

THE WAY WE NEVER WERE:
NATIVE AMERICANS IN
POPULAR CULTURE: A PROPOSAL FOR A
VIRTUAL REALITY BASED EXHIBIT

By

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Bachelor of Secondary Education - Social Studies

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Stillwater, Oklahoma

2004

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
December, 2017.

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Acknowledgements

I dedicate this thesis to the one person without whom I would not be able to pursue my dreams and goals. For twenty-five years, through every twist and turn of a constantly changing life, she has supported, nurtured, loved, and encouraged me with an abundance of love and the occasional metaphoric kick in the pants. Everything I have been successful at in the last quarter century of my life was only possible because of you. This one is for my Chicago-Hawaiian Rose, Anette Ketchem. I love you.

I would also like to thank a few others for invaluable assistance along the way. To the faculty of the History Department and the College of Education at Oklahoma State University, thank you for helping me expand my knowledge base and professional skills. To Lu Ireton, Rodney Stewart, Robert Wilds, Tinia Petties, James Smallwood, Bill Steinbrink, and Patricia Nowlin, thank you for showing me by example the right way to teach. To the Power Triplets, Cara Eubanks, Sarah Barton, and Emma Fritz, your friendship and ebullient humor kept me sane through some truly stressful times as we pursued our MA degrees. To Michael Joslin and Justin Prince, my brothers in spirit, I am glad that we are still together as I enter the next phase of Grad School.

Many thanks for the constant mentoring and encouragement are necessary to the members of my committee, Drs. Bill Bryans, Doug Miller, and Laura Arata. Through multiple semesters, all three provided immeasurable support, as well as much appreciated training in teaching at the university level during my rotations as a GTA in their sections.

Finally, I want to thank and praise the Lord my God, with whom I can do anything and without whom I can do nothing.

Name: JON C. KETCHEM

Date of Degree: DECEMBER 2017

Title of Study: THE WAY WE NEVER WERE: NATIVE AMERICANS IN
POPULAR CULTURE: A PROPOSAL FOR A VIRTUAL REALITY BASED
EXHIBIT

Major Field: HISTORY

Abstract: This project proposes a museum exhibit that will explore the public memory of Native Americans as influenced by popular culture through commercial entertainment venues. The introductory chapter explains how exposure to popular media affects the public's perception of Native Americans. Phil Deloria argues that the public formed a pan-Indian viewpoint regarding the varied tribes and nations of the Native American populace. While negative in general, those Native Americans who participated in these entertainment venues benefited individually by this participation. This thesis argues that this public perception of Native Americans is attributable to two distinct reactions of the majority White culture to settler colonialism. The negative stereotypes of Indians from the Wild West shows through the 1950s served as justifications for settler colonialism. The extreme positive stereotypes formed in the 1960s and thereafter were apologies for settler colonialism. The second chapter provides historical background for the exhibit proper. The second chapter begins by examining the created perceptions of Indian culture presented through the traveling Wild West shows of the late 1800s. The next section of the chapter relates the same for the film industry. The third section reviews Indian portrayals in television programming since the 1950s. The penultimate section examines the varied stereotypes presented by the commercial music industry. The last section of chapter two examines the portrayal of Native Americans in European venues. The third chapter presents the design and technical details of the proposed museum exhibit. This chapter also contains an argument in favor a VR exhibit. Additionally, there is an appendix following the bibliography with larger representations of the images from the presentation proposal.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The only sound heard among the smoking remains of the little farm house is the buzz of fly wings around the remains of John and Mary Johnson. Arrows extrude from the naked, charred beams jutting from the rubble. The perpetrators of this senseless act of violence have left nothing alive at the homestead. The corral is empty, the cow and horses stolen. From beneath Mary extends a little hand, silently inferring that Mary gave her life futilely trying to shield this child.

This vignette, itself an amalgam of dozens of scenes culled from videos watched in the research for this proposal, was the standard view of the interaction between the so-called noble pioneers, extending civilization into a barren, unpopulated, and underutilized frontier, and the savage Indians in the mental images of the public regarding the expansion of Euro-American society into the West. This image, created through the medium of popular entertainment, dominated the mindset of the preponderance of the US non-Indian population. Moreover, it tinged and imbued the opinions formed regarding all issues involving the Native Americans contemporary to their time, ranging from the rights of the various tribes to hold and use their lands as they saw fit to citizenship for individual tribal members, and the very sovereignty of the tribal nations.

Mass entertainment created this false image of Indians in the minds of the average citizen through simplified messages delivered visually that required little to no critical

thinking. In excess of five hundred tribes, with differing languages, religious practices, and social customs found themselves reduced to a single pan-Indian stereotype. The multiple thousands of people constituting the membership of those tribes ceased to be unique individuals to the great mass of the US citizenry, reduced to stereotypes. During the research phase of this project, this researcher divided the stereotypes into four general categories. The first were Braves, who raided, murdered and stole from Whites for nebulous reasons. Second there were Maidens, who were inherently without moral integrity and drawn to White men. Next, there were "Good" Indians, who retained vestiges of their language and customs but cooperated with the White expansion. Lastly, there were the "Civilized" Indians, who made the complete transition to the norms of mainstream America and abandoned the customs of their people. These stereotypes dominated for decades, constantly reinforced by the entertainment industry.

Beginning in the 1950s, this narrative and its implied message changed. Gradually the polarization of the myth reversed. By the middle 1970s, various media presented entertainment containing four stereotypes. There are gradations and variations within these stereotypes, but they still conform to these four categories.

The first was noble Native Americans who possessed neither the inclination nor the desire to engage in warfare with either White settlers or other tribes, although they can fight when sufficiently provoked. These noble men and women exhibit all the best attributes of leave-no-trace environmentalists. Specifically, they never kill game than they can use, never leave refuse or detritus behind when they move camp, and invariably have at least one expository conversation about the need to live in complete harmony

with nature. They invariably become the victims of one or both of the negative stereotyped groups of characters.

The second stereotyped people involve Whites who begin to honor the beliefs of the nobles. These characters usually become at least an honorary member of the tribe in the movie or show. Most of the males are soldiers or explorers who receive aid from the tribe. Most of the women are former orphans raised by the tribe. They conform and self identify as complete members of the tribe. Usually, they will be the love interest for the honorable male. Throughout the plot, these characters risk everything to aid and protect the tribe.

The third stereotype centers on the evil Whites. These characters blatantly display racist attitudes in speech and actions. In most cases, they seek the eradication of the tribe in order to secure their lands for exploitation. More and more, these characters also acquire the attribute of an environmental spoiler. They seek to destroy Indian religious sites or burial grounds for logging, strip mining, or industrial use.

The last stereotyped people are the racially traitorous Indians. These characters actively help the evil Whites in the acquisition of their goals. Often these characters perform assassinations and other treacherous actions in the service of their White employers. They serve as scouts for the cavalry, spies for the mining magnate, and servants for the richer antagonists. Implicit in all of this is a hint that they secretly desire to be White.

This document proposes a virtual reality digital exhibit for a museum displaying and explaining the effects of these stereotypes on the public psyche through five mediums. The first is the Wild West Shows of the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries. The second is the motion picture industry from the turn of the twentieth century to the mid-1990s. The third group of mediums are television programming and commercials. The fourth medium is popular music. The last medium examined is foreign interpretations of Native Americans through reenactments, movies, and television. This narrative of the exhibition argues that all of these stereotypes, regardless of intent, were and are harmful to the Native American nations as a whole even if individual citizens of those nations benefited.

By reducing an entire race to static caricatures, the decision makers in the entertainment industries deprived the Indians of agency in the mind of the public. The mindsets created by long-term exposure to these stereotypical constructs extend to the assumptions and actions of the nation's policy makers in Congress and the Executive agencies. The resulting decisions cost the Indians their land, their cultural heritage, and their very sovereignty. The underlying thesis of the narrative is that the stereotypes result directly from settler colonialism. The early negative stereotypes retroactively justified the forcible expropriation of millions of acres belonging to the various tribes. By convincing the viewing audience that these thefts were appropriate, the producers also supported the systematic oppression of other minorities by the White majority. The later stereotypes attempted to reject settler colonialism, with varying degrees of success. This was quite a challenge, as the previous decades of media not only resulted from settler colonialism, but also advanced it through new means. For this narrative, the definition of settler colonialism is when an uninvited wave of immigration from a more powerful ethnic group, usually with the support and approval of an imperial power, displaces and

dispossess the indigenous inhabitants.¹ The creators of these productions sought to alter the outlook and opinion of the public regarding the manner in which the nation interacts with Indians. The secondary goal is to increase public understanding regarding the treatment of all ethnic groups and races by the government and powerful private interests.

One could well inquire as to why certain examples appear in this exhibit, while others do not. The decision came as the result of much consideration. This exhibit does not propose to portray the best-known examples in each subject area. The number of films, television series, and musical tracks that could potentially be part of the exhibit is prohibitively large. Narrowing the number enough to fit within the time constraints of the average citizen's willingness to participate in educational or cultural pursuits necessitates that most remain unincluded. Some of the examples, such as the Wayne/Ford Cavalry Trilogy are well known, but the others received a place because they are less famous. This serves to emphasize the degree to which the misinformation permeates popular culture, but also possibly provides safe emotional space for consideration of the topic. Patrons may be more inclined to view the exhibit critically if it is media they are not strongly attached to. Strategically, this could be helpful regarding the intent of the exhibit, as there is a decent probability that once they consider these materials critically, they may be more open to thinking critically about media they are more attached to personally.

¹ Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3.

Historiographic Essay

Popular culture, both in the United States and in other countries, is replete with depictions of Native Americans. Unfortunately, the preponderance of these portrayals is inaccurate stereotypes. Far worse, these inaccurate definitions of what it is to be an Indian are created by non-Indians for the entertainment of other non-Indians, with little to no input from Native Americans. The argument of this exhibit is that the stereotypes of Indians presented in popular culture result from centuries of settler colonialism practices against the Native Americans. The stereotypes either serve to validate retroactively the dispossession of the Native Americans, or are apologies for the same. Regardless, both reasons harm the reconciliation process between Native tribes and the people and government of the United States.

For instance, it was necessary to look at publications from experts such as both Vine Deloria, Jr. and Phillip Deloria about the general portrayal of Native Americans in entertainment venues. It was necessary to look at the arguments presented by G.M. Frasier, Lary May, and others about the portrayal of Indians in cinema. Frasier, Tahmahkera, and Fitzgerald provide some insight into the portrayal of Indians on television. To determine proper positioning in the canon of books about the Wild West Shows, one must refer to authors such as Moses, McNenly, and Kasson. The public imagery of Native Americans in European entertainment venues serves as subject matter for McNenly, as well as Kolb. Determining the placement of the narrative in regarding the opinions of Native American scholars about their people's portrayal by non-Indian entertainment involved the works of both Delorias and Raibman. Last, the unique nature

of the proposed exhibit required consultation of literature about the presentation of public history such as Anderson, Masa-Banes, Silverman, and O'Neill.

Since the thesis of this narrative contends that the portrayal of Native Americans as created by non-Indians is either a affirmation or refutation of settler colonialism, depending on the era of the media's creation, it is imperative to properly define settler colonialism. Lorenzo Veracini gives a clear definition in his 2010 monograph, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. Veracini argues that one must not assign a synonymous status to settlers and immigrants. Immigrants join existing societies, conforming to some degree to the culture and customs of the existing society. Settlers bring their social customs with them and create a new society, often displacing the indigenous population.²

Kevin Bruyneel addressed the use of Native Americans as mascots in sports in an article in the Spring 2006 edition of *Native American and Indigenous Studies*. The use of Indians began, according to Bruyneel, at the same time as the allotment process. Bruyneel argues that the racism against Indians is endemic to American culture at such a base level that it is invisible to the average citizen. This use of Indians as mascots is an example of the third method of settler colonialism, appropriation of culture. The first two are forceful dispossession of territory and forced assimilation.³

Jennifer Guiliano's 2015 book *Indian Spectacle: College Mascots and the Anxiety of Modern America* also analyzes a portrayal of Indians in the form of team mascots in football. Guiliano argues that football is an essential part of supporting the myth of white

² Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3.

³ Kevin Bruyneel, "Race, Colonialism, and the Politics of Indian Sports Names and Mascots: The Washington Football Team Case," in *Native American and Indigenous Studies*, Vol 3, No 2 (2016), 1-24.

male superiority. Team mascots are important elements in the creation and sustainment of this myth. She further argues that mascots such as Chief Illiniwek of the University of Illinois are a continuation of the progressive appropriation of Indian culture. While mascots are outside the subject range of this exhibit, Bruyneel and Guiliano's arguments have merit and seem supportive of the thesis of the narrative, at least regarding the portrayal of Indians in pre 1960s movies and television. By casting and scripting Native roles as stereotypes designed to create a mental justification for the actions taken by the settlers in appropriating the lands belonging to the Indian nations, these entertainments serve to bolster efforts by certain portions of the white male audience to assert their self-proclaimed superiority.⁴

In 1996, L. G. Moses published *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*. In this book, Moses examines the struggle between three disparate groups over how the Native Americans would appear in the grand spectacles of the Wild West Shows. They consisted of the producers of the shows, the agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Indian performers. The show producers' primary motivation was money, although Moses argues, as Buffalo Bill himself did, that William Cody attempted to portray his show as educational as well as entertainment. The BIA agents sought the elimination of the Indian performances because they conflicted with the image of the New Civilized Indian that the agents were attempting to force their charges to assume. Native performers initially sought to preserve their cultures through their performances, but over time lost control of the portrayals to the producers.⁵ The narrative for this

⁴ Jennifer Guiliano, *Indian Spectacle: College Mascots and the Anxiety of Modern America*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 15.

⁵ L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*. 1st ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 10.

proposal accepts Moses' premise regarding the Wild West Shows. For the more modern venues, the struggle became between the production companies desire for profits, and the Indians desire for accurate portrayals of their people.

Also in 1996, S. Elizabeth Bird edited the essay collection *Dressing in Feathers: the Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*. This collection spans the full spectrum of popular culture from the Wild West shows through contemporary television programming and local school mascots. The contributing scholars to this collection argue that the image of Native Americans in popular culture is an amalgamation created by Whites without reference or input from the Native people. Bird and the other contributors seek a redirection in the perceptions of the non-Indian community by exposing the methodology behind the false narratives.⁶

Joy Kasson revisits the portrayals of the Indian culture in the Wild West shows in her 2000 monograph, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History*. The book focuses on the showmanship and marketing talent of William Cody. However, the Indian cast members also play a prominent role in the dialogue. Kasson argues that the Indians were cognizant of the false roles they played, but had no qualms about doing so, as the portrayals were a source of income. She does not address the long-term ramifications from these false narratives in the perceptions of the audience.⁷

In 2004, Phillip Deloria revisited the subject as a part of his monograph about Indians whose lives defied the cultural stereotypes regarding what Whites perceived as "real" Indians, *Indians in Unexpected Places*. Like Kasson, Deloria asserts that the

⁶ Elizabeth S. Bird, *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, (Boulder, CO; Oxford [U.K.]: Westview Press, 1996), 15-45.

⁷ Joy S. Kasson. *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History*. 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 211-219.

Native cast members were aware that they were playing a role created by outsiders. Deloria contends that this was an immediate good for the Indians participating in the shows, providing both income and the opportunity for travel beyond the restrictions imposed by the reservation system. Deloria goes further than Kasson with his argument. He posits that the false images only reinforced already formed mental constructs and were therefore a net neutral for the public perception of Indians. It is compelling to point out that all of these authors ascribe agency to the Native Americans. They portray roles created by outsiders, but they actively choose to do so for their own reasons.⁸ The narrative for this exhibit fully agrees that the Indians who played roles in all of the media discussed in this exhibit actively chose to play roles they knew were inaccurate. It also agrees that the portrayals were a net neutral, but argues that when an action or movement does not cause degradation in a situation, it also makes no improvement.

John O'Connor addressed the portrayals of Indians in movies in his 2003 book, *The Hollywood Indian*. The author ascribes the portrayals of Indians in cinema to an emotional attachment to a romanticized set of ideals on the part of Whites. O'Connor asserts that Hollywood tends to stereotype all ethnicities and societal groups to some degree, but that the Native Americans received a greater mutation at the hands of the scriptwriters and production staff because the culture is so visually different from that of the dominant Anglo-American culture. *The Hollywood Indian* ascribes no agency to the Native Americans. Rather O'Connor describes a narrative created by Whites, performed by Whites pretending to be Indians, and patronized by Whites.⁹ This exhibit seeks to

⁸ Deloria, Philip Joseph, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 14.

⁹ John E. O'Connor, *The Hollywood Indian: Stereotypes of Native Americans in Films* (Trenton, N.J.: New Jersey State Museum, 1980), 3-45.

make a similar argument in its narrative. With the exception of the Westerman album and Young Deer's movies, the examples used in this exhibit are also guilty of spreading a definition of what it means to be an Indian in works created by Whites, for White audiences.

Lary May also examined the narrative provided by the cinema in his 1980 monograph, *Screening Out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry*. While primarily focused on the overall effect of cinema on society, a discerning reader can extrapolate much from the chapters that apply to the Indian community in particular. May argues that the movies fostered a shift from producer to consumer-based culture in the United States. This consumer-based culture tended to favor the WASP culture and its constructs at the expense of other cultures present in the nation. So, one could argue that May believes that the resulting mass media became a tool for the justification for the ongoing pattern of settler colonialism toward the Native Americans.¹⁰

The late George MacDonald Fraser, an author of historical fiction and screenplays for both cinema and television, wrote a reference work about historical inaccuracies in each genre respectively. It is titled *History and Hollywood*. Although not a trained academic, Fraser did a credible job of analyzing the myths produced for both screens, with extensive use of primary documentation. Fraser argued that the portrayals of non-White characters in historical fiction, as produced for the screens, resulted from a simple economic calculation by the studio executives. Since the majority of the population was White, the executives ordered all narratives tailored to produce the maximum positive feelings with that demographic, thereby maximizing the potential for

¹⁰ Lary May, *Screening out the Past: The Birth of Mass Culture and the Motion Picture Industry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 32.

profits. He ascribes the same motive to the decision makers of the television industry. Frasier reviews the studios in the first volume and television in the second. Again, these volumes recognized no agency on the part of the Indians in the process.¹¹

In 2014, Dustin Tahmahkera revisited the Native American portrayal on the small screen in *Tribal Television: Viewing Native People in Sitcoms*. More specifically, he analyzed the portrayal of Indians in television comedies and prime time animation. Tahmahkera argues that screenwriters chose to portray Indians as comedic foils for White characters to bolster the claims to moral and intellectual superiority on the part of the White culture. He also ascribes a desire to justify settler colonialist actions taken against the indigenous people of the nation, resulting from this perceived level of superiority.¹²

That same year, Michael Fitzgerald addressed a similar subject in *Native Americans on Network TV: Stereotypes, Myths, and the "Good Indian"*. Fitzgerald chose to concentrate on the portrayal of Indians in television dramas and action shows. He contends that the medium of television lends itself easily to the task of justifying settler colonialism. He dissects the Indian characters from twenty different shows spanning a fifty-year time-period, dividing them into “good” or “savage” Indians. Fitzgerald and Tahmahkera both describe the Native American as relatively powerless to prevent these false narratives owing to the demographic group’s relatively small percentage of the population, but not without agency. They argue that activists within the various nations and inter-tribal organizations work to combat negative stereotypes, but the control of

¹¹ George M. Frasier, *History and Hollywood, Volume I* (New York: Penguin Press, 1985), 85-120. See also *History and Hollywood, Volume II* (New York: Penguin Press, 1985), 65-72.

¹²Dustin Tahmahkera, *Tribal Television: Viewing Native People in Sitcoms* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 12.

most major news by the same corporations profiting from the false narratives lessens the scope of their message.¹³

It is important to consider where the narrative of the proposed exhibit stands in relation to these varying central arguments before discussing the literature on European portrayals of Native Americans or the literature on the need for a paradigm shift in museum exhibition. The argument of this exhibit asserts that the Native Americans in the casts of the Wild West Shows, movies, and television shows were, indeed, fully aware that they were “playing Indian”¹⁴. It stipulates that these portrayals were a net positive for the individual actors involved, as the roles allowed them a generous living, but also constituted a net negative for the Native American people as a whole. The negative images from these entertainments became justifications in the minds of the citizenry for the dispossession and near extermination of the Indian. The exhibit narrative goes farther, stating that the excessively positive portrayals of the last several decades also represent a net negative for the community, as they exaggerate almost to the level of satire, which does nothing to remediate the opinion of the average US citizen.

In 2007, Joe Kolb penned *Native German*. He analyzed the high degree of affinity among the German populace with certain aspects of Native American culture. More specifically, he addressed the deep connection between the Germans and the various nations of the Diné people. He examined and analyzed the Karl May books about a German noble living among the Apaches, and the various media representations of those books, as well as the increasing number of German citizens choosing to devote their

¹³ Michael R. Fitzgerald, *Native Americans on Network TV: Stereotypes, Myths, and the "Good Indian"* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 20-40.

¹⁴ Deloria, 17.

weekends and holidays to participating in Diné reenactment camps. Kolb ascribes this affinity to a desire by the highly urbanized Europeans to reconnect with a culture they see as having a closer connection to nature. Kolb argues that this desire and method of acting on that desire are a positive for the reenactors, as it reduces resistance to self-awareness and fulfillment.¹⁵ This exhibit rejects that argument. By creating an Indian alternate persona, these Europeans commit cultural appropriation. There is nothing improper or inappropriate about admiring cultures other than one's own. Appreciation of diversity is a necessary step in healing racial and ethnic tensions. Pretending to be someone you are not, especially in as inaccurate a manner as these reenactors is different matter.

In 2012, Linda Scarangella McNenly wrote *Native Performers in the Wild West Shows: from Buffalo Bill to Euro Disney*. McNenly contends that the portrayals of Indians in the Wild West Shows, to include the modern analog operating outside Paris at Euro Disney, are the results of transculturalism. In transculturalism, as defined by McNenly, a minority population acquires a degree of acceptance for the attributes of the majority culture in the portrayal of their own indigenous culture. She credits agency to the Indian performers, stating that they actively chose to participate in the pan-tribal presentation and the non-historically based stereotypes for personal goal accomplishment. McNenly seemingly rejects the concept that Indians have an obligation to consider the possible effect on the community as a whole resulting from their choices.¹⁶

Regarding the European portion of this exhibit, the thesis of the narrative is uncommitted regarding motivation among the audiences for the Euro Disney reenactment, the various Winnetou shows, or the reenactment camps. It instead argues

¹⁵ Joe Kolb, *Native German* (London: Tredegar. 2007), 95-112.

¹⁶ Linda S. McNenly, *Native Performers in Wild West Shows: From Buffalo Bill to Euro Disney* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 98.

that these portrayals diminish the reduction of tension between the various Indians and the government and society of the United States. Pronouncements from prominent European critics traditionally are mirrored by the reviewers in the larger venues of the United States, with a commensurate effect on the opinions of the American public. The continuing reinforcement of false narratives prevents fully honest dialogue between the concerned parties.

Gail Andersen edited *Reinventing the Museum: The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift* in 2010, with a revised second edition in 2012. In this collection of articles and chapters drawn from other works, Anderson and others discuss the need for the museum management field to reorient all aspects of managing museums in light of the ongoing digital revolution. Amalia Masa-Banes in this anthology argues that future exhibitions must strive to reflect a fully inclusive reflection of society. This includes ensuring that all ethnicities involved in the subject matter of an exhibition have a voice and presence in the exhibit. Lois Silverman and Mark O'Neil contributed an article they submitted to *The American Historical Review* entitled *Change and Complexity in the 21st-Century Museum*. They argue that as the percentage of the population that obtains all of its entertainment, news, and continuing educational needs met digitally increases, the traditional model for exhibiting materials decreases in relevance. They argue in the article that museums must integrate modern technology into the exhibit process. This is why this exhibit proposal is for a virtual reality based presentation, rather than a traditional physical exhibit. Anderson argues that the museum remains the most trusted source of

historical education in the nation, and that this places a moral imperative upon museum staffs to remain relevant.¹⁷

The narrative for this proposal utilizes a synthesis of these three arguments in *Reinventing the Museum* as its underlying justification. Just as libraries are daily compelled to reduce the number of well written but never read volumes from the shelves of the stacks, museums must turn from relying solely on well designed and researched exhibitions that draw little or no visitors. In a period of rapidly evolving technology, it behooves the field of museum management to embrace and internalize the changes or face the fate of other outmoded institutions.

¹⁷ Gail Anderson, *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2004), 11-33.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL CONTENT

The Wild West Shows

The Wild West Shows and their predecessors, the circuses shown by men like PT Barnum, were the first true mass entertainment genres in the United States. Joy Kasson describes William "Buffalo Bill" Cody as "the first national celebrity".¹ Cody's show, Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show and Circus, and the 101 Ranch Wild West Exhibition were the three largest of the Wild West shows that toured the United States and Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Large numbers of Native Americans traveled and performed as integral parts of all three shows.

The Indian performers were a diverse group. The Indian casts of all three shows were arguably a fair representative sampling of the spectrum of Native America, in all

¹ Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History*. 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 98.

aspects of their lives. They belonged to numerous different tribes. In fact, some of the tribes represented were traditional enemies. Sitting Bull and other Sioux directly involved in the demise of Custer and the Seventh Cavalry toured with Buffalo Bill for several seasons, including three European tours. At the same time, Cody's cast included graduates of the Carlisle Academy, a boarding school with the mission of assimilating Native Americans into the dominant culture. Pawnee Bill briefly employed Geronimo, the renowned Apache, on a tour that also included a Creek graduate of Dartmouth. Plains nomadic tribal members worked in the same cast as Iroquois Confederation members from upstate New York. Diné¹ farmers shared the arena with Cherokee town dwellers.

A member of the audience watching a performance of these shows had no idea of this diversity, however. The costumes, war implements, and even the war songs in the performance were uniform among the diverse group. All wore war bonnets copied from the Pawnee. The headdresses topped ensembles consisting of buckskin clothing more appropriate to the tribes originally native to the Northeast and bone and bead regalia borrowed from the Cheyenne. The ponies used in the performances sported painted fetishes borrowed from the Arapaho. The White men scripting these performances presented these amalgamated Indians to the audience as true representations of the Indian people.

The most important problem derived from this artificial construct is that to the audience, most of whom never encountered a Native American in their regular lives, this became what they assumed all Native Americans were like. In the mindset of the typical White resident of the United States and Western Europe, where the shows travelled, all Indians were plains nomads, living on the backs of their ponies, and seeking plunder from

¹ Diné is the name the Navajo call themselves. The term means "The People."

any White encountered. The truth, that the various Native tribes of the Americas lived in biomes ranging from deciduous woodland to chaparral; in abodes that included tepees, hogans, adobe towns, and houses exactly like their white neighbors; never occurred to the vast majority of these audience members. The beautiful mosaic of cultural attributes from more than five hundred distinct tribes became simply the monochromatic "noble savage."²

All three major Wild West Shows, as well as some of the lesser-known ones, utilized a representative Native American village along the entry path to the main pavilion or exhibition tent. The audience observed the same Indians who performed for them, along with their wives and children, cooking, preparing or repairing implements and props, and erecting or decorating their shelters. The path to the main show passed through a dizzying array of tepees, smoldering fires containing unknown foods cooking, and Indian children playing games unfamiliar to the White audience. Just as the costumes were an amalgamation of different cultures attributed to all Indians, this Indian village provided a sterling example of *mastirovka*.³ Only the Plains tribes actually used tepees. Even then, they only employed them during travels between the summer and winter quarters of the bands, and during extended hunting parties. When the tribes were in their regular quartering areas, tribal members resided in cabins⁴. The Wild West Shows presented the audience with the false narrative that all Indians lived in tepees all the time and once more, the White audience internalized this as a core belief.

² Louis Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show*. 1st Ed. (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 2005), 12.

³ Russian term, literally translated as masked, referring to a deliberate subterfuge for public consumption.

⁴ Colin G. Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2016), 40-43.

This exhibit adopts the position that that the Native Americans in the casts were not simple pawns. Neither were the producers of the shows actively seeking to denigrate the Native Americans. The audience members generally harbored no negative intent as they internalized the stereotypes presented in the shows. The Indians in the cast were aware that they were "playing Indian." As Phil Deloria states in his seminal work, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, playing a role in the Wild West Shows provided them with both a better source of income than was available in the home areas for most Indians and exposure to a wider world than they would ever access using their own resources. They were quite aware that they were "playing Indian" for the amusement of White audiences.⁵ Cody, Lillie, and the Miller brothers had no animosity toward the Indians the show employed, and, by the standard of the era in which they lived, they were quite progressive in respect to their opinions of Native Americans. The audience members were merely hungry for diversion, and drawn to the exotic.

However, the question becomes what was the harm inflicted by the shows. The answer is twofold. First, unlike literature or high drama in theatre, visceral visual stimulation of the nature of the Wild West Shows does not require the audience members to engage their higher cerebral functions or analyze the sensory input. Rather, these shows and their more technologically advanced successors, film and television, allowed the viewer to simply enjoy the action without thought. However, viewers still take in directly to the limbic portion of the brain and the subconscious the subtext of such entertainment, forming the basis for bias in other decisions.⁶ This exhibit contends that the biases formed in the minds of the audience members, many of whom were politically

⁵ Deloria, 24.

⁶ Michael R. Mend and Charles Winick, "Deviance and Mass Media, Vol. 2.," *Contemporary Sociology* 9, No. 4 (1980), doi:10.2307/2066249.

active or even politicians themselves, became justification for settler colonialism actions, such as land dispossession, compulsory education at the boarding schools, and restrictions on freedom of movement for Indians.

Red Men on Film

Moving the narrative forward into the early twentieth century, this exhibit next examines and analyzes Native American stereotypes in the first half of the twentieth century in the nascent film industry. Motion pictures naturally descend from the grand spectacles of the Wild West Shows. Movies rely on visual stimulation, but for the most part do not require viewers to engage second order or higher thinking to enjoy what they watch. As with the Wild West Shows, the subtext thus flows through without conscious realization and tendencies to biases form.⁷

The subtext of early movies continued to incorporate the stereotype of the unreasonably hostile Indian, raiding the homes and wagons of honest pioneers, who were only seeking to extend civilization into the underutilized wilderness. Implicit in this subtext is the presumption that the White settlers are legally and morally correct in their incursion into lands traditionally claimed by the Indians. Conversely, the Indians are wrong for opposing this repurposing of lands that Eurocentric ideology claims that they under or improperly utilize. Films also continue to advance a false doctrine of pan-Indian uniformity. They further contain a subtext that was not acceptable or possible to portray

⁷ Ibid.

in the Wild West Shows. These movies often include none too subtle warnings against miscegenation.⁸

One manner in which the studios convey their subtext without excessive difficulty concerns the absence of actual Indians in most movies. From the founding of the first studios in Hollywood during the opening decade of the twentieth century and until the early 1960s, the total number of Native American actors in films numbered less than one hundred at any one time. The only studio that regularly used Indians to portray Indians was Native American James Young Deer's Young Deer-Red Wing Productions. For all other studios, if a part called for an Indian, the production staff dyed the hair of and applied dark make up to a Caucasian actor. The term for this practice is redfacing, much as the use of makeup and wigs to allow White performers to portray Black characters is blackfacing.⁹

No evidence has yet emerged to explain the rationale behind the studio heads decisions regarding the portrayal of Indians, but certain trends are easily discernible in the movies from this era. First, Indian characters only appeared in period pieces set in the Wild West or the Colonial Era. Movies with urban and/or modern settings had White protagonists and antagonists. Blacks and Asians occasionally appeared as menial servants or as comic foils, but Native Americans did not appear, even as the percentage of Native Americans moving to the cities in search of employment grew annually.¹⁰

Second, movie Indians appeared in four distinct categories regardless of location or tribe, very similar to the categories described in the introduction of this proposal.

⁸ Deloria, 85.

⁹ Deloria, 89.

¹⁰ Nicolas G. Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country: Native American Migration & Identity in Twentieth-century Los Angeles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 11-30.

These categories are braves, maidens, blanket Indians, and civilized Indians. The braves' function was raiding the homes of settlers and losing battles to the cavalry. Maidens enjoyed no agency whatsoever and served either as live wallpaper or as a romantic interest for male characters of either White or Indian descent. Blanket Indians were portrayed as work-shy drunkards, dependent on handouts from the forts by which they lived. Civilized Indians were the graduates of the boarding schools who fully embraced the dominant culture of the United States.¹¹

These stereotypes were detrimental to the Indians as a people for the same reasons as the similar stereotypes presented in the Wild West Shows, from which films evolved. Such portrayals denied the rich diversity in actual Native cultures. Furthermore, these depictions reduced an entire people to mere caricatures. As before, the result was the formation of biases supportive of colonial settlement philosophy. In this case, the assumption was the inherent inferiority of the Indians as a race and the inevitability of their subsumation or elimination by the Euro-American majority in the United States.¹²

More insidious was the new message portrayed in films. In films such William DeVille's *The Squaw Man*, female Indians fall helplessly in love with a white character within moments of the first interaction. The resulting romance usually results in death and tragedy for the Indians involved. The White character either suddenly realizes the dangers of romantic entanglements with a Native woman and survives, or fails to do so and meets a tragic fate.

The message conveyed by these stereotypes is twofold. First, the seemingly irresistible nature of White men to Indian women conveys the message that Caucasians

¹¹ Once again, these categories derive from generalizations resulting from several hundred hours of films watched by the author.

¹² Deloria, 96.

are inherently superior to Indians and irresistible to Indian women. Secondly, miscegenation is dangerous.

Both of these grew from the beliefs of white supremacists of the era. The message regarding miscegenation revolves around White men and Indian women, but the subtext is actually the reverse. White supremacists worried about two things at all times: maintaining a status quo that accords all political, societal, and economic power to Whites and maintaining the purity of the Caucasian race. When the plot line warns about the danger of White men and Red women, the producers desire the audience to consider the converse. That is, the danger of romance between non-white men and the ultimate inviolate symbol of White supremacists, white women. The late Dr. James Smallwood, while still teaching at Oklahoma State University, delivered a lecture in a senior level class about the Jim Crow South. Smallwood argued that the decision makers in the post Reconstruction South deliberately chose to cling to the strictures of the Jim Crow laws even after it became apparent that these laws were limiting the economic growth and social acceptance in Western society outside of Dixie. The reason for this recalcitrance was an irrational fear that if allowed to be truly free, Black men would attempt to acquire Caucasian wives. The same irrational fear emerges in the portrayals of Indians in the movies from the first six decades of the film industry.

The last stereotype presented in the films in the first half of the twentieth century often receives erroneous attribution to Stephen Spielberg.¹³ Movie critic George Siskel, in March of 1992, while reviewing a movie set in nineteenth century India, noted that the director had "Spielberged" the supporting cast. This referred to a phenomena noted by both Siskel and his partner Roger Ebert with the debut of each installment of the Indiana

¹³Roger Ebert, *Life Itself: A Memoir*. 1st ed. (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2011), 218.

Jones movies. Those natives supportive of their colonial masters and their American allies appear intelligent and capable, but those who opposed these imperialist protagonists seem stupid and inept. Whether this was truly Spielberg's intent is not for this exhibit to determine, but what is apparent is that directors engaged in this character manipulation long before the Indy movies.

In movie after movie, those Indians who embraced the inevitability of White expansion, or even abetted this expansion, receive positive portrayals. Those who oppose the expansion receive negative portrayals. Despite historical evidence that such was not the case, the old westerns depict Indians as inferior in encounters with the United States military. In fact, one of the most used clichés involves Indian braves fleeing at the mere sound of the bugle calls of a Cavalry patrol. The only time they appear to be effective in combat is when the raiding party vastly outnumbers settlers.

The stereotypes about Indians presented in these first two methods of mass entertainment affected the attitudes of their audiences. This led to the formation of biases among those audiences. Especially susceptible to these sub textual cues were the various immigrant ethnic groups seeking to advance the social acceptability of their families and ethnic groups in the view of those who were included in the White oligarchy. Part of moving their people forward to the desired status involved establishing a perception of superiority to those ethnic groups that could never receive White status: Blacks, Asians, and Indians.¹⁴ These biases then became supporting arguments for settler colonialism based decisions. The effect of those policies on the fate of Indians is tragic and produced consequences still felt today.

¹⁴ David R. Roediger, *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 180-5.

Television Indians

The first commercial television stations began airing programming in the United States by 1948. Within five years, television supplanted radio as the primary source for news and entertainment in American homes. This new venue also made serious inroads into the primacy of cinema. The three major radio networks quickly assumed a monopoly on the distribution of the products from television production companies. The network executives made a safe choice for the content offered by the new medium. They blended visual analogs to the most popular radio shows with small-scale versions of the established cinematic tropes, including westerns, to provide entertainment options in the security of private homes.

The new television westerns brought all of the established images and stereotypes of Native Americans from the cinema productions. The Indians who support land appropriation and cultural assimilation are “good,” with positive portrayals. Those opposed to the seizure of their tribal property in favor of white settlement and industry are “hostile,” with negative depictions. Mixed race characters who choose to abandon the customs of their Native relatives and assimilate receive happy endings, usually involving marriage to a White woman who plays a major role in the decision making process. Those who cling to their traditions experience negative consequences, especially if their love interest is another Indian. The Indian love interest often dies as a subtle warning to the audience of the supposed dangers of miscegenation. Additionally,

the new venue offers another subtle mental cue to the viewer about the indigenous inhabitants of the nation. The explanation of this cue appears in the next paragraph. In combination, the new westerns continue to reinforce the justifications of the decisions made in support of settler colonialism.

The new optic presented for imprint on the mental processes of average citizens is subtle. In fact, it is so subtle, many never notice, simply because it is the absence of presence. For many television westerns, Native Americans make no appearance or very few appearances. For instance, the longest running western television series was *Gunsmoke*, which aired from 1955 through 1975. From a total 635 episodes, Native Americans only appear in just fifteen episodes. Those episodes include thirty-two Indian characters with dialogue. Ten of those are biracial, of mixed white and Indian origin, leaving twenty-two speaking characters of Native descent from a cast numbering in the thousands.¹⁵ These few conformed to the standard industry tropes familiar from the movies.

For instance, in episode seventeen of the fifteenth season all three tropes appear. Samuel Lone Eagle, a graduate of an unnamed boarding school in Kansas and Yale University, arrives via train in a suit, although he changes to a calico shirt and Navajo headband when going into the field as part of a posse. His brother, Angry Bear, is leader of a war band escaped from the reservation and raiding farms. Angry Bear has a white wife named Linda, taken captive as a girl and now part of the tribe, and a biracial son, Little Owl, known as Oliver to his mother. By the end of the episode, Angry Bear dies at his brother's hand. Lone Eagle changes into his suit and departs to California to establish

¹⁵ "Episode List," IMDb, , accessed December 07, 2017, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0047736/episodes>. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0047736/fullcredits> see also "Episode List," IMDb, , accessed December 07, 2017, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0047736/episodes>.

a law practice. Linda chooses to return to her family, who never quit looking for her, in Nebraska. Oliver renounces his tribal name, begins a romantic relationship with a parson's daughter, and takes a job in the dry goods store. Despite this decision, his character makes no further appearance on the show.

One might ask how the relative absence of Native Americans in these television programs serves as a justification of settler colonialism. The answer is that by not showing any Indians among the White settlers, the shows reinforce the argument that the settlers moved into empty spaces in the Trans-Mississippi frontier. By extension, this further argues that the various tribes that occupied these lands did not fully or properly utilize them. Therefore, the appropriation of these lands for the use by farmers, ranchers, and townships is justifiable.

The audience already had an established relationship with one of the first television westerns long before it appeared on their set. *The Lone Ranger* began as a thrice-weekly radio serial in 1933 about a former Texas Ranger and his faithful Indian sidekick Tonto as they travelled through the Old West meting out justice. Clayton Moore voiced the Ranger from 1939, a role he held for the rest of his professional life. A number of White actors voiced Tonto, speaking in a stereotyped patois style. Beginning in 1948, it transitioned to include a visual medium by way of B-reel short films of children's Saturday matinee fare, in addition to the radio program. At that point, Jay Silverheels, a Mohawk from a Canadian band of the Iroquois Confederation, assumed the role of Tonto. In 1949, the venues expanded with the introduction of the television show, which ran until 1957 for 221 episodes.¹⁶

¹⁶ "The Lone Ranger (TV Series 1949–1957)," IMDb, , accessed December 07, 2017, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0041038/>.

The Lone Ranger utilized all the industry stereotypes about Indians. The Tonto character received positive portrayal, although the character often seemed more of a servant than as a partner to the former lawman. Of the 2,376 radio episodes, 60 short films, and six feature length films from the 1950s, other Indians appear less than 100 times. Those who accept expansion of the European-American population are peaceful and friends with the locals. Those who seek to live as they always have received portrayal as warlike and cruel. In addition, as in *Gunsmoke*, in the vast majority of the episodes of a series set in the west, the Indians are conspicuous in their absence. Unlike most prime time westerns, this show did not have a target audience of adults. From the earliest radio days, the writing and marketing targeted children below the age of twelve. The stereotypes presented in *The Lone Ranger* formed part of the imprinting process for two generations of children during their most impressionable years. *The Lone Ranger* is a single example of this phenomenon. Television programming from the Cold War era contains numerous other examples. These children became adults unlikely to question the morality of the dispossession, relocation, and attempted cultural elimination of the original inhabitants of the half of the nation west of the Mississippi River.

In the early 1960s, another trope segued from the cinema into television. This involved Indians as comic foils for White characters. Perhaps the most egregious example of this format of lampooning Native Americans was *F Troop*, which aired for two seasons in 1965-67 for sixty-five episodes. Set in an unidentified portion of the western frontier, the show details the farcical misadventures of a troop of cavalry soldiers and the local tribe, the Hekawi. The Hekawi name itself is a nudging reference to a racist joke about a tribe of Indians so inept they get lost and yell “where the HEKARWE.” The

joke never overtly appeared in the script, but the implication is obvious. The Hekawi characters were either ignorant, venal, corrupt, or a combination of these three. They regularly conspired with Sergeant O'Rourke and Corporal Agarn in deceptions against the post and troop commander, Captain Parmenter.¹⁷ The portrayal of entire tribes as cartoonish caricatures further reinforced the justification for the settler colonialist appropriation of Native property for reallocation to White purposes. The message to viewers was that the Indians were childish and irresponsible; therefore confinement to reservations was in their best interests.

Unlike the cinema industry, television in the 1960s and 1970s did not witness a major shift in the manner in which the studios portrayed Native Americans. Rather, the western as a staple of prime time television slowly atrophied, further reducing the presence of Indians in television. The genre did not completely expire, as *Gunsmoke* continued until 1975, *Bonanza* continued until 1979, and shows set in the West appeared every few years. Most of these shows, however, did not fit the traditional mold of the genre. *Little House on The Prairie*, *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*, and *Into The West*, to name only three of the better known shows, are more properly described as settler shows. They detail the lives and struggles of White settler communities in the West, usually as metaphors for contemporary societal issues. Native Americans often made no appearance on these shows. Again, the mental message was that the Indians were gone when the settlers arrived, so it was justifiable to take and alter the land.

One of the few appearances of Native Americans on television in the late-60s was also one of the more contentious. In October of 1968, the science fiction program *Star*

¹⁷ "F Troop (TV Series 1965–1967)," IMDb, accessed December 07, 2017, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0058800/>.

Trek aired an episode titled *The Paradise Syndrome*. In it, the series star, William Shatner as Captain Kirk, unwittingly teleports to a planet inhabited by a single tribe of Native Americans. Suffering from amnesia, Kirk emerges from an obelisk that serves the people as a focus of worship. Owing to the fact that Kirk emerges from the holy relic, the tribal sachem proclaims that Kirk is the prophesied savior of the tribe. All but one tribal member accepts this proclamation without debate. Throughout the episode, Kirk adapts local dress and marries the daughter of the tribal chieftain. The lone dissenter in the tribe eventually reveals Kirk as a mortal and leads a stoning against Kirk and his wife. The wife dies and Kirk escapes only through the intervention of the crew of his ship.

This episode embodied many of the stereotypes of its predecessors in both the cinema and television. These are in addition to the multiple technical issues with this episode. For instance, the tribe spoke modern English, despite the fact that their migration to this planet occurred in the Pre-Columbian era. The beadwork on their ornaments are plastic and the paints used on their shelters are colors that would only become possible with industrial chemicals not discovered for centuries after the scripts says they left North America. Despite the passing of a millennia, the tribe has a population lower than a hundred souls, all still collocated in a single village. Implausible as these details are, the true issue lies with the stereotypes presented in the screenplay.

The screenplay posits that this tribe is the beneficiary of an unnamed powerful race of aliens who moved them to this planet for their survival approximately one thousand years before the arrival of Kirk. These the aliens saw that the Natives would lose their lands and culture to the onslaught of European immigration. The producer expects the audience to accept without question that the rescuers had the ability to

transport a tribe of Indians across thousands of light years without altering their perception of the universe. Leaving aside the technical barriers to this act, (energy required for transportation, the unlikely chances of a planet with flora and fauna the same as those evolved on Earth, and hundreds of other details), this alone is a negative stereotype. It stipulated that Natives are so inherently inferior to Whites that they require alien intervention before the first settlers arrived. This reinforced the presumption of White superiority to the audience and reinforced the argument that the dispossession of the tribes is justifiable.

Second, the tribe accepts the premise that Kirk was their messiah virtually without question. Such naiveté is child like. This stereotype reinforces the settler colonialist argument by portraying these characters, and by extension all Native Americans, as not truly mentally mature adults. Consequently, they require paternalistic guardianship. In the show this revolved around the aliens and the prophesied messiah. In real life, this was and is the Federal government as embodied in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The third is the use of pan-Indian optics. The tribe wear buckskin clothing in the pattern used by the Creek and Cherokee prior to 1800, but Kirk dons a vest in the Pawnee pattern. The tribe lives in a fixed location in a wooded glade abutting a lake, but they live in tepees. Yet, tepees are a field expedient shelter for the plains tribes alone, and only while hunting or travelling between seasonal homes. The decorations and adornments worn by the tribe members represent at least six different tribal traditions, ranging from Iroquois to Navajo. All of this combines to reiterate the trope that all Indians are the same. This perception supports the effort to eliminate the culture of the Natives. If they

are all essentially the same, there is no need to preserve and protect the individual tribal customs, traditions, and languages.

Advertising and product packaging often use Indian imagery, such as the Land O'Lakes Butter cartons and advertisement, which use the image of an Indian girl holding a box of the butter. Another example came in the early 1980s, when Mazola Corn Oil released a campaign of television commercials using an Indian man. He wore clothing contemporary to the period of the commercial and told the audience about corn, which his people call maize and which is all that is in Mazola. Arguably, the most memorable of these was a commercial that was part of the 1970 environmentalist public awareness campaign Keep America Beautiful. As Robert Conrad narrated a message about the volume of physical detritus created by the American public annually, the audience watched a Native American paddle a canoe through a polluted river, alight on a shore littered with modern debris, and turn to face the camera as a single tear crept down his cheek. This commercial was emblematic of the shift in the stereotypical portrayal of Indians from the 1960s until the current period. Native Americans now received portrayal as arch conservationists who practiced leave no trace ethics and lived harmoniously before the arrival of the Europeans. As stated earlier in this work, this stereotype is just as false as the negative stereotype of the first half of the Twentieth Century. False attributions of an extremely positive nature are still false. Whether positive or negative, false attributes deny Native Americans agency in their own destiny.

Indians in Popular Music

Popular music in the United States contains numerous instances of Native American references. Most are ballads in the country and western genre. Many of these are historically or culturally accurate, but the phrasing in these compositions still feeds negative preconceptions to the listeners. More recently, country composers produce songs they believe honor Native culture, but they bear almost no resemblance to real Indian life or history. To a lesser degree, one finds Native American references in rock music, especially those aspects deriving from the folk and protest phases of the 1960s. The smallest group of songs in popular music comprises those songs composed, performed, and produced by Indians¹⁸. These songs are technically accurate, but the four companies that dominated the allocation of radio airtime and the commercial distribution of music in the United States and Europe in the decades before the internet relegated them to niche status. Consequently, only small independent radio stations and privately owned record stores provided access to the music. Only true aficionados were even aware of their existence.

In 1948, Hank Williams, Sr. co-wrote, produced, and recorded the song *Kaw-Lija*. This ballad tells the story of a cigar store Indian experiencing unrequited love for a wooden statue of an Indian maiden sitting at the other end of the store porch. While not about actual Indians, this song provides an insight into the use of Indian stereotypes for White owned businesses. White tobacconists commissioned wooden statues of Indian men and women that stood in front of their businesses to serve as readily identifiable

¹⁸ Billboard Singles Charts | Record Research MusicVault, accessed December 07, 2017, <https://musicarchivevault.com/>.

signals as to the products sold in the shop. White men as far back as the colonial era commissioned, designed, and constructed the carvings without input from Native American voices. The resulting statues fit within the pan-Indian stereotype, with all of the negative connotations previously noted. Williams' song tacitly endorses the stereotype by a non-objective voicing of the narrative.¹⁹

Sonny James' song *Running Bear* appears to be a complimentary song toward Native Americans. The lyrics describe a romance reminiscent of Romeo and Juliet, but now between Running Bear and Little White Dove, two youth from rival tribes. As in the Shakespearean tragedy, the two die in the act of joining against the wishes of their families. A cursory listening experience reveals nothing objectionable to anyone not familiar with the commonalities in Indian cultures. A modicum of knowledge reveals two problems with the song. The first comes before the lyrics. The opening chords are a fifteen-second rendition of James' backup singers performing a purportedly Indian traditional chant, but the chant is not from any Indian culture. Rather, it is something created by White writers for use in a 1932 Bugs Bunny cartoon, that swiftly became a staple in movies, cartoons, and radio shows needing audio filler for Native ritual scenes.²⁰ The second problem occurs in the last verse. James sings of the doomed lovers choosing to swim toward each other against an impossible river flow, preferring death together rather than life apart. The lyrics state that they will be together in the "Happy Hunting Ground" where they need never fear separation anymore.²¹ Again, this is not a term organic to any actual Native Indian tribe. It is the product of writers for Eastern

¹⁹Hank Williams. *Kaw-Lijah*. *Kaw-Lijah*, Sun Records, 1948, Vinyl single

²⁰ Angela Aleiss and Ebrary, Inc. *Making the White Man's Indian: Native Americans and Hollywood Movies*. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2005), 65.

²¹ Sonny James, *Running Bear*, *Running Bear*, Mercury Records, 1954, Vinyl single

periodicals in the 1840s who did not actually take themselves out of the city to interact with any Indians. Native Americans sometimes use the term in conversation, especially when conversing with non-Indians, but the term is White in origin. The use of these terms renders an otherwise unobjectionable composition into a tool for confirming White preconceptions about Native Americans.

More difficult to criticize is the 1964 Johnny Cash single, “The Ballad of Ira Hayes.” It narrates the struggles and ignominious demise of Ira Hayes, a Pima person who participated in the iconic flag planting on Iwo Jima during the Second World War. Hayes was uncomfortable with the mantle of hero and stated on multiple occasions that the true heroes never came home from the island. He dealt with his survivor’s guilt by self-medicating with alcohol until he drowned in a three-inch deep stream of water in an irrigation ditch while staggering home from a binge. Cash used no imposed cultural tropes in the lyrics, nor did he alter the facts of the story. Still, this song reinforces an old racist belief that all Indians are incipient or full-blown alcoholics. In this worldview, Native Americans are incapable of coping with the stresses and rigors of life in a White society and must abuse alcohol for relief. Undeniably, substance abuse is a problem for the residents of many reservations. Data, however, does not support this mistaken trope for the majority of Native Americans who reside outside the Reservation system.²² The statistics indicate that the percentage of Native Americans residing outside the reservations with substance abuse issues is consistent with the percentage of the general national population.

²² Cathy Carr, "American Indian/Alaska Native," Cathy Carr, September 20, 2017, accessed December 07, 2017, <https://www.samhsa.gov/behavioral-health-equity/ai-an>.

Paul Revere and the Raiders recorded and released the song *Indian Reservation* as part of their album of the same name in 1967. Most listeners refer to the song by its subtitle, *Cherokee People*, rather than its proper title. Mark Lindsay, the lead singer of the band, stated in an interview with *Billboard* that the song was a tribute to the strength and perseverance of all Native American people, but especially the Cherokee survivors of the Trail of Tears. Lindsay said that he learned nothing of the Trail in his school career. Then in 1966, he heard an earlier single jazz version of John Loudermilk's *Indian Reservation*, performed by Marvin Rainwater in 1959. This prompted him to learn about the Trail of Tears, which moved him emotionally. He convinced his band, the Raiders that they needed to build their next album around a rock rendition of the song. The song and the album both attained top ten statuses in both the rock and folk playlists in 1967.²³ All of this sounds very positive for the public image of the Cherokee people. Unfortunately, the song contains numerous mistaken beliefs about the lives of the Cherokee Nation and its citizens.

The most basic misconception was in the song's title. The Cherokee did not live on a reservation. Following their forcible removal from Georgia and Tennessee by executive order from President Andrew Jackson, they received an allotment of several million acres in current day Oklahoma, but this was not a reservation. Until the allotment process of the 1880s and 1890s, the Cherokee nation as a whole held title to the land, but it was not subject to Federal oversight like a reservation. The Cherokee nation still operated as a sovereign entity within the boundaries of its new territory. The federal government did not assign a group of agents to supervise and potentially override the actions of the Cherokee government. When the Curtis Act and other successor bills

²³ *Billboard*. December 2, 1966 edition. Pg 48.

resulted in the allotment of the lands held in common by the Cherokee Nation, tribal members transitioned to private land ownership. They had no restriction on their movement or actions beyond the law, which applied to all residents of Indian Territory and its successor state, Oklahoma, regardless of race. Attributing a status as a dependent people confined to a reservation denies the historical status of the Cherokee as a sovereign people with agency over their lives.

The second error rests in the line that states that the government took away their language and taught their children only English. The Cherokee were the first Native American nation to develop a written version of their traditional language. Although most Cherokee were fluent in English, internal political and judicial records of the tribal government were in both English and Cherokee. Although the number of Cherokee who speak the native language decreased markedly in the twentieth century, an initiative to teach the language to all members desiring to learn began well before the composition of this song. Again, this lyric assigns an undeserved and unneeded victim status to the Cherokee.

A third error occurs in the lyrics that assert that the Whites deprived the Cherokee of their “traditional way of life, the tomahawk, bow, and knife”. The misconception here is not that the Cherokee stopped using their traditional weaponry to defend themselves and hunt, but rather the assertion that this was something imposed upon the Cherokee from outside. Many Cherokee actively chose to assimilate to the lifestyles of their American neighbors. They changed their style of dress to match the current styles. They sent their children to school to learn how to live among the nation that surrounded their own. They even sent many Cherokee youth to universities, including Ivy League schools.

John Ross and his majority in the Houses of Warriors and Kings²⁴ passed internal laws forbidding the use of any of the three mentioned implements for war. The Cherokee were not passive victims of the White government.

Perhaps the most egregious example of a popular song misrepresenting Native Americans is by country artist Tim McGraw. McGraw released another Loudermilk composed song, *Indian Outlaw* in 1994 in advance of his album, *Not A Moment Too Soon*. The song is essentially a nonsensical chain of incoherent couplets proclaiming a large number of negative stereotypes about Indians, finishing with a shouted reprise of the two-line chorus of Loudermilk's *Indian Reservation*. The entire song consists of negative stereotypes from popular culture. McGraw sings about his "Squaw," who is "a Chippewa" before announcing that he likes to "sit around my wigwam, beating on my tom-tom." It appears that Loudermilk attempted to load the song with every Indian cliché he knew, and McGraw's rendition enthusiastically embraces every single one of them. Larry Flick panned the song in his Billboard review, stating that it had the potential to regress relations between Whites and Indians by two centuries.²⁵

A few songs attained a wide audience and gave a positive and honest image of Native Americans to non-Indian listeners. Not surprisingly, most of these came from Native American composers and singers. For example, Floyd Westerman, also known as Khangi Duta, composed and performed *Custer Died For Your Sins* in 1969. Westerman received inspiration for the song from the Vine Deloria, Jr. book of the same title. The

²⁴ The House of Warriors and the House of Kings were the lower and upper houses of the Cherokee analog to the Federal Congress under the original Cherokee Constitution of 1827. Morris L. Wardell, *A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, 1838-1907* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 65. The Constitutions of 1866, 1906, and 1975 replaced it in succession. Our History, accessed December 07, 2017, <http://cherokee.org/About-The-Nation/History/Facts/Our-History>.

²⁵ Larry Flick "Single Reviews," *Billboard*. (February 5, 1994), 75.

song is a searing indictment of the perfidious treatment of the Native Americans by the Federal government. It invokes the death of Custer and his battalion of the Seventh Cavalry as atonement for all of the innocent Indian deaths, broken promises, and stolen lands. It struck a chord with non-Indian idealists on campuses across the nation. The inclination among reform minded Americans, often college age youths, to seek justice for marginalized demographic groups of the nation made them more receptive to messages from members of those groups. This in turn resulted in the opening of dialogues about the inequities inherent in the relations between the Indian nations and the United States.

Indians in European Hearts and Minds

Native Americans are not just featured in the culture of the United States. The fascination inspired by the Wild West Shows of the 1880s and 1890s is shared by tens of thousands of Europeans from all levels of society. In modern times, this interest adapted to the changes in entertainment media. A visible Native American-inspired presence exists in European movies, television, open-air amphitheaters, reenactment societies, and amusement parks. While these activities occur in multiple countries in Europe, this exhibit will only present information about two in Germany that are related to each other.

The German people have long harbored an attraction to the lives and customs of the American Wild West in general and the Native American original inhabitants of the region in particular. In fact, evidence exists that the Germans infatuation with the region, era, and people of the Wild West is old enough that it was once contemporary. All three of the major Wild West Shows made multiple tours of the major German cities to sold-out audiences. Also, *Der Spiegel*, both the Berlin and the regional editions, during the

1880s and 1890s contains reader submitted travel reviews from assorted German nobles about their extended sojourns into the American West²⁶. Karl May wrote numerous novels and plays set in the Wild West which introduced the western novel genre into the German literary canon.

In 1892, May wrote the first novel in the Winnetou series, *Old Firehand*. The novel received critical and popular acclaim, and May wrote ten sequels and five plays. *Firehand* went through five printings in two years.²⁷ Long after May's demise in 1912, the Winnetou Series captivated German audiences. The premise of the novels revolves around a recent German immigrant to the United States who received an incapacitating injury while migrating to California. An Apache warrior named Winnetou found the injured man and nursed him back to health in his village. The young German becomes a member of the tribe, taking the name Old Firehand, which in later books changed to Old Shatterhand. By the third book, he married a tribal member. In a later book, he proclaims that his soul is Apache but became lost and lodged in a body born in Germany.²⁸

The Winnetou series is a glowing tribute to the Apaches by its German author, and greatly shaped the beliefs and perceptions of Native Americans in the minds of the German populace. Unfortunately, the image it imparted was deeply flawed. For instance, May established a pan-Indian cultural trope with his descriptions. He presented the Apaches as emblematic of all tribes in North America. Consequently, the average German citizen to this day labors under the misconception that all Indians were nomadic hunters who moved freely across the continent. This ignores the fact that individual

²⁶ *Der Spiegel*, 1880-1900.

²⁷ Jay Tavare, "Winnetou: The German Apache," The Huffington Post, June 15, 2012, , accessed September 15, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jay-tavare/winnetou-the-german-apache_b_1595604.html.

²⁸ Karl May, *Winnetou en Old Shatterhand*, (Utrecht: Kadmos, 1898) 41.

tribes had distinct areas considered to belong to their tribe. These lands were off limits to all other tribes, often on pain of death. Throughout the literature, Winnetou and Shatterhand encounter members of other tribes during their travels. Regardless of the tribal origins of the newcomers, all speak Apache. This disregards the multiple hundreds of Native American languages, many of which bear absolutely no resemblance to Apache. Lastly, May portrayed Winnetou as a Apache prince, and Nsho Tishi, who married Shatterhand, as a princess. The Apache have no hereditary nobility. This error continues to be a part of the German public image of Indian tribal structure to the current era. In fairness, this is not a uniquely German error. American cultural history contains hundreds of such references, going back to Pocahontas and Jamestown in 1607.

The Winnetou Series received new life in 1963 when Horst Wendlat, a German movie producer, released the first film in a series that eventually contained eleven movies, four television mini-series, and twelve large scale amphitheater plays over thirty-eight years. The series finally stopped adding new material when the actor who played Winnetou, Pierre Brice, passed away. All proved enormously popular with German audiences. Interest in Native Americans, never completely extinguished, became once again a serious part of the German national cultural pantheon.

The Winnetou movies continued all of the mistaken stereotypes from the written series and added more that were only possible in a visual medium. Winnetou used a sign language to reinforce his spoken words when conversing with other tribes. This was accurate, as there a multitude of documented instances of the use of sign as a communication aid by Indians. Pierre Brice did not know and did not learn the proper signs. Rather, he used the form of sign language used by the hearing impaired in

Germany.²⁹ All Native Americans in the series wear roughly the same clothing--full-length buckskin trouser and shirts for the males, and buckskin dresses for the females, all adorned with large amounts of patterned beadwork. Neither of these outfits is appropriate dress for Apaches. This costume choice once again reinforced the myth of pan-Indian commonality for the viewers.

The greatest problem with the Winnetou movies, series, and plays are the actors. The only character played by an actor of the proper nationality is Shatterhand, played by Lex Barker. Pierre Brice, who portrays Winnetou, is French. Iazu Lorias, who played Nsho Tishi, was Serbian. Actual Native Americans did not play even one of the secondary or extra level Native Americans. This is redfacing on a mass scale. Again, this is not unique to Germany. Redfacing has appeared in countless films made in the United States. This major cultural niche and sub-group rests on books and movies written by a European who never travelled to the Americas or met a Native American.

Regardless of its inaccuracies, the Winnetou stories dominate the popular conception of Indian life among Germans today. Two large organizations especially promote the myth. The first is the German branch of the international role-playing association, the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA). In the United States, SCA members tend to dress as Medieval Europeans or Mongols from the Golden Horde. In the German branch, fully twenty percent of the reenactors choose Native American personas, usually based on their perceptions from Winnetou.³⁰ The other organization

²⁹ Jay Tavare, "Winnetou: The German Apache," The Huffington Post, June 15, 2012, , accessed September 15, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jay-tavare/winnetou-the-german-apache_b_1595604.html.

³⁰ "Germany's Obsession With American Indians Is Touching-And Occasionally Surreal," Indian Country Media Network, March 24, 2013, , accessed December 07, 2017,

derives directly from the genre. The BundesWinnetou, or Winnetou Society, gather every weekend from April through September at a camp site in Bavaria's Schwarz Wald, for the purpose of living in the style that they believe that the Winnetou characters lived. Dressed in regalia that is mixed culturally completely inauthentic, they spend two to three days each week pretending they are Apache. During these encampments, many answer only to their chosen tribal name, refusing to acknowledge that any other identity exists. Some claim, as the Shatterhand character did, that they are Apache souls stuck in German bodies. The lifestyle in the camp abounds with anachronisms and inauthentic details. The residents use tepees, while the Apache usually lived in wickiups. Ceremonial drum have skins from synthetic materials. Modern plastic beads abound in designs ranging from Tlingit to completely imaginary. Heidi Klum wore a choker based on an Iroquois design at the 2014 Oscars, despite being roundly criticized for using a Native American theme for an episode of *Germany's Next Top Model* in April of that year.³¹ If an actress wearing a piece of jewelry based on an Indian design to an awards show is roundly criticized for cultural appropriation, one hesitates at a proper term for creating an entire Indian persona from a flawed premise.

The question arises whether the false images portrayed in these European Indiaphiles' narratives fit within the central argument of this project; that the misinterpretations directly link to settler colonialism. This author contends that they do fit within that argument. The reenactors, inspired by the books and movies from an author

<https://indiancountrymedianetwork.com/news/indigenous-peoples/germanys-obsession-with-american-indians-is-touchingand-occasionally-surreal/>.

³¹ Jenn Selby, "Heidi Klum faces 'racism' backlash over 'redface' Native American shoot: Germany's Next Top Model issue apology," *The Independent*, April 10, 2014, , accessed December 07, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/heidi-klum-facing-racism-backlash-over-her-promotion-of-redface-native-american-themed-germany-s-9251080.html>.

who had no knowledge of Native Americans, claim a completely false identity as Apaches, which is cultural appropriation.

CONCLUSION

The major entertainment venues of the modern era present a skewed and misleading public image of Native Americans and their lives. From the first modern mass entertainment venues, the Wild West Shows, to the more recent technologically advanced venues, a common thread emerges. Those with the authority to determine the narrative about the Native Americans and their interactions with non-Indians consistently chose to produce a skewed and inaccurate portrayal of the original inhabitants of this nation.

In the early years, this false image served as a justification and glorification for the settler colonialism employed to expand the nation at the expense of the original owners of the land. For the last half century, the skewed imagery served as an apology for those same actions. The diametric opposition of the reasons masks a simple concept. Simply put, a lie told for good reasons is the same as a lie told for ulterior reasons. They are both lies and damage the credibility of the teller when exposed, as most lies do in time. If the relations between the White majority and the Native American people are ever to be one of peers existing in respect, sovereignty, and trust, the lies must stop.

CHAPTER III

EXHIBIT PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL INTRODUCTION

Just as libraries contain thousands of well written, painstakingly researched books by extremely qualified academic writers that will never be read outside academia, so are there well designed, and thoughtfully conceived museum exhibits, which receive only a few dozen visitors. In both cases, messages that are potentially important parts of the intellectual conversation remain silenced. It is not sufficient simply to produce quality exhibits with a relevant message. The public must desire to attend the exhibit. More importantly, the staff of the exhibiting museum needs those patrons to tell their friends, family, and acquaintances about the exhibit with sufficient enthusiasm to inspire them to also attend and, in turn, convince others to do the same.

This chapter contains the actual proposal for the virtual reality-based (VR) museum exhibit to present the narrative of the material and thesis from the historical context chapter. For the purposes of this exhibit, the VR experience derives from the patron using an Oculus operating system based VR goggle system from Samsung. The VR system interfaces with a server platform at the museum, which serves as the host for the exhibit experience. The patron has the sensation of being in all phases of the exhibit from home or office, anywhere in the world. This style of exhibit is part of the relatively

new but growing usage of digital and virtual technology for education and entertainment. Implementing this proposal will benefit both the museum and the cause of educating the public about Native Americans.

Mission and Scope

The non-Indian communities in the industrialized nations have false preconceptions about the original inhabitants of the North American continent. These misperceptions color and imbrue their cognitive processes about matters concerning the rights of Native American communities and the individuals who constitute those communities. The narrative from the assorted media of commercial entertainment plays an essential role in the formation of such misperceptions. The only palliative for misperceptions is exposure to the truth. The mission for this exhibit is to educate the public to the methods used by the entertainment industry to shape a false narrative about Native Americans. Ultimately, the exhibit will hopefully encourage the patrons to reexamine personal misconceptions developed by their previous personal exposure to the media in the exhibit.

The public consistently ranks museums as both the most reliable and the best source of historical information.¹ For that reason, a museum exhibit has the potential to be the best method for disseminating a counter argument to the false narrative delivered

¹ Gail Anderson, *Reinventing the Museum: The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift* (New York: Altamira Press, 2012), ix.

through entertainment. A virtual reality based exhibit expands the potential audience exponentially.

Another purpose for the exhibit beginning prior to the opening of the physical building concerns developing a steady customer and donor base as early as possible. The result will be a larger source of income than if donor drives begin after the soft opening. The intended chronological scope of the exhibit will be between the 1880s and contemporary times. The exhibit will focus on the five forms of media that have consistently driven the false narrative. The first area will be the Native Americans in the Wild West show. The second examines the American cinema industry. The third is the messages about Indians contained in television programming. The fourth involves the message about the Indians in popular music. Lastly, the exhibit will educate the audience about the use of Native American imagery in European entertainment media.

But Why Virtual?

The first obstacle to this proposed exhibit is institutional inertia. Museum boards or the committees with the delegated authority to approve exhibitions tend to resist proposals that alter the paradigm dramatically. One question will likely dominate any approval meeting: Why should we do a virtual exhibition? This section of the proposal seeks to answer this question and assuage any trepidations regarding these new

techniques. A virtual exhibit offers several positive contributions to the museum: immersion factor, cost, spacing, insurance, artifact preservation, and flexibility of contributions.

Virtual exhibition is a relatively new phenomenon. Until the beginning of the 2010s, the closest analogs to a virtual exhibit were the additional materials for existent physical exhibits, presented as linked pages to the institutional web site. Almost without exception, these consisted of two-dimensional pictures of artifacts from the collection that not placed in the exhibit proper. The immersion factor for the patron in such material is minimal.

A virtual exhibit is completely immersive. With virtual reality (VR) goggles, the patron can fully interact with the exhibition. The individual artifacts are rendered in one to one scale and in three dimensions. Patrons will be able to walk up to and completely around the artifacts. Music and narration appropriate to the individual artifacts enhance the immersion factor. Timing is always properly synchronized to the individual VR device interface, regardless of the number of patrons accessing the virtual exhibit at any given time. Google's Babel Fish interface will translate the narration and labels into the language of each individual. While other translation programs exist, the Oculus program's default translation interface is with Babel Fish.

Museum exhibits are expensive to produce. At an average cost of \$204 per square foot,² large exhibits are not always cost effective. This exhibit, using three large and two small exhibit halls requires 3,000 square feet of floor space. A physical presentation of this proposal would exceed \$600,000 in set up and operating expenses. The costs for the same size virtual exhibit are magnitudes lower. The initial costs entail a four-blade server unit to house the interface program and the digital data of the scanned artifacts, a three dimensional scanner unit, and the VR operating system from Google, totaling \$52,390.³ If the museum does not have an organic technical services department, then the initial installation and ongoing operating system updating, servicing, and maintenance is available on a contract basis from technical service companies, with prices varying by region. The server reduces the operating cost to the daily power usage and the cost of the service and maintenance contract. For the cost of one traditional physical exhibit, a museum can produce multiple exhibits.

The spacing advantage is also considerable. Museums have a finite amount of space for exhibits. To create a new display, another must move or be taken down. The server that houses the virtual exhibit fits in a standard computer secure cage, measuring three feet by four feet by nine feet. The museum can place the cage in a closet, collection storage room, or an offsite storage facility. The total floor space occupied, and thus unavailable for other exhibits, is effectively zero. As a result, the ever-present question of

² Mark Walhimer, "2011 Museum Exhibition Cost Survey Results," Museum Planner, accessed November 14, 2017, <https://museumplanner.org/2011-museum-exhibition-costs/>.

³ "Google VR Services APKs," APKMirror, accessed December 07, 2017, <https://www.apkmirror.com/apk/google-inc/google-vr-services/>.

when to take an exhibit down to make room for the new need not arise. The museum can and may let the exhibit run for as long as patrons continue to show interest by accessing the exhibit.

More importantly, the exhibit does not need to conform to the space restrictions imposed by the physical boundaries of the museum floor plan. The dimensions of the exhibit halls in museums are concrete and are alterable only at great expense. The interior dimensions are more flexible, but still impose an absolute ceiling for the square footage available for artifacts, as well as the height and weight of those artifacts. A virtual exhibit has no such restrictions. Curatorial staff can design a custom display wing tailored to the specific needs of the exhibit. There is no need to withhold artifacts from inclusion for lack of space. The possibility exists to design the pathways to best maximize the visual appeal of the individual sections. Since the virtual exhibit is not located in any part of the museum's display wings, there is no diminishment of available floor space in the physical museum.

Insurance for an exhibit is a costly expense with no upside. If no damage occurs, the premium is spent without remuneration. If damage occurs, the insurance company pays, but objects of historical significance, often irreplaceable, are no longer usable. The same is true for liability insurance, which reasonable boards insist on purchasing. A litigious injured patron that receives a large award for injuries sustained while attending an exhibition has the potential to devastate the financial viability of the institution. Moreover, in a field where the admission fees and contributions from visitors rarely

recoup the set up and operating costs of an exhibit, every dollar spent comes from a finite pool of money. Savings in any category helps the institution to achieve more with the same amount of financial resources. Obviously, artifacts accessioned into the collection need to be insured for replacement value. This is a fixed operating cost, already in the approved annual budget. This proposed exhibition will contain mostly artifacts from the collections of other museums, which normally requires insuring them against damage in transit to and from the museum, as well as against damage while on display. Since the artifacts never actually leave their original collection, but are simply scanned and uploaded to the server, both of these additional expenses become unnecessary.

This leads directly into the next positive argument for a virtual exhibit: artifact preservation. Damage from patrons is far too common. A small percentage of such damage is from malicious intent or vandalization.⁴ Mostly, it derives from well-intentioned patrons unable to resist touching objects that intrigue them. Regardless of intent, over time artifacts can become damaged or even destroyed from interaction with the public. Locking the artifacts away from the public contravenes the intent and purpose for museums. A virtual exhibit represents a viable alternative. The patron can approach and walk around the artifact with no potential for harm as the objects in question are still actually in storage with a full scale avatar replacing it.

Virtual exhibition provides for greater flexibility of contribution to the exhibit catalogue. Any artifacts presented are not necessarily located at the museum housing the

⁴ "NPS Archeology Program: Technical Briefs," National Parks Service, accessed December 07, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/archeology/pubs/techbr>.

exhibition. This allows the curatorial staff to add artifacts from a variety of other institutions. If the museums controlling the respective collections agree to a sharing of the exhibiting rights, artifacts from dozens of museums around the globe become potential parts of the exhibit, without depriving the donor museum of the chance to exhibit the physical object.

For all of these reasons, a virtual exhibition is a net positive for the the museum that chooses to host it. By implementing this proposal the museum has the potential to avoid costly damage to precious artifacts, expand the artifacts utilized to include related items from other collections, and lower operations costs. Additionally, the success of this exhibit will facilitate future virtual exhibitions concurrent with ongoing exhibits at the physical museum.

Exhibit Design

Overview

The design for this exhibit facilitates and maximizes the immersive nature of the VR experience. The Patron will walk through seven sections. In each, the program will adjust the ambient lighting and background music or simulated crowd sounds to best accentuate the patrons' interaction with the current display, reenactment, or artifact.

The descriptions for the individual sections conform to a standardized format. The initial portion of each section is technical specifications for the museum staff, rather than descriptions for the patron. For instance, the opening paragraph will detail the light level

and proper background audio, as well as a general description of the space. It will also contain any technical directions needed for that section.

The second paragraph describes any signage for the section, to include the wording. This signage is for the meta theme of the section. The instructions for the labels corresponding to individual artifacts or groups of artifacts are in a separate paragraph.

Following this paragraph will be the specifications for the individual components of the section. These paragraphs will contain a series of informative sentences for the use of the curatorial staff. The sentences will be in the same order for each artifact or artifact group. The first line will contain an individualized code for that location. This code will consist of a numeral corresponding to the section, 1-15; a letter indicating left wall, center, or right wall. L, C, or R; and a number indicating its place in the progression of artifacts for the section. For example, 3L7 will be the seventh artifact encountered in the third section, on the left wall. Below the code, is a small image of the artifact with a reference number for the images list. The next entry is a sentence stating the host location or owner of the original artifact. The last item is a representative copy of the label for that display, to include crediting the institution housing the physical object.

Throughout the VR experience, a series of computer generated narrator avatars provide supporting details regarding the section for the benefit of the patron. The narration provided in this proposal is for guideline purposes alone. The staff implementing the exhibit should consider making changes to reflect the demographics of the projected audience. In some cases, multiple avatars having a dialogue on the

particular material may be beneficial. It is important that the when a single narrator interacts with the audience, that he or she be a Native American. If the curatorial staff determines that multiple avatars are best for a subsection, at least one should be Native. This is to neutralize any misperceptions that this exhibit is another case of non-Indians telling other non-Indians what a real Indian is like. In fact, it would be best if the museum consults with large numbers of Native Americans from a variety of tribes and nations regarding the script prior to implementation, to ensure that Native people have a voice in the process.

Section 1: Entry Atrium

The entry atrium is ten feet wide by ten feet long by 8 feet tall. The walls resemble the inside of a bark long house, as one would find in a village in the Pacific Northwest. On the left and right walls are three simulated picture frames each. A rotation of all images from the exhibit will rotate on these screens. They will transition every thirty seconds, using a variety of fade-ins and fade-outs. Directly to the front of the patron is a wooden door. To the left of the door is a sign introducing the central narrative for this exhibit.

The sign is in 48 point font, with gold lettering on a dark background. The narrator will verbalize the statement when the VR interface registers that the patron is reading the sign. It reads: “Relations between the dominant culture of the United States and the indigenous people of the nation tend to result in a unbalanced sharing of power between the two

groups. Unfortunately, Native Americans do not often get equitable treatment in these engagements. A significant contributing factor is a set of mistaken perceptions among non-Indians regarding Native Americans. These misperceptions stem to a large degree from the implied subtext in commercial entertainment, which contains a number of inaccuracies and stereotypes. As you follow the path today, you will learn about these mistaken assumptions. Some of the material on the tour will be familiar to many patrons. Others will be more obscure, or even unknown. The choice of these more obscure artifacts and media is so that you, the audience may understand how deeply the phenomenon of improper portrayal of the Indians became embedded in popular culture.”

Section 2: Wild West Show Gallery

This section is twenty feet long and has a median width of ten feet. The height remains eight feet. The walls in this section look like granite. On the immediate left after entry is the narrative sign for the section. It will be 48 point black lettering on an off-white background. This format will apply to all signs and labels in this section, but the labels will be in 24 point rather than 48. The narrator will read this sign aloud. *“The Wild West Shows and their predecessors, the shows of men like P.T. Barnum, were the first true mass entertainment genres in the United States. Audiences for the shows numbered in the thousands two or three times per day, whether the event was in North America or Europe. Native Americans performed in all of these shows and were very popular.*

Unfortunately, these shows did not present accurate portrayals of the Indians. This resulted in audience members forming mistaken perceptions about Native Americans in general.”

Approximately three feet further down the path, the patron will see two pictures mounted in Victorian Era bronze frames and hung two feet apart. One will be approximately eighteen inches higher than the other one. A group label rests between them reading: *“The show owners and the Native American performers respected each other. Although the performances presented and reinforced negative stereotypes, management and talent worked well together.”*

Item 2R1.



Image 1 Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull

Hosted by William F. Cody Collection, Library of Congress

Label: Sitting Bull was a popular addition to the Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show for four months in 1885. Library of Congress.

Item 2R2



Image 2 Buffalo Bill and Indian Cast Members

Hosted by William F. Cody Collection, Library of Congress

Label: Native Americans joined the Wild West shows from a large number of different tribes. In this group photo, two of the cast were Sioux warriors on parole from military confinement, one was a Sac and Fox Haskell Institute graduate, and one was a Cherokee Princeton Law student.

Item 2C3

No Image available

Artifact will be a three dimensional 1:1 scale rendering of a wax figure of an Indian performer on a mount. Label will appear suspended in space next to artifact.

Hosted at Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum, Pawnee, Oklahoma.

Label: Indian cast member of the Pawnee Bill's Historic Wild West Show

Left Wall Group 1

Three publicity posters (2L4, 2L5, 2L6) arranged in chevron pattern.

Group Label: All of the major shows used Native American imagery freely in the publicity material for their shows. Library of Congress and Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum

Item 2L4



Image 3 Publicity Poster for the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show
Hosted by William F. Cody Collection, Library of Congress
Label: No individual label

Item 2L5

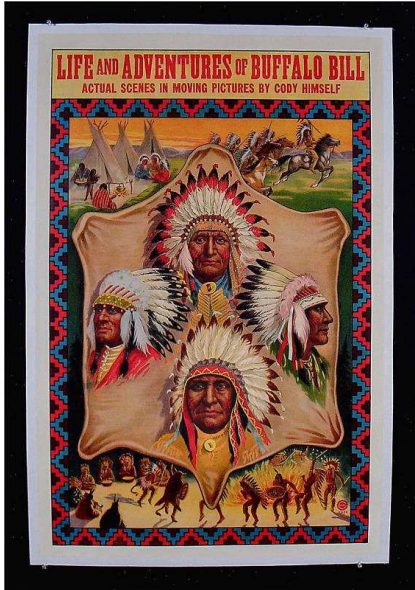


Image 4 Publicity Poster for the Buffalo Bill Biographic movie
Hosted by William F. Cody Collection, Library of Congress
Label: No individual label

Item 2L6



Image 5 Publicity Poster for the Pawnee Bill Historic Wild West Show
Hosted by Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum
Label: No individual label

Item 2C7

No image available

Display will be collection of medals awarded to cast members from European heads of state. 1:1 three-dimensional rendering. Displayed on blue velvet covered waist high table

Hosted by Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum
Loan Item

Right wall group 1

Three candid photos (2R8, 2R9, 2R10) of cast members taken by journalists arranged in a circle with two foot radius, rotating at .5 RPM

Group label: Outside of the arena, family members of performers staged a performance of sorts for the tourists. The Indians erected a mock village along the path from the ticket booths to the arena. Mrs. Cody had a portable “Reservation Agency” building she used as an office and resting area between shows on the rare times she traveled with the show. The village was mostly for show. Most of the cast stayed in hotels at night, but some used the camps for quarters.

Item 2R8



Image 6 Two Pawnee women with male child
Hosted by Illustratedpast.com

Label: Two Pawnee women applying face paint to a male child in the mock village.
Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum
Item2R9



Image 7Red Wolf and Miss Louisa
Hosted by Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum
Label: Red Wolf of the Ogalala Sioux speaks with Cody's wife at the "Reservation Agent" office before appearing in a show. Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum (Note: The shows belonging to Pawnee Bill and Buffalo Bill merged in the last years of their existence. Some photos of Cody's show became the property of Pawnee Bill and are hosted by the Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum.)

Item 2R10



Image 8 Two Indian women painting a tepee
Hosted by Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum
Label: Family member of performers often staged activities in the mock village. Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum

Left wall group 2

Two photos of Indian performers awaiting their cue to enter the arena. Pictures are in echelon right rising.

Group label: Indian Cast Members from the British Tour of 1887 for the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show. Library of Congress.

Item 2L11



Image 9 Indian Cast Members From the British tour of 1887
Hosted by William F. Cody Collection, Library of Congress
No Individual Label

Item 2L12

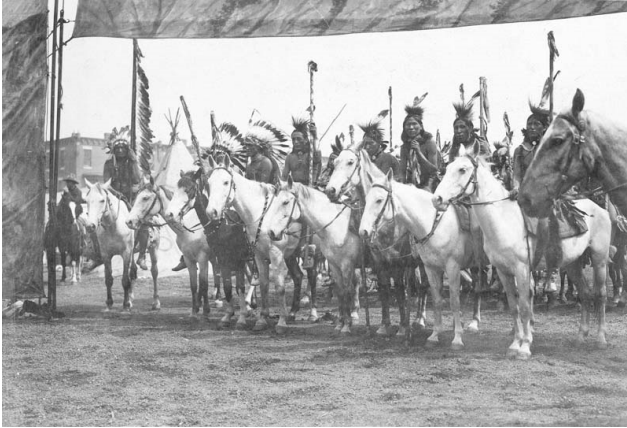


Image 10 Indian Cast Members From the British tour of 1887

Hosted by William F. Cody Collection, Library of Congress

No Individual Label

Right wall group 2

Five Formal Photographs (2R13, 2R14, 2R15, 2R16, 2R17) of cast members from the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show during the British Tour of 1889. Photos are in Victorian distressed silver frames, arranged in a pentagon.

Group label: During the British tour of 1889, a number of the Native Americans posed for formal photographs. Please note that their chosen clothing progress from tribal to mainstream, with some having attributes of both cultures, Imperial Museum, England

Item 2R13

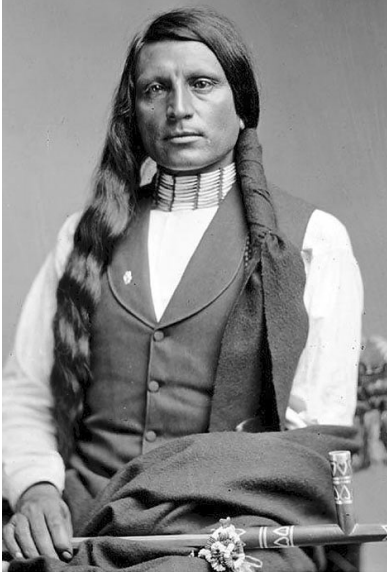


Image 11 Formal Photograph of Indian Member
Hosted by Native American Photo Collection, Native Peoples Archive, Imperial
Museum, London England

Item 2R14



Image 12 Formal Photograph of Indian Member
Hosted by Native American Photo Collection, Native Peoples Archive, Imperial
Museum, London England
Item 2R15



Image 13 Formal Photograph of Indian Member
Hosted by Native American Photo Collection, Native Peoples Archive, Imperial
Museum, London England
Image 2R16



Image 14 Formal Photograph of Indian Member
Hosted by Native American Photo Collection, Native Peoples Archive, Imperial
Museum, London England

Item 2R17

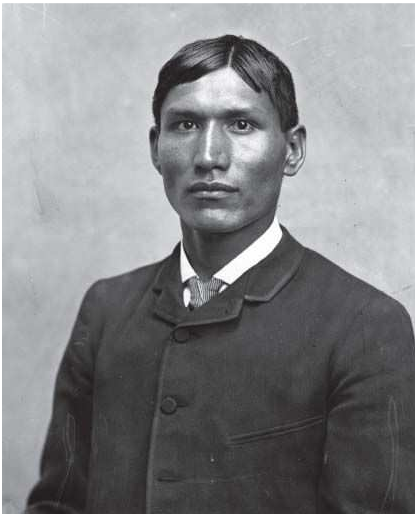


Image 15 Formal Photograph of Indian Member
Hosted by Native American Photo Collection, Native Peoples Archive, Imperial
Museum, London England

Section 3: Wild West Show Live Diorama

Entrance to this section is via a three-bend corridor from the far wall of Section 2. As the patron reaches the midpoint, a calliope plays faintly, as from a great distance. The volume increases with each step. The program code needs to include a safety over ride limiting the volume level to decibels low enough not to cause sensory overload. When the patrons emerge from the corridor, they are in a three-dimensional 1:1 scale reproduction of the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show diorama from the Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum (PBR&M). The original diorama at PBR&M is a 1:32 scale reproduction. To produce a 1:1 model for the virtual exhibit requires inverting the original rendering as 32:1. The VR program allows the reproduction to include individual elements to conduct a preprogrammed movement loop. As the patrons progress through this area, sections will begin moving approximately 2 seconds before they arrive at that spot. The avatars in each of these sections will explain what they are doing.. (At the time of the writing, the author was still waiting for permission to use the pictures of the diorama in this publication) For this section all items are hosted at the PBR&M.

Label just before entering the village:

Label: The entry path to the shows went through a mock Plains Tribe travel or hunt camp. The performers usually stayed in hotels, but on show days, the dependents and those cast members not needed in the arena stayed in the village, pretending to do daily chores. Some cast members also chose to live in the camp. The villages contained features from multiple tribes. All artifacts in this section are from Pawnee Bill Ranch and Museum.

Item 3L1

Indian family erecting a tepee.

Label: The families took turns erecting a tepee before each show. After the audience

departed, the family took it down and another family erected a new one on the same spot

before the next show.

Item 3R2

Indian male applying face paint

Label: Between times in the arena, unless their mount or equipment needed care, the

Indian performers rested in the village. This man is preparing to return to the show.

Item 3L3

Two Indian males preparing their mounts

Label: Two Native performers preparing their ponies. Please note that they are using

belly bands with attached stirrups to hold the blankets on. This is an addition made by the

show to reduce the possibility of an accident.

Item 3R4

Two Indian males with bows

Label: Two Indian performers practicing archery. This helped maintain skill levels and

entertained the audience members at the same time.

Static figures in the village portion of the diorama include women cooking over open

fires, mothers teaching daughters to sew hides for tents, and an older Native male

repairing tack. The curator has the option to add movement and labels to these elements

later.

From the village, the path enters the big top style tent. The patron will see five

Native Americans in full regalia staging an attack on a stagecoach in the ring. This

portion of the diorama does not stop. The five ride after the coach firing arrows while the shotgun operator fires at them as they all circle the ring continuously.

Narrator: *“In addition to demonstrations of dances and horsemanship, the Indians cast members participated in simulated attacks in each show.”*

The path leads to an exit flap for the tent, which opens into a short hall way to the next section.

Section 4: Images of Indians in Movies

Section four imitates a mid-twentieth century cinema. The arrow leads the patron to the right and around the lobby. The displayed pictures and posters appear in standard quick change frames common to most theaters. No labels are affixed to the images. The route takes the patron into the back of a screen room, with a roped off area where the patron pauses. The screen activates and the images from the lobby appear in succession, with a short clip from the relevant film, and explanations from the narrator.

Opening Scene: Fifteen to thirty second clips of various stock and B-roll scenes of Native Americans from silent era through pre-1960s westerns play in seamless succession, without dialogue, as the narrator makes an introduction.

Narration: *“From the beginning of the Hollywood studios, Native American characters appeared in hundreds of movies. For the first half century, these characters conformed to certain negative stereotypes. Often the actors who filled these roles were not Indians. The studios frequently opted to cast Italian-American, Latin-American, or White actors in*

heavy makeup and wigs. The phenomena is known as redfacing, just as actors using makeup to impersonate African American characters is blackfacing. Redfacing involves White actors playing Red people to entertain White people, using stereotypes developed by other White people.”

(Note to museum staff, the images chosen for the proposal are suggestions. The museum staff has the option to replace them or add additional images and dialogue.)

Item 4R1



Image 16

Publicity still for *The Quiet Gun* (1957) Regal Films

Hosted by Warner Brothers Museum

Narration: “*Sarah Quinlan, shown here in a publicity campaign photographs for Regal*

Films The Quiet Gun in 1957, was an Irish immigrant who made a short career out of appearing in thirty B westerns as an Indian.”

Item 4R2



Image 17

Publicity still of Frank De Kova for *The White Squaw* (1956) Columbia Pictures

Hosted by San Francisco Museum of Film

Narration: *“Frank De Kova made his American acting premier in 1957’s The White*

Squaw. De Kova was a child and young adult actor in Holland before becoming a

contract actor for Columbia Pictures. De Kova complained bitterly about the studio dying

his blond hair black and the three hours each morning needed to apply dark make-up to

three fourths of his body.”

Item 4R3



Image 18

Production still of Jack Buetel and Janis Carter in *Half Breed* (1952) RKO

Hosted by Warner Brothers Museum

Narration: *“Movies like *The White Squaw and Half Breed* conveyed two very strong messages to the audience. The first was that White women were irresistible to Native American men, especially if she was a blonde or red-haired woman. The second message conveyed that allowing interracial relations was dangerous and always led to problems. Biracial characters like the one that Young portrayed only prospered if they chose to reject their Native heritage. Those characters who chose to remain true to their Indian heritage came to bad ends, usually dying.”*

Item 4R4



Image 19

James Young Deer and wife Red Wing

Hosted by Warner Brothers Museum

Narration: *“Actor, director and producer James Young Deer and his actress wife Red*

Wing were two of the few Native Americans in the film industry before the mid-1960s.

Red Wing’s movies conformed to the standard tropes of the era. A standard storyline

included assorted white male protagonists falling in love with characters played by Red

Wing. These White men would also become involved with a White female character. If the

man chose the White female character, the movie ended happily. If he chose Red Wing, the

movie ended with his character dead, or ruined and alone after the departure of Red

Wing, who always played an immoral woman in these roles.”

Item 4R5



Image 20 Theater poster for War Arrow (1953) Universal Studios

Hosted by Warner Brothers Museum

Narration: *“Jeff Chandler starred in several large budget Westerns in 1950s. These movies tended to advance all of the industry tropes: the irresistibility of White women to Indian men; the irresistibility of White men to even married Indian women; the noble pioneers facing senseless violence from savage Indians; and the inevitability of defeat for the Native American tribes. They also included most of the production mistakes that created false impression in the minds of the audience. For instance, they used the terms “prince” and “princess” for Indian youth, when the tribes did not use a hereditary nobility.”*

Item 4R6

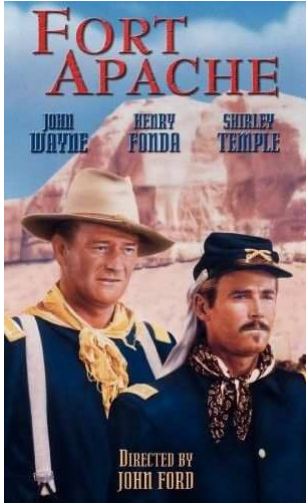


Image 21

Display Poster for *Fort Apache* (1948) Argosy Pictures

Hosted by John Wayne Birthplace and Museum

Item 4R7



Image 22

Display Poster for *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949) Argosy Pictures

Hosted by the John Wayne Birthplace and Museum

Item 4R8



Image 23

Original display poster for *Rio Grande* (1950) Argosy Pictures as used for the DVD cover art.

Hosted by the John Wayne Birthplace and Museum

As the next four items involve longer narrations, small vignettes from the movies, without dialogue, play on the screen during the narration.

Narration: *“Producer/director John Ford and John Wayne worked together in the three movies known as the Cavalry Trilogy. These movies avoided the controversial interracial sexual argument, but advanced a different set of tropes. In all three movies, Indians are two-dimensional archetypes. The first are the reservation bound defeated Indians. These characters are usually sick, alcoholic, and thoroughly defeated. The second are the war-like Indians. These characters are irrationally aggressive against settlers. In all three movies, the warriors run away from any serious engagement with the soldiers. In fact, in Fort Apache and Rio Grande, the sound of the bugler sounding charge proved enough to end hostilities. Strict production codes regarding violence in movies restricted Ford in this regard. A possibly unintended result was the audience, many of whom were young*

matinee attendees, believing that the Indians were either inherently weak and inferior or cowardly bullies who deserved displacement by White settlers.

All of these tropes were ubiquitous in the Westerns produced in the first five decades of the Hollywood studios. For many of these movies the audiences consisted of pre-teen children. In these formative years, their mental processes are susceptible to messages from visual media. This can, and often did, result in the formation of unthinking biases about Native Americans that affected their interpretations of events for the rest of their lives.”

Item 4R9

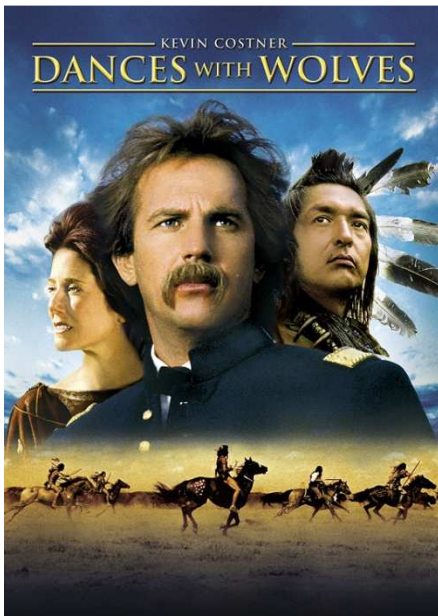


Image 24

Display poster for *Dances with Wolves* (1990) Tig Productions and Allied Filmmakers
Original artwork hosted by San Francisco Museum of Film

Narration: *“As with all things, the attitudes of the decision makers in the entertainment industry changed over time. From the mid-1960s, the western stereotypes*

in movies began changing. By the 1970s, the portrayals reversed. In the simplest terms, the noble pioneer became the industrialist exploiter of nature and a vile thief of tribal patrimonial lands. At the same time, the indigenous people became environmentalist pacifists, desiring only to live conflict free lives in harmony with nature. The fact that these new stereotypes were no more accurate than the previous ones had no effect on the executives at the production companies. Years of justifying the mistreatment of the Native Americans became efforts to atone for that mistreatment.

The problem with the new stereotypes is that they are just that: stereotypes. Telling a falsehood with the best of intentions is still telling a falsehood. The next three examples were all done with the best of intentions, but they did nothing to promote honest dialog.

Kevin Costner produced, directed, and starred in Dances with Wolves in 1990. Costner portrays Lieutenant John Dunbar, a wounded officer from the Civil War sent to the West to serve while recovering. Through a highly improbable chain of events, he becomes an adopted member of a band of the Lakota Nation and marries a White woman raised by the tribe, Stands with a Fist. The father of the current chief adopted her when she was a small child, and raised her as a member of the tribe. Dunbar lives among the Lakota, learning about them until arrested for desertion. In the end, the Lakota help Dunbar escape from custody and they all flee to Canada.

Costner spends almost four hours extolling the superior virtue of the Lakota. He also goes to great length to cast the White race and the Federal government as embodied

by the army in every possible negative light. The Lakota characters give sermons on the duty to preserve the land and the animals for future generations, ostensibly to Dunbar, but the actual intended recipient is the audience. Stands with a Fist repeatedly explains that she can never live among the Whites, whose evil sickens her. The soldiers who encounter the band kill non-combatants without provocation. This paean to the virtues of the Lakota is visually stunning, and it is the first movie to use the actual Sioux language, but the bias toward the Native Americans is so overt that it stifles honest conversation.”

Item 4R12



Image 25 Tom Laughlin from the *Billy Jack* franchise.

Hosted by the Warner Brothers Museum

Narration: *“Tom Laughlin conceived the idea for the character Billy Jack while he attended film school. The first movie in the series, *Born Losers*, was his graduation project. The movie came to the attention of executives from Warner Brothers who optioned the movie. Its sequel, *Billy Jack*, earned more money than the first movie. As a result, two more sequels followed. The premature death of Laughlin ended the franchise.*

Laughlin plays the lead character as the exemplar for the new Native American warrior. Billy Jack is a Navajo, a martial artist, and a Special Forces veteran of the Viet Nam War, recently returned to the Navajo reservation. Throughout the franchise, Billy

Jack protects the residents of the reservation and the progressive school conducted there from the depredations of a series of local ranchers and businessmen, all middle aged White men. With each new movie, his abilities get more surreal. By the fourth movie, he can dodge bullets, fight five armed men with only his hands and feet, and connect with animals on a spiritual level.

Laughlin's movie series is another example of a moviemaker attempting to make amends for the previous negative stereotypes. Unfortunately, his efforts are no closer to reality than those. There are Native Americans with a deep concern for the environment, and doubtlessly an equal number of non-Indians who have a greater desire to make a profit than protect the land they live on. However, neither group reflects the whole of their race, as this series would have the audience believe. More importantly, the Billy Jack movies are guilty of red facing. Tom Laughlin is not an Indian. Once again, the movies present a White man playing Indian to tell the audience what Indians are like, using the words and actions written by White men.

Item 4R10



Image 26

Publicity Photo for *The Lone Ranger* (2013) Walt Disney Studios
Hosted by California State Indian Museum

Narration: *“In 2013, Disney Studios attempted to revive a classic from the western movie genre, The Lone Ranger. In an effort to reboot the franchise in manner consistent with the Disney formula of humor and happy conclusions, major changes to the character dynamic occurred. Tonto became more important than the title character. Johnny Depp played the stoic Indian sidekick in an almost slapstick manner. Tonto, who is an Apache, wears Comanche face paint at all times, which even the Comanche only wear for specific reasons. More importantly, Depp is not an Indian. Disney deliberately committed red facing while trying to atone for previous cinematic offenses against Native Americans. The movie drew enormous criticism from several Indian rights groups and was a financial failure.”*

The efforts to present a extremely positive version of Native Americans is made with the best of motives. The sins of Hollywood against the Indian for the first half century of movie making were extreme, but telling lies is not the way to atone for lies. Only truth can remediate lies.”

As the simulated house lights increase, an exit door opens on the left side of the simulated theater, leading into the next room.

Section 5: Indians on the Small Screen

This room looks like a mid-Fifties family room. The walls are wood paneling. A large console model television sits against the far wall from the entrance. As the patron walks up to the set, the screen activates. The narrator resumes as television B-roll clips play without sound.

Narration: *“The first commercial television stations began airing programming in the United States by 1948. Within five years, television supplanted radio as the primary source for news and entertainment in American homes. This new venue also made serious inroads into the primacy of cinema. The three major radio networks quickly assumed a monopoly on the distribution of the products from television production companies. The network executives made a safe choice for the content offered by the new medium. They blended visual analogs to the most popular radio shows with small-scale versions of the established cinematic tropes, including westerns, to provide entertainment options private homes.*

The new television westerns brought all of the established images of Native Americans from the cinema productions. The Indians who supported land appropriation and cultural assimilation were “good” and received positive portrayals. Those Indians who opposed the seizure of their tribal property in favor of white settlement and industry were “hostile” having negative portrayals. Mixed race characters who chose to abandon the customs of their Native relatives and assimilate received happy endings, usually involving marriage to a White woman who played a major role in the decision making process. Those who clung to their traditions suffered negative consequences, especially if their love interest was another Indian. The Indian love interest often died as a subtle warning to the audience of the supposed dangers of interracial relations.”

Item 5C1



Image 27 Publicity photo for *The Lone Ranger* with Jay Silverheels (l) and Clayton Moore (rt)

Narration: *“The audience already had an established relationship with one of the first television westerns long before it appeared on their set. The Lone Ranger began as a thrice-weekly radio serial in 1933. It told the story of a former Texas Ranger and his*

faithful Indian sidekick, Tonto, as they travelled through the Old West meting out justice. Clayton Moore voiced the Ranger from 1939, a role he held for the rest of his professional life. A number of White actors voiced Tonto. The screenplays assign dialogue to Tonto with a stylized speech pattern that relies on intermixing guttural sub vocalizations with modifier free phrases, such as “Hmm, bad man heap no good, Kimo Sabe.” Beginning in 1948, the franchise transitioned to include B reel short films as part of children’s Saturday matinee fare, while the radio program continued. At that point, Jay Silverheels, a Mohawk from a Canadian band of the Iroquois Confederation, assumed the role of Tonto. In 1949, the venues expanded with the introduction of the television show, which ran until 1957 for 221 episodes.

The Lone Ranger utilized all the industry stereotypes about Indians. The Tonto character received positive portrayal, although the character often seemed more of a servant than as a partner to the former lawman. The positive portrayal stems from the decision by Tonto to abandon his people and travel with the Ranger. The positive portrayal tacitly endorsed the efforts to forcefully assimilate the Indians into White culture, such as the boarding schools like Haskell or Carlisle. Of the 2,376 radio episodes, 60 short films, and 6 feature length films from the 1950s, Indians appear less than 100 times. Those who accept expansion of the European-American population are depicted as peaceful and friends with the locals. Those who seek to live as they always have are cast as warlike and cruel. In addition, in the vast majority of the episodes of a series set in the west, the Indians are conspicuous in their absence. Unlike most prime

time westerns, this show did not have a target audience of adults. From the earliest radio days, the writing and marketing focused on children below the age of twelve. The stereotypes presented in The Lone Ranger thus formed part of the imprinting process for two generations of children during their most impressionable years. These children became adults who did not question the morality of the dispossession, relocation, and attempted cultural elimination of the original inhabitants of the nation west of the Mississippi River.”

The on screen vignettes shift at this point. The on screen images become the first thirty seconds of the opening credit of *Gunsmoke* and a cross selection of the publicity photos of the cast from the individual seasons while the narration continues. When the narration reaches the portion about the Lone Eagle episode, thirty-second vignettes from the episode play without dialogue.

Item 5C2



Image 28

All photos and video clips housed at Universal Studios

Narration: *“The new optic offered by television for imprinting the image of Indians on the mental processes of average citizens was subtle. In fact, it was so subtle, many never noticed, simply because it was the absence of presence. In many television westerns,*

Native Americans make no appearance or very few appearances. For instance, the longest running western television series was Gunsmoke, which aired from 1955 through 1975. From a total 635 episodes, Native Americans appear in only 15 episodes. Those episodes contain 32 Indian characters with dialogue. Ten of those are of mixed white and Indian origin, leaving twenty-two speaking characters of Native descent from a cast numbering in the thousands. These few conformed to the standard industry tropes familiar from the movies.

For instance, in episode seventeen of the fifteenth season, all three of the major tropes utilized in the portrayal of Indians are present. Samuel Lone Eagle, a graduate of an unnamed boarding school in Kansas and Yale University, arrives via train in a suit, although he changes to partial Indian garb when going into the field as part of a posse. His brother, Angry Bear, is leader of a war band escaped from the reservation and raiding farms. Angry Bear has a white wife named Linda, taken captive as a girl and now part of the tribe, and a biracial son, Little Owl, known as Oliver to his mother. By the end of the episode, Lone Eagle kills Angry Bear before taking a train to California to establish a law practice. Linda chooses to return to her family in Nebraska, who never quit looking for her. Oliver renounces his tribal name, begins a romantic relationship with a parson's daughter, and takes a clerking job in the dry goods store, although his character does not appear again in the series.

One might ask how the relative absence of Native Americans in these television programs served as a justification of settler colonialism. The answer is that by not

showing any Indians among the White settlers, the shows reinforce the argument that the settlers moved into empty space in the Trans-Mississippi frontier. By extension, this further argues that the various tribes that claimed these lands did not use them to their best value. Therefore, the appropriation of these lands for the use by farmers, ranchers, and townships became justifiable. No counter argument in favor of the Indians are heard by the audience.”

The onscreen footage shifts to a series of promotional stills from *F Troop*, followed by the original opening credits and ten to thirty second vignettes from episodes. The vignettes play without dialogue as the narration resumes.

Narration: *“In the early 1960s, another trope segued from the cinema into television. This was the trope of Indians as comic foils for White characters. Perhaps the most egregious example of this lampooning Native Americans was F Troop, which aired for two seasons in 1965-67 for sixty-five episodes. Set in an unidentified portion of the western frontier, the show details the farcical misadventures of the titled troop of cavalry soldiers and the local tribe, the Hekawi. The Hekawi name itself is a nudging reference to a racist joke about a tribe of Indians so inept they get lost and yell “where the HEKARWE.” The joke never overtly appeared in the script, but the implication is obvious. The Hekawi characters were either ignorant, venal, corrupt, or a combination of these three. They regularly conspired with Sergeant O’Rourke and Corporal Agarn in deceptions against the post and troop commander, Captain Parmenter. The portrayal of an entire tribe as cartoonish caricatures further reinforced the justification for the settler*

colonialists' appropriation of Native property for to White purposes. The message to viewers was that the Indians were childish and irresponsible; so their consignment to reservations was in their best interests."

The imagery shifts to the opening credits and music from *Little House on the Prairie*; *Dr. Quinn, Medicine woman*; and *Into the West*. After the opening credits finish, publicity photographs and production stills for these series progress across the screen as the narrator resumes.

Narration: *"Unlike the movies, the late Sixties and Seventies did not see a major shift in the manner in which the television studios portrayed Native Americans. Rather, the western as a staple of prime time television slowly atrophied, further reducing the presence of Indians in television. The genre did not completely expire, as Gunsmoke continued until 1975, Bonanza remained on the air until 1979, and shows set in the West appeared every few years. Most of these shows, however, did not fit the traditional mold of the genre. Little House on The Prairie; Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman; and Into The West are more properly described as settler shows. They detail the lives and struggles of White settler communities in the West, usually as metaphors for contemporary societal issues. Native Americans often made no appearance on these shows. Again, the mental message was that the Indians were gone when the settlers arrived, so it was justifiable to take and alter the land."*

The imagery changes to the episode credit shot for *The Paradise Syndrome* episode of *Star Trek*. Thirty second to two minute vignettes from the scenes corresponding to the publicity stills in this proposal play before the narration resumes.

Narration: *“One of the few appearances of Native Americans on television in the late-1960s was also one of the more contentious. In October of 1968, the science fiction program Star Trek aired an episode titled The Paradise Syndrome. In this episode, the series star, William Shatner as Captain Kirk, accidentally teleports to a planet inhabited by a single unspecified tribe of Native Americans. Suffering from amnesia, Kirk emerges from an obelisk that serves the people as a focus of worship. Owing to the fact that Kirk came from the holy relic, the tribal sachem proclaims that Kirk is the prophesied savior of the tribe. All but one tribal member accept this pronouncement without debate. Throughout the episode, Kirk adapts local dress and marries the daughter of the tribal chieftain. The lone dissenter in the tribe eventually reveals Kirk as a mortal and leads a stoning of Kirk and his wife. The wife dies and Kirk escapes through the intervention of the crew of his ship.*

This episode embodied many of the negative stereotypes of its predecessors, both in cinema and television. These are also multiple technical issues with this episode. The screenplay makes no explanation for how a group of First Nation members could be teleported thousands of light years through space without any noticeable changes to their world view. Nor is there any explanation as to how a planet that evolved so closely in parallel to Earth had no human inhabitants. There are cultural issues that exceed even

the simple explanation that this is science fiction. For instance, the tribe speaks modern English, despite the fact that their migration supposedly occurred in the Pre-Columbian era. The beadwork on their ornaments is plastic and the paints on their shelters are colors that would only become possible with industrial chemicals developed centuries after the script says they left North America. Despite the passing of a millennia, the tribe has a population lower than a hundred souls, all still collocated in a single village. Egregiously inaccurate as these details are, the true problematic issue lies with the stereotypes presented in the screenplay.

The screenplay posits that this tribe was the beneficiary of an unnamed powerful race of aliens who moved them to this planet for their survival approximately one thousand years before the arrival of Kirk. The aliens saw that the Natives would lose their lands and culture to the onslaught of European immigration. The aliens incongruously know exactly how the future will happen and have the ability to teleport an entire tribe through vast distances in space. Leaving aside the technical barriers to this act, this alone constitutes a negative stereotype, as it stipulated that Natives are so inherently inferior to Whites that they required alien intervention to survive even before the first European settlers arrived in North America. This reinforced the presumption of White superiority to the audience and the argument that the dispossession of the tribes is justifiable.

Also, the tribe accepts the premise that Kirk is their messiah virtually without question. Such naiveté is child like. This stereotype reinforces the settler colonialist

argument by depicting these characters, and by extension all Native Americans, as not truly mature adults. Consequently, they require paternalistic guardianship. In the show, this so called protection came from the aliens and the prophesied messiah. In real life, this was, and is, the Federal government as embodied in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The third stereotype is the use of pan-Indian optics. The tribe wear buckskin clothing in the pattern used by the Creek and Cherokee prior to 1800, but Kirk dons a Pawnee styled vest. The tribe lives in a fixed location, a wooded glade abutting a lake, but they live in tepees. Tepees were more typically a field expedient shelter used by the plains tribes alone, and only while hunting or travelling between seasonal homes. The decorations and adornments worn by the tribe members represented at least six different tribal traditions, ranging from Iroquois to Navajo. All of this combined reiterated the trope that all Indians are the same. This perception supports the effort to eliminate the culture of the Natives. If they are all essentially the same, there is no need to preserve and protect the individual tribal customs, traditions, and languages.”

The imagery shifts to the *Keep America Beautiful* public service announcement, followed by one of the Mazola corn oil commercials, and a Land O’Lakes commercial from the period in the early 1970s when an animated version of the pictured Indian from the package voiced the commercials. The narration resumes following this video stream.

Narration: *“Indian also appeared on television through the lesser medium of advertising. Among these was a public service announcement from the 1970*

environmentalist public awareness campaign, Keep America Beautiful. As Robert Conrad narrated a message about the volume of litter created by the American public annually, the audience watched a Native American paddle a canoe through a polluted river, alight on a shore littered with modern debris, and turn to face the camera as a single tear crept down his cheek. This commercial embodied the shift in the stereotypical portrayal of Indians from the Sixties until the current period. Native Americans now received portrayal as arch conservationists who practiced leave-no-trace practices and lived harmoniously before the arrival of the Europeans. Other commercials used Indian images or actors to sell products made from corn or to emphasize the purity of the product.”

The set fades to static screen and the door to the right of the set opens. A corridor leads to the next section.

Section 6: Indians in Popular Music

The corridor ends at an archway opening into a small honky tonk. Scanned reproductions of cigar store Indians stand on each side of a small stage. Above the bar is a framed reproduction of the Stanford pencil sketch of Ira Hayes and Johnny Cash. The set activates as the patron approaches. In succession, avatars of amateur artists doing covers of *Kaw-Lija*, *Running Bear*, *The Ballad of Ira Hayes*, *Indian Reservation*, *Indian Outlaw*, and *Custer Died for Your Sins* appear. Between songs, one or more of the avatar

patrons will interact with the patron, using narration derived from the historical content section of the proposal.

Item 6C1



Image 29 Pencil sketch inspired by the song by Amber Stanford

Image hosted by estate of Johnny Cash

Item 6C6

As the narration ends, a door on the left wall, center, opens and a hall winds to a double door.

Section 7: Indians in European Hearts and Minds

The doors open and the patron enters an open air amphitheater. Avatars of the three main stars of the Winnetou movies and live action plays perform five or more short scenes from the plays. Between scenes, when the avatars are ostensibly off set changing, avatars from the audience interact with the patron, using dialogue derived from the historical content section of the proposal. After the last scene, the guide arrow will lead the patron out of the amphitheater into a wooded glade in the Black Forest of Bavaria. The patron will approach and enter a reproduction of a German reenactment society

encampment. As the patron wanders through the camp, avatars from the reenactors will interact, explaining the motivation behind the camp, and imparting information from the historical content section.



Image 30

Item 7R7



Image 31

Images 30-31 German Native reenactment camp in the Schwarz Wald

As the last avatar finishes speaking the program ends.

Potential Partners

California State Indian Museum, Sacramento, CA
Cherokee National Cultural Center and Museum, Tahlequah, OK
Chickasaw Cultural Center, Sulphur, OK
Eastwood Foundation, Carmel, CA
Imperial Museum, London, England
John Wayne Birthplace and Museum, Winterset, IA
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA
Museum of Western Film History, Lone Pine, CA
Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, OK
Pawnee Bill Mansion and Museum, Pawnee, OK
San Francisco Film Museum, San Francisco, CA
Smithsonian Institute American Indian Museum, Washington, D.C.
Smithsonian Institute American Indian Museum, Heye Center, New York City, NY
Warner Brothers Museum, Los Angeles, CA

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