REEL INDIANS: NATIVE AMERICAN REPRESENTATION IN FILM, 1950-1970

By

CHRISTOPHER COLT CHANEY

Bachelor of Arts in History
Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Weatherford, Oklahoma
2008

Master of Arts in History
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
2012

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Dissertation Approved:

Dr. L.G. Moses

Dissertation Adviser

Dr. William Bryans

Dr. Michael Logan

Dr. Stephen Perkins

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Name: CHRISTOPHER COLT CHANEY

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Abstract: The perception of Native Americans has constantly been in flux since Europeans began to colonize North America. Whether it was the Spanish, British, or later the Americans, each had a vision for what Indians were and could be. As popular culture mediums have changed, so have perceptions. From dime novels to Wild West Shows to big budget Hollywood films, Indians and frontier stories have received top billing. However, westerns have not always been accurate in their portrayal of Indians. Indian activists have been trying to get their voices heard and affect changes in the film industry since the early days of filmmaking. There has been lot of research describing the failures of filmmakers in representing native cultures; nevertheless, not all have been negative. Starting in 1950, before the peak of the civil rights movement and while westerns were still popular, some in Hollywood were making westerns that attempted to show Native Americans as real three-dimensional people and not caricatures of a forgotten time. Throughout the 1950s, there were westerns that began to focus on Indian stories or put Indians at the forefront of the film. By 1960, the western genre was waning in popularity. With the counter culture movement and a shift in the political climate, it is understandable that frontier stories were becoming outdated. The anti-war and satirical western are the most memorable involving Indians, from 1970, closing the tumultuous 1960s. Modern Native American filmmakers are finally seeing the changes for which the previous generations fought. These modern artists are able to tell their own stories and represent what they deem important to a larger audience. By studying the politics, activists, and films from 1950-1970 it is possible to tie in historical events from the frontier and examine what people from the era thought about the American West and Indians.

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PREFACE

"Perhaps inevitably, even with the best intentions of being true to one's subject (and it has to be recognized that best intentions have not always been to the fore in Hollywood), films made by white people for white audiences will inevitably produce an image of Indians designed to serve a white agenda. We see in Indians what we want to see, what we need to see."[1]

It is important in the study of history to focus on all aspects of society, not simply the majority or even the minority. All people are interconnected and deserve to have their stories told. Mainstream American culture has had a fascination with Indians since the inception of the United States. Native Americans have had thousands of stories told about them, but not necessarily by them. Wild West Shows provided Indians a place to relive their past that was disappearing and scholars believed that Indians were disappearing as well. Then with the invention of the moving picture, scholars began to try to capture their customs because of the belief that they were a dying race. Through this evolution people realized they could make money by telling stories involving Native Americans.

Typically, there were frontier stories and the Indians were the villains that tried to kill

[1] Edward Buscombe, *'Injuns!': Native Americans in the Movies* (Bodmin, Cornwall: Reaktion Books LTD, 2006), 16.

hard working settlers by making war against them and the United States. While these stories might be intriguing, a simple study of history will show that Indians were three dimensional people and not caricatures from a dime store novel. Beginning in 1950 with the release of *Broken Arrow* there is stream of westerns that try to show the Indian side of the story that takes place along the frontier.

The introduction describes what a western is and how that definition is important to the discussion. Along with the ideas about what constitutes a western film, there is an investigation into what the themes of the genre are concerning Native Americans during the 1950s and 1960s. Frontier is another term that is defined by the standards of Frederick Jackson Turner and modern sensibilities. To complete the definition there is historiographical section addressing the development of the term and how it was used. The historiography also shows the development of Native American scholarship. It concludes with a discussion of shared memory.

Chapter one describes the evolution of the portrayal and perception of Indians from the early of the United States progressing to the dime novel and later to films. Chapter two provides an analysis of Native American participation in television and movies. Three important figures and their experiences are examined: Jay Silverheels, Iron Eyes Cody, and Sunny Skyhawk. It also includes a discussion on stereotypes and the population breakdown of Native Americans in society.

To understand why the movies in the 1950s and 1960s began to address racial issues it is necessary to examine the politics and movements of the time. To do so, there is an analysis of each decade prior to the discussion of the films from the period. This allows for a more detailed understanding of why the films were chosen and their importance. Chapter three provides a short discourse on the 1950s and provides context for the films. Chapter four is divided into eight sections, each section analyzing a different western film from the decade.

Chapter five provides much of the same types of content as was provided for the 1950s, but with focus on the civil rights movements of the 1960s. This provides the background for the changing sentiment of western films and their treatment of Native Americans, culminating in *Soldier Blue* and *Little Big Man*. Chapter six has four sections each pertaining to a different film for the decade.

The conclusion of the work provides an idea of what Native American filmmakers and writers are trying to accomplish by taking creative control over their stories. By doing so, they have are able to show what is important to them culturally and provide the public with what they want shown, which is considerably different from what films from previous decades had shown. The focus of Indian filmmakers is showing themselves as modern members of society. They also emphasize the ideas of kinship and ethnicity. Films from 1989 to 2009 that involve Indian writers and filmmakers are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

"From the colonial period to the present, the Indian has skulked in and out of the most important stories various Americans have told about themselves."[2]

Movies provide an audience with a chance to get away for about two hours and escape into another time and place. Many films are entirely fiction, whereas others contain elements of truth. Then there are the ones that create the truth. To borrow from *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962) "No, sir. This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."[3] No words could be truer when describing the genre of the western film and western history. These types of situations create problems when people begin to assume that was how things were in the "Wild West." While these stories might be entertaining, they create problems and stereotypes about Indians. Indians have been victims of this type of treatment since the earliest days of filmmaking. However, many films have been able to create some truths about Native Americans and their relationship to the United States while creating political statements about current events.

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[2] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 5.
[3] IMDb.com, Inc., "Memorable quotes for The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056217/quotes.

The focus of the dissertation will be on the period 1950-1970; however, it will be necessary to discuss events of earlier cinema and discuss the development of modern Native American films and directors such as Sterling Harjo and Chris Eyre. When doing so one finds out that many of the issues of movies from 1950-1970 do not line up with what modern Native Americans want to show on the big screen. They want to show themselves in contemporary settings and the ways of reservation life. There is also a large element of family and kinship present. In an attempt to make stories that are more relatable, their films are typically in a modern setting using Native American actors. They discuss modern issues and problems for natives and everyone. This is also about identity and identity is as much about the future as it is the past, what people will become and what they have been.[4]

The 1960s are touted as a time of change and cultural upheaval, however the 1950s are the beginning of the changes in American society. This is visible in films from the decade that offer a more considerate view of Native Americans. Film portrayal of minority groups begin to change in B Movies and big budget films. This movement, for Native Americans, began in 1950 with *Broken Arrow* and many more westerns throughout the decade. These movies culminate in 1970 with the release of *Little Big Man* and *Soldier Blue*.

People in America have preconceived notions about what an Indian is or is not. This is not a foreign idea, for stereotyping applies to what people think about a Texan or New Yorker. Stereotypes are nothing new; typically, there is a little truth in them. This does not make them right, but we should examine where the truth lies. It is unfair to place a stereotype on Native

[4] Daniel Bernardi ed., *The Birth of Whiteness: Race and the Emergence of U.S. Cinema* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 3.

Americans that has them stuck in the nineteenth century. They have progressed well out of that historical era.[5]

The ideas people hold make up a significant amount of popular culture in the United States. This makes stereotypes dangerous, especially about a group that people may not encounter on a routine basis. However, we do know that stereotypes even hold up when groups do encounter each other frequently. People have an attachment to their ideas no matter how wrong or right they are.

First, we must define what a western is. Tim Dirks describes westerns aptly by stating, "The major defining genre of the American film industry, a nostalgic eulogy to the early days of the expansive, untamed American frontier (the borderline between civilization and the wilderness). They are one of the oldest, most enduring and flexible genres and one of the most characteristically American genres in their mythic origins."[6] The genre encompasses the ever-popular Wild West theme. The popularity of the western image is not unique to America. People from all over the world seem drawn to this type of idea. Wild West shows and Indian hobbyists still operate in Europe today, signifying the attraction to the reality and the myth of the Wild West.

Dirks finishes his definition by saying, "This indigenous American art form focuses on the frontier West that existed in North America. Westerns are often set on the American frontier during the last part of the 19th century (1865-1900) following the Civil War, in a geographically western (trans-Mississippi) setting with romantic, sweeping frontier landscapes or rugged rural

[5] James A. Clifton, ed., James A. Clifton, ed., *Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers* (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1989), 1.
[6] http://www.filmsite.org, Tim Dirks, http://www.filmsite.org/westernfilms.html.

terrain."[7] Some may also define a western as an idea or a style. There is certainly some validity to that argument. Many other styles and genres do lean on the western format from time to time.

"In the last century something like seven thousand Western feature films were produced in all, and a substantial proportion of these dealt with Indians," writes Edward Buscombe.[8] Therefore, it is certain that Native Americans have not received the best treatment in many of these films. Typically, the stories have white driven narratives. This does not always mean the films show Indians as the stereotypical bloodthirsty savage or the noble savage.

Keeping in mind the number of westerns to come out of Hollywood they have not all been positive toward Native Americans. Indians have received some negative treatment in films, with whites being the heroes. This is especially true in the early days of cinema. There are many dynamics at work in movies dealing with Indians. There are simple cowboys and Indians stories or a more sophisticated approach involving the idea of the civilization versus the wild frontier, but in both of these the Indian plays a vital role.[9] John Saunders notes, "The stereotypes and the dramatic possibilities they provide date back at least to James Fenimore Cooper, writing at a time when their history was still in the making, their eventual defeat and the white man's guilt over how it came about still in the future."[10]

Saunders raises an important question about guilt for what happened in the past. The idea of "white guilt" is prevalent in some of the later films such as *Little Big Man* and especially *Soldier Blue*. The message of *Soldier Blue* is transparent or thinly veiled at best. The movie makes some changes to the incident it is trying to represent. Without getting deep into this film and its problems, another question arises about how distraught people should be when movies try

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[7] Ibid.
[8] Buscombe, *'Injuns!': Native Americans in the Movies*, 23-4.
[9] John Saunders, *The Western Genre: From Lordsburg to Big Whiskey* (London: Wallflower Press, 2001), 93.
[10] Ibid., 93.

to push an agenda by changing the history. Wayne Sarf puts it bluntly, "As things stand, it's hard to get upset over an 'historic wrong' that exists only in the minds of a writer and director – unless, of course, you don't know any better."[11]

However, as society moves forward and racial tensions are growing once again these ideas are making their way to the forefront of social thought. In a culture of apathy toward much of the events in the world, it is easy to disregard inaccurate portrayals of historic incidents. That does not mean that it is acceptable to go along with everything Hollywood puts out, but when people do not take the time to understand the actual events, problems arise. Sarf's statement about "historic wrong" is well put, but the problem does not lie with the filmmakers, it lies with society.

Films became a way for writers and directors to reach a wide audience and promote agendas or simply historical fiction. However, westerns have an important place in society and author Jack Nachbar takes it a little further by stating westerns are, "the single most important story form of the twentieth century."[12] As long as the public understands that the film frequently represents an interpretation of historic accounts, there should be no push back from historians or the public; but when there is movement to portray the movie as accurate is when there become issues.

There does seem to be the start of a more balanced approach in 1950 with the release of *Broken Arrow*. The film allows Indians a voice, one that is reasonable and shows that there are good and bad people among the Indians and the whites. Still other movies came out after this portraying white settlers taming the frontier and making something out of the land, matching a narrative that promotes white settlement and civilization where settlers perceived none. A film

[11] Wayne Michael Sarf, *God Bless You, Buffalo Bill: A Layman's Guide to History and the Western Film* (East Brunswick, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1983), 181.
[12] Ibid., 9.

that came out after this that draws criticism is *The Searchers* (1956) directed by John Ford. John Wayne's character Ethan Edwards is the hero, but he is a troubled hero. He might be the embodiment of the West for many people. Edwards has a deep hatred for Indians and does not hide these feelings. This is what poses the problem. The film exposes a more realistic idea of how things must have been for settlers. Yet, the film is clearly not a historically accurate or realistic film once one sees the opening of the film claiming Monument Valley is Texas. John Ford understood people want the legend. What historians can do with films like this is make them teaching opportunities.

The second term that needs a definition is frontier. The history of North America is full of frontier encounters, with the most well-known examples coming from the western United States. It important to define what a frontier is in trying to understand why encounters along this area are important. Common knowledge tells us the basic idea of a frontier is the area separating different countries, a borderland. For the purposes of this study James Clifton provides a usable definition, "A frontier is a social setting, a culturally defined place where peoples with different culturally expressed identities meet and deal with each other."[13]

People have reminisced about Native Americans and the Wild West since they seemingly faded into the past. Wild West shows and the film industry capitalized on Wild West imagery.[14] Something about this period of western settlement keeps drawing people's attention. However, films about natives have not always accurately represented American Indians and their cultures. Many filmmakers have tried to make honest movies, but most have failed.

Traditionally, most films show Indians on the prairie hunting buffalo, attacking wagon trains, or as scouts for the army. For movies featuring Indians in stereotypical roles, one could

[13] Clifton, 24.

[14] L.G. Moses' book *Wild West Shows and the Image of American Indians* (1999) explores Wild West shows from the Indian perspective and provides insight into the operation of the shows.

first look at the majority of John Wayne and John Ford films. *Stagecoach* (1939) portrays Geronimo and the Apaches as "on the warpath" and ready to kill any whites crossing their territory. *The Searchers* (1956) is an interesting example of Native Americans and the racism that existed along the frontier. A more modern example would be *Dances with Wolves* (1990) in which Kevin Costner appears to teach the Indians everything they know. Although the film is more balanced, it still has its problems.

These movies continue to spread the myths about Indians and keep them locked into nineteenth-century stereotypes, making them seem like a bygone people. Academia has tried to move away from this period, but the public seems unwilling to follow. At times, it seems that American Indians have become extinct due to how often we see them strictly portrayed in the past.

Westerns and Native Americans in film is something that many academic fields including Anthropology, English, and History write about to this day. The historiography begins with Frederick Jackson Turner when he creates the idea of the importance of the frontier and the people that live along its borders.

It is difficult to define a distinct school of thought that incorporates popular culture ideas along with western history. The main criticism of Native American historiography is that there is no defined school. That is one of the challenging aspects of studying Indian history including popular culture. The most obvious path toward studying Indian representation in popular culture needs to start with new west historians and their push to break away from Frederick Jackson Turner and his frontier thesis.

It is important to understand what Frederick Jackson Turner was talking about in 1893 before discussing New Western History. To contributors to new western history the west of

Turner was a place of process, but not in the way Turner had envisioned. They saw many factors affecting the process of the region. The frontier was the merging of many different cultures.

Turner left out the Spanish, which had occupied the West long before the other European powers. The Native Americans were present as precursors to the adaptation of the Euro-American, providing knowledge and survival skills. Turner's Frontier Thesis showed the new settlers as learning the ways of the Indians and adapting to the landscape and once they made the changes, moved farther west.

Once the initial frontiersmen had civilized the area, yeoman farmers could begin building something on the land paving the way for society. The farther west the process went, the more uniquely American it became. It is difficult to dispute that the settlement of the West is not an exceptional American experience. What Turner leaves out however is part of this experience, all of the "others" that helped make it distinctly American. He states, "in spite of environment, and in spite of custom, each frontier did indeed furnish a new field of opportunity, a gate of escape from the bondage of the past; and freshness, and confidence, and scorn of the older society, impatience of its restraints and its ideas, and indifference to its lessons, have accompanied the frontier."[15]

Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land* in 1950 marks the beginning of a New Western History. He was the first to argue that viewing the West as a mythic place of conquest was in line with supporting the idea of manifest destiny, which Americans at the time supported. He examined the myth of the West being a wide-open area of free land ready for settling. Smith argues that by accepting manifest destiny politicians facilitated passage of the Homestead Act of 1862 and similar legislation. This simple idea would be the foundation for future scholars in western history. Exploring the myth of the West becomes an important theme from that point forward

[15] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893).

and drives many studies including those examining the myth perpetuated by popular culture. While Smith is the first to discuss such things, three historians take the movement farther: Patricia Limerick, Richard White, and Richard Etulain.

By the late 1970s, New Western History was emerging as the direction that the study of western history would take. The proponents of the movement wanted to break away from Frederick Jackson Turner and his "Frontier Thesis" completely. There was no discussion of Native Americans, Women, African Americans, or any other minority group. They decided Turner's Thesis was outdated and exclusionary. This new group would offer the antithesis.

In the early and mid-1980s Native American historians and scholars began to publish works about the problems with the assimilation process. Three of the more famous works include Richard White's 1983 manuscript *The Roots of Dependency*, Fred Hoxie's 1984 book *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* and Donald Fixico's 1986 work *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960*. While Hoxie examines the early days of the program and determines that a shift occurred around 1900 with the view before that was the Indians were potential citizens and after that time they were a colonized people. Essentially, they would be citizens without functional rights. In Fixico's book, he examines how the termination of federal support for Indians and the relocation programs led to more poverty and discrimination.

In 1987, Patricia Limerick's book *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* came out. In the work, she views the myth of the West as covering up the true complex history of the region. By exploring issues such as Mormonism in Utah, border disputes with Mexico, and Native American land claims, Limerick shows how western history is the intersection of different cultures and land issues. She did not agree with Turner's Thesis because of the emphasis on civilization conquering savagery as it moved westward. Limerick has valid

points about civilization and savagery. North America was home to many distinctive and old cultures. One need only to look to the extensive trade routes and empire building of the Aztecs to understand what type of civilization was present before Columbus.

Calvin Martin joins this discussion in 1987 by putting the focus on Indians and their worldview. This is a break from the norm at the time. The new western historians were promoting minority studies, but they were not on the level that Martin wished to bring to the conversation. He would focus on metaphysics and perceptions of time. The argument is that Indians and European or Western constructs of time are completely different. To Martin western time is anthropological, while Indians are biological, which he describes in his book *Keepers of the Game*.

Martin also follows this up with *The Way of the Human Being* in 1999. The basis for this work comes from his time spent with the Navajo and Yup'ik Eskimos during which he was exploring their ways of being and seeing the world. This book solidifies his argument about the difference in white and Indian cultures. He describes how Eskimos do not discuss things like nature, conservation, or environment because they are part of nature and understand that, while western culture is detached from nature. These two books appear to make Donald Fixico's 2003 work *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World: American Indian Studies and Traditional Knowledge* possible.

In 1998, Philip Deloria's *Playing Indian* became a part of the new focus by historians. Being the son of Vine Deloria Jr. and an American Studies Ph. D., his work is not typical history and fits well with Martin and Fixico. The book explores the subject of whites projecting themselves into Indian culture and portraying Indians as a means of understanding. His underlying theme for the work is how white men have used Indian representation to meet their goals. He released a work in the same frame of mind in 2004 with *Indians in Unexpected Places*.

Deloria explores the realities behind the myths about what Native Americans do and how they live their lives, mainly exploring the early twentieth century. He explores five different areas of Native American culture. The five sections are violence, representation, athletics, technology, and music. The issues with violence and representation fit well together by looking at the way movies portrayed Native Americans and real life violence that ensued.

They would define the West as a place and not a changing frontier as civilization progressed westward. Another issue many had with the "Frontier Thesis" is that historians chose theory over experience. Richard White famously excludes any mention of frontier in his book *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West* published in 1991. This shows how much they wanted to separate themselves from Turner. New Western Historians thought the West was full of varying people and cultures, something they thought Turner left out.

The 1991 collection of essays *Trails: Toward a New Western History* edited by Patricia Limerick, Clyde Milner, and Charles Rankin gathers the works of many historians of the new west movement. In doing so, they also get contributions representing Indians from Francis Paul Prucha, Lawrence Kelly, and Brian Dippie. The author's discuss race, class, gender, environmental, and cultural issues. They also find time to criticize previous scholars, in particular anyone that uses Turner's Thesis. One fault some find with the work is that it still only places emphasis on Native Americans because of their interaction with whites.

These early works of the new west movement show that there is a place for a richer, more complex study of Native Americans and not just in response to white encroachment. In 1991 *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, by Richard White began this process. While the dialogue does center on Indian interactions with Europeans from the 1650s through the war of 1812, there is a primary focus on Native American societies themselves. White shows it as a hybridization of the two cultures because neither was

able to dominate the other. This is a break from the thought process of the Frontier Thesis with whites adapting and then controlling the culture.

There are many good books examining stereotypes and issues surrounding the meanings of films. For example, Jacquelyn Kilpatrick's *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film* (1999), John Saunders' *The Western Genre: From Lordsburg to Big Whiskey* (2001), Armando Prats' *Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western* (2002), Peter Rollins' and John O'Connor's edited book *Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of Native American in Film* (2003), and Edward Buscombe's *'Injuns!': Native Americans in the Movies* (2006). Several books deal specifically with the issues of Indian stereotypes, for example Philip Deloria's *Indians in Unexpected Places*. Vine Deloria Jr., Donald Fixico and Calvin Martin have also written extensively about Indian thought and placement in modern society.[16]

Historians have examined Hollywood films and placed them into the context of the time, in the greater trends of society. They have acknowledged the treatment of Native Americans and how they have not received leading roles. This tendency still exists today with the recent big budget film "The Lone Ranger" featuring Johnny Depp as Tonto. In this dissertation, there will be an examination of the lives of people influential in getting Native Americans recognition in film, such as Jay Silverheels and Iron Eyes Cody. These two individuals in particular pushed for changes in the movie industry.

The Western was a staple of American filmmaking since the beginning. Edward Buscombe writes, "Throughout most of the history of Hollywood, until it began to lose its appeal in the 1960s, the Western was the major genre of American cinema, comprising between a fifth

[16] Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), Donald L. Fixico, *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World: American Indian Studies and Traditional Knowledge*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), Calvin Luther Martin, *The Way of the Human Being*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

and a quarter of all feature films made in the period 1910-1960."[17] One begins to wonder if the Western fell out of favor because of societal changes or the types of issues in the movies. *Soldier Blue* and *Little Big Man* seem to signal an end of an era of Western filmmaking. However, these films were somewhat controversial. What is interesting is how these films tried to portray Native Americans in a more relatable fashion, even if *Soldier Blue* stresses Indian victimhood.

Wayne Michael Sarf describes a pronouncement by Sam Peckinpah, "the Western is a universal frame within which it is possible to comment on today."[18] This notion will become more prominent moving into the 1960s and with the release of *Soldier Blue* in 1970, even though Westerns were on the decline. This was not the only western film to engage in social commentary, but it is obvious what the filmmakers are trying to comment on making it an easy choice for discussion. With the Vietnam War fresh in the audiences' minds and a growing antimilitary sentiment, the massacre on screen effortlessly paralleled recent events for the filmmakers.[19]

Philip Deloria discusses D.H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* in his book *Playing Indian*. Deloria focuses on two ideas that Lawrence puts forth that center on American identity. The first observation is that Americans tend to focus on what they are not. The second comment is how Americans try to reconcile "civilized order and savage freedom."[20] Another way Lawrence described this was, "'Indians represented instinct and freedom.'"[21] This continues to be a major part of the appeal of the west, the place where "savage freedom and civilized order" met along the frontier.[22]

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[17] Buscombe, *'Injuns!': Native Americans in the Movies*, 23.
[18] Sarf, 187.
[19] Ibid., 185-6.
[20] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 3.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

Deloria also describes how Lawrence believed that James Fenimore Cooper was "Continually trying to work out the tension between a society that promoted democratic equality and the undeniable fact that some people are born more able than others."[23] This idea of democratic equality might be a strong phrase for the American experience. With the foundation of the nation in republican ideology, it seems a stretch to describe it as promoting democratic equality. Nevertheless, the point about people having different opportunities deserves some attention. Many different kinds of people have had to overcome setbacks throughout the history of the United States.

The discourse about Lawrence also discusses how Lawrence felt that Indians had been victims of a contradictory approach of people wanting to destroy them and idolize them.[24] Again, Lawrence's take seems to be strong, but the point is that there is a dichotomy about Native Americans that still exists today. This is present in the entertainment industry as well. Mainstream society appears to be drawn to the freedom of Indians, but is scared to let them live that same way. This could also be a case of whites learning the Indian ways and doing them better, as we have seen frequently in books and movies.

Sherry Smith echoes those sentiments by stating, "Europeans who visited American shores and those who chose to stay, contemplated 'Indian' and used those deliberations not only to define Native Americans but also themselves."[25] Projecting this idea into a more recent era, we might get some explanation as to why the portrayal of the west and Indians vary so much. The writers and the directors are projecting something they long to be or something they despise. Most of the time Native Americans and westward expansion allow the filmmakers to comment on contemporary society. By showing a the noble savage or tribe that is at peace with nature, the

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[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 4.
[25] Sherry Smith, *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes, 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5-6.

story tellers are able to project their vision of a more perfect society or one that they wish more accurately represented their own time and society.

There is a connection between being both Indian and American. There is a connection between the symbolisms of the two identities. People have begun to merge the two things, although they did not need be mutually exclusive to begin with. We see clothing makers and advertisers try to tie Native American imagery to items to make them seem more American. They have become a representation of the American experience, something that is unique to the United States.

We continue to see the effects of this in society to this day, from popular culture to politics. In popular culture, we get the perpetuation of the noble savage. This idea is prominent throughout literature and film, from James Fenimore Cooper's writings to Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves*. A complaint among many Native American scholars is this exact image. It occurs in movies that are supposed to be about Indians, but inevitably turn into a story that centers on a white man that learns the ways of the tribe in which he is interacting. The alternative story is one that follows the white man and his love interest that is typically an Indian woman. This storyline provides the protagonist with a better connection and understanding of the tribe's ways because of his wife, such as in the 1957 film *Run of the Arrow*.

To contrast this point about noble savages, there is a movement that begins in the 1880s to represent Indians as regular people. Authors such as Charles Erskine Scott Wood, George Bird Grinnell, Frank Bird Linderman, and Mabel Dodge Luhan had different connections with Native Americans and in society, but they strove to tell the reality they saw. They also did not intend their works for scholars, but rather the general reader. Even though they may have had many different political views and affiliations, such as Wood's anarchist viewpoint and Luhan's connections with Democratic politicians, they wanted to help educate society on Native

Americans.[26] The work they did is much like what we see on television and in films throughout the modern era.

Charles Wood enlightens his readers with tales of love among the Indians. While in his personal life, he struggled with his father's decision for him to become a soldier and lost love with a Native American woman. We can draw many similarities between his life and many of the films involving Indians. He was a soldier and was involved with an Inuit woman during some time he spent in Alaska. Wood would leave to get supplies to go farther in the Alaskan frontier and when he was to town learned that his regiment was going to fight against the Nez Perce. Therefore, he would have to leave, what he later referred to as the "Thlinkit princess."[27]

This incident would leave a lasting impression on Wood as is later seen in his poem "The Trooper." The story relates the capture of a young soldier after a battle with Indians and subsequent release by a woman of the tribe. In this tale, however the soldier stays with the woman, not returning to his regiment to honor his duty. The story seems to be Wood returning to the Alaskan wilderness and staying with the Inuit woman. It is hard to deny the connection with the story of Pocahontas saving John Smith.[28]

This draws some similarities with countless westerns that have Indian woman saving the white man. However, the ending is never a pleasant one as the woman is dead by the end of the film. This occurs in countless westerns, including *Broken Arrow*.

The works of modern producers and activists can a reach a wide audience in a short amount of time and helps to spread the message much quicker than the popularizers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century could imagine. Many movies about Indians, whether intentionally or not, are helping to influence viewers opinions about them. Some films, such as

[26] Ibid., 14-5.
[27] Ibid., 21-5.
[28] Ibid., 30-2.

Solider Blue, have a clear agenda. Other movies such as *Broken Arrow* are more covert about their intentions. *Soldier Blue* wants the viewer to feel sympathy for the Indians in the movie and bombards the viewer with imagery and situations to make the audience hate the army. *Broken Arrow* takes a more subtle approach, showing the majority of the Native Americans holding up their end of the bargain in the film by honoring the agreement they have to allow safe passage of white travelers through their land, while a few renegades try to upset the promise and create tension. Whites receive much of the same treatment they are trustworthy and dishonest. This is a refreshing idea. Both sides have good and bad associated with them.

Indians have become the poster children for government intervention for many in politics and a sympathetic figure in pop-culture, the "vanishing American." What makes this compelling is the way that Native American populations have been growing over the last century. Indians are not disappearing from the world and they are not stuck in the nineteenth century.

The issue of Native Americans not developing since the timeframe of the movies is somewhat alarming and hard to understand. The majority of westerns take place from the end of the Civil War until 1900. Typically, the Indians in the film have the identity of plains Indians, whether accurate or not. This brings up many of the issues that Native Americans and Native filmmakers are dealing with today. People expect to see longhair and hear them speak in a stereotypical "Indian" style.[29]

However, many other period films are made about the past including the Civil War which places African Americans as slaves, but people do not expect them to be doing those things now. Not all whites are crossing the country in wagons to homestead. The difference appears to be that Native Americans have not found their role in modern cinema. Indians in comparison to other racial groups seems stuck in these time warps of popular culture, whereas African Americans do

[29] Buscombe, *'Injuns!': Native Americans in the Movies*, 25.

not receive much coverage in films from this time. Not many movies show what was going on with that minority group after the Civil War, in many westerns there appear to be two races of people in the west, whites and Native Americans.[30] There has been an effort by people such as Sherman Alexie, Chris Eyre, and Sterlin Harjo that began in the 1980s to show Indians in modern society, but it has not received as much attention as when Indians play the stereotypical western role.

Whether it is in television, movies, music, and even video games Indians are typically from the "Wild West." There is a lot of romanticism attached to this period though; we usually see this with anything associated with this period of American history, most notably among the images of cowboys and Indians.

One idea that many in the academic community fail to consider is the idea of shared memory. This concept is more evident to the public historian. When discussing films and public perception it is important to consider the people viewing the content and how they will perceive the story. Many historians get upset when they consider a movie or television show convinces people the past is different than it actually was. They believe that if the viewer believes the content has some basis in reality it can affect how they view the history of the situation in the movie. This may seem like the obvious answer, but what a few historians have to say about the subject may surprise people.

There is a book that seemingly makes an argument that detracts from worrying about the historical significance of films and if people believe what they see during the movie. In an ongoing effort to try to connect history with the public and get more attention for the field, it is important to understand what the public finds significant. *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* by Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen makes use of interesting

[30] Clifton, 22-3.

methodology. To determine what the public wanted to know, the researchers conducted phone interviews with 1,453 people. There are random interviewees and selected ones. 808 of the contacts are random and the remaining 645 consist of African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Oglala Sioux.

"Social class, regional identity, political conviction, and ethnicity among whites were much less important in shaping respondents' understanding of the past than race (particularly for blacks and Indians) and religion (particularly for evangelicals of all kinds)."[31] These findings are not surprising. Native American and African Americans typically have stronger connections to family and community. These groups maintain extended family relations within their groups more so than whites in urban settings do. Even evangelical Christians refer to members of congregations as "brother" and "sister" while only having a link through the church. Whites will look to the past more often for understanding of family history.

Groups such as Native Americans and African Americans have not always been a focus of historical studies, which also helps to explain why they want to seek out this connection and further their cause. How Native American and African American's view the past corresponds the closest with how a professional historian would do so. They look to coincide their past with the larger narrative of their people.

In understanding some of the political implications of the study and some of the banter that politicians throw around about conservative and liberal, both sides may be at a loss about the findings. "Conservatives may be alarmed at how rarely our respondents referred to patriotic narratives," while politicians and pundits try to evoke those types of narratives constantly. The next sentence states, "Liberals and leftists (especially historians) may be unsettled by another of our findings: when Americans think and talk about the past, many of them avoid collective

[31] Roy Rosenzweig and David P. Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 10.

frameworks like ethnicity, class, region, and gender − categories close to the hearts of professional history practitioners."[32] This demonstrates the disconnect between professional historians and the public.

How people determine who the most trustworthy source of information is about the past raises some interesting questions as well. The rankings place museums, relatives, and eyewitnesses ahead of teachers at the high school and college level. People who work with history for a living are lower than people who may have simply lived during a certain era or someone that witnessed an event.

Yet, for how far down historians appear to be, they are still better sources of information, in the opinion of the interviewees, than books, television, and movies. This also poses some problems. There is an entire network on cable television devoted to history. The History Channel provides programming about all types of happenings throughout the world. It is good to see that people do not just accept any knowledge from a visual format.

Movies are continually a source of debate among historians about the authenticity and accuracy of films. Since people place them below teachers, the debate may be senseless. This could be creating some of the detachment between historians and the public. The public may not understand why historians get upset about whether or not movies are precise when they are for entertainment. What movies and television seem to do is show is the changing politics and social orientation of a period in time, so they are providing some service for discussion points.

During the early twentieth century, Native Americans were a dying race in the view of the American people, if there were not studies done immediately they might not be around to evaluate later. The national narrative did not consider them and placed them in a category of being non-reactive to the happenings encroaching upon them.

[32] Ibid., 116.

There have also been other studies done that seek to help historians understand what the large and small screen mean to the profession. David Glassberg examines how people perceive a popular documentary by Ken Burns. His discussion on the documentary attempts to show how historians can reach the public. Glassberg notes, "By focusing on viewer response, rather than only on the intentions of the filmmaker, we can begin to go beyond the history that the filmmaker wanted to make and explore the history that viewers saw and understood."[33] This chapter also demonstrates how the public interprets events based on their own knowledge and experience.

The most glaring issue with this is that he bases the entire study on 444 letters to Burns. This seems like a small number when trying to generalize about viewership, as most people that take the time to write in will love the program or have some serious issues with it. The fact that people took the time to write to Burns shows a connection between the two groups. The problem with how people view the documentary is that they understood it to be factual and not interpretive. There are elements of fact in most things, but a lot of history is interpretive. This seems obvious to the academic historian, represented in the ever-changing analyses of events.[34]

What Glassberg is trying to explain to the reader is something that historians should already know; films make more money than books and have a wider viewership. People more easily identify with visual interpretations than they do in picking up a book. The emotional connection is stronger when someone can see what happened and hear words read from that period. There is a difference between what historians criticized the series for and what the public thought. Film is a media that historians do not take enough advantage of, even though there is an entire channel dedicated to history on cable television.

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[33] David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 91.
[34] Ibid., 89-108.

This does not mean that this study is irrelevant as polls do have margins of error and there is ample evidence that movies and television do help to change opinions of events in the past. However, what they tell us about the past may be more about what the people at the time thought and not what actually happened. Many films use historical settings to push agendas or political statements about their contemporary ideology. In dissecting the films in this study, it will be important to consider what was going on socially at the time. The 1950s and 1960s were a time of change and a clash of cultures. The overwhelming conservatism of the 1950s began to die out in the 1960s when a new generation spoke up about their rights and ideas.

CHAPTER I

THE EVOLUTION OF INDIAN PORTRAYAL AND PERCEPTION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

"Indians were a proud dignified race of warriors with their own code of honor, culture, and justifiable hatred of the white man."[35]

Daniel Bernardi writes, "Indeed, U.S. cinema has consistently constructed whiteness, the representational and narrative form of Eurocentrism, as the norm by which all 'Others' fail by comparison."[36] It is not hard to argue that white actors have dominated movies in the United States. What is even more significant, whites have most often portrayed the "others." Bernardi is correct about the construction of whiteness in films and actually, the construction happens across all media. As will be demonstrated during the discussion about Indian portrayal, his assertion about "others" failing in comparison to those of European descent is not entirely right. By the 1970s, however, in showing whites in films, sometimes the audience sees them as solely responsible for all the vile things that happen to Native North Americans where Indians come to possess victimhood.[37]

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[35] Iron Eyes Cody and Marietta Thompson, *Iron Eyes Cody: The Proud American* (Madison, NC: Empire Publishing Company, Inc., 1988), 22.
[36] Bernardi, 5.

Both of these approaches have problems. An early attempt at making a movie with a more balanced and indeed complicated story is *Broken Arrow*. We will see Indians shown as equal to and, in some cases, superior to whites in the fairness and truthfulness of their dealings in the films.

In the early 1900s, films about Native Americans could serve two purposes, entertainment and education. In 1901, Thomas Edison and J.H. White in conjunction with the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) tried to capture "authentic" Indians and their customs on film. In trying to preserve the history and culture of what many considered a dying race, films such as the "Moki Snake Dance by Wolpi Indians" came about from the efforts of the BAE.[37] Thomas Edison had been commercializing Native Americans since the earliest days of motion pictures. In 1894 he produced *The Sioux Ghost Dance* and in 1898 *The Parade of Buffalo Bill's Wild West*.

It is important to remember that this first Native American film marketed by Edison came out the year after Frederick Jackson Turner's "The Significance of the Frontier." The infamous slaughter of Sioux at Wounded Knee occurred only four years before. Edison films show how important the idea of the frontier is to American society. Once the frontier was gone according to Turner, people still clamored for stories about the "Wild West" and Indians. What was once in printed form would now be part of a new medium, the moving picture.[38]

An interesting aspect of the search for authenticity is how it is widely reported that many Indians did not perform the ceremonies or dances the correct way when they were on camera. The changes ranged from doing the movements in the opposite direction to completely changing

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[37] Alison Griffiths, "Science and Spectacle: Native American Representation in Early Cinema," in *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, ed. S. Elizabeth Bird (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 80-1.

[38] John H. Lenihan, "Westbound: Feature Films and the American West," in *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Cutlure*," in *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture*, ed. Richard Aquila (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 109.

the dance. What early filmmakers will discover that the public is intrigued with Native Americans and do not care about the accuracy with which they are shown on film.[39]

One of the ideas these silent films show is how much of mainstream society perpetuated the notion that Indians were dangerous. This is an idea that remains for many years throughout every form of popular media. It is part of the noble savage discourse. Some perceive Native Americans as similar to children, nobly innocent, but if provoked they can turn wild and dangerous.[40]

Throughout part of United States history and its antecedents in European history, Indians were considered closer to whites than other minorities. The idea of the noble savage bridges the gap between cultures. For centuries, European intellectuals categorized them as human or white. James Clifton reminds us about the racial classification of the time in noting that, "Confused inherent biological characteristics such as skin color with cultural and mental attributes."[41] Native Americans received better treatment, for a while, which only lasted until the American Revolution. The idea of Native American and whites being almost identical in personality and character ends with the war for Independence. This no doubt has to do with some tribes siding with the British and the need for poor whites to separate themselves from the others in society.[42]

These ideas reach back to historical figures such as Thomas Jefferson, but he was more optimistic about where Indians could end up in society. When he purchased Louisiana, an action that was clearly outside of his executive authority, he envisioned the region – the great American West – as the perfect place for Indians as the United States slowly expanded westward. In Jefferson's mind, it would take several centuries for the country to reach the Pacific boundary.

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[39] Richard W. Etulain and Glenda Riley, ed., *Hollywood West: Lives of Film Legends Who Shaped It* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2001), 159.
[40] Bird, "Introduction," 3.
[41] Clifton, 22.
[42] Ibid.

With this envisioned slow spread of white society onto the plains, Native Americans would have ample time to adapt and fit into society, making assimilation easier on everyone.

The frontier experience did not turn out to be as simple as Jefferson imagined it could be. Many factors sped up westward expansion from technology and the discovery of gold in California. The process did not feature a slow assimilation of Indians, but resulted in much tension and many conflicts between western tribes and mainstream society.

It is worth noting that for many years and well into the twentieth century, there remained movements to incorporate Indians into mainstream society. While many blacks wanted to sit at the lunch counter or go to school with whites they could not. Many Native Americans preferred to remain culturally divided from society and did not want to go to school or socialize with whites. Yet, many Indian children had to go to boarding schools where they had their hair shorn, their languages outlawed and dressed in uniforms, for the boys after the fashion of military academies. This follows in the same ideology that Indians were capable of assimilation into society more easily than blacks, making Native Americans essentially white once again.

Vine Deloria Jr. describes the ideas and perceptions behind the assimilation movement in *Custer Died for Your Sins*. To him the former slaves were regarded as draft animals in the eyes of whites whereas Indians were perceived as wild animals that nevertheless could be domesticated and taught new skills. This is somewhat of an exaggeration, as he does not talk about any of the movements to help both slaves and Native Americans by whites. Former slaves have a purpose and that is to work as is seen in the black codes of the post-Civil War South in keeping up labor contracts and not allowing them to quit and move.

Indians needed to be kept separate from mainstream society until it was realized how much valuable surplus land they possessed. Although this idea was present early on when gold was discovered in Georgia in the 1830s, the process accelerated once white expansion crossed the

Mississippi River. In this worldview, Indians were determined to have the potential of whites so the government could divide the land as other whites preferred in comparison to communal holdings and get it in the hands of people that understood how to use the land properly. To get them to be more "white," they had Christianity and schools forced upon them, typically in the same place, the reservation with fixed boundaries. This is from the same society that would close schools and public places to blacks or simply not allow them to use the same facilities as the whites.

The idea of removing any semblance of the traditional lifestyle from Native American groups was major goal for many activists interested in the reform of Indian policy. The Dawes Act of 1887 was also part of the legislation trying to remove all tribal ties from the Native American community. The act would force Indians to take allotments of their own land and surrender "surplus" land held in conjunction with everyone else in the tribe. This was a noble enough idea that would get Native Americans their own private property that would eventually lead to citizenship.[43]

The Dawes Act consisted of these types of requirements. The president could designate a tribe ready for allotment. Reservation land was surveyed and then divided into parcels of 160 acres, given to the head of households and smaller amounts to younger people and orphans. If the Indians on the reservations did not select what parcel of land they wanted, the government would assign them and the federal government would keep the land in trust for twenty-five years so the Indians could learn to handle it as real estate. When or if they accepted the ways of society they could gain citizenship. Most importantly, the government could sell left over lands, the funds to be used for education within the tribe.[44]

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[43] Smith, 7.

[44] Colin G. Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 378.

Many of the ideas present in the Dawes Act were a way for the federal government to acquire reservation lands and control Native Americans. Once the government decided that excess lands were valuable for white settlement and sale they needed a way to get the lands that treaties promised the tribes in perpetuity. The frontier, as Turner explained, was the safety valve for urban American society and its need for more lands for people to settle thus forestalling discontent. The act would also attempt to force Indians into giving up their tribal ties. Allotment would transform Indians into model yeoman farmers and instill in them a desire for private property and money. This would prove to be a futile attempt at an overnight revolution involving tribal communities.[45]

The Dawes Act remained in effect until 1934. In the eyes of the federal government, citizenship meant the freedom, if they chose, to sell their allotments. By the turn of the twentieth century and the commissionership of Cato Sells, competency commissions were established that granted allottees the freedom to sell their individual freeholds. While this sounds like a victory for the Indians, it placed them in a difficult position in dealing with people wanting to gain the lands and exploit some of the tribal members' lack of knowledge about the resources found on the lands. The government also used blood-quantum to determine if someone was competent to control his own affairs. The idea of blood quantum is a problem that has been evident since some of the earliest interactions between Euroamericans and Native Americans. Finding any European blood in the ancestry of an Indian could gain a certificate of competency from the federal government. This simply reinforced the idea of genetic superiority and holding Indians in a perpetual state of adolescence from the federal governments' standpoint.[46]

The idea of cultural superiority is something that has persisted since the early days of the country concerning minority groups, especially Indians. What seems to make this more difficult

[45] Ibid., 378-9.
[46] Ibid., 380.

to understand is how there became expectations on how quickly Indians could become a part of mainstream society whether they wanted to or not. Deloria presents a cynical perspective again that brings out what he believes to be an important point, but it is also an outlook that someone would have after many years of dealing with a system that seemed to be against Indians in every possible way. He writes that there seems to be an attitude toward Indians that "we know better" in reference to whites and the government. This attitude is something that continues to extend farther away from Native Americans and into every person in the country. The government has become increasingly a "nanny" state, trying to decide what is best for the citizens. There is a lesson present to all about government control from the treatment of Indians and other minorities from the past. The lesson being that the more government intervention there is, the less freedom you have and the typically the quality of life.[47]

Some historians and certain activists within Native American communities have classified the troubles with the frontier process as genocide against Native Americans, a theme that *Little Big Man* in 1970 discusses. All forms of popular culture will explore this idea of genocide against Indians. The United States government held many positions regarding Indians, but genocide was never one. Some prefer to point the finger at the military, but when one examines the numbers genocide is questionable. From 1798-1898 there were 1,240 battles, this excludes 21 from the war of 1812, one during the Mexican War, and 295 during the Civil War. Estimates are that there were anywhere between 3,000-6,000 Indian deaths at the hands of the army, while there were 2,125 army casualties. These estimates are from battles with the United States military and do not include the deaths incurred from the process of forced removal and resettlement.[48]

[47] Deloria Jr., 7-10.
[48] Sarf, 178.

Moving forward the concerns change for many in the Native American community. The days of wars against encroachment on their lands begins to change to encroachment on the perception of outsiders of what Native Americans are. As early as 1911, Native Americans were concerned with how movies represented them and their cultures. That year a delegation of Shoshones, Arapahoes, Cheyennes, and Chippewas would demonstrate on the steps of the capitol building over how the new media of film portrayed Indians.[49] They directed their demands toward President Taft and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This was only the first time that Native Americans would direct their disappointments with screen portrayals toward a president. Jim Thorp even wrote a letter to President Roosevelt to speak up for Native Americans and the way Hollywood treated them.[50] The formation of the Indian Actors Association in 1936 signaled an effort to get Indians jobs in films portraying Indians. This should come as no surprise because of the use of Indians in the traveling Wild West shows. Many Indians were the stars of the shows and allowed to reenact scenes from their past.

The dime novel did a lot to create and perpetuate many of the western myths that we still know today. Dime novels created the dominant literary identity to the west in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Buffalo Bill Cody was the first big star that dime novels created. The books are predecessors to comic books and graphic novels. Much like comic books, the emphasis is on action. They contain a hero that overcomes tremendous odds and does so in this case in a way that corresponds with progress on the vast frontier. The hero himself represents the greatest qualities of civilization and the wilderness, making him a skilled frontiersman. The idea of the white man combining the best of both worlds is a theme that persists to this day.[51]

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[49] Ibid., 193-4.

[50] Rob Schmidt, "Sonny Skyhawk: Three Decades of Fighting the Power in Hollywood," http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/08/13/sonny-skyhawk-three-decades-fighting-power-hollywood-150858.

[51] Darly Jones *The Dime Store Novel* and Richard Etulain's *Telling Western Stories* describe the effects of the dime novel on the public during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Wild West shows helped to bridge the gap between the nineteenth and twentieth century ideas concerning the culture of the American West. The shows were able to bring the dime novel to life. Historic and mythic figures brought the frontier experience to audiences around the world. The most famous of these shows belonged to Buffalo Bill Cody. He began the shows in 1883 and showcased Annie Oakley, the ideal frontier woman, to Sitting Bull, the brave chief of the famous Sioux nation, and everyone in between. The shows were part circus, pageant, rodeo, and historical depictions. The performers would participate in rope tricks, bulldogging, and marksmanship competition.

L.G. Moses brings the lives of the Indian performers to the forefront and shows how the Native American performers enjoyed the opportunity to relive the days of the past by bringing aspects of their culture to large audiences. By working in the shows, Indians were making money and getting to see "civilized" society. He does not portray the "show" Indians as ignorant and being taken advantage of by greedy promoters.[52]

Nevertheless, the shows did create the myth that all Indians lived in tipis, hunted buffalo, and wore war bonnets, which the author does acknowledge. Many of the stereotypes about Indians have their origin in these shows. When movies became the primary source of entertainment, they took over the role as the purveyor of myths. Movies exploited the stereotypes in greater fashion.

In a way, Indian participation created some of the stereotypes surrounding Native Americans. Moses and Philip Deloria in, *Indians in Unexpected Places* builds upon Moses' work pointing out that Indians were able to relive their past and preserve elements of their culture that might have otherwise vanished. Both authors explain that Indians saw it as opportunity to

[52] L.G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

provide for their families and see the world. Opportunities such as these were not readily available on the reservation.

Deloria looks at Wild West Shows and movies in *Indians in Unexpected Places* primarily in the chapter on representation. His conclusion from is that movies began to exploit Native Americans to make money by creating movies that drifted farther from the truth of Indian experience. Wild West Show producers made some of the first motion pictures about Indians; but they lacked an audience because, as the author points out, they were dull.[53]

Films switched their emphasis to accommodate audience taste and to make money instead of being historically accurate. The switch marks a turning point in what the public saw and would come to believe about Indians and their battles with the United States Cavalry. It is interesting to read how many Indians refused to work on pictures that did not represent them fairly and that some requested larger amounts of money to go ahead with the movie. The Indians seem to have known the consequences that would follow these misrepresentations. After these problems, the studios began to move away from Indian actors and began to use whites to play Indians.[54]

Some historians believe that the shows were negative because they allowed Indians to act out their lives before the government attempted to assimilate them. Indians were paraded in front of thousands of people and cheered as they recreated scenes from their past, in a different lifestyle than the government and reformers wanted Indians to be a part of. To compete with the Wild West Shows and promote the new "civilized" Indians, the government and Bureau of Indian

[53] Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 52-108.
[54] Ibid.

Affairs began to promote exhibitions that portrayed Indian schools and showed how assimilated Indians acted.[55]

In the earliest days of westerns, Bernardi's statement will have more relevance, especially in those films that portray the subject of General Custer's clash with the Sioux. One of the most influential events on early westerns was the Battle of the Little Bighorn. The killing of George Custer was the subject of two major films in 1912, *The Massacre* directed by D.W. Griffith and *Custer's Last Fight* directed by Francis Ford.[56] It is no surprise that Hollywood made films about the famous battle.

Roberta Pearson adds that the Battle of the Little Big Horn is comparable to Pearl Harbor for a modern day audience.[57] Some of the same sentiment would apply from then to now, although in keeping with this logic of unwarranted attacks, a more modern example would be the events of September 11, 2001. In reality, however, the Little Big Horn was no surprise attack. Nevertheless, Indians were the dangerous other. In the 1909 film *On the Little Big Horn*, Indians are referred to as a "band of naked, painted devils."[58]

When viewing the depiction of the Japanese not long after Pearl Harbor this portrayal is similar to what people wrote and said about them. White audiences would see the surprise attack by the Japanese much like the massacre at the Little Big Horn, although the only similarity is that, many American military personnel lost their lives. The Japanese attack was a complete surprise, whereas Custer did not have to attack the great Sioux encampment.

Artists have retold the incident in everything from songs, paintings, and films. It will be a part of the story of one of the films from 1970, *Little Big Man*. What is most intriguing is how

[55] Moses.
[56] Bernardi, 273-4.
[57] Ibid., 278.
[58] Ibid., 287.

the different eras and artists portray Custer. Some show him as the gentleman hero of the plains and others show him as a bumbling idiot that got his men massacred. *Little Big Man* depicts him as the latter.

For a time when not many movies were being made, two films about Custer's fate came out the same year. While these two films tell the story of Custer leading his men into oblivion, they take some liberties with history and even show Custer as a hero. In the movie *Custer's Last Fight*, the filmmaker portrays the massacre as a battle and a hero's "last fight." It is not a stretch to view Custer as a hero during this film and the Indians as evil. *The Massacre* in contrast shows a more loose interpretation of the battle, in which whites appear to be killing Indians more often than Indians killing whites making the battle seem less one sided.[59] These ideas also help to solidify the comparison between the idealization of Little Big Horn and Pearl Harbor.

Custer led his men into a situation that was avoidable. He divided his troops into four different parts in the presence of a large and presumably hostile force and placed himself in a situation where he would be facing the largest group of Indians alone.[60] This insured that Custer would not have to share the glory of the victory with other commanders, helping to secure his status as an important military figure and perhaps future politician. However, there would be no glory to share.

Edward Curtis did extensive work with many Indian tribes and spent much time trying to preserve them on film. He had a studio in Seattle, Washington. A chance meeting with George Bird Grinnell in 1898 while photographing Mt. Rainier set his artistic life in a new direction. After this chance encounter, Grinnell became interested in Curtis' work. Grinnell would end up

[59] Ibid., 274-5.
[60] Ralph K. Andrist, *The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indian* (1964; repr., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 276.

asking Curtis to accompany him to Montana to photograph members of the Blackfoot tribe. He began photographing Native Americans in 1900 and by 1906 he was filming them.[61]

Curtis won fame for his photography, which incorporated the use of props to create a stereotypical look of many Indians. Some people criticize his use of props. One of the problems was with authentication of artifacts used in the scene. When photographers like Curtis used props and placed importance on the items in the picture it makes it difficult to authenticate who the item belonged too. What historians and anthropologists began to understand was that many of the items belonged to the photographer and not the subject. The props helped the photographer sell his work and create an image of authenticity that audiences wanted. People did not want pictures of Native Americans in everyday normal clothes. They wanted their Indians wild or unadorned to fit the image in their minds. This idea is still prevalent in modern society.

Even with the problems attached to using props, Curtis was able to capture many images of Native Americans and in doing so preserve much of their history. He spent nearly thirty years in the field to complete his twenty-volume work "The North American Indian."[62] He knew specialists needed to view his work and planned to donate his complete fieldwork to them.[63]

One of his most famous works is the 1914 film, *In the Land of the Head Hunters*. This film came out eight years before the famous *Nanook of the North*, which follows much of the same direction and attitude of Curtis' work. The movie centers on the Kwakiutl Indians of the Northwest coast of the United States. Curtis does use a fictional plot and some props to move the story, but tries to capture the Indians customs on film.[64]

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[61] Makepeace, Anne, Susan Lacy, Pegi Deam, Tleena Ives, Oliver Jackson, Jerry Potts, Allan Pard, Sheila Tousey, Bill Pullman, and Edward S. Curtis, *Coming to Light: Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indians*, DVD, (Oley, PA: Bullfrog Films 2000).
[62] Ibid.
[63] Bird, 88-9.
[64] Ibid., 86.

Curtis used props and altered images to create parts of the film and most of his other works; however, for this film he tried to combine a fictional movie with anthropological accuracy desired of scientists. He understood that his film could serve two purposes, entertainment and preservation.[65] Alison Griffith notes, "As would be expected, the construction of Native Americans in early silent film was infused with the nationally and historically specific discourses regarding the relations of Native Americans to White society."[66]

[65] Ibid., 88-9.
[66] Ibid., 79.

CHAPTER II

INDIANS IN MOVIES AND TELEVISION: FROM SILVERHEELS TO SKYHAWK

"The reel west was fabricated with the real west."[67]

An Associated Press article from The Daily Oklahoman on February 21, 1960, entitled "There's No Demand for GOOD 'Injuns,'" shows the kind of stereotypical assumptions prevalent with the dominant culture as recently as "The New Frontier." The main point of the article is that Indians wanted more authenticity about Indians in movies. It describes Jay Silverheels, best known as Tonto from the Lone Ranger television series, as helping to organize a movement. Protestors sent their appeal to President Dwight Eisenhower, Vice-President Richard Nixon, and three television networks.[68] The protest, hardly a movement, does not seem to have gained much momentum moving forward; but it pointed toward a growing discontent among tribal members about how society treated and perceived them. This will become even more evident as these smaller movements come together as a portion of the Native American civil rights movement.

Silverheels was born in Ontario, Canada, on the Six Nations Reserve in 1919, although there is another reported birth year of 1913. His family raised him as a Mohawk, even though his

[67] Cody and Thompson, 23.
[68] Associated Press, "There's No Demand for GOOD 'Injuns,'" *The Daily Oklahoman*, February 21, 1960.

father was a captain in the Canadian army. He had roles in numerous films and television shows beginning in the 1940s such as *Captain from Castille*, *Broken Arrow*, and *Pathfinder*. He played Tonto, his most iconic role, in 221 episodes of the *Lone Ranger* from 1949 to 1957.[69] He was also the first Native American to get a star on the Walk of Fame on Hollywood Boulevard in 1979.[70]

During the 1960s, there were rising tensions because of the Civil Rights movement. Activists such as Silverheels and Iron Eyes Cody opened the Indian Actors' workshop in 1963 in Los Angeles. Another group that Silverheels helped to form was the Indian Actors' Guild in 1966. They sought the portrayal of Indians to be by Native American actors.[71] Silverheels was not the first, nor would he be the last to try to promote authenticity on the large and small screens. The movement involved many different people, with quite possibly the most famous advocate having the least amount of Native American ancestry.

Iron Eyes Cody was one of the most influential actors to portray Native Americans in film and television. According to the Internet Movie Database website he is credited with over 200 appearances as an actor with his career spanning from 1926-1990.[72] However, he is probably most famous for portraying the "Crying Indian" in a public service announcement about pollution in 1971. Cody became an iconic figure in the western world. He worked as a consultant on many films and depicted many different tribal peoples. This is a testament to his longevity as an actor and his professionalism. It also supports the idea that authenticity aids in movies and television.

He strove for truthfulness onscreen, he reported that his son even wanted to know if he had scalped someone and that led him to realize how important honesty in front of the camera

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[69] Etulain and Riley, *Hollywood West: Lives of Film Legends Who Shaped It*, 163.
[70] Ibid., 165.
[71] Ibid., 164.
[72] IMDB.com, "Iron Eyes Cody (1907–1999),"
http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0002014/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1.

was.[73] How disturbing to think that his son wondered if he had ever indeed scalped someone. It becomes understandable why so many Indians have fought for more historically accurate depictions on screen. While scalping did occur, it is interesting to see how Cody's child was not sure what was imaginary and what real. To ensure that children and even adults knew the difference, Cody began to push for representations that were more authentic.

During the 1930s, one of Cody's main jobs was that of a technical advisor on films. He also worked for the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus during the 1930s.[74] Colonel Tim McCoy, provides a little insight, into what Cody did during his time with the circus.[75] One of the first lines mentioning Cody refers to him as, "A Cherokee from Oklahoma."[76] This perpetuation of the idea of Cody being of Native American descent is even present in the memoirs of McCoy as well, someone who worked frequently with Cody.

McCoy admired Cody, "Iron Eyes is still one of the great, authentic Indian actors."[77] The word to focus on in that statement is authentic. McCoy was well versed in plains Indians cultures. He spent many years living in Wyoming and interacting with Native Americans on a daily basis. His declaration of Cody being "authentic" is important. McCoy's western life experience and longevity in the movie industry provided him with an idea of what "authentic" was. McCoy does not end his praise for Cody there, "Iron Eyes sang the songs and he knew what

[73] Cody and Thompson, 22.
[74] Tim McCoy with Ronald McCoy, *Tim McCoy Remembers the West: An Autobiography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 242-3.
[75] Tim McCoy was an actor mostly known for his performances in westerns. His film career lasted from 1925-65. According to IMDB.com, he has ninety-three movie appearances, the majority of which occur between the years 1925-40. He had numerous encounters with Iron Eyes Cody from their time in the circus together to Iron Eyes appearing in McCoy's television show. "Tim McCoy (1891-1978)," http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0003706/.
[76] McCoy, 248.
[77] Ibid.

he was doing. Aside from being an avid student of native American culture he is a most knowledgeable man."[78]

The circus days for Cody included being knowledgeable in a general way about Indian cultures and in this particular instance to assist with the Hopi Snake Dance. The most difficult part of the job appears to have been maintaining order within the troupe. McCoy reports that many of the Indians stayed drunk most of the time; mainly due to the type of work they were doing handling poisonous snakes. He also recalls how Cody was not and that is part of the reason he was responsible for the others.

This responsibility could not have been an easy one for Cody because McCoy relates how several Indians fell from the train and had to reconnect with the circus once they sobered up. One story in particular had one Indian declared dead and placed in a coffin as the people attempted to notify the circus. As the mortician started to latch the coffin, the man woke up and opened the lid, surely startling the mortician.[79]

The authenticity of the Hopi Snake Dance underscored Cody's relationship with the troupe. McCoy describes a Hopi elder visiting the show while in New York as he was making his way to Washington D.C. The elder lectured the Indians about how it was not appropriate for the ceremony to be on display for a crowd at a circus. This lecture worked on many of the performers, especially the younger ones, and many left the show.[80]

What makes Cody's endeavors important is that he seems to have constantly encouraged more balance in depictions of Indian and white relations on screen or whatever the project was at the time. With the release of *Broken Arrow* in 1950 seeming to embody his idea of balanced

[78] Ibid., 249.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid., 249-50.

representation, it seems to be the exception and not the rule for many years. While his efforts seemed to have helped, it is in the 1960s and 1970s where his ideas began to come together.[81]

Cody also appeared on many popular television shows. Cody's efforts would still help to change stereotypes in entertainment, just on the small screen this time. He worked with Walt Disney on *The First Americans* and guest starred on *Gunsmoke*.[82] Television was a way to reach a wider audience than films. This becomes especially true beginning in the 1950s with the spread of television culture.

After the Second World War, there was a softening of the attitude about Native American depiction on screen and this may be due to the service of Indians during the war.[83] With their war record and efforts of people like Cody, there are films made like *Broken Arrow*. Then later in the 1950s and into the next few decades in combination with the civil rights movement, things begin to change. It would be unfair to overlook the real-life efforts of many minority groups during the war when examining the changes made in society and Hollywood.

In an associated press article entitled "Indians Win Last Battle" from The Daily Oklahoman on January 27, 1957, we learn that Iron Eyes Cody and Indians for Screen Authenticity (IFSA) gave their stamp of approval for the film *Reprisal*.[84] The film deals with a man of mixed heritage that is trying to distance himself from his Indian ancestry in a new town, but eventually gives up trying to remain only white to the townspeople. Cody did not appear in the movie, but he was in four other movies in 1956. This idea of Indians approving films that show Indians authentically was forward thinking at the time. IFSA also gave Indians a collective voice to address problems and successes in movies.

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[81] Liz Sonneborn, *American Indian Lives: Performers* (New York: Facts on File, 1995), x, 46-7.
[82] Ibid., 49-50.
[83] Ibid., 48.
[84] Associated Press, "Indians Win Last Battle," *The Daily Oklahoman*, January 27, 1957.

By the late 1960s, the western genre was declining as Native American rights groups were attacking Hollywood's Indian stereotypes. While Cody did participate in the efforts of some of these groups, he did try to inspire changes. However, many Indians enjoyed their roles in film and television. Cody described why more Indians did not reject work: "The Indians we hired as extras were…swept along with the joy of being paid decently at something which was, really a lot of fun: riding horses, shooting, and yelling."[85] The argument made by Cody does not differ much from an argument made about why Indians chose to participate years before in Wild West Shows.

Cody used his position of prominence among filmmakers to help many in the Indian community. He helped many Indians find jobs in the movie industry during and after the Great Depression who moved to California in search of work.[86] Things like that are important in looking at the legacy left behind by Cody, especially when examining his own heritage. During his life, he tried to promote unity and understanding.

He seems to have walked the line between the white and Indian world well. He was a cultural mediator that was able to reach a wide audience. Cody was friends with many western celebrities of his time including Roy Rogers, Tim McCoy, and the Sons of the Pioneers. Another way he was able to reach a wide audience was through the radio show "The Lone Indian" in which he would travel around the United States and provide a local history lesson about Indians from the areas he stopped.[87]

After his wife's death in 1977, he slowed down his acting career to focus on his charity work.[88] Many people in politics acknowledged Cody's outreach to the community. Cody did a lot of charity work to help Indians and met with numerous United States Presidents including

[85] Sonneborn, 50-1.
[86] Ibid., 47.
[87] Cody and Thompson, 23.
[88] Sonneborn, 51.

Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan.[89] He was involved in many charities and helped promote truthfulness about Indians to a wide audience.

According to Cody, he believed the best movies about Indians were *Broken Arrow*, *A Man Called Horse*, *Greyeagle*, *Little Big Man*, and *Winterhawk*.[90] One of the more curious selections in the list is *A Man Called Horse*. This film was highly touted at the time of its release in 1970, but went on to receive much criticism from inside and outside of the Native American community. The controversy surrounding the film centers on a white man rising to such a position of prominence in the tribe and the portrayal of Native American customs. In doing so, the movie becomes more about him and less about the Indians.

His celebrity helped his ability to be a cultural mediator. He seems to have taken this seriously, especially when it came to his charity work and helping children. Cody's "The Great Spirit Prayer" offered a unifying message and showed his understanding of trying to unite the two worlds of Indians and whites. He does this by incorporating language that is often associated with a Native American cultural vocabulary as the "Great Spirit," while keeping with a Christian tradition in addressing one God or "Spirit." The prayer is as follows:

The Great Spirit Prayer

Oh Great Spirit whose voice in the winds I hear,
And whose breath gives life to all the world, Hear me.
Before you I come, one of your many children.
Small and weak am I.
Your strength and wisdom I need.
Make me walk in beauty.
Make my heart respect all you have made.

[89] Cody and Thompson, 5, 78-9.
[90] Ibid., 27.

My ears to hear your voice.

Make me wise that I may know all you have taught my people.

The lessons you have hidden in every rock.

I seek strength, not to be superior to my brothers.

Make me able to fight my greatest enemy myself.

Make me ready to stand before you with clean and straight eyes.

When Life fades, as the fading sunset, may our spirits stand before you without shame.[91]

Cody was a cultural mediator between Native Americans and whites. The idea of cultural mediation is nothing new in Native North America, but it seems to play a large role in the understandings and misunderstandings between Indians and whites. One of the most famous people to do this was Quanah Parker, the Comanche chief who found a role as a cultural mediator in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as the Comanches found their territory dwindling. He was only half-Comanche and half-white, so there seems to be some connection between not being full blood Indian and being able to carry influence outside of the Native American community. They both tried to help what they considered their own people.

However, this is where things get a little messy. Iron Eyes Cody, one of the most beloved Indian actors of all time and mediator between cultures, may not have been of Indian heritage. There are about as many differing reports on his heritage as roles he played during his acting career. Some report him to be Espera DiCorti, born in Gueydan, Louisiana in 1904. There is another version that has him being born in Oklahoma Territory as Oscar Cody. According to other sources, he was born on a ranch in Texas and learned the ways of Indians from his father while being home schooled. Others claim that he was Cherokee, Cheyenne, and Cree.[92]

[91] "The Great Spirit Prayer," Iron Eyes Cody, http://ironeyescody.org/prayer.html.

[92] Etulain and Riley, *Hollywood West: Lives of Film Legends Who Shaped It*, 166.

By Cody's own explanation, he was born on April 3, 1912 outside of Fort Gibson, Oklahoma to a white father, Thomas Longplume Codey and a Cree mother, Francis Salpit Codey. Thomas would later shorten Codey to Cody to be more like Buffalo Bill Cody. There is acknowledgement of possible discrepancies in the birth year and location because his father's abusive behavior caused his mother to avoid his father during her pregnancy. The birth years his father variously used according to this source are from 1907-1915.[93]

Even if he was not Native American, he played many important roles in Indian communities and on screen. Cody is also not the only white man to play Indian roles with such regularity in movies and television; but he may be the most famous based on how many times he played such characters.

This is a common occurrence when dealing with Native American portrayal in film, especially during the years covered by this study. It became easier to give these roles to whites that would do whatever the director told them to do. In some cases, Indians did not want to do certain things on camera and would demand more money or simply refuse to participate causing problems for the production.

Another Native American actor to influence both films and television is Sonny Skyhawk. While his film résumé is not as impressive or long as Cody is, he was nevertheless able to make a difference for the Native American community. There are reports claiming that he is the only Native American member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which selects the nominees and winners of the Oscars. He was accorded this honor in 2015. His most notably had a role in the 1993 film *Geronimo* dealing with the life of the Chiricahua Apache leader.

[93] Cody and Thompson, 15.

Skyhawk's greatest contribution may have come in the form of an organization he started "American Indians in Film and Television" or AIIFT.[94] Skyhawk founded AIIFT in 1980. The main objective of the organization according to him "'Is to give his [my] people 'a voice within the industry.'"[95] 1980 was a tough time for many Indian actors because the western was no longer popular and to this day has not seen much of a rebirth. This brings out the idea of Skyhawk's foundation the most. He desires to see Native Americans in everyday roles from doctors to cab drivers. The imagery of "everyday" Indians goes against the narrative built by Hollywood. Native Americans do not seem profitable in roles other than, as Skyhawk phrases their generic roles in westerns, "heathens on horseback."[96]

In an interview for the television series "Hidden Heritage" in 2012, Skyhawk explained many feelings and ideas he had about Hollywood, Native American representation, and how to effect change. Skyhawk told a reporter when asked about changes in Hollywood, "But those changes were miniscule, if they were made at all. Now, at last, it has become a crisis in the entertainment industry, which is more than I could have wished for."[97]

The last Native American actor to receive a nomination for an Oscar was Graham Greene for his part in 1991's *Dances With Wolves*. Greene is also only the second Native American to receive a nomination, the first being Chief Dan George for his role in *Little Big Man* in 1970. With all the movies with Indian roles it seems odd not to have any more nominations, until one remembers that the majority of the roles are on the periphery of the films unless well-known, typically white, actors play them. Skyhawk reiterates this idea, "Native peoples have always

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[94] Tim Walker, "Sonny Skyhawk: American Indians in Film and Television founder vows to give his people a voice in Hollywood," *Independent*, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/sonny-skyhawk-american-indians-in-film-and-television-founder-vows-to-give-his-people-a-voice-in-a6844256.html.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

been secondary characters. *Dances With Wolves* was supposed to be about natives, but ended up being about Kevin Costner."[98]

The most famous protest on behalf of Indians came in 1973 with Marlon Brando sending Sacheen Littlefeather to speak for him when he refused to accept his Oscar for Best Actor in the film *The Godfather*. Leonardo DiCaprio picked up this type of protest during the last few years, but does not seem to be having the same results as Brando according to Skyhawk. Skyhawk states that he admires both Brando and DiCaprio for the stance they took and acknowledges that it could have hurt their careers to say the things they have. However, in 2016 it is hard to imagine someone with the record of DiCaprio taking up the cause for a minority group hurting their career.[99]

Skyhawk mentions others as being detrimental to Native Americans in films. While he praises Brando and DiCaprio, he did think Indians were again secondary characters in 2015's *The Revenant* starring DiCaprio. The complaint about Native Americans not being the center of the story in *The Revenant* seems to be misplaced as the story focuses on DiCaprio's character fighting for life after a bear attack and his friends leaving him for dead. Skyhawk calls out Disney for allowing Johnny Depp to play Tonto in the 2013 retelling of *The Lone Ranger* stating, "For Johnny Depp to have the audacity to want to play Tonto is totally unforgivable."[100] This decision had to come down to profitability for Disney, which seems to have overestimated the box office pull Depp would have as the movie underachieved.

Skyhawk believes that the most important goal of the organization is to educate the authorities in Hollywood on Indians and that they exist as part of modern mainstream society. He did acknowledge that remains an uphill battle, but new filmmakers appear more willing to listen

[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

and learn than an older generation of directors like John Ford. We see some of the issues he raises in films by Native American directors Sterling Harjo and Chris Eyre, who seem to be heeding the advice of Skyhawk by trying to change the system from within. They tend to focus on contemporary subjects and show how Indians fit into modern society.

Skyhawk discussed how essentially Indians need to learn how to make movies on their own by learning how to do all the jobs associated with filmmaking. This would allow them to control their own storytelling and take it out of the hands of Hollywood imagery. By doing this they would be able to fix, some of the problems left from previous decades of disconnect between the two groups. He also had an understandable issue with Hollywood seemingly rewriting many instances in Indian history.[101]

This is an interesting take from someone with many years' experience dealing the film industry and having seen the inequality first hand. Skyhawk recounted how he could remember filming a movie early on in his career and receiving treatment that was not consistent with the other actors. He described how on dinner breaks the Indian actors would have to wait in an area away from where the other actors ate. After the other actors finished their meals it was time for the Native American actors to eat. They had to eat what the others did not.[102]

In another instance, Skyhawk describes the process in which studios would get actors to play Indian roles in films. The studios would allow people to line up for the jobs and if they received the part, they would enter a stage as a non-native and come out looking like an Indian. In the early days, they would use a solution made of food coloring, but as it progressed, they began to spray them. By the 1970s, Skyhawk says they could get fifteen dollars a day and all the food they wanted. He also describes how much of the filming took place in Old Tucson with

[101] *Hidden Heritage*, "Native American Actors," episode 57.
[102] Ibid.

temperatures staying well over one hundred degrees and how many people suffered from sunstroke.[103]

This was also in the same era when it was popular for white actors to portray Indians in film and television. Hearing stories like that one add another element to the idea of using white actors in the leading Indian roles. On the surface, one could state that using well-known actors will help sell tickets, therefore making the studio more money. However, learning something like that makes one wonder if inherent racism was at play in casting these roles.

While Native Americans were routinely cast for roles during the early days of Hollywood, it began to wane as they discovered white actors could do many of the same roles and usually cheaper. This appears to be a direct effect of the growing commercial value of films. When one learns about stories such as Skyhawk tells, it raises concerns that it was about more than the profitability of the enterprise. The production companies began to realize the profits that movies deliver. Then as authenticity became more of an issue and with the help of people such as Cody, Indians began to be able to interject authenticity into films once again.

These stories are not something associated with Cody; but because he was not actually Indian he may not have experienced it on the same level as someone like Skyhawk. Cody becomes the perfect cultural mediator because both sides accepted him. While his appearance was that of an Indian he was not actually Indian, so people may have treated him differently.

Skyhawk appears to have made a choice that Native Americans would be best to control their own stories and lives. This seems to be somewhat of the same strategy that Cody used when he consulted on films and help many Native Americans attain work in the business. Skyhawk calls for Indians to create change themselves and not wait on others to do it for them. By doing

[103] Schmidt.

this they will not cater to a people in Hollywood that continued to demean them by keeping them in loincloths and feathers.

By controlling their own lands and ideas, Indians have been able to secure profits for many of the tribes. This idea of securing income from different sources such as gaming is also beneficial to Indians when they try to tell their own stories. They will not have to rely on the Hollywood producers as much if they have the capital to finance their own projects. Once they can handle all the duties associated with filmmaking the more independent they will be, leaving them to tell any stories about their people they deem important or entertaining. From listening to Skyhawk's interview, it appears that stories about contemporary life are what Native American communities want to see. They want people like them shown outside of the nineteenth century.

The idea of contemporary Native Americans seems straightforward, but Skyhawk discussed how difficult it is now for Indians to straddle two worlds now that they are gaining more money, independence, and influence. The two worlds Skyhawk mentions are the traditional lifestyle that many still look to versus the contemporary lifestyle of being successful in business. It produces a dilemma for many tribal leaders as they walk the line between both.

Part of the struggle is changing the perceptions of society about what it is to be Indian in modern society. Some view their giving away of money to help others as bad business, but it is part of the traditional lifestyle of many tribes. Movies and television series could address these issues by showing how they have responded traditionally and in a contemporary setting. According to Skyhawk it is important to remember those two mediums can change opinions and people's perceptions of each other.[104]

To finish his discussion about the future of Native Americans in the film industry and everyday life, Skyhawk expressed pride in the progress the film industry has made in the last few

[104] *Hidden Heritage*.

decades. While television and films are slowly changing the minds of some, he appreciates that the process is slow and that they need to be patient. One of the big ideas he mentions is the need to change the perception in popular culture and the government.[105]

Skyhawk also talks about how there have been improvements made; but there is room for improvement, particularly in television. He describes how the gay and lesbian, Hispanic, and Asian communities are present on the screen; but still no Native Americans. There is a need to show good role models for young Indians to see themselves as part of mainstream society. He describes his efforts by saying, "That's what drives me when I go into CEOs' offices. That's what makes me get up in the morning. You've got these young people out there who don't see themselves as part of this society. And that to me is a travesty."[106]

Changing the minds of the people may be a first step in changing the minds of government officials. One of the easiest ways to go about that is the use of one of the most popular mediums available, films. While there have been some issues with modern movies like *The Lone Ranger* (2013) featuring Johnny Depp as Tonto, there have been many movies throughout the 1990s and 2000s that capture a modern view of Indians such as the film *Skins* (2002), *Four Sheets to the Wind* (2007), and *Barking Water* (2009). These films seem to embody the type of work Skyhawk discusses by featuring Native American actors, directors, and writers.

One issue that many have a problem with is when tribes misrepresent other tribes. For example in *The Searchers,* there are Navajos playing Comanches and they are wearing Navajo style jewelry.[107] This "problem" relates back to Sarf's comment about "historic wrong," the jewelry does not distract from the story or the representation of Indians in the film. It simply

[105] Ibid.
[106] Schmidt.
[107] Sarf, 195.

adds to the stereotype about Navajo-style jewelry being popular and that all Indians wear that style.

On a larger scale, *The Searchers* pushes many more stereotypes besides Navajo style jewelry. The iconic opening scene shows Monument Valley and labels it as Texas. Much like the jewelry implying that all Indians wear that style, Texas is strongly associated with being western and Monument Valley is famous as well, so why not combine the two. John Ford creates a mythic west that combines a majority of the famous visual representation and stereotypes associated with the West.

This problem dates back to early European exploration of the Americas. From Christopher Columbus to arguably some in modern society an Indian is an Indian. They did not try to differentiate between the diverse tribes that lived within North America. When in reality Native Americans vary greatly. The Aztecs would not find much in common with a tribe from what is now the northwest or southeast United States. It is hard to imagine a population of 8,400,000 – 112,500,000 people all being the same. These appraisals come from noted anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and Henry Dobyns, with Kroeber offering the low end and Dobyns putting forth the high estimate. When examining the figures put forth by many scholars 50,000,000 – 75,000,000 seems to be a more accurate data point. Even at these lower numbers, putting that many different people into one category does not provide the entire picture.[108]

These numbers are important in establishing the size of the societies the Europeans encountered. In establishing these numbers, we find out that Native American cultures were and are varying in nature. Therefore, to take these large Native American cultures and lump them into one category does an injustice to the people. It also lends perspective to the problem being one that dates back centuries to some of the earliest contacts between Europeans and Indians.

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[108] Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 22-3.

The numbers of films based on plains tribes is not consistent with the breakdown of tribal numbers living in North America. From the earliest days of the Wild West shows to modern day cinema, audiences seem to flock to anything associated with the "West." For many reasons, there has always been a fascination with the tribes of the plains. Maybe the horse culture attracts many to this time. Others seem to have a number of reasons and this goes back to the earliest contact with Europeans crossing the plains.

However, the period following the Civil War up to around 1900 seems to the major focus of the majority of westerns. Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis fits this narrative of stories well. The theorized close of the frontier in 1890 corresponds with the time of the films and the closing off the growth of the characters involved. Cowboys and Indians is an idea that many people do not want to get rid of.

The years following the Civil War mark a faster encroachment from whites onto the lands promised to many tribes. The treaties promising land to the tribes, mostly in perpetuity, no longer mattered in the eyes of many in the government. However, this had been happening for many years before the Civil War beginning in the southeast as encroachers found valuable natural resource deposits. This trend continued as the country expanded westward. Many of the films focus on this time.

What is evident from this is that studios put these movies out because that is what people wanted to see. In our capitalistic society, the objective is to make money, so executives in Hollywood want to produce movies about what they think audiences want. This makes the issue of highlighting plains tribes over northeastern or southeastern tribes not one about Hollywood picking the topic based on the breakdown of population or equal representation in the films, but about making money.

Keeping in mind that the profitability of the movies is a major factor in determining if studios make movies, it becomes easier to understand why some stereotypical roles continue today. Native Americans make up a small minority of the national population of the United States. Some movies have been successful in changing the roles to more accurately depict Indians. Not all of these films have been a success, but many have. The problem for some is the standard play of using white perspective to tell the story. However, this idea goes back to the studios making movies for the audience they perceive as being the ones that will attend them.[109]

This does not excuse the stereotypes that Hollywood perpetuates, but it places the ideas into perspective. What this leaves us with is determining if this is a Hollywood problem or a societal one. The ideas in the movies that come out seem to reflect on the way the culture thinks at the time. Therefore, it is interesting to see how the films of the 1950s and 1960s reflect the social aspects of life in the United States.

The move to a more sympathetic Native American image occurs in the 1950s and continues into the late 1960s. There was a movement in film and television to show a more balanced view. James Clifton writes, "Since the 1950s, for instance, movies and television productions have no longer portrayed Indians as vicious, horse-riding Plains nomads menacing unwary settlers, substituting instead more sympathetic images that display Indians as innocents, as despoiled underdogs."[110] What tends to happen in any type of movement, from politics to pop culture, is a going from one extreme to the next. If one side believes they are being slighted they tend to go as far as possible the other way.

This movement begins with noble intentions, but begins to dissolve into one that creates an appearance of Indians that is too sympathetic. It may seem strange to view someone as too sympathetic, but in some cases, Indians come across as not having any control over what happens

[109] Buscombe, *'Injuns!': Native Americans in the Movies*, 27-9.
[110] Clifton, 2.

to them. The ideas for the stories can become too much of one side without corroborating both sides of the issue with historical evidence.[111] This is an idea that is present in films like *Soldier Blue*.

[111] Clifton, 3.

CHAPTER III

THE 1950s

In the late 1940s and into the 1950s a change took place in the political and social attitudes to a more conservative viewpoint. The main thing that brought the change about was the fear of communism. This would have effects on minorities including women, African Americans, and Native Americans.

The 1950s was a time of turmoil in Hollywood. Communism became the buzzword surrounding many leading figures. In 1950, the first of the Hollywood Ten went to jail and the following year the House Un-American Activities Committee reconvened Communism-in-Hollywood hearings.[112] All the talk about communism came at the height of the Cold War. In January 1950, President Truman confirmed the ongoing efforts to develop a hydrogen bomb; then by June the Korean War began.

[112] "The 10 individuals who defied HUAC were Alvah Bessie (c. 1904-85), Herbert Biberman (1900-71), Lester Cole (c. 1904-85), Edward Dmytryk (1908-99), Ring Lardner Jr. (1915-2000), John Howard Lawson (1894-1977), Albert Maltz (1908-1985), Samuel Ornitz (1890-1957), Robert Adrian Scott (1912-73) and Dalton Trumbo (1905-76)." http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/hollywood-ten. Also, according to the website everyone except Edwad Dmytryk refused to cooperate even after going to jail. He decided to testify in 1951 and named twenty people in the industry as communists. Charlie Chaplin, Orson Welles, and Lloyd Bridges are a few of the more well-known actors of the time to have their names associated with communism during this time.

Movie attendance hit a low in the years leading up to the 1950s. From 1946 to the early 1950s, there was a fifty percent drop in attendance. People were moving out of cities to areas where there were not as many theaters and they found entertainment in the home with the spread of television, although the Hollywood Blacklist did not help the situation either. The quality of movies and the types of stories coming out of Hollywood would have to change.[113]

In the 1950s, there would be two different types of audiences for movies. Movies during this time became an escape from the Cold War, the Korean War, and the troubles of the Civil Rights movement.[114] According to Murray Pomerance the first group, "Looking backward with a fond reverence for auteurist principles, filmmaking skill, and the technical and narrative glories displayed at the time," while the second group, "Paid money at the box office to get into the theater when the getting was good."[115]

Moving back into the events in Hollywood culture, James Stewart became the first actor to get a percentage of a movie's profit for his role in *Bend of the River* (1952), laying the groundwork for future actors. The Supreme Court also ruled in May of the same year that films are an expression of free speech.[116] This will have a trickle-down effect and allows filmmakers from that point on to make movies they want to make without the fear of censorship from the government.

In June of 1953, Fidel Castro began the Cuban Revolution and the Korean War ends. By 1954, the United States begins a sustained confrontation with the ironies inherent in a nation's professed principles and the failures of achieving freedom and justice for all. In May 1954, the Supreme Court hands down the *Brown v. Board of Education* unanimous (9-0) decision to sustain

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[113] Murray Pomerance ed., *American Cinema of the 1950s: Themes and Variations* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 1.
[114] Ibid., 2-3.
[115] Ibid., 5.
[116] Ibid., xi.

school segregation.[117] This overturned the ruling made by the state of Kansas, in which they sighted the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The Supreme Court actually overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* stating that separate is not equal and a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This was an early victory for the accelerating civil rights movement.

In December 1954, the Senate condemned Joseph McCarthy by a vote of 65-22 for dishonorable conduct for a Senator.[118] McCarthy's witch-hunt had begun four years earlier in 1950. This movement even produced a new word in the dictionary: McCarthyism. His investigations would even have an influence on Hollywood because of the concern of communist infiltrating all aspects of life, which was apparent with the imprisonment of the Hollywood Ten. He was able to convince the people that communists were in the State Department and the government was doing nothing to replace them. The following year after the Senate reprimanded McCarthy the Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee demanded that the film industry police itself, no doubt because of the accusations and subsequent reprimand of McCarthy.[119]

One of the more interesting situations to come out of the communism craze that swept through Hollywood is the movie *High Noon* starring Gary Cooper (1952). This film dealt indirectly with the issues of McCarthyism. It would be remembered as a statement against all the people in Hollywood that would not help the others that came under attack from the government, although not all in the industry saw it this way. John Wayne and Howard Hawks did not like the film and made their response with *Rio Bravo* in 1959. According to Michael Munn's book about John Wayne, Hawks explained, "I didn't like *High Noon*. Neither did Duke. I didn't think a good town marshal was going to run around town like a chicken with his head cut off asking

[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.

everyone for help."[120] Munn also reports that Wayne wanted to tell a similar story, but in "the American Way."[121]

The Civil Rights movement began to garner more attention in the mid-1950s. December 1 1955 marks the entrance of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr to the Civil Rights movement.[122] Once Parks refused to give up her seat on a municipal bus that day in Montgomery, Alabama, a new association formed. Parks' case, along with a few others, led to the formation of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which picked Martin Luther King Jr. to be its leader. The group decided that a bus boycott would be the best option to combat the racist policy. The case made its way to the Supreme Court in 1956 and they ruled that the Montgomery bus segregation laws were unconstitutional.

Nineteen fifty six is a year that saw "In God We Trust" become the motto of the United States.[123] At the height of the Cold War, it was important that people knew the United States was putting its full trust in God. As the arms race continued this is understandable. People were fearful about the future.

Also in 1956, *Around the World in Eighty Days* opened on October 17 and for the first time patrons were able to purchase tickets with a credit card. Diner's Club was the name of the credit card.[124] This is a significant event for consumers. It would be hard for most people to imagine a society without some type of credit or debit card today. This allows people to carry less cash and do things on credit. Companies will be able to extend credit to individuals by giving them a card and charging them interest on purchases they make. While this was not the final step toward what we now know as credit cards, it was a major step forward.

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[120] Michael Munn, *John Wayne: The Man Behind the Myth* (New York: New American Library, 2003), 148.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Pomerance, xiii.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.

Seven years after the first of the Hollywood Ten had gone to jail and three years after the Senate condemned McCarthy, the communist scare was still alive and well in the United States and in Hollywood. In February of 1957, we still see the effects of the blacklists in Hollywood. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences were still excluding blacklisted individuals from Oscar consideration. Later that year the Soviets put Sputnik I, the first satellite into orbit.[125]

Getting back to social issues, in September of 1957, the governor of Arkansas used the National Guard to prevent black students from enrolling at a high school in Little Rock. This problem lasted for twenty days until President Eisenhower federalized the Arkansas guard and sent in troops from the Eighty-second Airborne Division to secure the enrollment of the students.[126] These and other events in the 1950s paved the way for major civil rights changes in the following decade. These ideas about civil rights will make their way in time to Hollywood.

In response to the Soviets launching Sputnik I, the United States created NASA in 1958. The Soviet Union also got a new Premier earlier in the year, Nikita Khrushchev. Fidel Castro also came to power in Cuba on January 1, 1959.[127] Castro aligns with the Soviets because of his communist leaning and this will cause many problems with the United States, ultimately resulting in a trade embargo.

The final year of the 1950s brought some changes to Hollywood. The Academy Awards quit eliminating people on blacklists from Oscar contention. This marks the end of the official exclusion that began in 1957. Later in 1959 The Society of Cinematologists was founded in New York, which eventually becomes The Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Jerry Lee Lewis

[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.

also signed a huge contract with Paramount to make fourteen movies and pays him ten million dollars.[128] With the approach of a new decade, a whole lot of shaking was "going on."

With an understanding of the changing political and everyday lives of Americans, it is now possible to begin exploring the themes and attitudes of filmmakers from the decade. Many westerns from the 1950s still adhere to the standard stereotypes about cowboys and Indians, but there are several films that explore the relationship between whites and Native Americans with more sensible storytelling between the two sides. The first of these films debuts in 1950, *Broken Arrow*.

[128] Ibid., xiv.

SECTION I

BROKEN ARROW

"Gen. Oliver 'The Christian General' Howard: The Bible I read preaches brotherhood for all of God's children.

Tom Jeffords: Suppose their skins weren't white. Are they still God's children?

Gen. Oliver 'The Christian General' Howard: My Bible says nothing about the pigmentation of their skin."[129]

One of the first major motion pictures to take a more balanced view toward Native Americans is *Broken Arrow* (1950). This movie's screenplay is an adaptation of Elliot Arnold's novel Blood Brother, which is a dramatization of the relationship between Tom Jeffords and the Chiricahua leader Cochise in Arizona Territory. According to Iron Eye Cody, "The first movie that most of us remember in which the audience took the Indians' side was Broken Arrow (1949) [sic]; in it Indians were a proud, dignified race of warriors with their own code of honor, culture, and justifiable hatred of the white man."[130]

In an article from December 31, 1949, before *Broken Arrow*'s arrival in theaters in 1950,

[129] IMDB.com, "Broken Arrow (1950) Quotes," http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0042286/quotes?ref_=tt_ql_3.
[130] Cody and Thompson, 22.

Variety describes the film as, "A western with a little different twist – the story of the attempt of whites and Apaches to learn to live together in the Arizona of 1870."[131] They sum up the main ideas well and then the article goes on to say, "Essentially it's an appealing, sentimental Indian romance, with plenty of action."[132] While the review leads with the pertinent information about the film, the major draw for the reviewer seems to be action and a love story. It is a shame that the reviewer does not expound on the "different twist" because that is what makes the movie important. The love story drives the plot; but the film shows that whites and Indians can coexist peacefully. However, as many "love" stories turn out there is heartache in the end. Whenever an Indian woman marries a white man in an American film, somehow the woman dies. This film is no exception.

When Bosley Crowther of the New York Times reviewed the film on July 21, 1950, he understood the remarkable things the movie accomplished. He states, "In what appears an honorable endeavor to clear the public's mind of the traditional notion that the American Indian was an unprincipled and uncivilized brute…the Indians come off better – much better – on the whole, than do the whites."[133] He does describe how there are good and bad whites, along with good and bad Indians.[134] That is what makes this film important to any study about Indian portrayal on the big screen.

Crowther did not appear to enjoy the acting as much as the purpose of the film as he writes, "Unfortunately the nobleness of purpose of Twentieth Century-Fox is more to be commended than the talent with which it has made this film."[135] He seems to understand that this movie is a step forward in Native American depiction. Crowther gets the ideas that the movie is

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[131] Variety.com, "Review: 'Broken Arrow,'" http://variety.com/1949/film/reviews/broken-arrow-1200416701/.
[132] Ibid.
[133] The New York Times, nytimes.com, "Movie Review," http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9800E2D91038E532A25752C2A9619C946192D6CF.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.

putting forward unlike the author of the article from Variety. However, he also describes how the Indians in film seem a lot of more competent than Jeffords, played by James Stewart. Crowther accredits this to the filmmakers "Enthusiasm to treat the Indian with politeness and respect."[136]

Stewart plays Tom Jeffords, whereas Jeff Chandler portrays Cochise. Immediately this might cause concern for some since a non-Native actor is depicting Cochise. Yet, this film is an important part of Native American movie history. Jay Silverheels plays Geronimo, although in comparison to the role of Cochise it is a small one.[137] *Broken Arrow* shows Native Americans, Apaches at that, as people and not just mythical miscreants.

With the story focusing on Jeffords and Cochise there should be some focus on the facts surrounding these men's lives. They shared a close relationship and when Cochise surrendered to General Oliver Howard in 1872, he chose Jeffords to be the agent of the reservation, which would be in the home of his people. This was important because Cochise wanted Jeffords as the agent. Cochise demanded that Jeffords have complete control over affairs on the reservation, in effect keeping the army out because of the chiefs' mistrust of the military. That in doubt stemmed from the attempt to capture him under a flag of truce. There may have also been an ulterior motive to this as well. The reservation's southern border was Sonora. Cochise may have been at peace with Americans, but he did not have such an agreement with the Mexicans to the south.[138]

Cochise died two years later in 1874. People would continue to use the close relationship of Cochise and Jeffords to try to secure Jeffords more posts within the reservation system. In 1880, Arizona governor John C. Fremont attempted to get Jeffords the job of the agent at San Carlos. In a letter of recommendation, he wrote glowingly about Jeffords relationship with the Chiricahuas and about how General Howard would agree with the appointment. He wrote again

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[136] Ibid.
[137] Etulain and Riley, *Hollywood West: Lives of Film Legends Who Shaped It*, 163.
[138] Edwin R. Sweeney, *From Cochise to Geronimo: The Chiricahua Apaches, 1874-1886* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 15-6.

the next day: "I write to say that the chief Cochise died in Mr. Jeffords' arms. I mention this as giving to show Mr. Jeffords' fitness because of his friendly relations with the Chiricahuas."[139] This shows that they were trying hard to secure the agent position for Jeffords by using his relationship with Cochise and that Fremont did not let the truth get in the way of good story.

In the beginning of the movie, Jeffords finds an injured Apache boy and helps him by digging the buckshot out of his back. This is not typical behavior for a cowboy in a western movie. John Wayne's Ethan Edwards of *The Searchers* surely would not do such a thing. Jeffords provides narrative for the situation and explains that Apache women cry for their sons just as white women and that the men have a sense of fair play. He later encounters hostility from white people in town when he describes how he helped the young boy. Jeffords also describes events of the war between the white settlers and Apaches, explaining how both sides are guilty of cruelty.[140]

Jeffords wants to parlay with Cochise because he believes that all the people in the territory want the same thing, peace. The Apaches want to live as they have for generations and the whites want to ranch and mine for silver. What Jeffords does to get this parlay may be the most effective part of the movie in helping to promote Apaches as real people and not part of the frontier that has to be tamed. Jeffords was steeped in Apache ways. It was important enough to learn how they speak, live, and eat. Jeffords visits their homes and takes the time to consider their culture by hiring an Apache to teach him. During this part of the film, he continually discusses his respect for Cochise as well.

Once relations are established, it becomes clear that Cochise is a competent adversary and ally. He leads an attack against a cavalry troop that has set a trap for him by placing troops in

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[139] Ibid., 159.

[140] Julian Blaustein, et al. *Broken Arrow*, DVD, (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2007).

wagons disguised as a transport shipment. Cochise leads with precision and destroys the caravan rather easily. Jacquelyn Kilpatrick notes, "The Indians in *Broken Arrow* are a force to be reckoned with, but they can also be reasoned with."[141] She is correct in her assumption. *Broken Arrow* gives Indians a more three dimensional aspect than other films had not done up to this point. They are not the faithful sidekicks, savage heathens, or ecologists of so many other films; however, they are real people with differing ideas and morals.[142]

General Oliver Howard or the Christian General's depiction in the film shows how he was able to deal with Indians and provide some sort of understanding. Some view Howard as being less understanding than this because of his deep-rooted Christian beliefs that would not allow him to be completely open-minded because the Apaches were not Christian; but for the purposes of the film, it works well.[143] In the film, Jeffords is not sure about taking Howard to meet with Cochise, but Howard is able to convince him by discussing that the Bible makes no distinction about skin color. This is an accurate portrayal of events because Howard did have to convince Jeffords of his sincerity before he would take him to meet with Cochise.

The idea of Christianity uniting the two sides, or creating some kind of understanding is an idea that comes up in another film in 1957, *Run of the Arrow*. Bringing men of great power together or getting them to show some restraint in dealing with problems appeals to the ideas of the 1950s. Coming out of the era of nuclear blasts and into a world shaped by the threat of nuclear war convinced many that there needed to be some restraint and unification among Americans. Christianity would define an American way of life and was seen by the majority

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[141] Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 59.
[142] Rennard Strickland, "Coyote Goes Hollywood," *Native Peoples* 11, no. 4 (Fall/Winter 1997): 35. Rennard Strickland provides a paragraph in the article describing the different conceptions of Indians in movies that is both concise and accurate.
[143] Richard W. Etulain and Glenda Riley ed., *Chiefs & Generals: Nine Men Who Shaped the American West*, ed. (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2004), 65.

culture a way to Americanize Indians. If they could understand the moral principles that Christianity taught then mainstream society could accept them.

This was nothing new in Indian-white relations. Going back to the earliest contact with Native Americans, Europeans wanted to Christianize them, from the French Jesuits to the Spanish Franciscans and Dominicans. Once the federal government decided to place Indians on reservations, missionaries wanted in. President Grant allowed church denominations to divide the administration of reservations in the northern plains. Therefore, the idea of General Howard using religion to support his position concerning the Apaches has historical merit.

Another aspect of the film is one that many films used in trying to give the main white character a greater connection to the Native Americans by giving him an Indian wife. Jeffords becomes involved with Sonseeahray and they get married. Cochise tries to explain how difficult it will be for two people from different cultures to live together and maintain a happy marriage, providing wise words and seemingly testing them to see what they will say.

Giving the main character an Indian love interest may have been somewhat of a risk in 1950. However, she fits the bill of doting wife that would not offend the sensibilities of her white husband. Sonseeahray does not question or seem to have much of an opinion about what happens in the relationship. What we see in other films like *Run of the Arrow* is a Native American woman that is capable of handling herself and voicing an opinion to her husband and others. For all the good in *Broken Arrow*, this may be the most egregious problem with the representation of Indians. They could have made her more assertive and represented woman and Natives well at the same time.

Nevertheless, this does not end well as Sonseeahray dies, shot to death by whites. This moment solidifies whites as the villains in the movie. Jeffords begins a tirade about how peace is not possible and Cochise must talk him down and is ultimately the voice of reason for the

situation, another interesting aspect of the film. An Apache is the one that understands the big picture and believes peaceful relations are possible.

Building on some of the same themes of *Broken Arrow* is *Tomahawk* debuting in 1952. While the story elements are different, it is a cavalry and Indians film, the idea of Indians being a worthy adversary and society of note is present. They are not the two-dimensional warriors that many of the cavalry films portray.

SECTION II

TOMAHAWK

"There is also bitterness and hatred because you also have a vision of sacred hunting grounds, silent and empty of buffalo, elk, and beaver. Your food, clothing, and shelter vanished forever. Of starvation and sickness, where once there was plenty."[144]

Bosley Crowther understands that *Tomahawk* is a basic cavalry and Indians movie but nevertheless projects a "generous intimation of pro-Indian sentiment," in reference to what makes the film different from other films of the genre.[145] He also writes, "The history is hopelessly fuzzy, the Indian fighting and charges are perfunctorily staged and the scenery, while pretty is Technicolor, is nothing to take your breath away."[146] Crowther is correct to say that it is full of pro-Indian sentiment. The problems he sees with him are a little hard to understand, as the scenery is beautiful and many Indian fight scenes from the 1950s are "perfunctorily staged."

[144] The narrator's words at the beginning of *Tomahawk* discussing the Native American view of frontier encroachment.
[145] The New York Times, nytimes.com, "Movie Review," http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9F04E0D81F38E13BBC4152DFB466838A649EDE.
[146] Ibid.

This film portrays many historical figures: Red Cloud, Jim Bridger, Colonel Henry Carrington, and Captain William Fetterman all have appearances. The value of larger than life characters is something that these films hinge upon and name recognition helps further the cause. It is easier to get people involved with a name in which they have some familiarity.

While *Tomahawk* may seem like an odd choice for the title of the film, we find out that the name the Sioux give Bridger means tomahawk. There is even mention of Colonel John Chivington and his massacre of Southern Cheyennes at Sand Creek in 1864, something that the 1970 movie *Soldier Blue* brings to life. All of these characters would have had some say in what was going on in this time concerning the Northern Plains. They were all major players.

It is important to note some of the historical issues surrounding warfare between plains tribes and the army in the 1860s. The army was at a disadvantage after the Civil War when they attempted to fight the Indians. Warfare with the Plains Indians is just one example of the problems the soldiers would have. The style of fighting was different from the European style used during the Civil War, while the Plains tribes utilized guerrilla tactics. The frontier army must be as Robert Utley suggests, "an army that could live off the country in the Indian manner or a logistical system so supremely developed as to permit operations not dependent on the resources of the country."[147] Indian style fighting did not win out in the end, but it gave the army something to think about and the army changed their methods. The Civil War also created an army that was full of officers, another problem the army would encounter.

There is an attempt by some authors to show that the officers in the army were not racist and did not endorse extermination of Indians. With the officers not being racists it takes away any guilt from them when things went wrong and excessive bloodshed occurred. As Utley explains, it was rather "an impulse to civilize the Indian that dominated the military attitudes as it

[147] Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891*, (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1973), 9.

dominated public sentiment and government policy --- and that belies the charge that the United States pursued a policy of genocide."[148]

William Fetterman's mistake of trying to ride through the Sioux Nation with eighty-men is part of this film. We see a discussion of this in 1957's *Run of the Arrow*, without any explanation of exactly what happened to the boastful captain. *Tomahawk* shows him leaving the fort and his men paying the price for his arrogance. He got all of the men in his command killed in December 1866 when he decided to pursue the Sioux that had been taunting them, trying to draw them out of the fort.[149] Fetterman fits the mold of other egotistical and overachieving officers from the Civil War that thought the Indians to be a lesser opponent on the battlefield. Men such as Lieutenant Grattan who did not make it through his first battle in 1854, the Battle of the Mormon's Cow anticipate George Custer when his luck ran out at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876.[150]

Carrington had been fighting a defensive war against the Sioux from inside the walls of the fort, much to the dislike of Fetterman. However, Carrington understood the situation much better than his subaltern did. There was not much opportunity to do anything else besides play defense. Winter was on its way and the fort needed to be completed and winter provisions gathered. During this process, the Sioux regularly attacked and killed men gathering wood and cutting hay.

He also did not have enough men, horses, and mules to mount an offensive against the Sioux. The Indians had effectively run off many of the horses, mules, and beef cattle of which only one hundred out of the original seven hundred remained by September. The men were not cavalry, only mounted infantry and would not be effective in pursuing and fighting in those kinds

[148] Ibid., 52.
[149] Calloway, 303, 328.
[150] Andrist, 107.

of running battles. Without much forethought, Fetterman decided that Carrington was treating the Indians fighting skills with too much respect. This eventually caused a split between the men stationed at the fort, those siding with Carrington and those siding with Fetterman.[151]

Lieutenant Rob Dancy would fit the stereotype of a racist cavalry officer that enjoyed killing inferior Native Americans when he describes how he served under Chivington. Dancy proves this more when he shoots a young Sioux who is trying to steal horses from the mail transport on the way to Fort Phil Kearney, even when another member of the detachment tried to keep him from shooting them since they caught them in the act. Dancy refuses and kills one of the boys. At this point, it is hard not to point out other incidents besides Sand Creek such as General Sherman discussing how he would not restrain troops and refers to the Indians as "enemies of our race and of our civilization."[152]

There are many Indian extras shown in several of the scenes. The opening shot of the film has many Indian extras on horseback and participating in peace. The costume designers do not waste any buckskins or headdresses; each Indian participant has on an elaborate costume adding to the pomp and circumstance of the situation.

During the opening credits, the name John War Eagle appears with the other major players of the film. War Eagle has Sioux heritage and was born in Leicestershire, England. His birth name was John Edwin Worley Eagle. This is not the typical path for a Sioux Indian and especially one that ends up starring in movies. Therefore, there is at least one Native American actor who has a major role in the film.[153]

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[151] Ibid., 106-7.
[152] Utley, 145.
[153] John War Eagle Biography, IMDB.com, http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0911272/bio?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm.

Tomahawk is decidedly one sided in fixing blame for the bad things that happen. Films like *Broken Arrow* and even to some extent *Run of the Arrow* spread the blame around and do not make the Indians seem infallible. The idea that there can be good and bad on both sides helps to push the narrative of equal treatment and not simply a message of pity. There is plenty of blame to place on the shoulders of the United States government, but to demonize one side does not help to balance the narrative.

There are a few circumstances in the film showing Native Americans acting in a way that puts some blame on them, but even in those situations, it is easy to feel pity for them. When two young men attempt to steal some horses from the cavalry trying to deliver the mail, one is shot and killed. When the body is looked at more closely and the audience sees their age, sympathy results. They were trying to steal horses, but in many of these plains cultures, this is a rite of passage to become a warrior and even if caught probably would not have resulted in death.

The movie begins in Wyoming early in 1866 as the narrator sets the scene. There are cavalry troopers sitting across from Sioux on the plains in straight lines seemingly ready for battle. The voice-over states that, "Men of two different worlds have come together to talk. There is bitterness here, suspicion, and distrust." This statement from the narrator is one of the more profound statements in a western film concerning the relationship between the United States government and Native Americans. It is on par with Jeffords discussing the idea of fair play from the point of view of the Apaches in *Broken Arrow*.

The United States government and the Sioux are trying to negotiate terms. As the camera moves down the line of mounted soldiers the narrator talks about loss and hardships suffered by the white settlers on the frontier. Then the camera begins to pan across the Sioux as they sit on their horses. The narrator now speaks of loss again, including hunting grounds and lifestyle they

had experienced for so long. The next shot we have is of the negotiations taking place and we learn that this is the Fort Laramie conference to settle outstanding issues on the northern plains.

Another scene with intriguing dialogue about Indian affairs takes place a little farther into the film and shows Jim Bridger talking to Red Cloud, an Oglala Shirt-Wearer, about the future. Bridger brings up how changes are coming to the Sioux. To this Red Cloud responds that he knows things are changing. He also tells Bridger that he is trying to get his people to learn white ways, but they need more time to adjust. Change is happening too fast. This exchange sums up many of the problems between the United States government and Native Americans. If Indians were willing to assimilate, it would need to be on their terms, especially with the treaties in place that were supposed to protect their way of life. With the treaty system constantly changing to serve the needs of the government does nothing to make tribes want to adjust any faster. Agreements would seem invalid. Along with this is the shifting idea about whether or not Indians would be able to assimilate.

Some Indians understood the power and influence of the society that was encroaching more quickly all the time. They tended to echo the sentiments spoken by Red Cloud in this film. Whether it was a trip to Washington, D.C. for a chief to show him what things were like and meet with government officials or spending time in Leavenworth prison, the future did not look prosperous for Native Americans. One such Indian was the Brulé Sioux chief Spotted Tail. He served a year in Leavenworth prison in retaliation for attacks in 1854. During his time in prison, Spotted Tail realized the vast numbers of whites that would be moving westward to push onto Indian lands.[154]

What the viewer learns from the first scene is what Crowther aptly points out about this not being the typical film for the genre. In the first five minutes, there is talk about both sides

[154] Etulain and Riley, *Chiefs & Generals: Nine Men Who Shaped the American West*, 1.

losing things in this frontier struggle. This is not the cavalry that rides out of the fort at the perfect time to save the settlers as in many cavalry and Indian films. There are soldiers on both sides of the cultural divide that have experienced loss. The writers are already putting together a story that represents aspects of both cultures.

Tomahawk, like most westerns, centers on a white male lead. In this movie, it is Jim Bridger. He is present at the Laramie Conference when the film starts. A famed trapper, Jim Beckworth and a young Indian woman named Monaseetah accompany him. Susan Cabot, who makes a striking, yet unbelievable Cheyenne, portrays Monaseetah. All indications at this point make it seem like Monaseetah is his wife, which is what several characters believe to be true as well. We find out later that she is the sister of his dead wife and is with him because Colonel Chivington massacred her family at Sand Creek in 1864.

Bridger is the defender of the Sioux in this film. The Sioux are capable of protecting themselves, but Bridger attempts to mediate and look out for them at every turn. Red Cloud does a fine job explaining to the government officials that the meeting taking place is only trying to take advantage of the Sioux. He plays an important role in the history of the region. Red Cloud leads one of the only successful military operations by Native Americans against the United States. He was able to drive the military back and secure a beneficial treaty for his people, which this film and *Run of the Arrow* discuss.

Several movies including *Tomahawk* and *Run of the Arrow* deal with Red Cloud. It makes sense that he would be the focus or at least have a part in many of the films. He is part of the Oglala Sioux, which automatically makes him of interest to the public and historians. The plains tribes, in particular the northern plains tribes, dominate the popular culture collective. They have a following by anyone that consider themselves a western history enthusiast and what Hollywood consistently puts on the big screen. There are many reasons why they capture the

imagination of mainstream society, but much of it seems to concentrate on fashion and the hunt. This is a superficial view of a multifaceted society, but it is more likely the directors and producers who shy away from complexity fearing that audiences might balk.

They filmmakers present elements of racism and counter them with white characters who abjure such behavior. Dancy tries to impress Julie Madden, whom he meets while running mail to Fort Phil Kearney. He tells her he was with Chivington and fought Cheyennes in Colorado cleaning up that part of the country. She knows nothing about Chivington and the actual events Dancy is talking about, later finding out the real story from Bridger. They also present the "drunken Indian" early in the movie while Bridger trades with the Sioux. An Indian man walks up and slaps Bridger for no reason and when Beckworth gets upset and tells Bridger he should not let the "buck" get away with that, he takes the high road saying the Indian is drunk and to ignore him. What makes this interaction interesting is that Beckworth is using a derogatory term to describe the Indian man, but later in the film he is on the other side of the argument.

When Bridger, Beckworth, and Monaseetah reach the fort, they are not sure where they are going to be staying. Someone comes over and tells them that Bridger and Beckworth can stay in the barracks, but they are not sure what to do with the "squaw." To answer this, the two men refuse to go to the barracks until Monaseetah has a place to stay. She eventually ends up staying with Carrington's wife, who in a later scene is with another woman and Monaseetah. She gets upset when the other woman refers to Monaseetah as a "squaw."

"Squaw man" is another term that the characters use during the movie. This is also of historical significance when discussing white men allied with Native Americans, especially ones married to Indian women. Intermarried whites or "squaw men." It is a derogatory term used to insult the men, many for acquiring lands that they could not get otherwise. Dancy says that

Bridger is one when talking to Madden, another attempt to gain her attention and run down Bridger.

The film does an admirable job of showing that such terms as "buck," "squaw," and "squaw man" are derogatory. What is the most impressive thing about the films handling racist epithets is how they make the person seem that is saying them. The situations become tense. The other characters do not accept the terms or join in. Instead they appear to have disdain for the person using such words.

The climax of the film occurs when Red Cloud and his men attack wagons with supplies for the fort. Carrington and men from the fort must protect the supply train. They line up behind the wagons and prepare for a fight. What Red Cloud does not know is that the wagons had artillery supplies and breach loading rifles, meaning the men would be able to fire much faster inhibiting his offensive strategy. Bridger explains to Carrington that the Sioux will attack in waves with the idea to break some men through while the soldiers are reloading. However, he acknowledges that this could be a massacre if Red Cloud does not make an adjustment. After several waves of Indians fail to breach the troopers' defense, Red Cloud relents.

When Red Cloud stops the attack and is gathering his dead from the battlefield another instance occurs confirming this as not the typical cavalry and Indians film. Carrington has a chance to shoot Red Cloud and decides not to take the shot. In the typical cavalry movie, they would need to neutralize the threat. Bridger and Carrington then talk about how there will need to be great men on both sides after the fighting ends to help with peace and that is why Carrington does not shoot him. This shows the respect he has for the Sioux, which is something that the two characters the Indians killed during the film did not share.

The movie ends by the narrator talking about Red Clouds' great victory and the resulting Fort Laramie treaty in 1868. The viewer learns that the treaty resulted in the abandonment of Fort

Phil Kearney by the army. This treaty did many more things for the Sioux besides that however. It protected hunting rights for the Sioux in the area around the Powder River and shut down the Bozeman Trail, which is why the army abandoned the forts. It also created a reservation for the Sioux in what is now South Dakota, North Dakota, and much of Montana as "unceded territory.' It was to provide numerous provisions including money, food, and clothing to the tribe and outline the relationship between the United States government and the Sioux moving forward.[155]

While the treaty made many promises to the tribe and was a great victory for the Sioux, this is an example of the government treating Native Americans as disobedient children that cannot be trusted with their own resources and need a parent figure, in this case an Indian agent, to dole out their allowances. This is the other side of the treaty that these types of films do not mention. They provide the audience with a story about how the Sioux were able to overcome and hold onto what was theirs, but leave out how the government still controlled their lives. The government also ensured that while the Bozeman trail closed, the treaty nevertheless allowed for the safe building and passage of a railroad through the territory and had contradictory wording about ceding lands. Phrasing in Article 11 states, "The tribes who are parties to this agreement herby stipulate that they will relinquish all right to occupy permanently the territory outside their reservation as herein defined, but yet reserve the right to hunt any lands north of the North Platte, and on the Republican Fork of the Smoky Hill River."[156] What follows next is the description about how the Indians will need to allow the railroad to pass through their homeland and that they will not attack or harm whites.

In addition to these types of cessions made by the Indians, they were also being encouraged to send their children to schools and become farmers. Article 7 states in a rather

[155] Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, 3rd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 109-13. The preceding pages contain the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 with a brief summary by the author.
[156] Ibid., 112-3.

condescending manner, “In order to insure the civilization of the Indians entering into this treaty, the necessity of education is admitted,” and in talking about the parents’ duties, “they therefore pledge themselves to compel their children, male and female, between the ages of six and sixteen years, to attend school.”[157] They would also receive more provisions or money if they would attempt to farm. The ones wanting to farm would have their choice to select an allotment of land and, if they were using the educational system, they could receive money and supplies to begin their farm. By doing this, the government was able to manipulate a treaty by giving benefits to those tribal members that behave in a manner the government deems appropriate.

According to several of the chiefs that signed the treaty, the officials from the government did not explain those things. Red Cloud described the situation in a speech in 1870 by stating, “‘In 1868, men came out and brought papers. We could not read them and they did not tell us truly what was in them. We thought the treaty was to remove the forts and for us to cease from fighting.’”[158] Red Cloud was not the only one present to express concerns with what the officials told them about what they were signing. Bear in the Grass stated, “‘It was merely said that the treaty was for peace and friendship among the whites. When we took hold of the pen they said they would take the troops away so we could raise our children.’”[159]

This is another issue that *Run of the Arrow* discusses at the end as well. This adds to the understanding that most people only think of plains tribes when they consider Native Americans. Two films within six years of each other have the same leading Indian character in them.

The next film in the study deals with another famous Sioux leader, Sitting Bull. Filmmakers present his story in the aptly named *Sitting Bull* is not concerned about the history as much as *Tomahawk*. *Sitting Bull* however provides the audience with a message that seems

[157] Ibid., 111.
[158] Calloway, 330.
[159] Ibid.

directed more towards a younger audience and shows that peace and understanding are achievable.

SECTION III

SITTING BULL

"Sitting Bull: I have wanted peace. I have prayed for peace. There have been battles. But when the white soldiers win a battle, they call it victory. When the Indians win, they call it massacre."

The film *Sitting Bull* (1954) is a fictionalized telling of the events leading to Custer's Last Stand at The Little Bighorn. The portrayal of Sioux Indians, in particular Sitting Bull, is interesting. They do speak some of their own language and English, but the English is the standard "Indian English" one might expect from a western that treats Indians harshly. The Indians do not speak as well as Cochise in *Broken Arrow*, but Cochise is supposed to be speaking in his native language according to the dialogue at the beginning of the movie, while Sitting Bull and the Sioux are truly speaking English. This picture does capture some of the attitudes and characteristics about which many other westerns forget.[160]

While there are historical problems with *Sitting Bull* as Bosley Crowther indicates in his review in The New York Times: "One could work up a pique at this picture for playing so

[160] J. Carrol Naish, Iron Eyes Cody, Sidney Salkow, W. R. Frank, Mary Murphy, and Dale Robertson, *Sitting Bull*, DVD, (Eugene, OR: Timeless Media Group, 2007).

loosely with the facts merely to be on the currently popular side of a racial theme."[161] Then he takes this idea even further in describing the meeting between Sitting Bull and President Grant as "a wicked deception of youngsters, who are likely to be the principal patrons of the film."[162] While he has a legitimate complaint about how inaccurate this is, this movie seems to be trying to find some racial harmony. The filmmakers have taken two iconic figures in American history and showed them trying to coexist and understand each other.

For most historians this type of "historical fiction" does not help to remedy the many problems with history that are prevalent in society and the entertainment industry, though films such as this one are not the problem. The ideas behind the changes are noble ones and if people are serious about finding out the truth, they will look further than a movie. If Crowther is correct and the movie is mainly for children then it is no different from a fictional movie that tries to promote understanding and social cooperation.

This movie had one more controversy surrounding the production. Many Native American actors lost work when they decided to film it in Mexico. On March 2, 1954, The Daily Oklahoman presented an article, with a stereotypical reference in the title, "Indians Ready to Hit Warpath Over Loss of Work in Movies," by Victor Riesel about how upset Indian actors were losing work when the film moved to Mexico.[163] This is a strange incident as Iron Eyes Cody was one of the main actors in the film, portraying Crazy Horse. He was typically successful in helping out Native American actors and securing work for them. Cody prided himself in being able to help Indians obtain work in the film industry and this does not match his profile. However, without being in charge of the movie it is hard to place the blame on him. This simply

[161] The New York Times, nytimes.com, "Movie Review," http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9E07E7DF123DE23BBC4E51DFB767838F649EDE.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Victor Riesel, "Indians Ready to Hit Warpath Over Loss of Work in Movies," *The Daily Oklahoman*, March 2, 1954.

shows how much money or "the bottom line" controls what Hollywood does and as a general lesson, everything in life.

Another interesting aspect of the movies is how both sides, Indian and white, have their troublemakers. Crazy Horse and George Custer are the "bad guys."[164] This is a little different for the time. Movies like *Broken Arrow* did portray some whites and Indians as bad, but there are numerous films with the Indians as the main antagonists. The take on Custer fits directly with most perceptions of him, which will get worse from this point forward, culminating in the movies such as *Little Big Man*.

In understanding the film's use of characters, Rob Nixon provides some insight in an article for Turner Classic Movies. He outlines how the main characters and love triangle involve "white folks." However, he does describe the film as "a well-intentioned effort to portray the great Sioux leader with some dignity and understanding."[165] What also bears noting, Nixon points out how Joel Fluellen, a black actor, has "an important and sympathetic role."[166]

The movie begins with Sitting Bull narrating a description about the Black Hills and how they are sacred to his people. It is well documented how important the area is for the Sioux, regarded as the birthplace of their people. The events of the film have direct implications with the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868 that guaranteed the Black Hills remain with the Sioux in perpetuity. After the reported discovery of gold, the government sent Custer and an expeditionary force into the area to confirm the accounts. When they confirmed the reports, the

[164] TCM Film Article, tcm.com, "Sitting Bull" http://www.tcm.com/this-month/article/111429|111430/Sitting-Bull.html.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.

government attempted to purchase the region from the Sioux. Sitting Bull spoke for the Sioux and simply stated the land was not for sale.[167]

The government, however, would not allow the situation to go away so easily. They sent the army with a demand for all Lakotas and Northern Cheyennes to report back at their agencies, most of which were on the Missouri River by January 31, 1876. Many of the bands would not listen to the order and were therefore designated "hostile" and subject to discipline by the army. This campaign would have devastating effects for Custer and the Seventh Cavalry later that summer.

The battle fulfilled a vision by Sitting Bull that revealed to him soldiers without ears falling from the sky into his camp. A week before the battle the Sioux held a Sun Dance. During this ceremony, Sitting Bull fasted, danced, and had fifty pieces of flesh cut from his body. He finally collapsed and had the vision of the gift. Sitting Bull also delivered a warning to his men that this was a gift and they must not take anything of the soldiers because if they did there would be consequences after securing a major victory for their people.[168]

After Sitting Bull's narration, the film surveys the Sioux, miners, and the cavalry. The miners and the Indians begin to fight as the cavalry comes into the screen. The miners believe the cavalry is there to help them, but they do their duty and inform the miners that they must leave the Black Hills because it is Sioux land. This is already a twist from how many westerns portray the cavalry, although in a much more historic fashion. Typically, the army's job was to keep the boundaries protected, whether it was Indians or whites going where they were not supposed to.

Captain Robert Parrish, depicted by Dale Robertson, is the cavalry officer in charge and the main character. He is sympathetic toward the Sioux and realizes that his orders are to protect

[167] Calloway, 305.
[168] Ibid., 307 and Andrist, 262.

them from invasion of their land. Parrish even becomes forceful with the miners telling them he will "bust some heads" if anyone gives him trouble. Later, when he reports to his commanding officers at the fort, Custer is there and scolds him for not protecting the miners. Again, we get another unsuspected characteristic of Custer for this time in history. We have a sympathetic Captain Parrish and a portrayal of Custer that is less than flattering. Later films such as *Little Big Man* in 1970 represent Custer in this way and even make him a comical character depicting him as arrogant and stupid. Yet, Parrish is more like Jeffords from *Broken Arrow*.

This depiction of Custer is not the crazy one of *Little Big Man*; but one more along the lines of a xenophobic general that believes Native Americans are standing in the way of progress and need to be removed or killed. Some might even argue that this is one of the more accurate representations of Custer. Throughout his lifetime, he never seems to be a friend to the Indians, as he never seems to show them the respect they deserve. This ultimately leads to his downfall.

SECTION IV

APACHE

"Massai: You call that life? If an Apache cannot live in his home mountains like his fathers before him, he is already dead!"[169]

Apache starring Burt Lancaster in the lead role as Massai became the highest grossing film of 1954 and the only western to achieve that distinction for any year of the 1950s.[170] This might seem peculiar to some because of the famous westerns that came out in the 1950s such as *Broken Arrow*, *High Noon*, *The Searchers*, and *Rio Bravo* to list only a few of the westerns during that decade. Nevertheless, there is much star power in *Apache* with Burt Lancaster, Jean Peters, and Charles Bronson. What makes this movie unique is that it is truly an Indian story revolving around the life of Massai, an actual Apache. He is the main character and the secondary characters and plot of the film revolves around whites, which flips the script for how westerns typically work. Since it is a story that follows a Native American's struggles, it would have been useful to see more Indian actors in the film.

[169] IMDB.com, "Apache (1954) Quotes," http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0046719/quotes?ref_=tt_ql_3.
[170] Pomerance, 5.

"This initial Hecht-Lancaster release through United Artists is a rugged action saga in best Burt Lancaster style of muscle-flexing. Production is based on history, re-telling story of a diehard Apache who waged one-man war against United States and thereafter became tribal legend," writes a reviewer for Variety on December 31, 1953.[171] The reviewer goes on to describe that this film does not follow the typical angle of most westerns, especially when white soldiers are feeling the force of Massai's weapons. There is also a sympathetic side to Massai's struggles, as he seems to labor between being a warrior and living in peace with the whites.[172]

While Variety makes *Apache* sound like a great adventure on the big screen, a reviewer for The New York Times disagrees. The reviewer states, "This case history of Massai, the fierce diehard warrior who waged lone war against the United States Army, is not only sympathetic but, believe it or not, incredibly slow and dull."[173] This review is not entirely wrong. At points the plot does become stale and somewhat repetitive, but upon closer examination it also seems to represent the struggle Massai is having with living his former life or starting over in peace.

This is another instance where a white actor garners the leading role in a movie "based on history" about Indians. It is hard to take Lancaster seriously as an Apache warrior with his bright blue eyes and many facial features that belie his supposed Native American heritage. Charles Bronson is much more convincing as the Apache scout Hondo for the army. However, placing white actors in leading Indian roles was common practice for the time. Lancaster is noted as "The film's one true asset. Mr. Lancaster's perfect physical casting as the hero, also spells its doom," because "he remains an unintriguing symbol in a strangely indifferent tale."[174] This appears to be someone not willing to take a stand on whether the film is bad because of bad acting or bad writing.

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[171] Variety.com, "Review: 'Apache,'" http://variety.com/1953/film/reviews/apache-1200417726/.
[172] Ibid.
[173] The New York Times, nytimes.com, "Movie Review," http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9D06E4DD1E31E53BBC4852DFB166838F649EDE.
[174] Ibid.

Since this story concerns some actual historical events, it is important to know something about the man behind the story. The film is adapted from the book Broncho Apache that came out in 1936 by author Paul Wellman. He was a prolific writer, completing thirty-one books from 1934-1966. In one of his biographies he is listed as a "newspaperman, writer of popular history, novelist and screenwriter, and is best known for his books set in the Great Plains and Kansas."[175] He began working on articles in the 1920s for the Wichita Eagle about the Plains Indians wars and had them published as two books in 1934 and 1935. It is somewhat strange how he did not get to adapt his own story for the screen since he began working as screenwriter in Hollywood in 1944. However, he had several books adapted into films for which he did not write the screenplay for, including the 1961 John Wayne movie *The Comancheros*.[176]

What becomes evident from the film is how the screenwriter changed some of the events. The happy conclusion is one of the changes. Massai did not live out his day's happily growing corn with his wife and child. It would have also been nice to mention during the dialogue that Massai's Apache name means "Crazy." Massai is also described as "future scout, train jumper, and Apache survivalist."[177] He was a scout from 1882-1886, with *Apache* beginning in 1886 with the surrender of Geronimo. The film also shows him escaping the train carrying him to Florida.[178]

During 1886, Massai was a scout and was at Fort Apache, Arizona Territory. On August 29, he along with other scouts were disarmed and placed in a horse barn to await transport to Fort Marion in Florida. This was a shock to Massai and the others. They had served with honor during their time as scouts with the army. Sources report Massai to be the only prisoner that

[175] Map of Kansas Literature, "Paul Wellman," http://www.washburn.edu/reference/cks/mapping/wellman/#published.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Sweeney, *From Cochise to Geronimo: The Chiricahua Apaches, 1874-1886*, 126.
[178] Ibid., 237, 486.

actively tried to create a rebellion, for which he did not receive any support.[179] This report holds true to the tone of the movie. He is constantly stating that he fights with no one and has no friends because all the true Apaches such as Geronimo and Cochise are gone.

The film begins with Massai trying to disrupt Geronimo's surrender. This already presents some problems with the timeline for the film. The army was holding Massai with other Chiricahua's at Fort Apache beginning on August 29. Geronimo's surrendered in September, making it difficult for Massai to interfere.[180] While this does provide for an exciting introduction to the character, the actual events would have provided a similar thrill and add to the depth of Massai providing him with more reason to distrust the army and white men.

During this opening sequence, Massai tries to engage the cavalry so he can die a warrior's death. Jean Peter's character Nalinle, who later becomes Massai's wife, accompanies him as he tries to hold his position behind a boulder. The cavalry catch him and keep him alive so they can ship him to Florida with the other Apaches. Upon his capture, they tell him that he is no longer a warrior, only a whipped "Injun." This brings begins the frequent use of terms like "buck," "Injun," and "squaw" by one character, Al Sieber, in particular to describe the Indians he does not like. While these terms are derogatory, it provides a look into the personality of the character. He is a conflicted man that seems to enjoy doing battle with the Apaches and at some points even seems to respect them, but continues to use those types of terms. It provides a certain We-versus-They mentality.

James Clifton notes, "One tenacious element is a We-versus-They theme, and associated with this polarized duality is the lasting conviction that They are significantly different in various ways."[181] This is an idea that is popular in westerns in their narratives, that there is general

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[179] Ibid., 569-70.
[180] Etulain and Riley, *Chiefs & Generals: Nine Men Who Shaped the American West*, 97.
[181] Clifton, 1.

misunderstanding between cowboys/settlers and Indians. While this idea is not unheard of, it certainly did exist on the frontier; nevertheless, it should not completely define the frontier relationship between Native Americans and encroaching settlers.

The Searchers may be the most famous example of the "We-versus-They" mentality in films, although it is unquestionably not the only one. Where John Wayne's character is constantly proclaiming the Comanches to be the "They" that needs to be feared in *The Searchers*, James Stewart's character in the *Broken Arrow* is doing the opposite. *The Searchers* plays on the idea that Indian captivity is something worse than death. There were instances of harsh treatment, but many captives were absorbed into the tribe, much like the portrayal in the movie.

One of the more notable films to examine this idea from the opposite side is *Broken Arrow*. The film makes a concerted effort to show the similarities between the Apaches and whites. James Stewart stresses the connections many times during the film and pleads with both sides to recognize them. During the movie, it becomes evident that some on both sides are not ready to for that type of cultural understanding.

Broken Arrow also provides the viewer with the point of the view that it does not have to be "We-versus-They," that there is another option. A message they are trying to promote is that there might be bad people on both sides, but that should not stop the good on both sides from getting together to promote the well-being of everyone while holding the offending parties accountable. Cochise holds his people responsible when they attack whites, which Jeffers tries to do that to his own people as well. *Apache* deal with those same elements and it begins early in the story.

After Massai's capture and escort onto the train is when the real action begins. A map shows him traveling across the United States and once the train is past St. Louis, it makes a stop. Newspapermen get on board wanting to take a picture of Geronimo and Massai is sitting next to

him. They first take a picture of the two men and then ask Weddle, a scheming political type, if he helped capture Geronimo. He says that he did his part and they want to take his picture with Geronimo. The soldiers get Massai up and when the bulb flashes for the picture, he escapes out an open window. There is no evidence that he was sitting next to Geronimo, but it adds to the movie allowing the insertion of a larger than life character into the plot once again.

Once Massai escapes, we get the Indian point of view, at least what the writers believe an Indians point of view is, of St. Louis and white society. As he makes his way through the streets, he encounters Asian laundries, a fire fighting wagon, fancy dressed whites, and a self-playing piano. This scene fits the narrative of Indians beginning to understand that the encroachment by whites is something that they will not be able to stop. However, Massai does not seem deterred from getting back to homeland and trying to keep what is his.

Massai runs out of town after some harassment by locals and ends up in Oklahoma or Indian Territory during the winter. This provides ones of the most reflective and insightful parts of the movie. He takes refuge inside a barn to get out of the snow. A man walks in to tend the livestock and Massai hits him in the head. When the man collapses, Massai turns him over and to his surprise, he is an Indian wearing white man's clothes. The unidentified man asks Massai if he would kill a brother. Massai appears to be struggling with this Indian living like a white man, wearing his clothes and living in his house.

This scene identifies Massai as the other, the wild Indian encountering the noble savage. We find out the unidentified Indian is a Cherokee, yet never receive a name for him. This again plays at the dichotomy of wild versus civilized, Apache and Cherokee. These are two different types of Native Americans; one that has only recently began to have extensive contact with whites and one that has been dealing with whites for about one hundred years to the date in the

film. The scenes that follow put much into perspective concerning assimilation and living in unity, for all Native Americans.

It is evident that the exchange presents some accurate portrayals of these two types of Native Americans and their circumstances. There is also the idea of civilization and freedom that seem to be opposite ideas for Massai. This idea is not new or lost on Americans. Many in popular culture and society try to combat this by comparing oppressed peoples to Indians or by using white society as the symbol of enlightenment that will bring civilization to the free, but "wild" Indians. It is the rare circumstance that someone takes the time to compare wild and free Apaches with assimilated Cherokees living in a "white man's" house and farming, especially in a movie.

This desire to reconcile the idea of civilization and freedom is something that Americans have been dealing with the since the beginning of settlement along the east coast. One example of this new identity at play is the Boston Tea Party. The protestors chose to dress as Native Americans when they dumped the tea into the harbor. On some levels, this is a truly American act. They take something this is unique to America and apply it to the protest. When you assert the actions of the men in Boston as asserting their new American identity, the protestors dressing as Indians is not a negative act against Native Americans.[182]

The Cherokee man invites Massai into his "white man's" house. Massai does not understand until he walks inside and sees an Indian woman cooking and preparing dinner. To this Massai proclaims, "Now I understand, you have killed the white man and taken his house." The other man laughs and tells him no. He describes how the Cherokee and white man live side by side in harmony. He tries to explain that he is the enemy to no man. Massai challenges this idea and calls the Cherokees weak. To this, the Cherokee man tells him that they do not fight, but

[182] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 2, 132.

they do not run. They were once like the Apache wild and free, but have learned to live as the whites. This message of unity is something that would resonate with many viewers during these years. Along with some of the other westerns from the 1950s, is a main theme, such as the Apaches and whites trying to coexist in *Broken Arrow*.

Later, in what is presumably the same night, Massai is in a bedroom getting ready to leave. The Cherokee walks into the bedroom, trying to get Massai to stay. He again gets the assimilation talk from the Cherokee. There is more talk about cooperation. The Cherokee is a progressive Native American from the viewpoint of the government and the others in the tribe that would have resisted allotment. However, Massai sees this lifestyle as detrimental to Apaches.

When the Cherokee realizes Massai will not stay, he offers a pouch of corn to Massai to take back with him to his homeland so he can eat year round and not starve when the hunts are bad. Massai rejects the gift initially even with the pleading of the Cherokee and description of how that can make Indians equal with the whites. Massai climbs out the window into the cold, leaving the pouch of seeds, to return moments later to retrieve them. Therefore, Massia seems to be willing to try this lifestyle if it means he can remain in his homeland.

This adds a new element to the film and it becomes about Massai trying to preserve his homeland. He is transitioning from a warrior that kills to protect his people, to one that is trying to help by giving them a viable option to stay at their home. This is also a statement about assimilation and accepting the ways of white society as the Cherokees have done. The movie shows a natural progression of Massai seeing the power of the army, the breadth of a major city like St. Louis, and an Indian that lives in harmony with whites. Massai seeing the complexity of mainstream society and deciding that assimilation is better than fighting is something that

occurred often among Native American leaders. The assimilation process is something that the Cherokees would have had much more experience with than the Apaches.

Upon Massai's arrival back on the reservation, he delivers his message of hope and unity. For trying to help his people, they repay him by turning him over to the army. Now he has enemies among the whites and Apaches. This is reminiscent of the story of Geronimo and the Apaches blaming him for their treatment by the government. Massai adds to this narrative by praising Geronimo at various points in the film. Massai goes on a one-man mission to destroy the forts and attack the one that turned him in after escaping from custody once again.[183]

In the end he must finally submit to the army. He tries to grow corn and live away from everyone with his wife, but the army tracks him down. The We-versus-They attitude is resolved as white society wins out even as Massai is slowly trying to assimilate.

[183] Webb, James R., Harold Hecht, Robert Aldrich, Burt Lancaster, Jean Peters, and Paul I. Wellman, *Apache* (Santa Monica, CA: MGM Home Entertainment, 2001).

SECTION V

BROKEN ARROW

"Brad: They gotta stop sometime. If they're human men at all, they gotta stop.

Ethan: No, a human rides a horse until it dies, then he goes on afoot. A Comanche comes along, gets that horse up, rides him 20 more miles... and then he eats him."[184]

Broken Arrow provides a reference point for the other movies in the study. In contrast, six years later in 1956, *The Searchers* is released. The movie follows the storyline of Indian captivity. A few interpretations are possible for this movie. Some people argue it is racist, while others such as Tag Gallagher view it as mythic. He notes that director John Ford does not make any claim that the film is historically accurate. Gallagher states, "Quite the contrary: in an opening title card, it identifies the myth-evoking landscape of Arizona's Monument Valley in 1955 as 'Texas 1868,' and follows this with a series of Charles Russell imitations and painterly compositions bathed in expressionist light. This movie is a myth based on other myths based

[184] IMDB.com, "The Searchers (1956) Quotes," http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0049730/quotes?ref_=tt_ql_3.

themselves on still other myths, without beginnings."[185] The film shows all the mythic parts of the West, from the lone drifter/outlaw to the headdress wearing Indian war chief. Ford is giving the audience the legend.[186]

"Horse opera" and "rip-snorting Western," states Bosley Crowther when describing *The Searchers*.[187] John Wayne brings his troubled character to life with ease as Crowther writes, "John Wayne is uncommonly commanding as the Texan whose passion for revenge is magnificently uncontaminated by caution or sentiment."[188] His attitude toward Indians might seem out of place by today's standards, but his character shows what a hardened man of the frontier might think. This frontier attitude works well with John Ford's vision of the west with the epic landscapes and shots. Although with all the time filming in Monument Valley they could have filmed some more of the campfire scenes while they were there, which Crowther also notes.[189]

A reviewer for Variety agrees with Crowther about the grandeur of the film by stating, "It's a western in the grand scale – handsomely mounted and in tradition of 'Shane.'"[190] The reviewer goes on to make the movie seem redundant and yet complains about unexplained subtleties of the plot. At the end of the review it describes Ford's directorial work, "It's not sufficient, however, to overcome many of the weaknesses of the story."[191] Later he writes, "There are, however, some fine vignettes of frontier life in the early southwest and a realistic presentation of the difficulties faced by the settlers in carving out a homestead in dangerous

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[185] Tag Gallagher, "John Ford's Indians: Native Americans in John Ford's Western Films," *Film Comment* 29, no. 5 (September-October 1993): 70.
[186] John Ford, C. V. Whitney, Frank S. Nugent, John Wayne, Jeffrey Hunter, Vera Miles, Ward Bond, Natalie Wood, and Alan Le May, *The Searchers*, DVD, (Burbank, California: Warner Home Video, 1997).
[187] The New York Times, nytimes.com, "Movie Review," http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9502E4D91F3CE03BBC4950DFB366838D649EDE.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Variety.com, "Review: 'The Searchers,'" http://variety.com/1956/film/reviews/the-searchers-1200418123/.
[191] Ibid.

Indian country."[192] While writing this might make sense for reviewing a film, it makes one wonder if that is actually, what life was like. It makes it appear that Indians were the only threat to someone trying to make a life on the frontier. The film only touches on this one terrible incident involving an Indian raid and kidnapping.

In reading these reviews, it becomes obvious how the reception of the film has changed over time. These reviewers' attitudes toward the movie are not strongly in favor, which seems odd for a film held in such high regard by many in and out of the movie industry. Maybe it is the serious and dark mood of the film that made some people uncomfortable at the time. The main character might not make people comfortable either, especially when he seems to make up his mind to kill his niece because she has become Indian, which is somewhat noted by the Variety reviewer, "However, his reaction to the girl when she is finally found seems peculiar. He feels the girl has been defiled by the Indians during her years with them and is determined to kill her."[193] Although, Edwards has a change and heart of does not kill her. Those types of things, such as being critical of heroes or historic figures come about later and we will see the beginning of this in the 1970s.

John Wayne plays the main character in the movie, Ethan Edwards. By today's standards, he is staunchly racist. This is a direct contradiction with Jeffords in *Broken Arrow*. Comanches capture Ethan's nieces, Debbie and Lucy, during a raid on his brother's family home, killing his brother, Aaron, and sister-in-law, Martha. He decides that he must go after them and it appears to come from his hatred for Indians.

Martin Pawley, played by Jeffrey Hunter, a young man of mixed heritage claiming to be one-eighth Cherokee, joins Ethan because Aaron's family raised him. During the journey, Ethan finds Lucy's body, but Ford does not show her body or the finding of it to the viewer, leaving the

[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.

viewer to wonder exactly what happened to her. Ethan constantly refers to Pawley's mixed blood status and tries to distance himself from Pawley, not allowing him to claim any relation.

However, Ethan's ideas about Indians are representative of many whites of the time. It might be hard to argue that it is mythic, while trying to say that he embodies what many whites thought at the time. Nevertheless, *The Searchers* does hold true to what whites thought about Indian captives. Cynthia Ann Parker, mother of Quanah Parker, had a similar experience as the character Debbie Edwards does in the film. Debbie becomes the wife of a Comanche chief, the same as Cynthia Ann. Her family searches after her for years, but once they find her, she wants to return to the Comanches. We do not get this about Debbie.

The racism Ethan shows toward Debbie is not something that Cynthia Ann dealt with. Quanah experienced more of this than his mother did with the family. His appearance was not that of a white man, but of a Comanche. He attempted to contact his mother's family when he reached the reservation, but never received a favorable response.[194] Therefore, there are a few similarities between the two stories. Ford must have realized these things as he was well read and studied about the West.[195]

The Searchers exhibits much of the romanticism associated with the "Wild West." It combines the visuals of the place, Monument Valley, with the name of the place, Texas, and the people of the place, Comanches and settlers. All the ingredients are present for a romanticized version of the West. However, the filmmakers do add some interesting elements of truth. Comanches were present in Texas at the time. For some reason many westerns use them as the Indians for their movies. When someone understands how long Comanches were in Texas we understand how fluid the lands of the West were. The Spanish had a presence in Texas much longer than the Comanches did, but we do not get movies about the Spanish in Texas. The West

[194] William T. Hagan, *Quanah Parker, Comanche Chief* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 25.
[195] Tag Gallagher, *Film Comment*, 69-70.

is a place that was in constant flux, with the strongest or the smartest being able to take what they wanted.[196]

This idea of the mythic west is what excuses the film from having to make a profound statement about Indian/white relations. The movie is clearly not set in the real Texas, but the mythic larger than life Texas of peoples' imaginations. It explores the ideas of what people imagine the west to be and serves as a pivotal point for that type of discussion. After several viewings of the film, it is not difficult to come up with different questions about what we do not see. This makes the movie great for discussion about the basic ideas of the west to the more intimate details of the film itself, such as Ethan's feelings for his sister in law.

The Indians in the film combine two of the more popular styles of Native Americans. They are Comanches, which most people know as some of the most vicious warriors to roam the plains, but they wear Navajo style jewelry. Again, this type of jewelry is easily recognizable to the viewer and builds up these mythic Indians. The stylization of the film is reminiscent of how graphic novels stylize events and places.

One could describe *The Searchers* as morally ambiguous in dealing with race and racism. Ethan Edwards can be both an antihero and/or a racist. This poses one of a few questions that scholars and movie critics are still in disagreement about. One of the more important questions for this study however is about the handling of Native Americans and if it is anti-Indian, another issue that does not have a concrete answer.[197]

There seems to be only one anti-Indian main character in the film and that is Ethan. However, he is not a model citizen. This somewhat takes away from taking him too serious as a representation of all white frontiersmen in this mythical west that Ford has created. The way he

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[196] Buscombe, *'Injuns!': Native Americans in the Movies*, 27.
[197] Philip C. DiMare, ed., *Movies in American History: An Encyclopedia, Volume 2* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 428.

treats Pawley and the way he describes what the Indians will do to his nieces makes him the center for the racial controversy in the movie. Ethan believes that death would be better than being a captive of the Comanches. With this attitude, he creates tension between him and Pawley as they travel to recapture the girls.

Why the film is not anti-Indian is by the way the others in the film accept Pawley. The Comanches also take care of Debbie. They have not raped and murdered her or made her a slave, as Ethan would have everyone believe. Debbie has become a member of the tribe and wife to the chief. If the film was anti-Indian, everything Ethan said would have come true and he would not have been such a controversial figure to the other characters in the film or to the audience. The viewer may find it hard to side with him as the story progresses even though his determination is something to admire.

Ethan is the personification of the anti-hero for the western genre. He does not have the qualities of the noble cavalry officer that rides in at the last minute to save the weary settlers. However, he is not evil personified as many believe he is. He has several abhorrent qualities, but he does have a strong connection and loyalty to his family. At the end of the film, he redeems himself, solidifying his status as anti-hero for the movie.

Masculinity is another area the film investigates. Critics can view the older and younger men of the film and describe the differences in how they view the frontier based on their familial relationships.[198] The contemporary review in Variety describes a few of these situations, while Bosley Crowther stays away from these serious topics in his review.

Some also view the movies depiction of racial prejudice, violence, and the insinuation of rape as a depiction of contemporary society.[199] This argument seems to be overstated. John Ford

[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.

and John Wayne did not make statements like that in their films. While those things do occur in the movie, that idea is better suited for 1960s and 1970s westerns such as *Soldier Blue* that make it known what the plot is supposed to be showing, a reflection of modern society and using the egregious treatment of Indians in the past to make their point. Even if the filmmakers changed the facts for the movie.

The Searchers provides a different type of film from the others in the study. It has a much different legacy than the others due to the rise in popularity after it was in theaters. The others experienced some success upon their releases or were B-westerns with mild success. The subject matter and change of culture after the 1950s played a role in the way people remember and discuss the movie. The role and use of the anti-hero gained popularity and remains popular today.

This also shows the strength of the mythical west in popular culture. The idea of what people want to see versus what happened has been the debate among historians for some time. Some believe that there is an attachment to larger than life figures makes them want to see John Wayne type characters, Wyatt Earp, and gunfighters. Indians such as Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and Geronimo also fit this idea. They have also received numerous amounts of time in movies and television shows. The imagery of the West is a powerful thing when dealing with the public. People enjoy either western movies or the thought of starting over in the west.[200] The next film, *Reprisal!* Discusses the idea of starting over.

[200] Jay M. Price "Still Facing John Wayne After All These Years: Bringing New Western History to Larger Audiences," *The Public Historian* 31, no. 4 (2009): 80-84.

SECTION VI

REPRISAL!

"Matara: It's lonely trying to be something that you are not, isn't it? Give up the lie Neola.

Neola: NO!

Matara: Why don't you try to buy me off with whiskey or trinkets or cheap cotton calico? That's how the white man buys peace."[201]

The 1956 movie *Reprisal!* deals with some of the same issues as *Hombre* does in 1967. *Reprisal!* features a main character of mixed ancestry, something the viewer does not learn until about halfway through the film. Neola is the given Indian name of the main character that now goes by Frank Madden, played by Guy Madison who does his best John Wayne saunter throughout the movie. Matara, portrayed by Ralph Moody, is Madden's maternal grandfather that searches for him to try to get him to return to his people on the reservation. Matara pleads with him to return and to not forget about where he came from because he is an Indian. Madden's white father left before he was born, so that is the only life he knew.

With the credits running at the beginning of the movie it becomes obvious that there are

[201] Sherman, George, Arthur Gordon, David P. Harmon, Raphael Hayes, David Dortort, Guy Madison, Felicia Farr, and Kathryn Grant, *Reprisal!*, DVD, (Columbia pictures corporation, 1956).

not many Indians listed. This film is lacking Native American actors in the main character group. There appear to be many Indian extras as the film begins, as is seen in many of the movies from this era, but they do not get main billing. This does not mean the film will not handle the subject matter with respect, but it should raise questions about how the filmmakers will focus on Indians without Indians.

Moody is an actor that plays many Indian parts in his career and is one of a few non-Native actors that are able to do it well. Taini is the main Indian woman character for the movie and Kathryn Grant, later and maybe better known as Kathryn Bing, plays her. Therefore, out of the three leading Native American roles, none of them are actually Indians. This does not detract from the overall message that the filmmakers are trying to convey.[202]

The opening scene of the film sets the tone. There are two dead Indians beneath a tree during the credits that so routinely flash by at the beginnings of films from this era. After the credits, Madden is shown riding into a town and stopping at a land company office only to find no one is present. The name for the territory is never given that they are basing the movie in; they only give the name of the town, Kendall. There is no indication of where the film takes place, it is only when Madden gives a former address as somewhere in Oklahoma. The Native Americans are an amalgamation of many tribes and Matara alludes to being Cherokee, as all unidentifiable Indians seem to be. This is not the first or the last film to jumble up ideas and visions of the west. In fact, a film that came out the same year, *The Searchers*, sets the bar high for movies that present the mythical west. Madden notices everyone is at the saloon down the street and proceeds to see what is going on inside. What he walks into is a trial.

The three Shipley brothers, Bert, Neil, and Tom are on trial for murdering two Indians. Native Americans are at the trial standing near the doors of the saloon. Madden makes it inside

[202] IMDB.com, "Reprisal! (1956) Full Cast & Crew," http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0049668/fullcredits?ref_=tt_cl_sm#cast.

just as closing arguments are underway. Willard, the defense attorney, is making a case as to why the brothers are innocent. In his argument, he states that it is a disgrace that the court has allowed a female Indian's testimony during the trial. He keeps this line of logic going and describes how it goes against everyone in the territory and the same Indians that slaughtered innocent pioneers should not have a say in court. These remarks sum up how many of the whites in the movie think about Native Americans, they either despise them or see them as less than they are.

However, there is some hope as the judge calls down Willard for his statements and says that he plans to seek disbarment for the lawyer. The judge turns it over to the jury to deliberate and return a verdict. Once he does this, the lead juror stands up and states they have a verdict and that verdict is not guilty. The judge makes his disgust known about the outcome, but with no recourse has to let the decision stand. The sheriff is not happy either. From here, it is easy to understand what the town is about and how whites treat Native Americans.

The Shipley's are the main example of racist whites. The twist is that the middle brother, Bert, is interested in Taini. This is the ultimate insult to his brothers and his wife, as the eldest brother Neil reminds him. After the trial ends, many of the men of the town drink and shoot up "Indian town." During these events is when Bert reveals that he wants Taini. He goes over to her house and kicks in the door to see her. When she refuses his advances, he gets angry, calls her a "dumb squaw," and says he has to have her. As he makes his advances harder to fight off, Neil shows up and tells Bert to leave, criticizing his love for an Indian squaw that is trash.

This is the harsh reality of racism. One cannot help but feel that this is a statement about the treatment of African-Americans in the United States as much as it is about Native Americans. This movie would have come out around the time of the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement, with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954 and Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks coming to national attention in 1955. The town is segregated and the Indians cannot

get a fair trial, no matter how condemning the evidence is against the whites of the town. The Indians cannot own land either, something African-Americans would have struggled with in the south as well. The screenplay is adapted from a novel by Arthur Gordon that came out in 1950. The novel is about a lynching that occurred in Georgia.[203]

What makes this story interesting is why the filmmakers chose to tell it through the lens of the western. A story about a lynching in the south becomes a tale about racism and discrimination in the west. The filmmakers may have simply been trying to capitalize on the popularity of the genre at the time. It does bring to mind the idea of the vanishing Indian in discussing racism. It may seem easier to make the movie about fringe minority group such as Native Americans. By doing this not as many people will be upset about portrayal of events and may even lead to a wider audience for the film.

This may also speak more to the treatment of Indians in the media and popular culture. Even in modern context when African Americans receive more attention for the Civil Rights movement, Native Americans do not receive as much consideration. One place this is visible is in the world of sports. There have been instances of teams changing their names because of outside pressure, but some make the case that there are even worse names still be used by teams of all rankings. They also state that other minority groups would not have to put up with these derogatory terms used about their people.

Therefore, a movie based on a lynching in the south may have upset people, making a western and Indians the easier film to produce. The filmmakers make it easy to recognize that there is something larger at play. *Reprisal!* did not receive much fanfare or make best of lists for the time. The film does have issues, but this makes the point that even with the undertones it may have been too much for the viewers at the time. Even while it might be easier to present this film

[203] "Arthur Gordon (1912-2002)," savannahnow.com, http://savannahnow.com/stories/010502/locgordonobit.shtml#.WE8Enrk9V8E.

in the western genre, they do show Indians as the victims and somewhat timid. This also hurts the Indians in the film, as they do not have any recourse and seemingly no desire to fight back. They seem resigned to their fate as victims of the townspeople, just hoping the whites lose interest in tormenting them long enough so they can live their lives.

While Madden does not profess any political statements his attitudes have isolationist and even libertarian leanings, not something that many westerns deal with. He just wants to own his ranch and mind his own business. He tries to make it clear several times early in the movie that the problems in the town are not his. Madden tries to treat everyone the same and not get involved in the violence. This outlook brings him into the affair because the group he identifies as will not allow him to associate with Indians or be friendly with them.

An example of this is when Madden goes to town to buy wire to fence his property, mainly to keep the Shipley's cattle off his land. The owner of the store asks about getting all the wire and Madden says, "Good fences make good neighbors." After this exchange, he is loading his wagon with the help of an Indian boy, which is Taini's brother that works at the store. The Shipley's see this happening and bump into the boy knocking him down for getting in their way. This upsets Madden and he proceeds to get into a fight with the brothers, taking the punishment away from the boy because it was not his fault.

Catherine Cantrell and her father Jeb Cantrell are representative of a few townspeople that are sympathetic to the treatment of the Indians. They own the land office that has the property Madden purchases. Catherine tries to involve Madden in the helping the Indians in the area by showing him where the two were hanged on the property he just bought. She is an example of activists trying to help with Indian affairs that is in constant battle with the racists of the community.

Activism on the part of minority groups from white society in the United States is nothing new. At some points in the nation's history, Native Americans have been the chosen group of many advocates. Many did have good intentions, but even most of them did not take the time to consider what the Indians would actually want. The activists take up everything from education to religion.

Catherine is a stereotype of the concerned citizen taking up for minority group's rights. These types of people have been around since the earliest days of colonization. Some actually did some good work and others only tried to help in the ways they believed would be better for the Indians to live, not being concerned with what the Indians thought. While she professes to care about the Indians in the area, she has not done much too actually help them. Then when she believes Taini and Madden are romantically involved she lashes out, telling Madden she feels cheap and humiliated. She follows that by calling Taini a "squaw."

A major theme of the film is about Madden trying to deny his Indian heritage. His grandfather tries to get him to accept that he is Indian and not run away from his past. This is something that deals directly with the government and society trying to make Indians, less Indian so they can assimilate into society.

One of the major issues that activists took up was the involvement of Native Americans in Wild West shows. Assimilationists did not like Native American participation in the shows. They believed the shows reinforced stereotypes and savage imagery. This progressive ideology applies to many decisions made about minority groups. Many of the groups that did not like the Indian participation in the shows did not contain any Indians. The judgement came from affluent whites. They would offer what they believed to be a better alternative for Native Americans.

They tried to promote private property, education, and citizenship. While that list seems to contain things that anyone living in the United States would enjoy, there would be problems.[204]

Lawyers, educators, anthropologists, and journalists all decided it was their place to speak for this Native Americans. They saw themselves as being able to help this minority group. These progressive ideas did not just affect Indians, but many other groups as well. However, this cause was a popular one that would have federal implications. These groups wanted to define the role of Native Americans in the rapidly changing twentieth century.[205]

A problem with this type of activism is that it leaves out the voice of the people that will have to live according to the changes. One group telling another how to live their lives is not an act of charity, but in fact, is the opposite. This philosophy leads to the idea of cultural superiority. When one group decides they can dictate how another should live theirs, they are no longer equals.

The major problem with these components is the activists' ideas about education, the type of education they promoted in particular. They encouraged off-reservation boarding schools. To the assimilationists if they could remove the children for long periods and educate them in the ways of white society it would speed up the process because they could remove the home influence of the family. To take the phrase that people credit to Captain Richard Pratt the founder of the Carlisle School for Indian Students, "Kill the Indian, save the man," that is what the activists wanted to do. This is a disturbing sentiment from any group.

Another quote sums up the attitude of assimilationist when dealing with the issue of assimilation. Chiricahua Apache chief Naiche told Major Hugh Scott in 1911, "They [whites] told me when I was a boy that my mind and my way of living was no good. Take ours [white

[204] Smith, 6-7.
[205] Ibid., 5.

men's,] that is the kind of mind to have and the only way to live. Yours is no good. Throw it away."[206] These types of statements prove the bias exhibited towards Native Americans and their lifestyle. While it is not as harsh as "Kill the Indian, save the man," the meaning is the same. This seems to be the perfunctory response by many assimilationists as they tried to convert the Indians to live as whites.

These ideas spill over into something even worse as activists began to view Indians as, "permanently peripheral, destined to economic dependence and political impotence."[207] Activism that does not listen to the people in question leads to advances like this one. This is also a direct correlation with trying to push other cultural values and ideas onto other cultures that does not wish to have them. The next step in the process is usually discussing racial superiority. Such as, Indians are not able to assimilate properly because they are inferior to whites. While this might seem like a stretch to some, it is nothing new. It began with some stating African slaves could not be independent, while saving some optimism for Native Americans. However, after a period of trying to "help" Indians they lost hope for them as well.[208]

These few examples of the way Native Americans have had their civil rights ignored should provide plenty of support for why the filmmakers could have used real events instead of adapting a southern story. They missed an opportunity to discuss some similar issues with real world implications. The positive is that they made a film like this to begin with. Films like *Broken Arrow* provided the opportunity for films like *Reprisal!* to be made.

After the action of the middle of the movie and the climax when Madden renounces his whiteness and becomes Neola, the film ends with a semblance of acceptance. He struggles with his Indianness throughout the movie and finally lets everyone know how he feels about the way

[206] Sweeney, 15.
[207] Smith, 7.
[208] Ibid.

the townspeople treat the Indians and that he is one. After the public announcement, he retreats to his ranch to gather his things and ride off into the sunset in true western fashion.

The final scene shows that people are capable of changing when the sheriff rides out to Madden's ranch that is now up for sale and asks where he is going. Madden does not seem keen on the idea of telling him where he is headed and the sheriff says the town will miss him and they are working to remove the restrictions on Indians owning land. He concludes this by saying they want him to come back and Madden asks him, "As an Indian?" To which the sheriff replies, "Simply as a man." At this point Catherine rides up, calls out "Frank" and rides off with him.

For this film to be a B-western and often overlooked it provides a good story, even if the history is not accurate. It provides an opportunity to discuss the aspects of the injustice of the film and bridge into a discussion of the civil rights movement. The subject of why Indians are an acceptable way to direct the discussion is something else that deserves evaluation.

SECTION VII

WESTWARD HO, THE WAGONS!

"The ruts of the Oregon Trail were not cut by armies or adventurers but by wagons carrying American families and all their possessions – Westward bound with faith in God and the hope of a Promised Land."

While this does not speak about Native Americans, it establishes the attitude for the film. *Westward Ho, the Wagons!* is another 1956 release that is trying to capitalize on the popularity of the western genre. This time it is Disney trying to get in on the craze. The movie has all the elements of a Disney film. It is family friendly, has singing, and attempts to convey a message to the viewer. In this case, the message is one of Manifest Destiny and at the same time, unity. This makes for somewhat mixed feelings about the film.

A reviewer for *TV Guide* echoes this assessment. The reviewer states, "Done in the truest of Disney fashion in that it promotes goodwill and provides plenty of scenic, light atmosphere, yet never excites much interest in terms of a story to sink one's teeth into." This statement sums up the Disney element well and is what makes this film different from the others in the study. The reviewer also writes, "Though sure to make many viewers feel good in its support of human

understanding, the film is missing something."[209] It is difficult to see the human understanding element early on, but it does take shape as the movie progresses.

From the opening sequence with the above quotation, there is no doubt that white settlers will be at the forefront of the film. However, several Indian actors play significant roles in the film and one of the most famous non Native American actors that played Indian roles. Iron Eyes Cody plays a powerful Sioux medicine man named Many Stars. Cody is also a technical advisor, something he did throughout his career. Indian actors fill two other primary roles, John War Eagle plays Wolf's Brother and Anthony Numkena, a Hopi, portrays Little Thunder.[210] War Eagle's character does not have a name, only Wolf's Brother, yet he plays a significant role in the film. Despite the problems in the movie, at least Disney used Cody to advise and two other Native American actors to fill major roles.

The film does use a familiar face of Disney by casting Fess Parker, better known as Davy Crockett from the Disney mini-series at the time, as John "Doc" Grayson. George Reeves, television's Superman, also makes his final appearance in a movie. While there are plenty of good actors in the film, it does fail to deliver from an action standpoint. There is some forced action with Pawnees early on in the movie, which allows for the setup of good and bad Indians. One exchange between a child and Doc, who is trying to make a point, when they arrive at Fort Laramie, also helps to make the differentiation. Doc asks the kid, "If an Indian wants something a white man has, what does he do?" To which the child proclaims, "Scalps him!" Doc follows up with, "I mean a friendly Indian."[211]

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[209] TV Guide, "Westward Ho, The Wagons! Movie," http://www.tvguide.com/movies/westward-ho-the-wagons/review/122638/.
[210] Anthony Numkena Biography, IMDB.com, http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0634568/bio?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm#overview.
[211] Parker, Fess, Kathleen Crowley, and Mary Jane Carr, *Westward Ho, the Wagons!*, (Burbank, CA.: Walt Disney Home Video, 1986).

Doc is simply attempting to teach the child about trading in the fort, but it turns into more than that. This attitude is not something the child would naturally have he picked it up somewhere. There is evidence to this later on when Indian children staying outside the fort come over to interact with the white children from the wagon train. They do not judge each other, but they quickly bond over sharing the same kinds of toys. Wolf's Brother does not allow this to happen very long because of a negative encounter with one of the white men from the train at the trading post.

The film follows a wagon train in 1846 as it makes its way across the plains headed to Oregon. Disney makes sure and solidifies the western scenery by showing Chimney Rock early on, showing how far the train has made it as they note the landmark is the end of the prairie and they are almost out of Pawnee territory. They also state that once they get past the rock they will be in friendly Sioux territory. The first knowledge the viewer gets of the Pawnee is that they are hostile and attack the wagon train, in doing so they create a diversion that pulls the night watch away from the horses enabling the Pawnee to steal them. Therefore, in the opening minutes of the film we have established who the "good" and "bad" Indians will be.

After the Pawnee steal the horses, a boy named Dan Thompson resolves to hunt down the horses and bring them back. When they realize he is gone, Doc decides to go find the boy. He finally catches him, but Dan has already found the Pawnee raiding party sleeping. Not only are the Pawnee the "bad" Indians, they are also inept if a child on foot can catch up with them. Doc and Dan are able to create a diversion and Dan is able to retrieve his horse.

This occurrence does hurt the credibility of the film, but it is understandable that there needs to be two sides to create some conflict to further the plot. While this is not quite an accurate portrayal of Native Americans, there is some salvation later on when the train encounters

the Sioux at Fort Laramie. They are staying around the fort trading and there is discussion of trouble because some settlers killed some young Sioux warriors.

Another recurring theme from the other films during this time that this movie also centers on is Fort Laramie. It is understandable why so many people that grew up during this era tend to focus on the Sioux and Fort Laramie. By watching the majority of these westerns, you would believe that the Sioux are the only tribe on the plains. At least there is another tribe mentioned, even though they immediately receive the label as "hostile savages," during a story by Hank Breckenridge played by Jeff York.

This white washed version of the frontier experience provides a different point of view from *Reprisal!* and even *Broken Arrow*. It deserves to be mentioned alongside the other films for the inclusion of Iron Eyes Cody.

SECTION VIII

RUN OF THE ARROW

"Blue Buffalo: [addressing the village] He wants to become a Sioux. To take Yellow Moccasin as his squaw and to adopt Silent Tongue as their son. But his skin is enemy!

Pvt. O'Meara, 6th Virginia Volunteers Sharpshooter: I'm not an American.

Blue Buffalo: But your skin is white!

Pvt. O'Meara, 6th Virginia Volunteers Sharpshooter: But my heart is with the Sioux.

Blue Buffalo: Why?

Pvt. O'Meara, 6th Virginia Volunteers Sharpshooter: Because I love your people. I've learn from Yellow Moccasin that a man cannot live alone. He must have allegiance to a people... to a nation. In my heart my nation is Sioux.

Blue Buffalo: Would you kill the Americans in battle?

Pvt. O'Meara, 6th Virginia Volunteers Sharpshooter: [pauses for a moment] Yes."[212]

"Yankee-hatting [sic] Southerner goes west after the Civil War to join the Sioux in their uprising against the US. Slow in takeoff, action becomes pretty rough at times," states Variety.[213] A common sentiment among reviewers is that this is a straightforward film involving cavalry and

[212] IMDB.com, "Run of the Arrow (1957) Quotes," http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0050915/quotes?ref_=tt_ql_3.
[213] Variety.com, "Review: 'Run of the Arrow,'" http://variety.com/1956/film/reviews/run-of-the-arrow-1200418269/.

Indians as so many westerns are.[214] With that being the common feeling about the movie, the reviewers seem to have overlooked some intricacies of the film. What one might notice when viewing the movie now are the similarities with Kevin Costner's *Dances With Wolves*. This film is important for the time, as the 1950s is not the time most people expect to see a film show Indian culture as a counter culture movement.[215]

There are also similarities between this movie and *Broken Arrow*. Both deal with good and bad Indians. There are also good and bad whites, in this case cavalry men. They are not the simple white settlers or United States Army against savage Indian stories, looking to murder all whites encroaching on them as the settlers pursue the noble endeavor of bringing civilization to the frontier.

Run of the Arrow's (1957) opening scene shows death and destruction on Palm Sunday April 9, 1865 on the battlefield at Appomattox, Virginia. While this is far from the reaches of Indian history or representation, we learn that the main character, O'Meara played by Rob Steiger is a Confederate soldier who is not happy about the surrender. The actions of General Lee surrendering his army to General Grant set O'Meara's life in a new direction. This new direction takes him onto the northern Great Plains, although the scenery in the film suggests the southwest at many points. The ideal shots of the "West" with deserts and plateaus are present in several shots of the movie.

The cast of the movie includes many Native Americans, even though they are not in the primary roles. This embodies many of the problems that advocates such as Sonny Skyhawk mentions when describing Indian roles in feature films. The usual problems associated with this idea are present. Charles Bronson plays Blue Buffalo, the chief of the Lakota band that O'Meara

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[214] The New York Times, nytimes.com, "Movie Review," http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9405EED91431E63ABC4B53DFBE66838C649EDE.
[215] Nativeamerican.co.uk, "Run of the Arrow, Sam Fuller, 1957," http://www.nativeamerican.co.uk/runofthearrow.html.

wants to join. Sara Montiel, who is of Spanish descent, portrays Yellow Moccasin the Lakota woman that becomes the love interest of O'Meara. This leaves three more supporting roles that are supposed to be Indians: Walking Coyote, Crazy Wolf, and Red Cloud. White actors play them all. When there are village and group scenes of the tribe there appear to be many, if not all Native American extras. Tim McCoy also has a role in this film as General Allen.

There are many different themes at work throughout this film. The most obvious is the lost cause narrative that O'Meara is holding onto. After the surrender of the Confederate forces at Appomattox courthouse, O'Meara considers shooting Grant as he leaves the courthouse. Then he returns to his home where he laments the surrender. His mother tries to persuade him to let it go, but he refuses to listen. He tells her how much they have lost and family members they have buried. Mrs. O'Meara describes how Lincoln's assassination was worse for the South than the North. This leads O'Meara to describe how the South does not belong in the Union and neither does he. He declares he is going to the West to get away from the Yankees and that the savages have more pride left than the southerners after the war.

After the fifteen-minute setup, O'Meara then begins riding to "the West." The leads to the first introduction of an Indian and not just any Indian, a Sioux scout for the army, so there are several stereotypes in one scene. He is asleep on a rock when O'Meara wakes him up by pouring his canteen on him. Once O'Meara pours the canteen on Walking Coyote, played by white actor Jay C. Flippen, the canteen was full whiskey, so he had to have been passed out.

Now, setting aside these issues we begin to see humanizing effect of the portrayal of the character. Walking Coyote wants to go home and return to his people now that his service is over. This idea of returning home makes Walking Coyote a relatable person. People understand the feeling of being gone for a long period and just wanting to go home. This is not a

bloodthirsty savage out to kill all white people while speaking in grunts. This is a person that served in the army and wants to go back to his family.

The two quickly bond over stories about serving in the army. Walking Coyote lets O'Meara, who was infantry, know that only "squaws" walk and laughs at him. Again, this raises some issues with the use of the term "squaw," but in all we get a picture of a humanized Indian. .

What follows is Walking Coyote educating O'Meara about the ways and history of the Sioux nation. He relates to O'Meara how Sioux is not their actual name and how the French gave it to them. After that, Walking Coyote describes the tribal/band system the Sioux use. He names and describes the three divisions of the tribe, after O'Meara asks. While it does not provide an in depth lesson about the history or societal makeup of the Sioux it provides the viewer with an idea of how their society is set up. It provides something positive in comparison to many films from the era. This idea of O'Meara asking about this humanizes a group that many have represented as all being the same. This was released one after a movie that combines many stereotypes about Indians and the West in general, *The Searchers*, a great yet somewhat troubling film when describing Native American and western representation.

Immediately following the lessons on understanding the Sioux, O'Meara makes it known that he wishes to be a Sioux. The only drawback for our white confederate Irishman is the religious aspect of becoming an Indian. After much discussion with Walking Coyote, they seem to agree that their religions are not much different. Again, there is a unifying moment between two seemingly contradictory people.

However, there is something in the film that westerns typically do with the white main character; he picks up the Indian ways quickly. O'Meara picks up the language and nuances of the society with ease. Walking Coyote commends him on how fast he has learned. While there is no indication how much time has passed, it does not seem to be that long that the two travel

together. This does seem to minimize the depth of culture the Sioux people maintain in their society, while the movie does not fall into the trap of combining all Indians together. It just makes the Sioux culture one-dimensional. This does help move the story along, it could get tedious to have the main character never seem to understand the people he wants to live with, but when the majority of films do this it creates a false sense of cultural superiority.

However, the main character is a former Confederate soldier that refuses to accept the outcome of the war, so stereotypes abound on both sides. At no point does the concept of O'Meara learning the Sioux ways quickly seem preachy or condescending, even as the next sequence unfolds with a bunch of Indians burning a wagon. These are the "bad" Sioux according to Walking Coyote. This is a nice development for the story as it adds an element of division among this group that O'Meara wants desperately to join. The viewer might even wonder if O'Meara might have more in common with this group of renegades after hearing the way he described his own family and friends for giving up the war effort.

This is where the similarities with *Broken Arrow* and that films treatment of Native Americans as not all bad begin to show. There is a bit of the noble savage element to Walking Coyote, which is what the viewer is going to believe at this point in the movie. However, as the story develops the rest of the tribe seems to be reasonable as well. The bunch burning and looting the wagon are the exception and not the rule. The renegades capture Walking Coyote and O'Meara. Walking Coyote describes them as drunk, mean, and painted for war. Although on some level, he sounds like the older generation ranting against the problems and youth of the world, a sentiment that never seems to go out of style.

What Walking Coyote does to give himself and O'Meara a chance to escape is ask for the "run of the arrow." The angry band of Sioux reluctantly agrees and the concept begins to unfold as Walking Coyote explains the concept to O'Meara. Someone will fire an arrow as far as

possible. The next step is to allow the prisoners to run toward the arrow and the captures will not pursue them until they have reached the arrow, therefore giving the captives a sporting chance. This is mainly a ploy to help O'Meara escape as Walking Coyote is in too bad of shape to make it far enough to escape, although he does mention how no one ever makes it alive. This situation once again solidifies the concept of the noble savage giving up his life to protect his white brother from savages.

This feels like a bloodthirsty game right out of a horror movie when they create sport out killing. When viewed slightly different it becomes a chance for the captives to have some chance of escaping or allowing them to die on their own terms without torture. This means that even these mean renegade Sioux have a sense of fair play. Even they are not the bloodthirsty savages seen in so many other westerns that simply want to kill and torture whites.

As is expected Walking Coyote does not make it allowing O'Meara to get a lead on the Indians. He ends up falling along the path of a few Indian women that hide him in some blankets and take him back to the in village. This makes O'Meara the first to survive the game. Again, the white man is adapting and learning or outsmarting the Indians. Upon closer examination, it becomes clear that he would have died without the intervention of the women.

The woman who saves him is Yellow Moccasin. The woman that plays the part is a Spanish actress named Sara Montiel, but voiced over by Angie Dickinson. The director seems to have hit several sensitive subjects in one character. A woman from Spain is playing a Native American with the voice of a white woman. Nevertheless, the character is not the passive stereotype of Indian women. She does become the love interest and wife of O'Meara, but she asserts herself into many situations in the film. She is a kind, caring character that not only saves O'Meara, but also cares for a young mute orphan boy.

Again, the Sioux are shown as something besides bloodthirsty savages bent on preventing whites from their manifest destiny. They are charitable people that have a sense of community and want to protect what is theirs. These are ideas that Sunny Skyhawk describes as he talks about how Native Americans are giving and that does not sit well with many peoples understanding of money in a modern context.

One scene in particular bridges the 1950s idea of conformity and the American way into one scene. Once O'Meara makes it known that he wishes to marry Yellow Moccasin there is some discussion about if he is a Sioux or not when one Indian challenges the idea of the marriage. O'Meara says his heart is with the Sioux, but has a hard time deciding on whether or not he could fight and kill other whites. They then begin a discourse on Christianity that gives the impression that the conformity of this situation is trying to bring the Sioux and Christians together under the same banner. After O'Meara describes how he can live as a Sioux, but remain a Christian, they decide that they serve the same God, the only difference being the name. Then the notion of Christianity being on the side of liberty confirms the belief that this is about more than O'Meara and the Sioux.

This is certainly a reference to the red scare and communism. Christianity must be on the side of liberty to allow the United States to prevail over the communists. There had been many attempts to root out communists at every level of the government and local communities. With allegations ranging from outright communist ties to homosexuality, both sides of the political spectrum: Democrats and Republicans, conservatives and liberals, hold some blame. President Truman's loyalty program and the existence of anti-communist rhetoric of Joseph McCarthy were tools of control by both parties. Each of the two parties had varying ideas about why they wanted to keep communism out at the time. Republicans believed that communism was an affront to

private property and wealth and the Democrats did not want the communists to infiltrate their party.[216]

Others view this in different terms, arguing that the ideas presented in the films, and in society have a connection to the Cold War. Famed new western historian Patty Limerick states, "John Wayne and Turner's latter-day academic acolytes were equally artifacts of the ideological needs of the Cold War, both in their own ways responding to the preferences of the public at the time," in response to the idea asserting that John Wayne is the biggest obstacle to new western history.[217] In examining Cold War ideology, the elements do appear in westerns from that period. The tough frontiersman is not the focus of the movie instead, there is a discussion about Christianity and how it is a unifying factor in society. This dialogue seems to reach the values of the Cold War in a covert way.

The period and context are correct for his appearance and provides the viewer with an idea of how long O'Meara has been with the Sioux. He leaves after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox in 1865 and by this time Red Cloud's war is over putting the year at 1868, due to the negotiations that take place during the film, which seem to be the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. Although the details would have been different, the idea is the same. As many Hollywood stories do, they want the most famous people of the situation involved whether they were actually there or not. Red Cloud was one of the last to sign the treaty, waiting until the army destroyed the forts. After they did that, he finally signed the Fort Laramie in November 1868, while the original date for the treaty is April 29, 1868.[218]

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[216] For a more in depth discussions about anti-communist sentiment in America see: M.J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990).

[217] Patty Limerick, "Examining "The Heart of the West"," *The Public Historian* 31, no. 4 (2009): 90-96.

[218] Calloway, 328 and Prucha, 109.

There is also mention of Fetterman when one of the officers boasts about how he could bring the Sioux nation into submission without negotiations prior to the meeting between the Sioux and the army officers. The writers miss a great opportunity to expound on what happened to Fetterman. They speak of him, but just in passing describing his obsession with bringing the Sioux in as a "sickness," to remind an overconfident officer what happened to the last man that thought that.

It would not have taken long to describe how Fetterman believed he could run through the Sioux nation with eighty men, which turned into a fatal error. This does provide the notion that the senior officer understands the power of the Sioux. Clarifying the details of Fetterman would have made it clear to everyone why that name means so much to the situation and not just those with an understanding of the history. *Tomahawk* from 1951 shows this disastrous decision by Fetterman.

In an interesting turn of events, Red Cloud entrusts O'Meara to escort the soldiers to the area that they are to build the fort. He is supposed to make sure they receive safe passage and build at the appropriate location, as dictated by Red Cloud. By allowing a little change of the facts, they are giving Red Cloud complete control over the negotiations for the tribe. This does not take away from the history or the plot because the Indians appear to have an equal share in the proceedings and get to decide who will escort the troops to where they can build their fort.

O'Meara leading the troops adds more conflict to the situation between the Indians and the army. He realizes that one of the officers in the cavalry is a northern officer that he had dealing with early in the movie at Appomattox. Red Cloud tells them that he trusts O'Meara as much as any of the Sioux in his tribe. This gets to the idea of the white man out doing the Indians to become a better Indian, but in this situation, it seems to be a matter of Red Cloud trying to

make the situation easier on the army believing they would be more responsive to one of their own.

This begins the transition of the story that brings O'Meara back to his loyal American roots. The cavalry encounters the renegade Sioux from earlier in the film, led by Crazy Wolf that killed Walking Coyote after the running of the arrow. The band is again rampaging across the plains, reminding the viewer that there are still dangerous Indians. The corrupt army officers that do not wish to honor the agreements made between the United States government and the Sioux have also been introduced. Therefore, there is a dichotomy at play with good and bad on both sides, not portraying one side as perfect and the other as completely wrong. Numerous films show Indians as the victim and ultimately wronged by the evil army or government and do nothing to promote Indians as active participants in their history and the history of America.

The climax of the film is when O'Meara captures Crazy Wolf during an attack on the soldiers. Crazy Wolf asks for the run just like when O'Meara got the option for a fighting chance. However, this time a cavalryman sees Crazy Wolf running and shoots him, which leads to conflict between O'Meara and the cavalryman. O'Meara does not kill the other man in contradiction to what the Sioux would have done for violating the run. This makes some of the Sioux believe that O'Meara is not fully committed to the tribe and that he still has feelings for the Americans.

Yellow Moccasin even questions his loyalty. This is another instance of this not being the typical cowboys and Indians western with the lead actor having a Native American love interest. Surely, other Indian women, even in *Broken Arrow*, would not question their white lovers' loyalty in front of a group of people. Yellow Moccasin takes it upon herself to try to right the situation and voice her opinion about what is going on. She tells him he was never a Sioux in

his heart. This is not small accusation after he spent much time trying to convince the tribe and himself he was no longer part of mainstream American society.

At the end of the film, the army decides to build their fort outside of the negotiated area and the Sioux attack. O'Meara tries to talk the army into surrendering or leaving. They do not listen, leading to an easy victory for the Sioux. They capture the commanding officer and begin to torture him. O'Meara confirms all the suspicions of the Sioux that doubted him when he shots the officer to keep him from being tortured. This means that his loyalties are still with the United States.

O'Meara leaves with the remaining soldiers. Before the credits begin, big letters appear on the screen as the wagons move away from the burning fort that read, "End of this story can only be written by you." This lends toward the idea of reconciliation. With the red scare beginning to wind down in the late 1950s, this is a message to viewers to write a new chapter in American history and resolve the problems of the era.

While this film has issues surrounding the casting of non-Natives to play the roles of Indians, it handles the characters with respect and dignity. Being a B western, it did not have the budget that mainstream films had. That is probably the main reason it is not regarded as one of the best films about Indian and white relations, although it should receive more respect than it does. Indians receive fair treatment. They also do this by not making them passive one-dimensional figures to take pity on. These Indians have fought to control their land and interests and are negotiating with the United States government. When the army does not honor the terms of the agreement the Sioux run them out, they do not cower and allow them to do whatever they

want. The Indians of *Run of the Arrow* are a proud people that work to control their own destiny and do not allow the government or army to dictate what happens.[219]

[219] Fuller, Samuel, Rod Steiger, Sara Montiel, and Brian Keith, *Run of the Arrow*, DVD, (RKO Radio Pictures, & Warner Home Video, 2015).

CHAPTER IV

THE 1960s

By the 1960s, it is clear that political and social changes are coming. It was a clash between conservative and progressive values. In dealing with movies, this decade sees the decline of the Western, which until this point had been the most popular genre.[220] The 1960s saw the fight for women's and minorities civil rights.

The Vietnam War became the center of attention for both sides of the political spectrum. The new left movement formed and gained traction with the youth. While on a smaller scale, there is a rise of the new right. Lyndon Johnson proposes his "Great Society" and pushes it forward in the name of John F. Kennedy. The space race also begins during this decade. The USSR is the first country to have a man orbit Earth in 1961. The next year the United States is able to send a manned mission to do the same thing and by 1969, Neil Armstrong is able to walk on the Moon.[221]

Some important and influential entertainers and television shows make their debut during

[220] Sonneborn, x.
[221] Barry Keith Grant ed., *American Cinema of the 1960s: Themes and Variations* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2008), xi –xiv.

the 1960s. Motown records in formed in Detroit in 1960. Bob Dylan performs for the first time in 1961 in Greenwich Village in New York City. 1964 marks the arrival of The Beatles in the United States and their "shaggy" appearance. They would perform on The Ed Sullivan Show in February of that year and Beatlemania began. Then in 1966, the first episode of Star Trek airs on September 8th 1966. In August of 1969, the famous concert in the little town of Woodstock, New York takes place for four days.[222]

The 1960s is also marked with many deaths of political leaders and artists. Clark Gable has a heart attack just days after the completion of the film *The Misfits* in 1960. Two years later Marilyn Monroe dies from an apparent drug overdose at thirty-six years old. In 1963 John F. Kennedy is assassinated while riding in his motorcade in Dallas, Texas. The killing of Malcolm X, controversial leader of the Black Nationalist, movement occurs in 1965. The murder of Martin Luther King Jr. occurs on April 4th 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. Two months later on June 5th, the shooting of Robert Kennedy in Los Angeles occurred after he announced he won the Democratic presidential primary for the state of California. In the final year of the 1960s the gruesome murder of Sharon Tate and four others at the hands of Charles Manson and the "family" take place. These death tolls do not include all the deaths of protestors and soldiers, which too often remain nameless. All of the struggle and death mark the 1960s as a violent struggle and changing point in American history.[223]

It is important to examine the events of the 1960s to see what the civil rights movement was about to understand how the movie industry reflected these changes. Robert Utley discussed in 1970 how the changes of the 1960s would affect the future of western studies. He also described how American traditions and ideas came under scrutiny by those movements and that

[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid.

stereotypes would begin to crumble.[224] Minority groups began insisting mainstream society treat them fairly and in the case of Native Americans, honor treaties. As with most things in society, popular culture reflects the people's thoughts at the time. This will become evident with films coming out during this time. Indians had been receiving some better treatment in movies since *Broken Arrow* in 1950, but these changes would not occur overnight and the 1960s helped to solidify the reforms. Hollywood will also reflect these changes by 1970 with the films *Little Big Man* and *Soldier Blue*.

Moving into the 1960s there is more of focus on the civil rights movement that began in the 1950s. This civil rights movement will range from peaceful sit-ins, in the style of Martin Luther King Jr., to the more forceful Black Power movement, and other minority groups such as the American Indian Movement occupying Alcatraz during this time. The sit-ins began with a group of black students in Greensboro, North Carolina, going and sitting at segregated lunch counters and demanding service. This did lead to arrests, but they made the point that they would not tolerate treatment as second-class citizens.

When discussing the 1960s civil rights movement it is important to note that it began during World War II. After the war, minorities returned home and refused to be second-class citizens. Activism became more prevalent and brought racial issues to the forefront of society. Serving their country and fighting for the rights of oppressed groups overseas made them question their treatment at home.[225]

It is important to begin any in depth look at the 1960s by examining the political climate of the era. There would be much political upheaval ahead during this decade. In trying to decipher what was going on in society and at the movies, it is important to understand what was going on politically at the time. Minorities in the country began to put pressure on the

[224] Fixico, *The American Indian Mind*, 112.
[225] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 132.

government to help their status in society and the counterculture movement was at full strength. Starting with the presidency and the programs they put forward will help to provide some insight into the struggles of the 1960s.

Dwight Eisenhower reaching his office term limit allowed Richard Nixon to gain the Republican nomination. The Democratic nominee was John F. Kennedy. The election of Kennedy in 1960, a Democrat, would mark a change in the attitude in the handling of social issues. While Kennedy may have been more reserved in some of his rhetoric about social change, his Vice-President Lyndon Johnson was not.

After the assassination of John F. Kennedy in November 1963, Lyndon Johnson begins his presidency and brings about many civil rights changes in the name of Kennedy that would have major changes to the political and social constructs of the United States. Johnson wanted to cure the societal problems of the United States.

1964 was marked by the effects of the Vietnam War and the beginning of civil unrest that would last several years. The Gulf of Tonkin resolution passed Congress giving President Johnson power over the conflict and making the United States involvement official. The Vietnam War reached all aspects of society from the personal lives to entertainment. Entertainers began to take action and protest by various means. October of 1964 was the start of the student arrests at the University of California, Berkley as part of the Free Speech Movement. This would culminate with the arrests of over seven hundred two months later during a demonstration.[226]

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a major achievement for Johnson at the time. The act stated that there could be no more discrimination against racial, ethnic, religious, and national minorities in public schools, workplaces, and public accommodations. The next step of Johnson's "Great Society" was the Office of Economic Opportunity formed out of the Economic

[226] Grant, xii.

Opportunity Act. It would help many people receive training in an effort to get better jobs, hoping to further Johnson's "Great Society." This legislation would also have an "Indian desk" allowing for the formation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development that could assist reservation housing.[227] This was in direct relation with the growing discontent in the Indian community. The final piece of civil rights legislation during this time came after the Lyndon Johnson began serving his own term after the election of 1964. The legislation was the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This act made the federal government register voters in areas with low voter turnouts.

By 1965 the civil rights movement peaked, thanks in part to television coverage, and began to regress somewhat as it became increasingly violent. Dr. King's message of passive resistance was losing ground due to the fact that it was not progressing the movement as fast as some wanted, leading to the rise of the Black Panthers and the Nation of Islam. These new groups were more militant, however their violent tendencies hurt the movements overall. With the assassination of Dr. King and Robert Kennedy, people grew tired of the violence. All of these events would lead to the election of conservative Richard Nixon.

By discussing how the civil rights movement ended and affected politics, there must be an understanding of all the movements and their beginnings. The discussion will begin with African Americans, progress to women, and conclude with Native Americans since they are the focus of the study.

Some historians look back to Reconstruction and cite the radical policies of the era as the beginning of the civil rights movement. It is hard to deny that those policies did not affect the modern day movement, but it will be important to focus on changes that are more contemporary. The foundation for the modern era began with Franklin Roosevelt issuing Executive Order 8802

[227] Calloway, 457.

in 1941 disallowing any company with a military contract from discriminating based on race. In combination with the executive order, black participation in the war gave many a new sense of belonging after serving in the war effort.[228]

The first major push of the 1960s involving civil rights issues occurred on May 6th 1960. President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Civil Rights Act of 1960. This act came about as a way to help ease the process for southern African Americans to vote.[229] The Black Codes, reaching back to era of Reconstruction in the south made it was difficult for blacks to vote. With this new legislation becoming law, there was a push back in the south, along with blacks looking to secure their place in society.

What became obvious to activists during this time is that they needed to make politicians uncomfortable in order to get the changes they sought. Grassroots movements sprang up when the protestors came to this realization. For the black community much of the opposition arose from the churches. The church became a place for people to speak out without fear of reprisal unlike the pressure that politicians and academics felt at the time.[230]

One of the most violent incidents at one of these types of peaceful protests involved the Freedom Riders in 1961. The Freedom Riders demanded equality on bus rides and at the station while waiting for a bus. During this one particular ride into and through Alabama, a mob attacked the bus and slashed the tires. This caused the bus to stop a few miles outside of Anniston, Alabama, and when it did, a mob firebombed the bus and held the doors shut. They were intent on burning the passengers alive. An FBI agent was onboard the bus and drew his

[228] Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1978).
[229] Grant, xi.
[230] Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

pistol finally getting the doors open, however many were beaten severely as they escaped the burning bus.

Many attempts to desegregate college campuses in the south also led to violence. The University of Mississippi had an incident in 1962 when the first black student, James Meredith, tried to enroll. Thousands of students and citizens from the surrounding towns, many of which were armed, showed up to prevent the enrollment. Federal marshals had to protect Meredith. He suffered a gunshot wound during the protest and two people died during the race riots on campus. The incident at the University of Mississippi was not the only instance of this type of activity. The following year in 1963, Governor George Wallace attempted to stop integration at the University of Alabama. He stood in the doorway so the students could not pass; nevertheless, he finally backed down when federal marshals confronted him.

During 1962, there is also a small victory for African Americans. Jackie Robinson became the first black player selected for the Baseball Hall of Fame.[231] While discussing horrific incidents such as the beatings and murders of blacks, sports might seem insignificant. However, what seems to be true back then and now is that sports can play a vital role in helping to bridge gaps in society. It was a struggle to get baseball fully integrated and by 1962 there was a black player in the hall of fame and considered one of the best players to ever play the game. The induction signifies more than greatness at baseball, it shows a society slowly working together and recognizing all people.

In 1963 Martin Luther King Jr.'s march on Washington and his famous "I Have a Dream Speech" occurred. Over two hundred and fifty thousand people of various ethnicities and backgrounds marched on Washington D.C. gathering at the Lincoln Memorial. King referred to judging people by their character and not the color of their skin, the message of a colorless

[231] Grant, xii.

society. The speech and march made specific demands including an end to racial segregation in public schools, meaningful civil rights legislation, self-governance for the District of Columbia, protection against police brutality for civil rights workers, and a two-dollar minimum wage for all workers.

By the Academy Awards in 1964 there is an African American receiving an Oscar. Sidney Poitier receives the award for Best Actor in the film *Lilies of the Field*.[232] Much like 1962 with the induction of Jackie Robinson into the Baseball Hall of Fame, this signifies a work of excellence for the work of an African American male in a business predominantly run by whites. This would not be the only controversial move made by the film industry during the decade and will give rise to more airtime for minorities.

Malcolm X led a more violent revolution than Dr. King did during this time. His message was not one of compassion and love. He was a part of the black power movement and gave speeches about Black Nationalism; he became an outspoken leader of the movement. The end of his life was no different, three men shot him while he was giving a speech in Harlem in February 1965. Later that year even more violence occurred in black communities, the most famous being the rioting in Watts in Los Angeles on August 11th-16th, because of an altercation between a black man and the police. This would result in $40 million in damage and thirty-four people dead.[233]

The women's liberation movement was prominent in the 1960s as well. Beginning in the 1920s, women made several advances including the right to vote with the ratification of the nineteenth amendment in 1920. However, by the 1960s women had a low college enrollment rate, limited employment rates, and were still subject to gender roles in jobs. They were initially part of the New Left and the mainstream civil rights movement before forming their own

[232] Ibid., xii.
[233] Ibid., xiii and *This Day in History*, http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/watts-riot-begins.

organizations. Some of the more radical leaders of the women's movement believed men would always disrupt their efforts and they should separate.[234]

There would be two major factions: radical feminists that would not allow men to join and the National Organization of Women that allowed men to join. Betty Friedan was the first president of that organization at its founding in October of 1966. This type of separation was nothing new, it was prevalent in the 1920s as well, and would lead to animosity between women of the more conservative 1950s and more progressive women of the 1960s. The National Organization of Women gained more attention among moderates, mainly because of the lack of the homosexual stereotypes that surrounded the more radical groups.[235]

Native Americans were also involved in the civil rights movements that began in the 1960s; however, it is vital to look at what happened in the 1940s. After World War II and the service of many Indians, the federal government decided to change its policy by terminating their relationship with tribes, thinking assimilation was close.[236] It would appear to be a major victory for the Indians, but there were unforeseen circumstances.

The federal government wanted to remove special status from the tribes and place in it the state and local authorities' jurisdiction. They also admitted that wrongs had been committed against Native Americans in the past and wanted to settle all the outstanding grievances against the government concerning the loss of tribal lands, leading to the formation of the Indian Claims Commission in 1946.[237]

The Indian Claims Commission had the task of evaluating tribal grievances regarding land claims, treaty claims, resource management, and simply resolving any problems between

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[234] Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).
[235] Grant, xiii.
[236] Calloway, 447.
[237] Ibid., 447-8.

tribes and the government. While this seemed like a simple and easy solution to outstanding complaints, in reality it was not. One of the major issues was that many tribes did not wish to sale their lands, as in the case of Blue Lake in Northwest New Mexico, a sacred site for the Taos Indians. Another problem was what to do when more than one tribe claimed original occupancy of lands in question.[238]

The next set of problems arose at the tribal level. Once many tribes received the money they were not sure what the best course of action was. Some tribes wanted to allot the money per capita to individuals in the tribe, while others wanted to invest the money in the reservation or local economy. For example, the Crow tribe decided to do both with their $10 million settlement. They allotted half to per capita payments of individual tribal members while investing the other half.

This is a basic political and economic question, but without any rules or guidelines set forth by the tribes, it caused a lot of disagreement. The Indians still living on reservations often had differing opinions on what to do with the money in comparison to tribal members living off the reservation. This type of problem between reservation Indians and non-reservation Indians is not new to this program however. When allotment of resources and money comes up then the tribes had to address of the issue of who was eligible and who was not. Nevertheless, by 1978 when the Indian Claims Commission closed it paid out over $800 million and settled 285 cases.[239]

Starting in the 1950s, Native American populations began to rise according to census data. This could be for numerous reasons. There were groups trying to help Indians take pride in their culture again. Outside involvement and the powwows helped to spread the popularity in the

[238] Ibid., 448.
[239] Ibid.

1960s as a fringe part of the counterculture movement. People were also able to self-identify on the census forms.[240]

There is a more cynical side to the argument as well. Some could argue that as government began to aid certain groups, there were benefits to being Native American and more Americans began to look into their heritage to try to gain access to the benefits and programs such as affirmative action. There should be no doubt about the validity of this argument because people in the United States have been trying to take advantage of this same idea since the early twentieth century.[241]

Men would marry Native Americans to gain use of tribal lands and resources. This became popular in southwestern Oklahoma because of the vast grazing lands held by the Comanche and Kiowa tribes. Another example includes families adopting Osage children to get oil rights or the money attached to oil for caring for the children. This also led to the murders and disappearances of many Osage tribal members.

By the 1950s, the prevailing view of the Native American community was one of partial or full assimilation, if they were not there already they would be. The act of fighting in World War II and the shared experience of economic depression helped to solidify this connection.[242] This idea of shared experience was not exclusive to Native Americans. The African American community shared in just as many experiences as the Indians, but these preconceived notions about assimilation date back to the beginnings of the United States.

For many people in America in the 1950s the Native American community was going extinct, this is a continuation of other older ideas about the vanishing Indian going back to the nineteenth century. This idea of the traditional Indian community disappearing was encouraged

[240] Clifton, 16-7.
[241] Ibid., 20-1.
[242] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 142.

by the termination policy of the era. There was some pushback from traditionalists, but it would prove to be a difficult time.[243]

A program with three parts, termination, compensation, and relocation, represented the policy change. Later in the 1960s and 1970s, groups such as AIM represent the effects of the relocation program. The basis of relocation is that Indians received a bus ticket to an urban area where jobs were more readily available. Many Indians attempted to relocate on their own and some that used government assistance treated the trip as a vacation. The other service given was assistance in finding a job. Like many other government programs, relocation was ineffective and costly. Many Indians were not able to adjust to the new lifestyle in an urban setting and did not last long before either returning to their home or becoming trapped in the ghettos and slums. While some Indians were successful in the change, that was not the norm.[244]

In the 1960s, there was growing discontent among the younger generation of urban Indians. They saw the success of the broader civil rights movement and decided to take matters upon themselves. The leaders of this movement and other Indian leaders began to discuss the occurrences as an Indian Renaissance. This renaissance would include many things, including minority rights, politics, cultural persistence, and aiding their own situation.[245] They were returning to the reservations to reconnect with the traditions of their respective tribes, enthusiastically promoting their culture and identity. By demanding better conditions and treatment for all Indians, they wanted to be more involved in running their own affairs and policy formation.[246]

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[243] Sonneborn, x.
[244] For extensive discussion of this subject that pertains to relocation and termination, see Donald L. Fixico, *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986).
[245] Clifton, 1-2.
[246] Calloway, 457.

The most famous of the organizations was the American Indian Movement or AIM. Clyde Bellecourt, Dennis Banks, and George Mitchell formed AIM in the summer of 1968.[247] The formation of this group is relatively late in comparison to the similar movement by black leaders; however, it would garner a lot of media attention much like their counterparts in the black community.

There were several smaller groups of Native American civil rights groups, which preceded AIM. One of the first groups met at the American Indian Chicago Conference in 1961. At the conference, over four-hundred delegates from sixty-five tribes wrote a Declaration of Indian Purpose. The delegates sent the declaration to President John F. Kennedy. Out of this meeting came the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) that met in Gallup, New Mexico, later that same year.[248] This marks the beginning of a youth infused movement that sets the stage for organizations such as AIM in the Indian community. According to Donald Fixico, "The National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) and the American Indian Movement (AIM) expressed a contemporary Indian voice of multiple opinions during the early 1970s."[249] This is also evident with the First Convocation of Indian Scholars in 1970.[250]

The Northwest tribes had their own version of the "sit-in" during the 1960s called the "fish-in." In the fish-in, they would purposely go in and fish places that were off limits to them even though they had a guarantee of fishing rights on the lands. They had retained these rights even though they gave up lands in an 1850 treaty with Washington Territory Governor Isaac Stevens. Salmon were the buffalo of the Northwest and shaped the tribes lives in the same way. The fishing had not been a problem until the population of the northwest began to boom and more people began fishing for commercial purposes and sport, making the salmon population drop.

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[247] Ibid., 459.
[248] Ibid., 457.
[249] Fixico, *The American Indian Mind*, 110.
[250] Ibid.

The government then cracked down on fishing numbers, hurting the Indians in the area as they tried to feed their families.[251]

The final act of the 1960s for AIM began in 1969 at Alcatraz. They occupied the island in San Francisco harbor and declared they were re-claiming the island for all American Indians. This incident gets AIM national attention leading to wider efforts for Native American civil rights. The occupation lasted until 1971 when federal marshals removed the final fifteen protestors from the island. It lasted for nineteen months and helped to solidify similar efforts in the 1970s. On Thanksgiving Day in 1970, AIM protested at Plymouth Rock, again in 1971 at Mount Rushmore, followed by the Trail of Broken Treaties in 1972, and most famously the siege at Wounded Knee in 1973.[252]

The Cold War and the United States fight against communism will once again be at the forefront of this decade along with the Vietnam War creating more social unrest in the United States. While conservatives were not happy with the "Great Society," liberals were not happy with the war. It did not make sense to many how Johnson could be committed to liberal policies, yet fight an extended war in Vietnam. However, fighting the war to keep communism from spreading helped to keep the Democratic Party intact allowing the liberal policies to push through.[253] The Vietnam War left lasting effects on popular culture. Anti-war opinions are easy to find in music, television, and movies from that decade.

[251] Calloway, 458-9.
[252] Ibid., 459-460, 491, 496.
[253] Marilyn Young and Jon Livingston. *The Vietnam War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990).

SECTION I

A DISTANT TRUMPET

"2nd Lt. Matthew 'Matt' Hazard: All right, now take a good look at them. It's going to make killing Apaches a lot easier. They were buried alive. Those ants are eating their brains out!"

"Chief War Eagle: I surrender. Not because I am afraid but because I am tired of war. Always I wanted peace. But your men in Washington, no, they send soldiers. They killed our women and children. They destroyed our men with bullets and whiskey. They took our land, our freedom. They drove us like animals."

These quotes from *A Distant Trumpet* provide two different views from people seeing things differently and taking different measures to ensure their own survival. At its core, it is a basic cavalry film that deals with life at a fort and fighting renegade Apaches. There are moments of sympathy and tolerance for the Native Americans, but they are scattered until the end of the movie. There are two characters in particular that appear willing to treat the Apaches with respect, Second Lieutenant Matthew Hazard and Major General Alexander Quait. This movie is not like *Apache*, which tells an Indian story. It is even different from the plot of *Broken Arrow*

that tells a story about Apaches and whites, *A Distant Trumpet* tells a white story that shows Indians on the periphery.

Even with the Indians outside involvement, they end up being central to the plot and development of the white characters. This is evident from the opening credits when there are no Native Americans listed in the opening credits. This does not mean that the writers and actors do not fairly represent Native Americans. There appear to be numerous Indian actors used. Besides some of the stereotypical clothes the Apaches wear, they do receive decent treatment in the storyline. Having a Major General call an Apache chief the greatest guerilla fighter in the world that is compliment about a competent opponent.

"The last gasp of the Southwestern tribe of Chiricahua Indians in opposing the encroaching white man," reads the headline for Variety and makes it sound like an interesting film.[254] However, when you move to The New York Times review Bosley Crowther calls *A Distant Trumpet*, "A deadly bore."[255] However, he also notes the scene where Chief War Eagle has a conversation in his native language as important to the film.[256] This is another situation where the filmmakers seem to be allowing the Indians to have a more sympathetic and humanizing element. They are not just the "other," they have a language and ideas of their own.

Crowther is correct once again in his overall assessment of the film. It is a bore and the acting does not help anything. The only bright spot of the movie comes at the end with the negotiations between Hazard and Chief War Eagle, which occurs in the last thirty minutes. Up until that point, it was a laborious love story and cavalry film.

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[254] Variety.com, "Review: 'A Distant Trumpet,'" http://variety.com/1963/film/reviews/a-distant-trumpet-1200420686/.
[255] The New York Times, nytimes.com, "Movie Review," http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9D01E2DB1F3AE13ABC4051DFB366838F679EDE.
[256] Ibid.

The basis of the movie comes from a novel by the same name written by Paul Horgan. The book came out in 1960. This means it was quickly adapted for a movie, with the release year being 1964. Horgan wrote novels and historical sketches about the southwest frontier and the abundance of cultures that were present. He attended a military academy in his youth and later worked as a librarian prior to starting his writing career. He would go on to receive two Pulitzer Prizes in history in 1954 and 1975.[257] This makes Horgan highly qualified to write a story about Apaches and the army in the late nineteenth century. A reviewer of the book echoes these ideas and it seems apparent that the film does a good job of sticking with the plot from the book. The reviewers for the thirtieth anniversary edition proclaim the book to be "'the finest historical novel in American literature'" and "'the finest novel yet on the Southwest.'"[258]

The feelings of the 1960s begin to come out in this film, along with the sympathies of Horgan. There also seems to be an anti-establishment sentiment that grows within Hazard. He is a straightforward hard-nosed graduate of West Point that is determined to do all he can to fix things in the west. When he reaches Fort Delivery in a desolate region of Arizona, he finds that it will not be an easy task. As the movie progresses he begins to develop a problem with the government and their handling of Native Americans. He stands up for them continually during the film, but at the end, he threatens to leave the army over the injustice he sees.

In all, this film has not received much attention and for good reason as Bosley Crowther noted. Nevertheless, there is decent treatment of Native Americans in the storyline. As Crowther also notes, it is important to recognize the use of native language in the film. The element of activism is present in the movie placing it alongside other films in this study. The next film deals with Indians in a different fashion, but it is also not a story that centers on them either.

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[257] Encyclopedia Britannica, "Paul Horgan: American Author," https://www.britannica.com/biography/Paul-Horgan.
[258] Goodreads.com, "A Distant Trumpet," http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/39536.A_Distant_Trumpet.

SECTION II

HOMBRE

"Henry Mendez: You can be white, Mexican, or Indian, but I think it pays you to be a white man for a while. Put yourself on the winning side for a change.

John Russell: Is that what you are?

Henry Mendez: Well, a Mexican's closer to it than a White Mountain Apache, I can tell you that!"[259]

This quote sums up what the film depicts as the view of many of the characters towards Indians. Then later on in the film, what the cost is to be on the winning side is revealed when Russell puts himself on the white man's side.

Variety accurately summarizes the plot with one sentence, "Hombre develops the theme that socially and morally disparate types are often thrown into uneasy, explosive alliance due to emergency."[260] This movie presents a counter culture argument, but not in the ways that future films such as *Soldier Blue* and *Little Big Man* will. Apaches raise John Russell or Hombre, portrayed by Paul Newman, and he chooses to live with them instead of returning to white

[259] IMDB.com, "Hombre (1967) Quotes," http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0061770/quotes?ref_=tt_ql_3.
[260] Variety.com, "Review: 'Hombre,'" http://variety.com/1966/film/reviews/hombre-1200421352/.

society. It is not preachy about why he chooses them, just he prefers them and they accept him.

Roger Ebert points out the all too familiar elements of this film by listing them off in a review from 1967, "The good but indecisive Mexican, the decisive but bad Mexican, the thieving Indian agent, his cultured wife, the desperado, the lady boarding house operator with a heart of gold, and the Kid."[261] From that point of view, this western follows many of the established rules of the genre. However, what set this film apart from all the others are the moral and ethical questions the movie poses. Throughout western history, we see situations involving thieving Indian agents, such as Dr. Alex Favor played by Fredric March, and it makes one wonder how many good ones there were. *Hombre* provides the viewer with an up-close view of someone who seems to understand that stealing money supplies from the Indians is wrong, but does not care.

What these reviewers fail to compare is the idea of "noble savage." John Russell is not exactly the "noble savage" because he is white and his attitude toward the group does not portray a noble quality. The ideas he has are harsh and are his way or no way. He understands how to survive on the frontier while the others do not seem ready to make the tough decisions regarding survival. This is evident in his exchange with Henry Mendez played by Martin Balsam:

"John Russell: Hit something, Mendez, first the men, then the horses.

Henry Mendez: I don't know. Just to sit here and wait to kill them?

John Russell: If there was some other way, we'd do it.

Henry Mendez: Maybe we can keep going and try to outrun them.

John Russell: If you run, they're gonna catch you, they're gonna kill you. You believe that more than you believe anything.

Henry Mendez: All right.

John Russell: And try not to puke. You may have to lie in it for a long time."[262]

[261] Rogerebert.com, "Hombre (1967)," http://rogerebert.com/reviews/hombre-1967.
[262] IMDB.com, "Hombre (1967) Quotes."

His nobility comes into question when he makes the deadly mistake of giving himself up for Audra Favor. In this scene, we see nobility toward the group and doing what is right. The scene solidifies Russell as the noble savage. He sacrifices himself for the group by either identifying as a member of the group or by being the noble savage, which seems more fitting as he never seems to acknowledge his position among the other travelers. While *Hombre* is not as socially concerned as *Soldier Blue* or *Little Big Man*, it accomplishes a few things, such as bringing attention to corrupt Indian agents and the suffering, which could result along with the rough reality of frontier life.

SECTION III

SOLDIER BLUE

"Col. Iverson: [to Lt McNair] McNair! Raze the village! Burn this... pestilence!"[263]

Films such as *Soldier Blue* and *Little Big Man* allude to more than takes place on the screen. To understand some of the films it is important to understand what was going on in society at the time. With both films coming out in 1970, the content of both movies show horrible atrocities committed by the United States Cavalry and are a reaction to the happenings of 1968 during the Vietnam War.[264] On March 16, 1968 in My Lai, South Vietnam, American forces massacred approximately 500 women, children, and elderly men.[265] Author Scott Simmon states, "This time in the context of the Vietnam War, in the simple if horrifying way that *Soldier Blue* (1970) restages the 1864 Sand Creek massacre to evoke the 1968 My Lai massacre, or the emotionally powerful way *Little Big Man* (1970) reenacts the 1868 Washita River massacre,"

[263] IMDB.com, "Soldier Blue (1970) Quotes," http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066390/trivia?tab=qt&ref_=tt_trv_qu.

[264] *A Man Called Horse* also came out in 1970, but does not fit into the same category as the two films examined in the following paragraphs. Its handling of the material is from another perspective that does not necessarily portray a positive image, but more of a stylized one.

[265] Stuart Murray, *Atlas of American Military History* (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2005), 202.

while discussing the influence of the cavalry film.[266]

In discussing Native Americans in popularizing literature from the early twentieth century, we see some similarities in representation with movies. The authors tend to attack problems with their writing, which we see in many different forms of popular culture media. Sherry Smith describes this idea, "If they intended their works as windows into Indian worlds, they also served as mirrors into their own, presenting refracted images of their longings, desires, and sometimes neuroses."[267] The movies *Soldier Blue* and *Little Big Man* provide windows into both worlds.

These examples provide a base for understanding the films, but they do not give enough credit to the filmmakers in using the modern context to expose these happenings. This does play with the sympathy of viewers. Richard Slotkin writes, "The 1960s saw the appearance of a substantially new genre of 'anti-Custer' movies in which the traditional identification of the audience with the cavalry was inverted, and we were asked to see the bluecoats as murderous 'savages' and killers of women and children, and the Indians as defenders of pastoral values, hearths and homes."[268]

Yet, it allows for a more positive portrayal of Indians. These movies show Indians as victims of racist, violent whites, which is not much different from the way *The Searchers* explores racism. The main difference is that the main character is not the one with the deep resentment towards Indians like Ethan Edwards. This does present a better view than showing

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[266] Scott Simmon, *The Invention of the Western Film: A Cultural History of the Genre's First Half-Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 72.
[267] Smith, 8.
[268] Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800–1890* (New York: Atheneum, 1985), 17.

the Indians as creating the problem. Yet, the victimization is still through the white's perspective. The films show how graphic and brutal the Sand Creek and Washita River massacre were.

Roger Ebert leads his review with this statement from an ad about *Soldier Blue*, "Why, its ads asked, does 'Soldier Blue' show, 'in the most graphic way possible, the rape and savage slaughter of American Indians by American soldiers?' Because it's true, the ads replied, and 'now more than ever is the time for truth.'"[269] While the movie is about cavalry and Indians, it is supposed to be an allegory for the My Lai massacre. The reference in the ad about it being time for the truth makes it blatantly obvious what the agenda of the film is. A reviewer for Variety notes the same thing, "It would appear obvious that director Ralph Nelson is trying to correlate this allegedly historical incident with more contemporous [sic] events."[270]

What is interesting about this film is that they still use a white main character to move the plot along; it is a woman, but still white. Candice Bergen portrays Kathy Maribel 'Cresta' Lee, a white woman that understands the Indians, making her the same as numerous other white characters that "understand" Indians, maybe better than the Indians themselves. However, in this movie there is a different side to this in showing the massacre at the end. There are plenty of examples of this type of behavior along the frontier, most famously at Sand Creek.

Soldier Blue (1970) opens with an antiwar narration statement. This is not a surprise after viewing the film and understanding what was going on at the time. Wayne Sarf describes the historical context and film by stating, "In an era during which many white Americans reveled in antimilitary sentiment and masochistically wallowed in self-hating guilt over the racial wrongs

[269] Rogerebert.com, "Soldier Blue," http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/soldier-blue-1970.
[270] Variety.com, "Review: 'Soldier Blue,'" http://variety.com/1969/film/reviews/soldier-blue-1200422150/.

done by their ancestors, it was predictable that a new stereotype of the frontier soldier would emerge – that of the brass-buttoned sadist gleefully slaughtering the downtrodden aborigine."[271]

The film is an adaptation of the novel Arrow in the Sun by Theodore Olsen. While the movie does have strong antiwar sentiment, it also captures some of the brutality committed by Colonel John Chivington and his men during the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864. At the end of *Soldier Blue*, it is disturbingly realistic and graphic in the way it shows a group of cavalrymen destroying a Cheyenne village, raping women, indiscriminately killing children, and mutilating bodies. Variety describes it as, "The climax of the film makes the Army the complete villain and the Cheyennes the complete innocents. The seemingly handful of warriors are quickly wiped out, the women raped, children mutilated and, in many cases, murdered."[272] Even during the beginning of the movie, it is easy to get a grasp on where the film is going when it depicts cavalrymen making crude remarks about a white captive woman that they are returning to "civilization."[273]

The film opens with Candice Bergen's character, Kathy Maribel 'Cresta' Lee, on her way back to her fiancé after years of captivity with the Cheyennes. This also gives us a look at Honus Gent, a cavalryman, played by Peter Strauss. Gent and his fellow soldiers are transporting Cresta along with a paymaster wagon. None of the soldiers expects an attack because the Indians would have no use for the money. This demonstrates a lack of understanding of Indians and the economic situation of the plains and traders. Indians that fight with rifles have to get them somehow and the best way to get guns is to buy them. Cheyennes ambush the wagon train and Gent does not understand why. The only two survivors of the attack are Gent and Cresta. She explains to him that rifles cost money and that is why they want to rob the wagon.

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[271] Sarf, 185-6.
[272] Variety.com, "Review: 'Soldier Blue.'"
[273] Candice Bergen, et al., *Soldier Blue*, DVD, (Santa Monica, CA: Lionsgate, 2006).

This is the point of the movie where it becomes obvious that Cresta did not necessarily want to leave the Cheyennes. She is sympathetic to their cause and tells Gent that she understands why they attacked. According to her, the Cheyennes are fighting for their families and way of life. This provides a perspective that the negative image films do not embrace. These Indians are people with families and cultures, which they are willing to fight to protect. This makes them no different from any white family of settlers.

Cresta also explains that the only reason she left the Cheyenne is that she realized that she could never truly be one of them, but wishes she were. Gent does not understand her position and represents the element of society that views Indians as savages. As the film progresses he becomes infatuated with Cresta, but never really seems to comprehend why she feels the way she does. The only time he seems to have any appreciation of Indians is when he is injured and she knows how to treat him with what she can find in the environment.

There is not much interaction with Indians throughout the movie, but when Cresta explains things about them, she describes them as one would family members. They are not some strange group of people that scientists need to observe, they are real people. She understands them and their way of life. The Cheyennes were on the land first and want to keep what is theirs.

The final scene of the movie is when Gent becomes a believer in what Cresta has been telling him the whole movie. Chivington, a Methodist minister, was in charge of the third Regiment of Colorado volunteers, their purpose: fight hostile Indians. This did not work out well and he decided to attack a peaceful village of Cheyennes lead by Black Kettle. Chivington knew that the Cheyenne encampment was under the protection of the government, but Chivington and his men had not seen much action. Their enlistment period of one hundred days was almost over. This incident gives us the disputed quote, "'Kill and scalp all, big and small; nits make lice.'"[274]

[274] Andrist, 89.

This quote shows the brutality that Chivington sought to stir up among his men. Two officers also report him saying, "'Now boys, I shan't say who you shall kill, but remember our murdered women and children.'"[275]

Once Chivington's men began their attack, Black Kettle tried to reassure his people that no harm would come to them. He even raised an American flag, along with a white one to show he was peaceful. The soldiers ignored this act. They followed Chivington's orders well, killing women and children. Chivington would brag that the village contained 1000 warriors, which was not true.[276]

Reports estimate there to have been 400-500 Indians, mostly women and children, in the village. Approximately 150 died at the hands of the soldiers.[277] Chivington and his men marched victoriously through the streets of Denver, Colorado. They received applause at intermissions during performances in Denver while displaying scalps taken during the massacre.[278] Ralph Andrist describes Chivington and the frontier situation well, "Denver has treated him as a hero, but Denver was a frontier town; elsewhere, and particularly in the East, there was revulsion at the great and glorious victory on Sand Creek."[279]

In the film, after the massacre concludes, a narrator explains the events of the Sand Creek Massacre. Wayne Sarf notes that the numbers for the massacre are too high at the end of the movie and adds that Sand Creek there were several investigations into the incident from congress to the military. An investigation after the fact does not help any of the families affected by the massacre, but it does show that there was concern over the actions taken by men at Sand Creek.

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[275] Ibid.
[276] Ibid., 90-91.
[277] Thornton, 119.
[278] Andrist, 91.
[279] Ibid., 93.

Many government officials denounced the incident and took the time to investigate what actually happened.[280]

[280] Sarf, 189-90.

SECTION IV

LITTLE BIG MAN

"Jack Crabb: Do you hate them? Do you hate the White man now?

Old Lodge Skins: Do you see this fine thing? Do you admire the humanity of it? Because the human beings, my son, they believe everything is alive. Not only man and animals. But also water, earth, stone. And also the things from them... like that hair. The man from whom this hair came, he's bald on the other side, because I now own his scalp! That is the way things are. But the white man, they believe EVERYTHING is dead. Stone, earth, animals. And people! Even their own people! If things keep trying to live, white man will rub them out. That is the difference."[281]

1970 is a year that has another movie released dealing with some of the same issues as *Soldier Blue*, but is a bit more mainstream, *Little Big Man*. This film plays with stereotypes and has some fun with them, yet it consists of some meaningful statements about the West. The film deals with the white inclination that Indians rape all white women, the wise old Indian chief, and Custer's intelligence level.

[281] IMDB.com, "Little Big Man (1970) Quotes," http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0065988/quotes?ref_=tt_ql_3.

In the opening credits, the Cheyenne, Crow, and Stony Indian tribes get an acknowledgment for helping with the movie. This is certainly a step in the right direction. The connection with tribes, at least in appearance, tends to lend some authenticity to the film. While the main character is a white man, it deals with Indians for about half of the movie.[282]

"Little Big Man is a sort of vaudeville show, framed in fictional biography, loaded with sketches of varying degrees of serious and burlesque humor, and climaxed by the Indian victory over Gen. George A. Custer at Little Big Horn in 1876," writes a reviewer from Variety in 1969.[283] Roger Ebert's take on the movie is more to the point, "Arthur Penn's 'Little Big Man' is an endlessly entertaining attempt to spin an epic in the form of a yarn."[284]

Dustin Hoffman is Jack Crabb, the movie's 121-year-old main character, the only remaining survivor of The Little Big Horn. He is in a nursing home at the beginning of the movie and a historian wants to interview him. Crabb continues telling the historian his story and this is the movies narration. His story begins with the attacking of his family's wagon train, but viewers only see the destruction. He and his sister are still alive and a Cheyenne finds them. They fear for their lives and his sister believes the Indian will want to rape her. This becomes a gag for the film, as there is not much difference in the looks between Crabb and his sister.

Upon taking the children to the village, the Indians believe they are both males and try to deal with the sister because she is the oldest. They try to smoke a pipe with her and only realize she is a female when they examine her more closely and the men in the tipi seem to be in disbelief that she is a girl, while the women laugh. This situation shows the opposite of many other films from the era, Indians with a sense of humor. These are not the stoic Indians of so many westerns. Even films that have balance in the portrayal or place Indians at the center tend

[282] Arthur Penn, et al., *Little Big Man*, DVD, (Hollywood, CA: Paramount Home Entertainment, 2003).
[283] Variety.com, "Review: 'Little Big Man,'" http://variety.com/1969/film/reviews/little-big-man-2-1200422183/.
[284] Rogerebert.com, "Little Big Man," http://rogerebert.com/reviews/little-big-man-1970.

to stay away from showing them in humorous situations. This idea is something that modern Native American filmmakers have attempted to combat. *Little Big Man* is one of the first films to ridicule Custer and present Indians like this.

This situation already provides context for the treatment of Indians in the film. They do not want to rape the girl. Rather, they want to accept the two orphans. As Crabb stays with the Cheyennes, he learns their ways and they are understanding of him. They allow him to decide if he wants to participate as they prepare to attack a group of white soldiers, since those are Crabb's people. He decides to join the attack because he views himself as a Cheyenne or Human Being as they call themselves.

Little Big Man shows, in far less brutality than *Soldier Blue*, a massacre of an Indian village. The massacre *Little Big Man* examines is the Battle of the Washita. The attack occurred on November 27, 1868 and was part of a winter campaign. This "battle" involved Colonel Custer riding into Black Kettle's peaceful Cheyenne village. Black Kettle believed the soldiers would not do anything to them. Somehow, he had survived the Sand Creek Massacre only to have Custer's men kill him at the Washita.

The reports include 102 Cheyenne warriors' dead, along with many women and children, and around 800 horses. They destroyed the village, set fire to the lodges and threw what would not burn into the river.[285] According to another source, Custer documented everything his men destroyed and seized, "Some of the items he listed were: 1,100 buffalo robes, 4,000 arrows, 500 pounds of powder, 1,000 pounds of lead, tons of dried meat, 875 ponies. The lodges and the combustible materials were put to the torch: the rest was thrown into the river."[286]

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[285] Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The American Indian: Prehistory to the Present* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1980), 410-1.
[286] Andrist, 160.

What *Little Big Man* accomplishes is much more than *Soldier Blue*. By staying away from the brow beating, they reach the viewer when the serious things happen, such as the Battle of the Washita. *Soldier Blue* does a good job of showing the connection that some captives had to their Indian captures. Yet, Cresta becomes somewhat unbearable and then by the climax of the film making the battle worse than it was takes away from the atrocities that actually occurred. There is no reason to embellish the details because it was horrific enough. This also provides an easy target for people looking to push the opposite agenda and say that Hollywood does not show the facts and tries to distort them, turning movies into propaganda. *Little Big Man* avoids that problem.

While this film centers on a white protagonist it deals with Indians a lot, as the reviewer notes the climax of the movie. The filmmakers do not leave anyone wondering about their feelings toward Native Americans or even Custer for that matter. Custer appears as a bumbling idiot that will not listen to anyone. They show the Indians as having a sense of humor and real three-dimensional characters, not just war paint wearing stoic figures.

However, Ebert suggests that the protagonists of the film are the Indian and white man's version of civilization.[287] This is also a fair assessment of the film as we see Jack Crabb bounce back and forth between white and Indian worlds. They both provide vastly different experiences and friendships for Crabb. It is easy to figure out which world is better by how the filmmakers represent how much corruption and immorality there is in white society, in comparison to Native American culture. The ways of white man are prevailing, but by examining Custer in the film, we see that this is not always the case.

While there are many great performances in the movie, one actor received much of the acclaim. The reviewer for Variety notes how Chief Dan George's performance as Chief Lodge

[287] Ibid.

Skins is wonderful, he went on to receive a nomination for best supporting actor at the Oscars, giving meaning to Indian characters and their reception.[288] The additional Indian actors receive notice from other reviews as well, including Vincent Canby of The New York Times.[289] Roger Ebert also conveys how well Chief Dan George is in the film by saying he plays Old Lodge Skins, "With such serenity and conviction that an Academy Award was mentioned," Ebert thinks it is because, "Penn has allowed the Indians in the film to speak ordinary, idiomatic English."[290] They also allow the Cheyenne to refer to themselves as "the Human Beings," which is an accurate translation of what they called themselves.

Canby also notes how the director, Arthur Penn, "Takes seriously the vanishing of the race that managed to give Jack 'a vision of a moral order in the universe.'"[291] Some critics view this as a positive because they are showing how Native Americans seemed to be becoming extinct during the nineteenth century. This is not a new concept and has been around as long as Indian removal to areas away from their native homelands.

However, other critics describe this as an injustice against Indians. A review of the film from 2010 describes how Vine Deloria Jr. felt about this idea in his book *God is Red*. Deloria explains that by writings like the one in which the movie is based on help to perpetuate the myth of the noble savage. The work also keeps the myth alive of the communal nature of Native Americans. Again, it is simply feeding the stereotypes according to Deloria. Another work the review quotes is *The Only Good Indian…The Hollywood Gospel* by Ralph and Natasha Friars. They viewed the film as trivializing the subjects too much. The overly idiotic nature of Custer and the excessively righteous nature of Chief Lodge Skins made caricatures of these men. While

[288] Variety.com, "Review: 'Little Big Man.'"
[289] The New York Times, nytimes.com, "Little Big Man," http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=EE05E7DF1739E56FBC4D52DFB467838B669EDE.
[290] Rogerebert.com, "Little Big Man."
[291] Ibid.

they seem to agree that the filmmakers' intent was to show Indians in a positive way, by doing so in a satirical form hurt the final product.[292]

Another concern for Canby was how transparently the movie showed its social commentary.[293] This appears to be the trend for this film as well as *Soldier Blue*. The filmmakers feel the need to treat the audience as if they are not capable of making a decision about the history of the subject matter and present them with a story that takes the history to the edge of what actually happened. In doing so, they end up offending some because they appear to be pushing an agenda. *Little Big Man* is much better than *Soldier Blue* in this case. The latter becomes preachy at times, while the former keeps things light with comedic relief. That is what makes *Little Big Man* the better of the two films, but upsets some, such as Deloria.

Canby also notes, "The film has the circular form of encounters with friends or relatives that Jack has somehow lost earlier along the way."[294] This idea is important because many Native American cultures have a circular view of life, as Donald Fixico and Calvin Martin have aptly described in numerous works. This does add some validity to the movie. The filmmakers seem to be playing with those ideas, making it appear that they are pay homage to Native American culture.

Roger Ebert expresses strong sentiment about the movie. He declares, "It is the very folksiness of Penn's film that makes it, finally, such a perceptive and important statement about Indians, the West, and the American dream."[295] Ebert later states, "He doesn't capture the history of a time, but its flavor."[296] That might be the best way to describe this film. It gives the

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[292] Nativeamerican.co.uk, "Film Review: Little Big Man Arthur Penn, 1970," http://www.nativeamerican.co.uk/littlebigman.html.
[293] The New York Times, nytimes.com, "Little Big Man."
[294] Ibid.
[295] Rogerebert.com, "Little Big Man."
[296] Ibid.

audience a flavor of the west and Indians in a relatable way. Everybody should be able to find someone they can connect with in the movie.

Understanding why some activists and scholars like Deloria have a problem with this is not easy. According to James Welch, author of *Killing Custer*, "Little Big Man accomplished the feat of humanizing Indians by depicting individuals living in society, with its own special structures, more and values."[297] It would be easier to have issues with many other films and leave this one alone. The vast majority of films about historical events have problems, as does this one, but to say that the humor of the movie detracts from the major points does not work. By presenting the issues in a light fashion the filmmakers are able to reach a much wider audience than be making an overly serious movie.

In describing the 1960s and the effects of what happened on the movies coming out at the end of the period, "The decade was marked by antiwar protests against the ongoing conflict in Vietnam and by revolutionary social movements related to issues of class, gender, race, and sexual orientation. Nowhere were these changes more accurately recorded than on the big screen."[298] The western that most closely discusses all those areas is *Little Big Man*. It took time to display Indians with humanity, as real three-dimensional beings, and not just being a hindrance to the progress of civilization. Some credit the film for revising stereotypes surrounding Native Americans, but this was not the first film to portray them in a positive or fair manner.[299]

As the final two films show, there was a changing atmosphere surrounding the western in Hollywood. The production of westerns would decline over the next few decades. In a way this provides the opportunity for Native American filmmakers to emerge in the late 1980s and began to address issues that they saw with Indian representation in movies and television. Filmmakers

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[297] James Welch, *Killing Custer: The Battle of Little Bighorn and the Fate of the Plains Indians* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 98.
[298] DiMare, 307.
[299] Ibid., 307-8.

such as Chris Eyre and Sterlin Harjo are able to make movies about ideas that more closely resemble what modern life is like for many Native Americans. They do not keep them trapped in the nineteenth century in tepees hunting buffalo. The new films relate modern stories that discuss kinship and the problems Indians face on reservations and at the mercy of government control. The Indians they show have many of the qualities of the better films from this era they are not caricatures of Plains tribes, they are simply human beings that struggle with everyday issues much like everyone else in America.

EPILOGUE

TELLING THEIR OWN STORIES: 1989-2009

"Buddy Red Bow: You tell everybody fairy stories.

Philbert Bono: The stories of our ancestors. How they solved problems. Often the problems never change. Nor the people.

Buddy Red Bow: Yeah, well it's just too bad those stories don't tell us how to keep our reservations from turning into sewers.

Philbert Bono: But they do."[300]

The feature film *Powwow Highway* (1989) features the preceding dialogue describing the type of connection to kinship and history that many American Indian filmmakers try to convey in their films. They show that there is a contradiction between the new and old ways. It is only in the last thirty years that there has been an increase in Indian directed films about modern life for them and the problems they encounter, thus pulling them out of the nineteenth century. There has been much progress since 1970 as Indians have begun to control their own stories.

[300] IMDb.com, Inc., "Memorable quotes for Powwow Highway," http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098112/quotes.

Modern native filmmakers and authors are trying to place their people in modern society by showing what things are like for them. The most recognizable film to moviegoers is probably *Smoke Signals* (1998). What these films shows is that natives from all over the United States share experiences and problems with people of all races and ethnicities.[301] Before examining the movies, it is important to explore some of the themes that the filmmakers study in these modern films.

The filmmakers examine many topics, but they tend to focus on reservation life and kinship. It is not a surprise that these topics are prevalent in the plots. Typically in the past movies placed Indians into a position of secondary characters or villains, with whites getting the main billing. There have been films made that are sympathetic to Native Americans, but they have problems as well. The solution is natives empowering themselves through movies and telling their own story in an attempt to balance the record, although they tend to stay within contemporary settings. This seems to be the easiest and most efficient way to reach a wide audience and engage the viewer to think about Indians.

The concept of kinship and ethnicity are important when discussing modern movies made by Native Americans. First, kinship is an idea that has different meanings to different ethnic groups throughout the world. Anthropologist Linda Stone offers an easily understood definition of kinship by stating, "Kinship is conventionally defined as relationships between persons based on descent or marriage."[302] However she goes on to explain how in many societies kinship necessitates rights and obligations, making the idea of kinship more complicated. Stone also describes kinship by explaining, "Kinship is also an ideology of human relationships; it involves

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[301] All the films in this chapter are set west of the Mississippi. *Powwow Highway*, *Smoke Signals*, and *Skins* revolve around reservation life, which is also a common feature of Indian life in the west. Several books deal with the issues of Indian stereotypes, for example Philip Deloria's *Indians in Unexpected Places*. Vine Deloria Jr., Donald Fixico and Calvin Martin have also written extensively about Indian thought and placement in modern society.

[302] Linda Stone, *Kinship and Gender: An Introduction* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010), 5.

cultural ideas about how humans are created and the nature and meaning of their biological and moral connections with others."[303]

Donald Fixico explains the role of kinship for Indians well, "The whole is greater than any one of its parts. For example, the family is more important than the individual among tribes who believe in a communal identity."[304] There is also a discussion about how clans are important for tribes and how kinship supports members of the family. He uses an example from the Crow tribe. There are thirteen clans of the Crow and each person has clan relatives on top of their blood relatives. The clan system helped to strengthen the bond of the tribe by making more individuals related. This made cooperation among the tribal members better because they had obligations to more people in the tribe and not just their immediate family. Their kinship represents symbolic and blood relations.[305]

Kinship seems to have its' intricacies and ethnicity can be just as complicated. The Oxford Dictionary defines ethnicity as, "the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition."[306] What is good about this definition is that it allows for cultural connections. What will become evident while examining native relationships is that ethnicity does not always imply kinship status. Birth is the typical acceptance into an ethnic group, but it is important to remember that ethnic groups define their own characteristics.[307] Anthropologist Timothy Baumann provides his definition on ethnicity as well, "Overall, the

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[303] Ibid.

[304] Fixico, *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World*, 47. He describes himself as a Shawnee, Sac & Fox, Muscogee Creek and Seminole Indian according to his web page on Arizona State University's page. "Donald Fixico" https://webapp4.asu.edu/directory/person/472315.

[305] Ibid., 47-48.

[306] Oxford University Press, "ethnicity," http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ethnicity. (accessed March 3, 2013).

[307] Timothy Baumann, "Defining Ethnicity," The SAA Archaeological Record: The Magazine of the Society for American Archaeology, 4 No. 4 (September 2004) 12. On this page, the author also provides six main features of an ethnic group: A common proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland, and a sense of solidarity.

underlying truth of ethnicity is that it is a product of self and group identity that is formed in extrinsic/intrinsic contexts and social interaction."[308]

Native Americans have had an image placed upon them by popular culture. However, recently they are trying to use popular culture to project a new image. Anthropologist John Mihelich explains how popular culture, in this instance films in particular, can affect images of certain groups. He states, "Popular culture is, by definition, 'popular' and widely consumed, it is a powerful agent in shaping these representative images."[309] Mihelich believes there is more taking place when filmmakers make these movies. There is actually a fight over sovereignty taking place in popular culture, in films like *Smoke Signals*.[310] Sovereignty is a word used most frequently in land dealings between the federal government and Native Americans, not control over images.[311]

Filmmaker and author Beverly Singer investigates this concept of sovereignty over images as well. As the director of the Alfonzo Ortiz Center for Intercultural Studies at the University of New Mexico, she emphasizes the importance of oral tradition in understanding films made by natives. By understanding and maintaining this type of storytelling, it further enables Indians to have sovereignty over their identity. She also tries to distance herself from traditional Euro-American terms that describe films, as they do not represent the movies made by natives.[312]

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[308] Ibid., 14.

[309] John Mihelich, "Smoke or Signals? American Popular Culture and the Challenge to Hegemonic Images of American Indians in Native American Film," *Wicazo Sa Review* 16, no. 2, Film and Video (Autumn 2001): 129.

[310] Ibid.

[311] According to the online Oxford dictionary, sovereignty means supreme power or authority. Therefore, in the case of images, land, or self-government sovereignty is applicable. http://oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/sovereignty.

[312] Beverly R. Singer, *Wiping the War Paint off the Lens* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 2-4. She goes into more depth about Native American thought and storytelling. It works as a nice

Singer's position is extreme in comparison to what some of the other filmmakers are saying about why they make their films. Interviews with native filmmakers Chris Eyre, a Cheyenne and Arapaho, and Sterlin Harjo, a Seminole and Creek, show that they are trying to make movies that reach multiple audiences and expose mainstream popular culture to actual stories about Indians. They do find influence from their oral tradition, but do not seem to have a problem with Euro-American film terminology. Their positions take into consideration how diverse the United States is and the desire to make movies about what they know, while reaching as many people as possible.

Many of the themes addressed in the movies come from reservation life and how natives responded, in both how they live and their kinship relations. Natives either directed and/or wrote the films. They all contain mostly American Indian actors. Most importantly, they all revolve around ethnicity, family, and kinship.

Powwow Highway (1989) is an early movie of the genre directed by Jonathan Wacks. The movie is an adaptation of a novel by David Seals, who is Huron, of the same name published in 1979. The setting for the story is on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation at Lame Deer, Montana, and follows the characters as they travel to Santa Fe, New Mexico. It deals with such topics as the American Indian Movement (AIM), reservation politics, and kinship. The film also challenges Hollywood stereotypes of Indians.[313]

The main character is Philbert Bono, played by Gary Farmer, a Cayuga.[314] Philbert seems unintelligent, but as the movie progresses it becomes evident he is adept and caring. He cares about the traditions of his tribe. He pursues his vision and warrior name, even though

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compliment to Fixico's *The American Indian Mind in a Linear World: American Indian Studies and Traditional Knowledge*, providing the same thought process.

[313] Native Networks, "Gary Farmer," Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/farmer_g.htm.

[314] Ibid. Farmer received the Best Actor Award at the 1989 American Indian Film Festival for his role in the movie.

people do not seem as interested in the old ways as he is. Another basic kinship idea in the film is the mentioning that Philbert's uncle taught him many things. This is something that anthropologist see in many different societies, a connection to extended family.

The other main character that Philbert helps during the movie is Buddy Red Bow. Buddy, played by Adolph Martinez an actor of mixed ancestry, is a Vietnam veteran and a member of AIM.[315] He is fighting against government intervention and speculators on the reservation. During this, police outside of Santa Fe arrest Buddy's sister by planting drugs in her car to get Buddy away from the reservation so the speculators can get what they want on the reservation.

Philbert sees part of his warrior vision at the beginning of the film and it involves a warrior on a horse. After this, Philbert decides he must get a war pony. He walks to a junkyard and purchases an old beat up car that he refers to as his "war pony" throughout the film. Buddy then asks Philbert to take him to Santa Fe to rescue his sister. Therefore, Philbert believes helping Buddy is part of his vision and wants to help because part of being a warrior implies helping those in need and protecting the tribe. Buddy finds it easy to talk Philbert into taking him by playing upon those ideas. Buddy insists he would go get his sister no matter what, implying a strong connection to family as it is never discussed whether the charges were true or not.

Along the way, they stop at a powwow and they show the types of factions in reservation politics. Buddy gets into an argument with the group that he views as negative for the tribe. At this point, a friend of Buddy's who also served in Vietnam and an AIM member rescues him from a group trying to beat him up. This is another instance of kinship, more like clan kinship than biological kinship. He helps Buddy then they discuss how things were before. From serving

[315] According to his IMDB profile, he is Mexican, Apache, Piegan Blackfeet, and Northern European. IMDB.com, "Biography for A Martinez," http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0553436/bio.

together in the military and trying to advance their people, they share a bond. To refer back to Stone, the two share a moral connection.

Another interesting scene involving Buddy's niece and nephew directly discusses kinship and ethnicity. The two children escape from custody while their mother is in prison. They know they need to call someone for help, but they do not have any money. Upon seeing a Native American woman they ask her if she is Indian and if they can have some money. She asks them is they are Indians and they tell her they are. The woman wants to know what tribe they are, but the children do not know, they simply reply Indian. The woman tells them they should know what tribe they belong to and their ancestry because it is important. This implies that it is universal for all Native Americans to feel a connection to their tribal identity. The children simply view their ethnicity as Indian, not a particular tribe.[316]

Smoke Signals (1998) is another film that received a lot of acclaim. The movie is a reworking of the short story "This is What it Means to Say Pheonix, Arizona," from Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian Sherman Alexie's book *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*.[317] At the Sundance Film Festival, it received the Audience Award for Dramatic Films, the Filmmakers Trophy, and a nomination for the Grand Jury Prize. These awards signify a first for a movie written, directed, and co-produced by Native Americans, Chris Eyre and Sherman Alexie, a major accomplishment.[318]

Chris Eyre is a Cheyenne and Arapaho filmmaker that made headlines with films such as *Smoke Signals* and *Skins*.[319] After *Smoke Signals* release, *People* magazine called Eyre, '"The

[316] Janet Heaney, Jean Stawarz, Jan Wieringa, Jonathan Wacks, A. Martinez, Gary Farmer, Amanda Wyss, Barry Goldberg, and David Seals, *Powwow Highway*, (United States: StarMaker, 2004).
[317] IMDB.com, "Biography for Sherman Alexie," http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0018963/bio.
[318] Kilpatrick, 228-9. There are others including Roger Baerwolf and other members of Shadow Catcher Entertainment.
[319] Chriseyre.org, "About Chris," http://www.chriseyre.org/.

preeminent Native American Filmmaker of his time.'"[320] However, the quote that speaks most directly to his influence comes from Geoff Gilmore, Director of the Sundance Film Festival, in which he describes Eyre as, "A great American filmmaker."[321] After this he went on to direct the first three parts of *We Shall Remain* for "The American Experience" series on PBS. While also gaining mainstream attention for directing an episode of *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* and two episodes of *Friday Night Lights*.[322] It is evident that he takes his filmmaking seriously and enjoys working with many facets of television and film. On his website, he describes how important involvement with the characters in a film is, "Cultural aspects of a film mean nothing if you're not personally and emotionally engaged in the characters you are watching. I am interested in the people I'm portraying."[323]

Smoke Signals has several similarities with *Powwow Highway*. The two young men are opposite in nearly every way imaginable. Victor is athletic, personifying the Indian athlete, while Thomas is more what one would consider a nerd. Thomas tells the old stories, much like Philbert. Victor does not want to hear them, much like Buddy. They set out on a journey together and learn to understand each other along the way.

It begins in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho in 1976. This provides the background for the story, showing why the two main characters of the film grow up together. Adam Beach, Saulteaux, plays Victor Joseph and Evan Adams, Coast Salish, portrays Thomas Builds-the-Fire.[324] These two men have a connection because on July 4, 1976, the day of "white man's independence," Thomas' parents die in what looks like an accidental fire. Victor's father, Arnold Joseph, saves

[320] Ibid.
[321] Ibid.
[322] IMDB.com, "Chris Eyre," http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0264220/?ref_=sr_1.
[323] Chriseyre.org, "About Chris."
[324] IMDB.com, "Biography for Adam Beach," http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0063440/bio. Ibid., "Evan Adams," http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0010963/.

Thomas when his parents drop him out the window before fire consumes the house.[325] The movie advances forward twenty-two years to 1998. They find out that Arnold died in Arizona and the majority of the story centers around Victor and Thomas traveling to get his remains.[326]

After viewing *Powwow Highway* and *Smoke Signals* the emphasis on family is still there, but a stress on the traditional stories and a connection to the past appear to be waning. However, the character that finds more importance on the connection to the past gets the other one to see things their way and realize that kinship and ancestry are important. There is wisdom in the old ways. The character inclined to the traditional values is more caring about kinship and ethnicity. The films give the impression that a blending of the modern and traditional ways is important to keep the culture alive. By adapting to modern society, but not forgetting what makes a person Native American.

Skins (2002) is a film that did not receive as much attention as the previous films discussed. Chris Eyre directed the movie and it is an adaptation of a novel sharing a name with the movie written by Adrian Louis, a Lovelock Paiute. The movie explores the lives of two brothers living on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. The importance of family kinship connections is central to the film. Rudy Yellow Lodge, portrayed by an actor of mixed heritage Eric Schweig, the main character, takes it upon himself to try to change some of the negative things happening on the reservation.[327] This leads to him accidently setting his brother on fire when he burns down a liquor store in a town on the border of the reservation. There are references to other themes including poverty and activism. The movie also shows such things as sweat lodges and references to tribal beliefs such as the spider as the trickster.

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[325] Later in the movie, the viewer finds out that Arnold accidently started the fire. Gary Farmer plays Arnold Joseph.

[326] Larry Estes, Scott Rosenfelt, Chris Eyre, Adam Beach, Evan Adams, Irene Bedard, Gary Farmer, Tantoo Cardinal, and Sherman Alexie, *Smoke Signals*, DVD, (Montreal, Quebec: Alliance Video, 1999).

[327] IMDB.com, "Biography for Eric Schweig," http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0777760/bio. According to the website he is of German and Inuit descent.

The film begins with newsreel footage of Pine Ridge and Bill Clinton speaking about the poverty and how the government will improve conditions on the reservation. The movie then moves to the brothers as children. A black widow spider bites one and the other carries him to help. The brother that the spider bit grows up to be a police officer, Rudy, and the older brother, Mogie, grows up to serve in the military in Vietnam and is now an alcoholic. Through flashbacks during the film, the filmmakers show the connection the brothers have. Their father was also an abusive alcoholic and the brothers are protective of their mother. Mogie is the protector of the family in all of these scenes.

Graham Greene an Oneida, portrays the adult Mogie who has a son who is constantly visiting with Rudy because he is the stable person he can talk with.[328] The uncle again plays a prominent role in the family structure, much like the uncle teaching Philbert things in *Powwow Highway*. Mogie has many problems, but Rudy is always trying to give him money and help him. Rudy takes him to a picnic and football game between the police officers and the tribal council. The scene of the picnic again brings about a type of clan kinship. The park is full of tribal members enjoying themselves despite all the poverty and problems they deal with on a daily basis.

While in the hospital recovering from burns suffered in the liquor store fire, Mogie finds out he has cirrhosis of the liver and will not live much longer. The family grows closer during this time and for the first time during the movie they are all together. There is talk about how friends brag about beings descendants of American Horse, a famous Sioux. This again emphasizes the standpoint that all Native Americans need to know their heritage.[329]

Another native filmmaker who has recently gained notoriety is Sterlin Harjo, a member of the Seminole and Creek Nations, the first Native American to receive the United States Artists

[328] Ibid., "Biography for Graham Greene," http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001295/bio.
[329] Chris Eyre et al. *Skins*, (Century City, CA: First Look Home Entertainment, 2003).

Fellowship.[330] Harjo grew up in Oklahoma and has filmed two of his full-length movies in his home state. In an interview for a website, he described some of ideas about filmmaking while discussing his film *Barking Water* (2009). He talks about his influences and why he likes subtlety in his movies, "I am always striving to be truthful. I love how older Indians in my family tell stories. It can be about anything…about nothing, but the way they tell it makes it compelling."[331]

Harjo understands the position of Indians from a popular culture viewpoint. While discussing his influences in another interview, he descrobes how *Smoke Signals* made him believe he could tell stories about where he was from and relate to a larger audience. During this same interview, he tells how connected his family is and fits into the kinship patterns of many natives. He defines how his aunts and uncles are like parents, his great aunts and uncles are like grandparents, and his cousins are like brothers and sisters.[332] This provides an insight to his culture and the importance of telling stories the way he does. His influences have been different from many other filmmakers, which gives him a different perspective.

In another interview, the filmmaker discusses the importance of making a movie that relates to all people, not just Indians or white society, but everyone. Harjo states, "I wanted to make a film that I could relate to. I wanted to make a film about Indian characters that suffer through the things that all humans do. We really don't walk around having visions all day, or playing the flute 24/7."[333] This thought about Indians walking around having visions and playing the flute all day speaks directly to the image many have about Native Americans that do not have

[330] Native Networks, "Sterlin Harjo," Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/harjo_s.htm.
[331] Alexbledsoe.com, "Interview: Filmmaker Sterlin Harjo," http://alexbledsoe.com/2012/05/21/interview-filmmaker-sterlin-harjo/.
[332] RPM, Indigenous Music Culture, "Interview: Sterlin Harjo Talks Oklahoma & Music," http://rpm.fm/interview/interview-sterlin-harjo-talks-oklahoma-music/.
[333]Indiewire.com, "Park City '07 Review," http://www.indiewire.com/article/park_city_07_interview_sterlin_harjo_i_wanted_to_make_a_film_about_indian_c.

contact with them on a regular basis. He then directly refers to his film *Four Sheets to the Wind* (2007) by saying, "It's about Indians, but above all it's about humans and how one gets over loss through connecting with others."[334]

A film from Harjo that explores some similar themes to Eyre's work is *Four Sheets to the Wind* (2007). This is Harjo's first feature film. The movie focuses on Cufe Smallhill, played by Cree actor Cody Lightning, and his interactions with his family after his father's suicide.[335] The film is set in northeast Oklahoma and not a reservation as many of the films of this genre.

The movie begins with Cufe dragging his father through the woods. He then places the body in a pond at the request of his father before his death. This is upsetting to the rest of the family and they cannot understand why Cufe did that. His mother wants to have a funeral, so they have a closed casket service by placing weights in the casket. Miri portrayed by Tamara Podemski a mixed heritage actress, Cufe's sister, comes to the funeral.[336] From interactions at the funeral, she has a strained relationship with her mother. However, they believe it would be good for Cufe to go live with Miri in Tulsa for a while.

This is the point of the story in which family relations come to the forefront. Cufe is not dealing with the death of his father well and Miri drinks all the time trying to cope with things. She has trouble paying her rent, but continues to live an active party lifestyle and takes Cufe in paying for anything he needs. Miri eventually steals money from her job. She loses her job after this and overdoses on sleeping pills.

Cufe and his mother pick up Miri from the hospital to take her home. Once home, Cufe views the family as back together and through narration describes how he had a full night's sleep

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[334] Ibid.
[335] IMDB.com, "Biography for Cody Lightning," http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0510020/bio.
[336] Ibid., "Biography for Tamara Podemski," http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0687947/bio. She is listed as a Canadian born actress of Ojibway and Israeli parents. She won the Special Jury Prize for acting at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival for her role.

unlike any he could remember in a long time. There seemed to be a peace about the house as they were all under the same roof again. The film ends with Cufe driving away early the next morning.

The importance of kinship and family are present throughout the movie. Miri is not around the family because of her lifestyle, but still wants to be around Cufe. He accepts her even though she has made bad decisions and there does not seem to be any judgment against her by him. The mother is concerned about the family, but in the end, after tragedy almost hit the family twice in a short time they were back together. There is no discussion about kinship or ancestry as in the previous films, but rather a modern take on how Native American families deal with problems through the family.[337]

Barking Water (2009) is another movie directed by Sterlin Harjo and again it is not set on the reservation. As many of the other films of the genre, it follows a trip to visit someone with two people that had problems in the past. While this film is another personal journey, it has more elements of past kinship and common relations. Euchee/Creek actor Richard Ray Whitman plays the main character Frankie.[338] He finds out he has a terminal condition and seeks out his former lover Irene, played by Ponca actress Casey Camp-Horinek, to help him reach his daughter before he dies.[339]

The opening scene of the film shows Frankie in the hospital. Irene is looking at old family photos sitting by his bed, displaying the importance of family as she flips through the photographs. Irene and a nurse wheel Frankie out in a wheelchair. They put him in the car and get ready to drive to his daughter's house.

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[337] Sterlin Harjo, et al. *Four Sheets to the Wind*, (United States: First Look Home Entertainment, 2007).
[338] Native Networks, "Richard Ray Whitman," Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/whitman_rr.html.
[339] Ibid., "Casey Camp-Horinek," Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/camp_horinek_c.html.

On the way to Frankie's daughter, he and Irene stop at several family and friends houses to say goodbyes. The first house they stop at, we do not know their connection, but they all hold hands and pray in their native language in the front yard. Everyone present understands the situation and that Frankie is dying. The second stop involves his nephews. There are two. One of them appears to be full blood, while the other appears to be of mixed ancestry. The interesting thing about this encounter addresses some issues of ethnicity. The one with white features has on a "Red Power" sweatshirt and wants to pray to the creator. The full blood nephew has on a big gold chain and is dressed in an urban style, seemingly not wanting a connection to his people.

This poses some interesting questions to consider exactly what the filmmaker is implying, such as is Harjo trying to show that Indians are modern, while whites cling to stereotypes. It could be showing that no matter your appearance, ethnicity is something determined by the group, not assigned by an outsider. Harjo could also be using this encounter as a gag to present some humor in this somewhat dark story. For someone thinking about ethnicity this scene is thought provoking.

The next stop places them with another relative. This stop involves some talk about old times and them trying to relive some memories by watching a sunset from a favorite location of their past. Frankie does not feel well and leaves Irene with the relative. The young man questions Irene about why she is helping Frankie and she simply replies that she feels like she should. The relationship between Frankie and Irene has been a difficult one and it would be easy to understand why she might not help him.

During the travels, Frankie is constantly referring to his grandfather and looking at the family pictures from the hospital. In flashbacks, Frankie and Irene discuss children and what a blessing they are. This emphasis on kinship comes up again on their final stop before the daughter's house. The last stop places a new dynamic into the mix of family, interaction with

children. Frankie is watching the children play and asks them if they know how to "talk Indian." He tells them it is important to know those things.[340]

There is an evolution in these films from *Powwow Highway* to *Barking Water*. The reservation story is less prominent, but the road trip journey of discovery remains. Most of the contemporary films by American Indians focus on the atrocities of reservation life and not about the "Wild West" or frontier experience. The movies they are making are attempting to reach a wide audience and inform people about them. Then by examining them more closely, they are showing how important kinship and ethnicity are to Native Americans. Kinship takes many forms for Native Americans in these films and if you belong to their ethnic or kin group, they will try to be helpful. They do meet a few white people along who are helpful and seem to share the love of family just like the Native Americans.

The idea of cultural sovereignty is an idea that needs further exploration. The movies made by Indian filmmakers focus on modern problems and issues within the Native American community. Viewing these films for information about what is important to the modern Indian provides the viewer with some thought-provoking issues. From the cultural sovereignty viewpoint, there are also some stimulating ideas present as native filmmakers continue to grow within the film industry. What is evident is how important controlling and telling your own stories is because even while others may have the best intentions no one knows you like you do. If a group takes the time to show what they believe true about their culture, others will listen and a dialogue will begin.

[340] Sterlin Harjo, Chad Burris, Casey Camp-Horinek, Richard Ray Whitman, Jon Proudstar, and Frederick Schroeder, *Barking Water*, (New York: Lorber Films, 2010).

CONCLUSION

What is evident from examining Native American depiction is the complexity of the issue that dates back to the beginnings of European settlement in North America. The frontier experience created a unique American experience that includes Indians. In dealing with the issues of this experience, ideas and attitudes have changed. Indians have been the noble savage and the wild children of nature. Their presence along the frontier shaped the lives of settlers and the settlement of the United States.

Throughout the earliest interactions up through the early twentieth century, the debate about assimilation and at points whether or not they were a vanishing culture played a significant role in Indian policy. As time progressed people began to realize that Native Americans were not disappearing and were becoming active participants in the Civil Rights movement along with other minority groups.

The changes in the 1950s do not receive enough attention for the contributions made to Indian representation in films. The majority of the attention goes to movies that negatively portray Native Americans and perpetuate stereotypes. Researchers have overlooked the good that was done during the decade. Most people choose focus on the 1960s, in the case of Indian films

1970, as a time of transformation. 1970 is the year of *Little Big Man* and *Soldier Blue*, which are changes to the typical western film, but the basis for this occurred in the 1950s.

Broken Arrow begins this process with a humane depiction of Apaches in 1950 and climaxes with Little Big Man in 1970. The films are vastly different, but both show Indians as people deserving of attention and not painted heathens that white society cannot reason with. Broken Arrow takes a much more solemn approach, while Little Big Man delves into humor to show a frontier story that involves many interactions with Indians.

There were many people working behind the scenes to make the films more culturally appropriate including Iron Eyes Cody. People like him helped to make the 1950s the decade of change for Native Americans in Hollywood. While he was not an Indian, he was able to work with many tribes because of his ability to promote a positive perception of Native Americans and became a cultural broker between them and the filmmakers.

The movement produced films that featured Indian storylines that were more accurate and caring about Indian portrayal creating more balance in the film. This even creates situations where the viewer even feels sorry for or hopes for Indian victories against other groups. This play on emotion grows to the point of being extreme with the perception presented in *Soldier Blue* in 1970. The movement of the 1950s combined with the extremism of the 1960s leaves the western genre with outliers like *Soldier Blue* that alienated part of the audience with its antimilitary sentiment.

The politics of the 1950s did not feature as much upheaval as the 1960s, but the beginnings of the Civil Rights movement played a role in developing the ideas shown in movies. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks' ideology are prominent in the movies of this study. Indians are outsiders in many of the films, but active participants in controlling their future much like the members of the Civil Rights movement. They are taking an active role and no longer

remaining silent.

Reprisal! epitomizes the movement and the importance of the western. Filmmakers were able to adapt a novel about a lynching in Georgia and substitute the west for the south and Indians for African Americans. In doing so, the film would not have created as much controversy as if they would have made the film about race relations in the south. Any film that decides to discuss contemporary events, especially controversial ones, runs the risk of boom or bust at the box office. However, if they are able to present the ideas in a different setting or way then they are able to reach a wider audience and maybe make a difference by starting a dialogue.

The Indians in these movies are not the stereotypical Indians that ride paint horses, wear large decorative headdresses, and look to ambush the wagon train. The Native Americans in portrayed are warriors, but they have a sense of fair play and understanding of their situation. They are real people with real problems. They have a sense of humor and empathy. This is most noticeable in *Little Big Man* and lesser-known films like *Run of the Arrow*.

All the effort put in during the years 1950-1970 paved the way for Native filmmakers beginning in the late 1980s. From 1989-2009, there have been numerous films written and directed by Indians. While the earlier films focused on Indians in the role of western adversary/friend, modern Native filmmakers choose to show themselves as contributors to contemporary society. They are highlighting how Indians fit into mainstream America in a modern-day setting.

It is obvious from the more recent Indian films that tribal peoples are trying to change the perception of themselves as being stuck in the nineteenth century. This seems to be the crux of the issues facing Native filmmakers. They are finding a place for Indian actors to play a character that is not in a western.

Many great stories and films have been told through the western format. There is a place for them and with proper balance; they could still be successful today. American society seems to be in a cycle much like the 1950s and 1960s. There is political unrest and potential violence with other countries as the United States tries to figure out its place among the world powers once again. All of these issues are accessible through the western film and the interactions between white society and Indians.

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VITA

Christopher Colt Chaney

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: REEL INDIANS: NATIVE AMERICAN REPRESENTATION IN FILM, 1950-1970

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in History at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2017.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in History at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2012.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in History at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma in 2008.

Experience:

Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK
Instructor – Survey of American History Fall 2014
Teaching Assistant – Fall 2010- Spring 2013, Fall 2015-Spring 2017
Online Instructor - Spring 2017

The International Museum of the Horse, Lexington, KY
Intern – May 2012 – July 2012

Professional Memberships: Phi Alpha Theta