, Peaux-rouge, salvage, savage, sauvage, salvatico, skraelings, wildmen, pagan, heather, infidel, primitive, barbarian, cannibals, Caliban, new world man, sons of another adam.

Red devil, tawny devil, tawnies, darkies, darklings, brownies, greasy heathen, copper-colored, copper-skins, copperhead, red nigger, backward, undeveloped, obstacle to progress, stoic, the plight of the Indian, Indian giver, Indian coffee, sly as an Indian, Indian lover, praying Indians, friendlies, hostiles, renegades, red line of cruelty, bloody border warfare, Indian Country, Indian menace, Indian peril, savage barrier, vanishing Indian, Lo! The poor Indian, Mr. Lo, poor Indian, blanket ass, feather head, le plume, lazy Indian, dumb Indian, playing the dumb Indian, wooden

Indian, cigar-store Indian, Indian princess, Indian summer, Indian camp, firewater, debased, debauched, downtrodden, scalp, scalp-lock, scalp-knife, cruel, bloodthirsty, massacre, bury the hatchet, smoke the peace pipe, red children, visit the great white father, the Indian question, the Indian problem, Indian law, American Indian Law, you can not change an Indian, the only good Indian is a dead Indian, nits make lice.

<https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/native-american-indian-list-shit-they-call-us-and-shit-we-call-ourselves>

Though many elements in the Vinland sagas attest to actual contact between the Norse and Native Americans – the unmistakable description of pemmican, most notably – their descriptions of the skraelings as a whole, and even the word “skraeling” itself, belong to the medieval belief that the far reaches of the world were inhabited by monsters.

Bad Heritage: The American Viking Fantasy, from the Nineteenth Century to Now

Karl Steel

Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, CUNY

[The Saga of the] Greenlanders is shorter and less fantastical than *Eirik the Red*, but both contain figures of non-Norwegian origin. They also both contain episodes concerning skraelings, or the natives of Vinland, but as they are presented as alien enemies and contribute in no way to the settlement of Iceland they are not considered.

“They Accuse Us of Being Descended from Slaves”

Settlement History, Cultural Syncretism, and the Foundation of Medieval Icelandic Identity

Ann C. Humphrey

Rutgers University, History Department Senior Honors Program

April 17, 2009